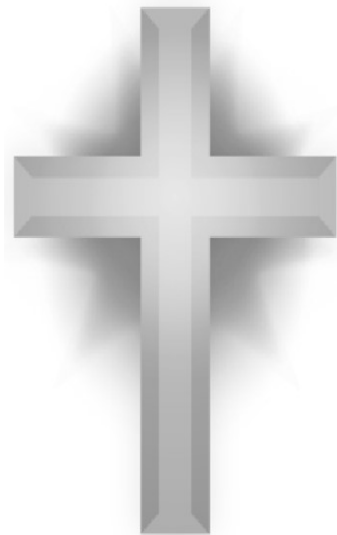
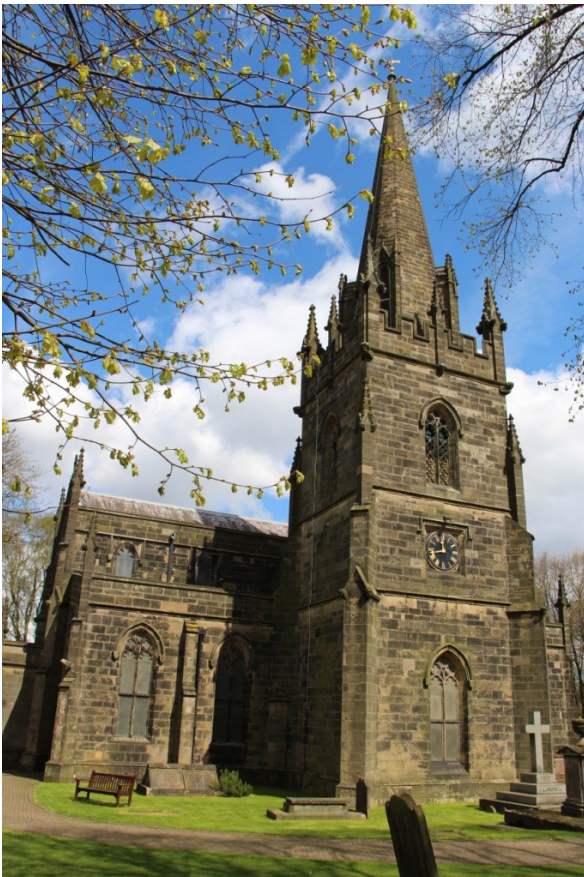


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50p

December/January 2021/22

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	Jackie Hewlett	01902 295164
	Sarah Parker	01902 885570
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader and Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
PCC Treasurer	Sheila Moss	01902 893570
Parish Office	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461

St Peters

Who's Who

Parish Warden	David Moss	01902 893570
Parish Warden	Edward Grist	01902 682786
Treasurer	Sheila Moss	01902 893570
Children's Advocate	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
DCC Secretary	John Powell	
Uniformed Organisations	Please Contact David Moss	01902 893570

St Andrew's

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Warden	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
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DCC Secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007

All Saints Who's Who

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	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
DCC Secretary	John Anderson	01902 677666
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Noah's Ark		
Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	01902 672556

Funerals

Funerals in November

10th John Griffiths – Gornal Wood

15th Peter John Robinson – All Saints

15th Graham Evans – Gornal Wood

18th Muriel Hough – All Saints

25th Keith Roger Stone – Gornal Wood

29th Gwendoline Lovatt – Gornal Wood

THE BEACON

If you are interested in having the magazine delivered to your home on a regular basis please contact:

Karen Evans: 01902 678056

The Beacon is published ten times a year and the cost for the year is £5. A larger typeface version of The Beacon can be provided on request.

Articles for the February magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 28th January

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: **www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk**

To Magazine Deliverers

Could you please get email addresses for all the people that you deliver to and let either Gail Griffiths or Karen Evans know .

St Peter's District Church magazine

St Peter's also publishes a magazine which is more particular to Upper Gornal. If you would like to receive that magazine (which is not available electronically), in the first instance please contact a St Peter's Church warden details on page 2 of this magazine.

If you wish to enquire about a wedding for 2022, please contact

Chris Williams chriswilliams550@btinternet.com.



