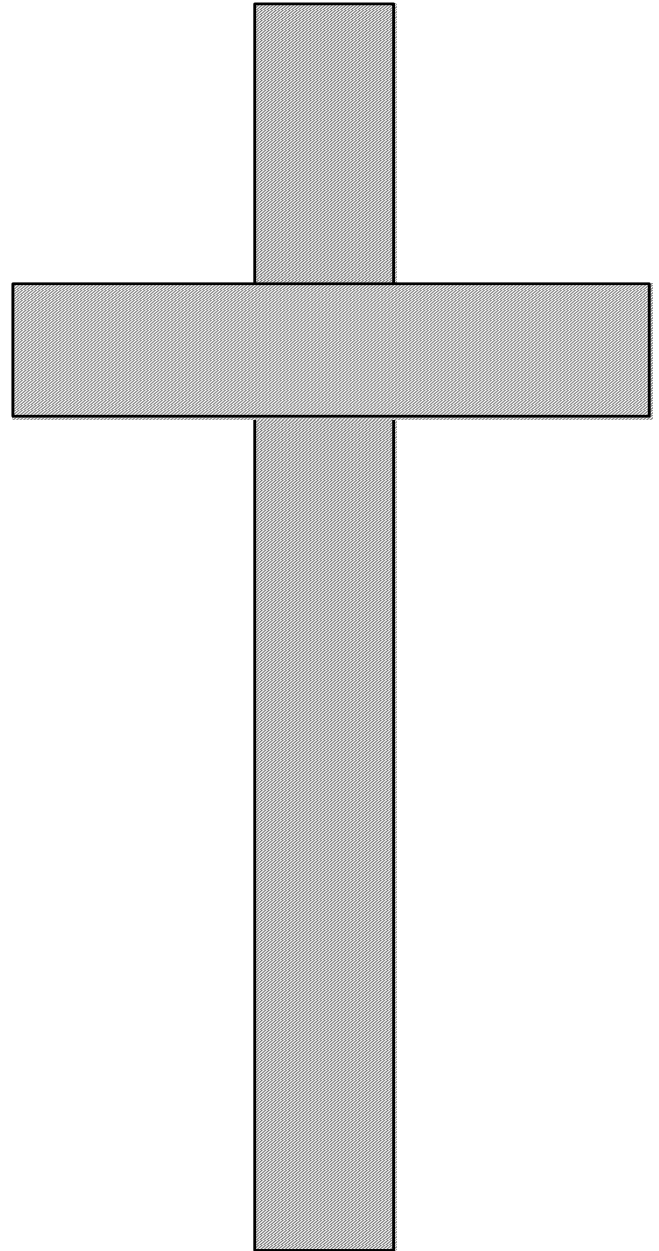
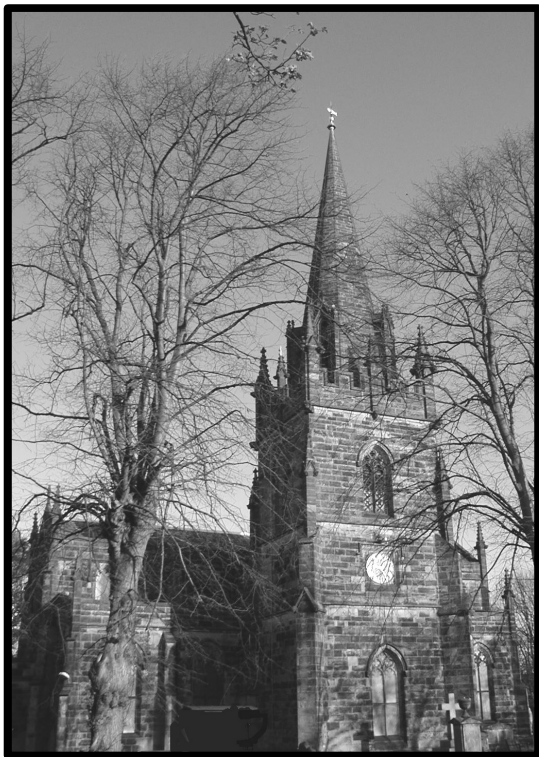


THE BEACON



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**Dec/Jan
2012/13**

**The Parish Magazine of
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live for today,
hope for tomorrow”**

Albert Einstein

**For over 100 years you have been helping
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This year you helped Anne-Marie to ride a bike on her own for the first time, you helped Frank leave his house each week to meet his friends for a cup of tea and a chat and you helped William receive the care and support he needs every day.