Advent Gift Week

At our DCC meeting last month it was decided we would not hold a Christmas Fair this year due to the ongoing situation.

Instead All Saints' Church are having an '**Advent Gift Week**' from **Sunday 28th November to Sunday 5th December.**

All donations will be gratefully received and will be equally shared between '**Crisis at Christmas**' and **All Saints' Church.**

Donations, in an envelope marked 'Gift Week', can be given to the churchwardens, or handed in at the Friday Coffee Morning on 3rd December, or to Gail at the Parish Office.

Christmas 2021 from Guy Hewlett

Our lives are often described as a journey. When we look at the Christmas nativity stories in the Bible, we see that there are a significant number of journeys. First Mary goes to see her cousin Elizabeth and there is a beautiful scene where the two women meet and each knows that the other carries a baby in circumstances beyond human experience. Elizabeth carries John the Baptist and Mary carries Christ our Lord.

We also see Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem for the census when Mary is heavily pregnant with Jesus. They go on a difficult and challenging journey and when the Christ child is born there are others who travel to see them.

The shepherds have a short journey from the hills outside Bethlehem to see the Son of God in the Manger and the Magi travel huge distances to see Jesus the Christ.

Wherever you are on your journey I pray that you will determine to meet with Christ this Advent and Christmas season, and I pray that during the challenge and sometimes the difficulty your journey you will find renewal, blessing joy and peace. I pray too that the New Year will bring greater safety and balance for us all and that united the church will continue to travel with and towards our God.

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year, with our love in Christ,

Guy and Jackie

Camels

In Jane's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a large star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it. "Why is the third man going in a different direction?" her mother asked. Jane replied: "Oh, he's looking for a place to park."

Mothers' Union

Mary Zielonka shared her cycling adventures with us at our October meeting. Cycling holidays with her Mum and with friends took her to East Anglia, Scotland, Devon and further afield to Canada. On one occasion Mary and her Mum cycled from Sedgley to Norwich. They had only gone a few streets away from home when her bike chain broke but, undeterred, once fixed they continued on their 56 mile journey. There were many stories and photos of the intrepid cyclists, which made for an entertaining afternoon. By the way Mary did admit that they often dismounted and walked up the hills!

Women's Refuge Collection

Thank you to all who supported our collection of items for 'Welcome Bags'. Donations from our branch and St James', Lower Gornal branch enabled me to make 30 'Welcome Bags' which were greatly appreciated by the Refuge. I also took a cheque, donated to our branch in memory of Maureen Wassell, to be used in the Refuge's garden project. I received the email below from the Refuge :

'Thank you so much for the Welcome Bags that you brought over to us and of course for the generous donation of £400.

As you are aware, from chatting last week, the money will be used to further our garden project into next year, by purchasing benches and tables and more planters. The garden will hopefully become what we dreamed of! It's well on its way.'

Thanks for all you do for us,
Best wishes,

Emily

New Beginnings
Refuge Coordinator

At our Christmas meeting on Tuesday 7th December we will share 'Christmas Memories' (memories from past Christmases, reflective thoughts and poems). There will be some carols and light refreshments. **Please note the new start time for our afternoon meetings of 2.00pm.**

The Mothers' Union subscription for 2022 is due to be decided at the beginning of December when I will let you all know. Judy will be collecting this at our afternoon meeting on 11th January. If you are unable to be at that meeting please give it to Judy or myself by 11th January but not before the New Year.

Dates:

7 th December	<u>2-00pm</u>	Christmas Memories
11 th January	<u>2.00pm</u>	Communion followed by social & paying of subscriptions

It is hard to believe we are preparing for Christmas after another strange year. We have been able to worship in church for some time with safe restrictions in place and meet as a branch, for which we have been very thankful.

At this time I share this prayer with you.

Loving God

During this holy season of Christmas, we ask for your blessing on all families.

Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you.

Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty.

Let Jesus' life ignite families with a spirit of light and love.

May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families.

Amen

Wish you all a Peaceful and Blessed Christmas

Liz Williams

THANK YOU

I would like to thank family, friends, neighbours, The Revd Guy Hewlett and people from All Saints for cards, phone calls, gifts and love shown to Roger and myself during my stay in hospital with covid and the weeks following. Everyone has been so supportive and kind and I hope to be back at church by Christmas. God Bless. **Norma Hurst.**

The family of the late Peter Robinson would like to thank all who attended his funeral on Monday 15th November at All Saints.

We would like to thank you for the donations which have gone to The Stroke Unit and The Dogs Trust.

A special thank you to Revd Catherine for such a lovely service. Thanks also for the many cards received and for keeping us all in your thoughts and prayers.

David and Maureen Matthews would like to thank everyone for their telephone calls and concern whilst David has been recovering from surgery. David is making progress and also thanks Guy and Catherine for their prayers. God bless you all.

David and Maureen Matthews.

Andrew, Beki and I would like to say a very big thank you to all who donated so generously to Midland Air Ambulance at Des's funeral. The total amount raised was £652.03 which was wonderful. He would have been so grateful and overwhelmed at everyone's kindness. God Bless you all,

Jean, Andrew and Beki would like to express their sincere thanks to friends, relatives and neighbours for the cards, flowers and kind words of comfort they received at such a sad time. The attendance at his funeral of so many people was especially appreciated and he would have been so touched to have been remembered and loved by so many. Thank you and God Bless you all.



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The Bible is a Love Letter

From Guy Hewlett

Last Christmas I wrote the following for our magazine. I know many found it helpful, and so here it is again! It is as true today as it ever has been!!

‘The Bible is a love letter. There is so much in this book of books, this book of love. As you would take your medication each day, please read the Bible and share it in the best way you can.

To receive a love letter is a very special thing. A love letter from your beloved is something to really treasure – a letter or a card or a note are all things which are beautiful to read and to re-read. They can reaffirm that we are loved and can put a smile on our faces and warm our hearts.

Now please don't be embarrassed, but this is a love letter to you personally; for each of you, a love letter. This is for you from God!

My Dear Beloved,

I have always loved you beyond your understanding. I knew you as you were knitted together in your mother's womb. As you took your first steps. As you breath even now, in this very moment! And I will always love you.

I cannot tell you how much my love extends other than I would give everything for you.

I love the way you walk and talk and think and speak. I love everything that there is about you. I love your face and your hair; I love your eyes; I love your voice and your singing, even when you think that you cannot sing; I love your smile and I love your heart.

I know that it is hard to believe this but there is nothing that would ever stop me loving you. Nothing that you could do or say that would stop or change my love.

I have seen you grow to maturity and your beauty has flourished day by day.

I worry when you are anxious or fearful or just not sure. I would take all of your fear and worry and wipe it away if only you would let me. I have truly tried to do this and will not stop trying! Not ever!

One day I know you will understand my love for you, and I pray day by day that you will be able to live in the knowledge and presence of my love and that your heart will be filled with peace and joy; that you will be free to laugh and live well in the midst of difficulty and challenge, as well as the times of plenty.

I pray that you will be able to return my love in words and actions and in the quiet times when we simply sit together with no words; those times when words are truly not necessary.

I know because I know that one day we will be completely together.

For now, please simply accept my love and enjoy the beauty of the world that I have created just for you.

Know that you are like a beautiful tree planted by streams of water bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither. Let your roots be deep in me that I may feed you with the living bread, the living water.

Please love as I love you and give to all that you can, that love which is never ending. I beg you to love me in return that our love may be complete.

My arms are wide open for you; please allow me to embrace you and hold you.

Do not let trials and tribulations make you begin to think that I do not love you; because that is just not true.

I have always loved you; I love you now, and I will always love you.

Remember that love is eternal. Please return my love in the best way that you can; and I know that your best will always be good enough and I know that your best will be different on different days, but please love me as I love you.

And please share my love with everyone that you meet; share it unconditionally.

With all my love for you always and forever, your Jesus.'

Tweenager's Satisfaction

According to its website, the Children's Society "fights for the hope and happiness of young people". It seeks to do this in part by assessing quality research of others, as well as undertaking research itself. Once a year, it produces *The Good Childhood Report*, and the most recent issue tracks trends over the last 10 years of the satisfaction that tweenagers (aged 10-15 years) have with life, friends, school and their appearance.