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ALL SAINTS', SEDGLEY

Sunday Services

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion
- 10.30 a.m. Parish Communion
(First Sunday: All-Age Worship)
- 6.30 p.m. Evensong (BCP)

Weekday Services

- Monday 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion
- Wednesday 7.30 p.m. Holy Communion
(1st Wednesday: Healing Service)

ST ANDREW'S, THE STRAITS

Sunday Service

- 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
(1st Sunday: Morning Prayer)

Weekday Service

- Wednesday 7.00 p.m. Holy Communion

THE STRAITS CHURCH

Sunday Services

- 9.30 a.m. Prayer & Communion
- 11.00 a.m. Family Service
- 6.00 p.m. Evening Prayer

(When there is a fifth Sunday in the month the three churches in the Team Ministry meet for a united service at either 9.30 a.m. or 10.30 a.m. depending on the venue.)

Baptisms & Weddings

Arrangements for baptisms and weddings at All Saints' and St Andrew's can be made at the Vestry Hour at All Saints', which is held on Wednesdays at 8.00 p.m. in All Saints'.

Baptisms are generally held on the fourth Sunday of the month at 4.00 p.m. at All Saints', and on the second Sunday of the month at 3.00 p.m. at St Andrew's. Baptisms can also take place during the Sunday morning service at All Saints' or St Andrew's by arrangement.

WHO'S WHO AT ALL SAINTS' & ST ANDREW'S

GORNAL & SEDGLEY TEAM MINISTRY

Team Rector	The Revd Canon Stephen Buckley	
(Day off Friday)		01902 883255
Team Vicar	The Revd Andy Stand	883467
(Day off Monday)		
Asst Curate	The Revd Rob Parker-McGee	
(Day off Friday)		01384 860525
Reader	Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Authorised Lay Minister		
	Suzanne Bradley	880055
PCC Secretary	Chris Williams	672880

ALL SAINTS'

Parish Wardens	Rob Lavender	01902 661325
	Derrick Turner	895066
DCC Secretary	Pam Hunt	670787
Treasurer	Derrick Turner	895066
Electoral Roll	Liz Williams	672880
Verger	Len Millard	676339
Organist	Mel Jones	0121 550 1604
Bell Ringers	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Servers	Len Millard	676339
Junior Church	Barbara Price	676591
Youth Group	Laura Price	" "
Noah's Ark Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	672556
Hall Bookings	The Vicarage	883255
Hall Caretaker	Joan Moon	682902
Social Club	John Dillworth	670156
Magazine Editor	Christine Buckley	883255
Distribution	Rob Lavender	661325
Advertising	" "	" "

Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	672880
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	881374

Uniformed Organisations

Rainbows	Liz Naylor	01902 885517
Brownies	Heather Churm	07530 977090

ST ANDREW'S

Church Warden	Margaret Probin	01902 883163
DCC Secretary	Rosemary Reed	
Treasurer	Gordon Betteley	882777
Sacristan	May Smith	

Little Angels

Mums & Toddlers	Sarah Parker-McGee	01384 860525
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THE STRAITS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Pastor	Maurice Powell	01902 885402
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PARISH WEBSITE: www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk

All Saints' Church Hall

**The hall is available for hire by groups
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(No private parties)**

For further information please contact:

All Saints' Vicarage

Tel. 01902 883255

E mail: srb55@talktalk.net

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

ALL SAINTS'