The survey found that many, perhaps a quarter, of children did not cope well with the changes forced on them by the pandemic. That will include some church children, and if the proportion is the same for them that would mean 160,000 tweenagers in English churches and 18,000 in Scottish churches.

However, while it is easy to suggest the downward life satisfaction trend is because of the pandemic, in reality the various trends have been broadly consistent over the last decade. Furthermore, some years the satisfaction value increases, though never simultaneously across all items. There is also a clear 'pecking order' in tweenagers' concerns with friends coming clearly at the top, followed by life as a whole, then school and then appearance.

Exciting news

We are now a little more certain about arrangements for opening our Pop Up Shop in the Mander Centre and you are the first to know!

Where: Lower Level in the Mander Square, two doors up from Bon Marche (as you approach the Square from Beatties). A small unit but we will be showing off our new logo and have a colourful window display to guide you!

When: 10 am on Monday 15th November. Our hours will be Monday - Saturday; 10.00 am - 5.00pm. Our final trading day will be Christmas Eve.

The space is 'cosy' so there is no possibility to operate a sale or return service and our computer system will not be set up to do those transactions. We will continue to operate SoR at the Beckminster hub from 10.00 am - 12 noon every Wednesday morning and are happy to welcome personal shoppers there too.

Our Mander Centre shop will major on craft and gift items so - ground coffee varieties, yes; freeze dried coffee no, you get the idea! We will have a good selection of chocolates and, of course, socks as well as Lanka Kade children's items and a wide variety of craft goods. Have you seen our rainbow crockery??

Please do pass this message round your networks as you are able. Do you have a church notice sheet, do you use Facebook or Instagram or good old word of mouth is as good as anything! It is exciting to think that fairtrade has now got a prominent position in the city and we do want to make it a success.

Finally, we have a few Divine and Real choc advent calendars at the hub. We will be taking most of these to the shop. It is getting close to the beginning of advent in terms of ordering more calendars and I will not be doing so unless you ask!

Again, could you ask your customers whether they intend purchasing a calendar and do let me know!

We are looking forward to seeing you!

With best wishes - **Brenda**

A Christmas Gift

It's not easy getting the right Christmas present for others, especially in these uncertain times. However, the Magi's gifts were entirely appropriate and help us to understand God's gift of Jesus to us.

'On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.' (Matt 2:11). These were the expensive kind of gifts that visitors from the east would bring: gold, frankincense (a plant gum resin used in incense) and myrrh (another resin used in perfumes).

Who is He?

Gold is a gift for a king. In Jesus, we see a king in baby clothes. The worship of the wise men was costly, not only in terms of their gifts but for their lives.

Why did He come?

Frankincense was used by the priests in the temple in offering sacrifices. Jesus, as the ultimate priest, is the one who came to bring God and man together. He could do this because He is both divine and human.

What did it cost Him?

Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. This gift reminds us that the baby of Bethlehem would die on the cross to give His life for us. The wood of the crib and the cross are the same wood!

What are we going to offer Him this Christmas? Jesus is *Christ*, the king who comes to rule our lives; He's *Lord*, the One who knows what it's like to be human as well as divine; and He's *Saviour*, who enables us to be friends of God.

"At Christmas time, when we receive presents that we don't really need, God offers us a gift we cannot do without." – J John

Amazed!

Some people like surprises. The pleasant ones, anyway!

When we look at the Christmas story, it is full of surprises. Mary didn't expect to be chosen by God to give birth to His Son. Joseph was surprised and shocked that his fiancée was pregnant. The couple thought they would start married life together in Nazareth, but political circumstances forced them to go to Bethlehem and then into Egypt.

The Bethlehem shepherds were surprised and frightened by the heavenly choir and an angel with a marvellous message. Later, they rejoiced at seeing the Saviour – a new born baby in a manger.

The Wise Men were surprised to see a unique star, and so they followed it all the way to Jerusalem. They thought a royal birth would be in a city and in Herod's Palace. They were surprised again, to be redirected to a remote village called Bethlehem. Herod too was surprised that a new king had come, and felt his position and authority were being threatened.

What is most surprising is that God had planned the coming of Jesus thousands of years before it happened. Prophets had told of His coming and their hearers were waiting for Him to appear. But still they were surprised when the Messiah came, for He did not come as a conquering hero but as a suffering Servant.

Jesus came to save people from their sins. He came to restore a broken relationship and bring His people to a glorious Home. The biggest surprise? It was also done for you and me!

Snowmen

Two snowmen were standing next to each other. One said to the other: "Can you smell carrots?"

Dwindling wildlife in Britain

Be kind to the wildlife in your garden – what little of it remains. The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, and it may not even have enough biodiversity – variety of plant and animal life – to prevent an ecological meltdown.

That is the finding of new data by the Natural History Museum. It says that the UK has an average of only 53 per cent of its natural biodiversity left, well below the global average of 75 per cent.

Worldwide, scientists warn that the variety of plant and animal life of earth is dwindling fast. It will have a serious impact on human life: “those systems have lost enough to mean that we have to be careful about relying on them functioning in the way that we need them to.”

Replace

Did you know? By replacing potato crisps with grapefruit as a snack, you can lose up to 90% of what little joy you still have left in your life.

Pay for it

Have you noticed? By the time you have paid off your holiday, it is time to think about Christmas presents.



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Music for the Messiah

Have you noticed that, in the Christmas story, singing is featured on three occasions?

Firstly, after Mary was given a message from the angel Gabriel, and was visiting her elderly and pregnant relative, Elizabeth. Mary was so overwhelmed with happiness at the forthcoming miraculous births, she started to sing.

Over the years, her words, known as *The Magnificat*, have been set to music by various composers. The hymn *Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord* is one example of it. Of course, we don't know Mary's melody line, but her words express God's promise that He would rescue His people and through them save the world. Mary sings of God's mercy and benevolence on the helpless, the humble and the hungry.

Months later, in the fields of Bethlehem, shepherds were confronted with an angel and given an incredible message: the Saviour, the Messiah had been born. This was followed by a host of angels who could not help but sing glory to God. Later, the shepherds saw the baby Jesus. They then returned home: not in silence and awe, but in song. They were overwhelmed with an encounter with Almighty God! Heaven and earth had been brought together. They simply couldn't stop themselves from praising and glorifying God.

For Mary, the Shepherds and the Eastern Men too, that first Christmas brought in a time of hope: hope for the helpless, pardon for the guilty, and forgiveness for the conscious stricken. Good news for those who had had nothing but bad news!

From that time on, people have tried to express their gratitude, thanks and wonder at God's love and mercy. Over the centuries, countless poets and musicians have composed music for us to sing. At no other time in the year, is so much music used to describe and express one moment in history.

Traditionally, December is a time for concerts and services of Christmas music. We come together to sing carols and other songs that express the wonder of God's Gift to us. Unfortunately, last year, the coronavirus restricted or even cancelled our musical festivities. This month, we may be in a better position to worship together.

Jesus has given us hope; forgiven our sin; and continues to impart faith and heal our spiritual wounds. Isn't that something to always sing about? *O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

Help a prisoner give their child a present this Christmas

Angel Tree gives parents in prison the opportunity to send a Christmas present to their children. In 2020, the scheme sent out over 4,400 gifts. Christmas is especially difficult for prisoners and their children. *Angel Tree* lessens the devastation experienced because of parental absence by not only helping families connect, but by providing children with much-needed joy.

Prison Fellowship volunteers work with prison chaplains and local churches to buy, wrap and deliver the presents. As long as a prisoner is allowed access to their children, they are given the opportunity to apply for a gift to be sent to them.

Each gift is dispatched as though it is from the parent in prison and is accompanied by a personal message written by the parent for their child to make the gift extra special. The parent is also given the option of including an age-appropriate Christian story book in their child's gift.

"I can't tell you in words how much my kids are happy. I can only say from my heart, you didn't send gifts, you sent happiness and smiles." – A Dad in prison

Visit <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/our-work/angel-tree/>



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IF I CAN'T DO THE JOB, I KNOW A VAN MAN WHO CAN!

The laws about Christmas

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.
Luke 2:7

Bethlehem was busy that first Christmas. This year Christmas Day is on a Saturday, and we get two Bank Holidays on the Monday and Tuesday. There are some peculiar legal rules about Christmas that are more significant when Christmas Day falls on a normal working day.