Sunday 23 December

6.30 pm Nine Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve

5.30 pm Christingle Service

11.30 pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day

9.30 am Parish Communion

ST ANDREW'S

Sunday 23 December

4.00 pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve

3.30 pm and 5.30 pm Crib Services

11.30 pm Midnight Mass

THE STRAITS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday 19th December

10.30 am Family Service

New Year's Eve

9.00 pm Fellowship Supper

12.00 Midnight Communion

ST ANDREW'S & THE STRAITS CHURCH

Christmas Day

10.30 am United Family Service

(Children, bring your favourite toy!)

MAGAZINE MATERIAL

Articles for the February magazine should be sent to the Vicarage by Sunday 26 January. They may also be sent by e-mail to srb55@talktalk.net.

THE BEACON

If you are interested in having the magazine delivered to your home on a regular basis, please contact Rob Lavender: tel. 01902 661325. *The Beacon* is published ten times a year and the cost for the year is £5.

FLOWER ROTA

25 Dec	The Allen Family
6 Jan	Margaret Hall, Bob Hill & Margaret Woodall
13 Jan	Ladies' Society - Jenny lavender
20 Jan	Bob Aston
27 Jan	Noah's Ark - Jenny Lavender

CHURCH OPENING



**Friday mornings from
10.30am to 12.30pm**

**The church is open for quiet prayer
& coffee and a chat.**

We will be pleased to see you



“WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU”

The title of this article is taken from the Prophet Micah, “What does the Lord require of you, but that you should love justice and kindness and walk humbly with your God”. So far so good, but what do these words have to do with the picture of a man dressed as a giraffe? Inside the costume is Armstrong Baillie who lives in Dundee. Twice a week he gets into his costume, and sets off

various places in Scotland to perform “random acts of kindness”.

During the past six months Armstrong has handed out free bananas and water to runners at the Edinburgh Half Marathon, cleaned up litter on Portobello Beach and given away £10 vouchers to mothers in hospitals. He has also been seen handing out free coffee to cold passers-by and cleaning cages at cat and dog homes.

Armstrong is unemployed and earns money by busking which he then uses to pay for his good deeds. Interviewed on the BBC he said, “It makes me happy when I see the difference in people when they see me in the suit. It makes them happy and it makes me feel cheery. The reason I picked a giraffe is that I have always been interested in animals and giraffes are my favourite animal. Giraffes are like me, as my head is in the clouds but my heart is in the right place.”

What Armstrong says supports the findings of Dr Barbara Mariposa, and the Mental health Foundation, that when we are kind and pay attention to the needs of others endorphins like serotonin are released in the brain which make us feel good and relieve the symptoms of depression.

Now, I’ve no idea whether Armstrong Baillie, has any “religious” motive for what he does, I rather think not. He is simply being kind and generous because it benefits others and makes him feel good to.

Surely this is an attitude we should all try and emulate, though we may not choose to dress as a giraffe, as such behaviour not only reflects something of what Micah says God requires of us, but also reminds us of His “random acts of kindness” in giving us all that we need

GENERAL SYNOD REJECTED WOMEN BISHOPS JUST WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY?

As everyone knows, The General Synod of the Church of England voted in late November to reject the draft legislation to allow women to become bishops. What exactly happened? Well, under the requirements of the Synod, the legislation required a two-thirds majority in each of the three voting houses for final draft approval.

Whilst more than two thirds voted for the legislation in both the House of Bishops (44-03) and the House of Clergy (148-45), the vote in favour of the legislation in the House of Laity was less than two-thirds (132-74). The vote in the House of Laity fell short of approval by 4 votes.

In total, 324 members of the General Synod voted to approve the legislation and 122 voted to reject it. The consequence of the “no” vote of terminating any further consideration of the draft legislation means that it will not be possible to introduce draft legislation in the same terms until a new General Synod comes into being in 2015, UNLESS the 'Group of Six' (the Archbishops, the Prolocutors and the Chair and Vice Chair of the House of Laity) give permission and report to the Synod why they have done so.