The courts are closed, so you could not go to court if you wanted to. No writ, warrant to enforce a judgment or order is allowed on a Christmas Day. So, while you may pretend you are not at home to unwelcome relatives, you do not have to hide from a court officer wanting to evict you or take your goods.

Curiously, there is no law to say you cannot work on the big day. The only law that protects shop workers is the Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004, which imposes a ban on Christmas Day trading for large shops, over 280 square metres in size, in England and Wales.

If you get bored on Christmas, you can eat as much as you like, but you cannot go outside and shoot pheasants or any other game. The Game Act 1831 makes it illegal.

Christmas has other particular laws around it. It is against the law to sell Christmas crackers to anyone under 12, because of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015, s.31. Also, and this is frustrating for many, it is against the law to make or use a slide from snow or ice in the metropolitan area, under the Metropolitan Police Act 1839.

This, as always is a light-hearted comment and you should always take proper advice. Spare a thought and a prayer for those who are homeless or fear the knock on the door from a bailiff or debt collector. If you need advice or help, don't hang about, contact someone, one of the debt charities like Christians Against Poverty.

Sudan coup – new threat to religious freedom

Release International is warning of a new threat to religious freedom in Sudan, following a recent military coup in the country.

Sudan's transitional government took significant steps towards increasing freedom of religion. They determined that Islam would no longer be the state religion, and abolished the death penalty for apostasy – converting from Islam to another faith.

Islamic law was imposed by the Sudanese dictator Omar al Bashir after he seized power in 1989. Al-Bashir has been indicted for war crimes in Darfur by the Hague.

In that growing climate of intolerance towards Christians, some churches were closed, demolished, and burnt down. Christians who shared their faith with Muslims risked being accused of incitement to apostasy or blasphemy. Some Church leaders were arrested.

That background of intolerance has continued, even under the transitional government.

Release International has been calling for full religious freedom in Sudan – and says that it will continue to do so. “We need only glance back a few years to Sudan under a hard-line Islamist government, to be genuinely concerned about what Sudan could be like again.”

Sudan was declared an Islam-only state by the dictator Omar al-Bashir when he seized power 32 years ago in 1989. Al-Bashir's government destroyed churches, arrested pastors, and bombed Christians in the Nuba mountains.

Santa

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses

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* Is there an article you would like to write about and put in our
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* If you have the magazine delivered or are on our newsgroup we
* would love to hear from you.

* Anything from recipes, walks you have done, programmes you have
* watched, new hobbies you have taken up.

* please email me : admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk or if you do not
* have use of a computer please post it to me at:

* Parish Office
* Ladies Walk
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* DY3 3UA

* Look forward to hearing from you.

* **Gail**

SPRINGS FOOD BANK - Food can be delivered to Springs Food Bank on **Mondays 10am to 12 noon at: SPRINGS, Upper Gornal Methodist Church, Kent Street, Upper Gornal, DY3 1YB.**

PLEASE NOTE – You can leave donations of food in the box on the table outside All Saints Rectory each day.

If you would like to make a cash donation you can do so on the Black Country Food Bank web site at:

<https://www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk> or you could put a cash donation clearly marked through the All Saints Rectory door.



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 Romans 1:20

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS MAGAZINE CONTACT

Gail Griffiths

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Remembering Dorothy Wordsworth

Two hundred and fifty years ago, on 25th December 1771, Dorothy Wordsworth – writer, poet and diarist – was born. She was sister to the poet William Wordsworth.

She had no ambitions to be a published author herself, but her diaries – particularly the Grasmere Journal, eventually published in 1897 – reveal her to be a talented, poetic writer, from whom her famous brother borrowed freely, and without attribution.

She was born in Cockermouth, one of a family of five, and her early childhood was happy until her mother died, followed by her father when she was 12. She was sent to live with an aunt in Halifax while her four brothers remained together, but she was reunited with William 12 years later, and they became extremely close.

In the intervening years she had lived for about six years in the isolated village of Fornsett, in Norfolk, where her uncle, the Rev William Cookson, was vicar – and where she set up a small school.