Speaking after the vote, the Rt Revd Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, said: “A clear majority of the General Synod voted in favour of the legislation to consecrate women as Bishops. But the bar of approval is set very high in this Synod. Two-thirds of each house has to approve the legislation for it to pass. This ensures the majority is overwhelming. The majority in the House of Laity was not quite enough.

“This leaves us with a problem. 42 out of 44 dioceses approved the legislation and more than three quarters of members of diocesan synods voted in favour. There will be many who wonder why the General Synod expressed its mind so differently. “The House of Bishops recognises that the Church of England has expressed its mind that women should be consecrated as bishops. There is now an urgent task to find a fresh way forward to which so many of those who were opposed have pledged themselves.”

The day after the ‘no’ vote, the House of Bishops of the Church of England met in emergency session to consider the consequences of the vote. At the end of November The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England also met , when a substantial amount of time was given over to a discussion of the recent vote.

A statement read: “Many council members commented on the deep degree of sadness and shock that they had felt as a result of the vote and also of the need to affirm all women serving the church, both lay and ordained, in their ministries. In its discussions the Council decided that a process to admit women to the episcopate needed to be restarted at the next meeting of the General Synod in July 2013. There was agreement that the Church of England had to resolve this matter through its own processes as a matter of urgency. The Council therefore recommended that the House of Bishops put in place a clear process for discussions in the New Year, with a view to bringing legislative proposals before the Synod in July.”

MOTHERS’ UNION

We were delighted to have Revd. Heather Humphrey with us at our afternoon meeting in November. Heather had been to Oberammergau in 2010 and seen the Passion Play. In the early 1630’s many people in Oberammergau died from the bubonic plague. The residents vowed that if God spared the rest of them from the plague they would produce a play every ten years, depicting the life and death of Jesus. The play is repeatedly performed over five months and involves over two thousand performers, all residents of the village. Heather showed us photographs of the beautiful tableaux, depicting stories from the Old Testament, which linked the scenes of the play. We heard how, when Jesus died on the cross, lightning flashed across the sky. This was a natural phenomenon, not stage-managed. The most moving scene was when the soldiers took the bodies of the two thieves down from the crosses, slinging them over their shoulders and dumping them, unceremoniously, on the ground. This was followed, in sharp contrast, with the great tenderness of Simon and the Marys, gently and lovingly lowering their Saviour to the ground. We had a most interesting afternoon and were pleased that Heather was able to come and share her memories of the Passion Play with us, after her illness in the summer.

‘Corners of a Foreign Field’ was the title of Barbara Price’s talk to our evening meeting in November. Barbara reflected on the changing attitude to the war through the poems of the war poets, before telling us of her own quest to find out what had happened to her mother’s Uncle Bert, who died in the First World War, and whose name appears on our War Memorial in church. The poems we heard included John McRae’s, ‘In Flanders Fields’, Rupert Brooke’s ‘The Soldier’ and Laurence Binyon’s ‘For the Fallen’ which has those well-known words used at the Remembrance Service:

‘They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.’

Barbara told us how she researched the name Bert Hughes (her mother's Uncle Bert) in the war records and by process of elimination narrowed the matches down to two, one of whom was born and enlisted in Sedgley. This seemed to be her Bert except he had a grave and the family had always believed there was not one. Barbara decided to visit the grave but felt she wanted a sign that this was her relative. She booked to go to France and on the Sunday went to church to hear she had won the first prize of £100 in the Raffle – the cost of the trip. Still wanting another sign she bought a lottery ticket using the numbers 16/10/17 – the date Bert died. She went to France where she found the grave of Bert amidst rows of soldiers' graves, some with no name 'A soldier of the Great War – known unto God.' On her return she checked her lottery ticket and the numbers 16/10/17 had won her £10, so she had her second sign and was now certain she had the right grave. Visiting Bert's grave was a very emotional experience and one she has repeated several times, also visiting the Menin Gate where 54,000 names of those with no known grave are carved on the walls, and every night at 6pm the Last Post and Reveille are played to some 300 people. Thank you to Barbara (and her assistants) for a very interesting evening.

The Mothers' Union subscription for 2013 is £20. Anne will be collecting this at our first meeting of the New Year.

I wish you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Dates

4 Dec	2.30pm	Patricia Boyd
18 Dec	2.30pm	Mothers' Union Choir singing at Ashwood Nurseries
8 Jan	2.30pm	Memories & Recollections (members' memories)
15 Jan	7.30pm	Visit to Estonia, Anne Ridge
21 Jan	10.00am	Corporate Communion

Liz Williams

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Week of Prayer begins on Sunday 20 January and we shall be marking this with a united service beginning at 3.30 pm at St Chad's RC Church. This is the first time that St Chad's have hosted this event, and I hope it will be well supported by our three churches.

Stephen Buckley

LADIES SOCIETY

Party Jewellery, with Joanne and Jessie

Two sisters, Joanne and Jessie took turns to tell us about Jewellery. We heard about the various qualities and warned that if you are buying gold or silver, to check the Hallmarks. Every Jeweller should have a notice on view displaying hallmarks, or a list should be available on request. We heard how silver (The oldest form of currency) was originally 100% silver, but in 1920 onwards, silver was made up of 50% silver and 50% copper and in 1950 it became a mixture of copper and nickel.

We were given a demonstration of Victorian silver, all very beautiful, including a shoe horn, a Vesta match box, a cut glass pot with an engraved silver lid, a silver backed mirror and a silver handled button hook.

We then had the chance to wander round the wonderful display of jewellery that had been laid out for our inspection, much of which had been made by Joanne and Jessie. It was beautiful and on sale for very reasonable prices and everything was there! Bracelets, Necklaces, Earrings, and Brooches.

If anyone wishes to see these “Goodies” Joanne and Jessie can be found at Stourbridge Farmer’s Market on the first and third Saturday of each month. They are also very active in raising money for a Children’s Medical Charity.

Thank you both for a very interesting talk and we wish you every success for your future ventures.

Our next “get together” will be at the Bell Inn at Trysull for a meal on the 26 November and the final meeting of the year is on 3 December when we have our Christmas Supper. I hope to see you all there.

Molly Taft

CHURCH FETES

Thanks to all who helped in whatever capacity at St Andrew’s Fete on Saturday 17 November, and at All Saints’ on Saturday 1st December. St Andrew’s raised just on £2000, and All Saints’ £1957. Well done, a splendid outcome for both churches!

PARISH CONFIRMATION

The Parish Confirmation service will take place in All Saints’ Church on Sunday 3 February at 10.30 am. Bishop David will preside, and we shall be joined by St Andrew’s, St Peter’s and St Mary’s.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

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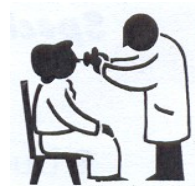
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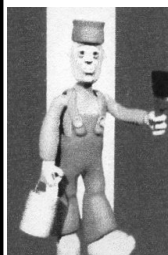
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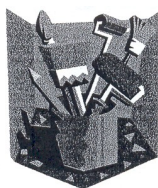
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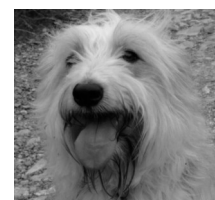
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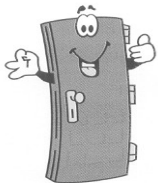


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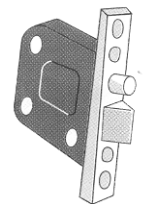
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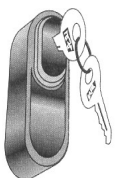


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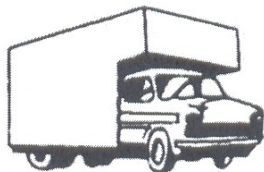
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our selections of delicious hot and cold drinks.**