Later, it seemed that she was in love quite passionately- – though probably not sexually – with her brother William, and she continued to live with him after his marriage to Mary Hutchinson in 1893, when Dorothy was 31 and regarded herself as too old to marry herself. She never did marry, though she may have had a brief liaison with poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a friend of William's.

In later life she was chronically ill – possibly from the after-effects of opium – and she remained an invalid in what her biographer described as “a deepening haze of senility” for at least the last 25 years of her life, dying near Ambleside at the age of 84.

Her journals describing walks with William and others in the Lake District reveal her importance to her brother's work and her own extraordinary talent.

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The great work of St Columba

It was 1500 years ago, on 7th December 521, that St Columba, an Irish missionary who spread Christianity in Scotland and the North of England, was born in what is now County Donegal.

Columba – also known as Columcille – was one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, who studied under St Finnian in his monastic school, Clonard Abbey. He was also a great-grandson of the Irish King Niall, and he was said to have left Ireland primarily because he had caused considerable bloodshed at a battle stemming from his illegal copying of the Gospels. But he became a missionary after he landed on Iona – a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland – and, with his 12 followers, built a Celtic church and established a monastic community.

Iona quickly became known throughout Europe as a missionary centre and school: it turned into a place of pilgrimage for centuries to come – and still is, though none of Columba's original buildings have survived. His cell and outlines of the original monastery were uncovered by excavations in 1958 and 1959.

He spent much time in Scotland, but Columba's final years seem to have been spent mainly on Iona, where he was already revered as a saint. He is now the patron saint of Derry. He and those associated with him spread the gospel more than any other religious pioneers in Britain.

In the Irish language his name means “dove”, which is the same as Jonah in Hebrew. The word ‘columba’ is also Latin for dove

Split

A professor was lecturing his physics class. “If molecules can be split into atoms and the atoms split into electrons, can the electrons be broken down any further?”

“I'm not certain,” replied one of his pupils, “But a sure way to find out would be to post some of them in a Christmas package marked ‘fragile.’”

Sarah Powell

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Application for grants are invited from individuals or organisations resident in the area of benefit. Application forms are available from the incumbent of any of the parishes mentioned above, or alternatively from:

**The Secretary to the Trustees: 12 Larkswood Drive,
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The Rectory
St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

After all these years, I now understand why the non-conformist denominations sit down, rather than kneel, to say their prayers. That way, no decisions have to be taken over the number, size, shape, colour, material and design of kneelers in church.

Our present set was donated by a retired Major-General in 1899 to celebrate the Relief of Mafeking, and after more than a century of use by the pious and not-so-devout has taken its toll. Like certain members of our congregation, they now look a little worse for wear. Many have sprung leaks, so that when used, a jet of flocking is emitted all over the clothes of their neighbour, who then leaves Mattins looking like a Yeti.

Other kneelers have been occupied by grateful mice, who find them most congenial for nesting and who leave in high umbrage, creating chaos as Miss Mapp chases them down the aisle with her umbrella; that this provides her with the perfect excuse to leave before the sermon is, I am sure, entirely coincidental. The final straw came when my own, by some quirk in its design, now sounds like a whoopee cushion every time I kneel. It may cause the choirboys much amusement, but it lends nothing to the dignity of our worship.

So, we have decided to have a completely new set – and therein lies the problem. Who makes them? What will be the designs? Who co-ordinates the whole project? There is enough here to occupy the combined minds of our Church Council for the next Millennium and there will be enough scheming, manoeuvring, signing of non-aggression pacts and formation of tactical truces to make the United Nations look like amateurs.

Unfortunately, we do not have the ecclesiastical equivalents of the blue berets to enforce peace.

The more patriotic members of the congregation have suggested they all show the Union Jack – presumably so they can be waved at appropriate moments in our services; one belligerent individual wants to see depictions of St Michael slaughtering the dragon, John the Baptist’s head on a platter and other such tasteful scenes; on the other hand, dear Miss Timmins wants them all to depict doves or small fluffy creatures, which would make the church look more like pets corner.