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own fresh sandwich, panini, plus jacket potatoes and fillings.**

**You're guaranteed a warm and friendly welcome every visit.
We look forward to seeing you.**



Outside catering also available

INTERCESSIONS FOR DECEMBER

1st	Israel/Palestine
2nd	Advent Sunday
3rd	Francis Xavier, missionary
4th	John of Damascus, teacher of the faith
5th	the Homeless
6th	Nicholas, Bishop
7th	Ambrose, Bishop teacher of the faith
8th	Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9th	Bishops John & David
10th	Crisis at Christmas
11th	Relate
12th	School Nativity Plays
13th	Samuel Johnson, moralist
14th	St John of the Cross
15th	Ember Day
16th	For all who work in this corner of the Vine Yard
17th	'Save the Children'
18th	Those who will find Christmas a sad time
19th	All who have to work at Christmas
20th	The Salvation army
21st	Armed Forces on active service at this time
22nd	The Samaritans
23rd	The Persecuted Church
24th	Christingle Services
25th	"Emanuel" God with us
26th	Stephen the first Martyr
27th	John, apostle & evangelist
28th	The Holy Innocents
29th	Thomas Beckett, archbishop & martyr
30th	Thank God for all his blessings throughout the year
31st	John Wycliff, reformer

JUST THOUGHTS

Don't Quit

When things gone wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,

When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,

When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit,
Life is queer with its twist and turns
As every one of us must sometimes learn,

And many a failure turns about,
When you might have won had you stuck it out,

Don't give up though the pace seems slow-
You may succeed with another blow,

Success is failure turned inside out-
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,

And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;

So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit-
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

Lord, give us humility and sensitivity to listen to advice from loved ones who know You well. Show us the right thing to do in our uncertain times and trust You for the results.

Just because you accept help from someone, doesn't mean you have failed it just means you are not in it alone.

Things change but some feelings remain the same.

When someone loves you they don't always have to say it, you can tell by the way they treat you.

Make it happen.

Please no whining, no complaining and absolutely no frowning, only smiles, hugs and warm feelings welcome here.

What love you are given you will have forever. What love you fail to give, will be lost for an eternity.

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the triumph over it.

Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure.

Happiness its has always been your choice.

At any given moment you have the power to say this is not how the story is going to end.

Have no fear of perfection; you'll never reach it.

A person, who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and become nothing. They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow or love. They are chained by their certitude, a slave who has forfeited their freedom. Only the person who risks is truly free.

Give the world the best you have and the best will come back to you.

Compiled by David Melhuish

BOOK REVIEWS

The Lion Book of Two-Minute Christmas Stories by Elena Pasquali and Nicola Smee, Lion, £7.99

This collection of ten Christmas stories, retold with warmth and wisdom, includes a retelling of the Nativity story from the Gospels as well as tales and legends associated with Christmas traditions from around the world. Together these stories reflect the message of peace and goodwill at Christmas.

Each story is retold in a short but continuous narrative, with quick and quirky illustrations adding to the momentum. The playful element is enhanced by text that 'interacts' with the pictures by means of join-in words so that they are fun to share with children. The large text and carefully managed readability mean that such a book is also great fun for young children who are learning to read. Part of Lion's Two-Minute series which also includes Bible Stories, Parables, Bedtime Stories and Animal Stories.

Happiness by Joan Chittister, Darton, Longman & Todd, £12.99

We all want to be happy. But what does happiness mean? And what must we do if we wish to achieve it? Never before in history has so much been written about happiness by so many. Every generation seeks it out. Every civilization defines it for themselves. Joan Chittister surveys humankind's long quest for happiness, in different periods and different cultures and religious traditions.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



We will be holding a Christmas Tree Festival in church from Friday 7 December to Sunday 9 December and Friday 14 December to Sunday 16 December. The theme this year is 'Tell me a Story'. Admission will be free, light refreshments will be available and any donations during the weekends will be for the Biblelands Charity. We look forward to seeing you and your family and friends.