Cutting through these vital issues, I have suggested that the entire congregation converts to Roman Catholicism... and then we could stand for our prayers and do without kneelers entirely.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Dwindling wildlife in Britain

Be kind to the wildlife in your garden – what little of it remains. The UK is one of the world’s most nature-depleted countries, and it may not even have enough biodiversity – variety of plant and animal life – to prevent an ecological meltdown.

That is the finding of new data by the Natural History Museum. It says that the UK has an average of only 53 per cent of its natural biodiversity left, well below the global average of 75 per cent.

Worldwide, scientists warn that the variety of plant and animal life of earth is dwindling fast. It will have a serious impact on human life: “those systems have lost enough to mean that we have to be careful about relying on them functioning in the way that we need them to.”

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Parish of Gornal and Sedgley Christmas Services



All Saints

- 12th Dec 7:45pm Nine Lessons and Carols (**booking Essential***)
- 24th Dec 5:30pm Christingle (**Booking Essential***, also on Zoom)
- 24th Dec 11:30pm Midnight Mass
- 25th Dec 9:30am Christmas Communion
- 26th Dec 10:30am Said Communion (Team Service)

St Peters

- 19th Dec 10:30am Carol Service
- 24th Dec 6:00pm Christingle (**Booking Essential*****)
- 25th Dec 10:30am Christmas Communion

St Andrews

- 12th Dec 9:30am Carol Service
- 24th Dec 3:00pm Christingle (**Booking Essential****)
- 4:30pm Christingle (**Booking Essential****)
- 6:00pm Christingle (**Booking Essential****)
- 24th Dec 23:15pm Midnight Mass

BOOKING

- All Saints** *Gail admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk
- St Andrews** **Canon Jan Humphreys 07954 314102
- St Peters** ***Sheila & David Moss 01902 893570

January Services 2022

Sunday 2nd January 2022

10.30am Team Service at All Saints

6.30pm Compline on zoom

Wednesday 5th January St Peters Communion 10am

Sunday 9th January

8am Communion All Saints

9.30am Communion St Andrews

10.30am Communion St Peters

10.30am Worship Together All Saints

2.30pm Baptism St Andrews

Wednesday 12th January St Peters Communion 10am

Sunday 16th January

8am Communion All Saints

10.30am Team Service with Bishop Martin All Saints

6.30pm Compline zoom

Wednesday 19th January St Peters Communion 10am

Sunday 23rd January

8am Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship Together St Andrews

10.30am Communion St Peters

10.30am Communion All Saints

12.30pm Baptism All Saints

6.30pm Compline zoom

Tuesday 25th January St Andrews 9.30am Communion

Wednesday 26th January St Peters Communion 10am

Sunday 30th January

8am Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship Together St Andrews

10.30am Communion St Peters

10.30am Communion All Saints

6.30pm Compline zoom

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH - DECEMBER

Wednesday 1st December – St Peters – 10am Communion

Sunday 5th December

8am – Communion – All Saints

10.30am – Team Service ALM – All Saints

4pm – Café Church – All Saints

NO COMPLINE

Wednesday 8th December 2021 – St Peters – 10am Communion

Sunday 12th December

8am – Communion – All Saints

9.30am – Carol Service – St Andrews

10.30am – Communion St Peters

10.30am – Communion All Saints

NO COMPLINE

7.45pm – 9 Lessons and Carols – All Saints – **Booking Essential**

Wednesday 15th December 2021 – St Peters 10am Communion

Friday 17th December – 7pm Sedgley Scouts Carol Concert

Sunday 19th December

8am Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship Together St Andrews

10.30am Carol Service St Peters

10.30am Communion All Saints

6.30pm Compline on zoom

Friday 24th December

3pm Christingle St Andrews

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

4.30pm Christingle St Andrews

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

5.30pm Christingle All Saints

BOOKING ESSENTIAL ALSO ON ZOOM

6.00pm Christingle St Peters

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

6.00pm Christingle St Andrews

11.30pm Midnight Mass All Saints

11.15pm Midnight Mass St Andrews

Saturday 25th December

9.30am Communion All Saints

10.30am Communion St Peters

Sunday 26th December

NO 8AM COMMUNION

10.30am Communion Team Service All Saints

NO COMPLINE

Wednesday 29th December – **NO COMMUNION ST PETERS**