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

with

The Mothers' Union Choir

&

The City of Wolverhampton Brass Band
Saturday 8 December

7.30pm

Tickets: £6 (including light supper)

AROUND THE PARISH -DECEMBER 2012 & JANUARY 2013

Noah's Ark Mothers and Toddlers. 14 November was Children in Need Day. There was a raffle, lots of little games suitable for the children, painting Pudsey bear, decorating cakes to take home, singing and last of all riding the bikes. £70 was raised. The most important day for all of the children will be when Father Christmas visits on 18 December. The party will begin with a short church service at 9.15 am and finish at 12.00 noon.

A computer mistake in last month's magazine said two violinists, when it should have been two soloists. Sorry about that.

Congratulations to the Rev Stephen Buckley who was made an honorary Canon of Worcester Cathedral on the 28 November.

Age Concern Sedgley. The annual general meeting was held Tuesday 6 November and was attended by the Mayor of Dudley, Cllr Melvin Mottram. Certificates were presented to members of staff and volunteers, all of whom do an excellent job and have done so for many years. After the official business was over we enjoyed a lunch of fruit juice, ham salad and strawberry gateaux, washed down by tea or coffee. During the year many activities were undertaken; the photographs around the walls are full of happy faces enjoying these events. The winners of the raffle were called and although I didn't win anything three ladies on my table did. There was some musical entertainment to round things off and a pleasant time was had by all.

Birthdays are special whatever our age so happy birthday to those that enjoyed one recently that I know of. John, Jenny, Jean, Jonathan, Joyce, Liz, Margaret. We could however say that a 90 birthday is a little bit extra special so greetings to **Alice Bradley**. She will be having a party with friends on the day, then the weekend following with her family. **Alan Thompson** will be 90 years young in January. Congratulations.

A Quote from Thoughts for Every Day: "Growing Old".

There are things that grow in beauty as the long years pass, growing lovelier day by day. Oak, china, silver, glass; towns of old quaint houses, weathered brick and mellowed stone, gather richly in themselves of beauty of their own. Often do we lose our looks when we have lost our youth. If we could grow in virtue kindness and truth, we should face the sunset with tranquillity and grace, and lines of beauty time would draw upon the ageing face.

Alan will be leaving us in the new year to live with his daughter Ruth. Alan was church warden here for over 25 years, and what Alan didn't know about church and all the rules wasn't worth knowing. Alan, we wish you well for the future. We also hope that all goes well when you have the operation on your eye.

Get well wishes to **Jan Humphries** who has had an operation on her shoulder; also to **Jean Round** who has had a cataract removed; also to **Joyce Ford** who is in hospital following a heart attack; also to **George & Tina Harper** who are both in hospital; also to **Bill Castle** who is in hospital; also to **Margaret Castle** who has had to have stitches following a fall.

Forthcoming marriage. Congratulations to David Turner & Nicola Bowley who were married on Saturday 24 November at All Saints. There were four bridesmaids, and the reception was held at Blakelands.

Wishing you all a truly blessed Christmas and a happy new year.

Dorothy Inett



"For the next part of our carol-service, Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his interpretation of Silent Night..."

INTERCESSIONS FOR JANUARY

1st	Naming of Jesus
2nd	God's guidance throughout the year
3rd	Clean water for Africa
4th	Torch Fellowship for the blind
5th	Noah's Ark & Little Angels
6th	The Epiphany of the Lord
7th	Schools returning after Christmas holidays
8th	Christians in China
9th	Mothers' Union throughout the world
10th	William Laud, archbishop
11th	Mary Slessor, missionary
12th	Displaced People
13th	Baptism of Christ
14th	Our work with young people in the parish
15th	Retired Clergy in our Diocese
16th	Dudley MBC
17th	Charles Gore founder of the Community of the Resurrection
18th	Week for Prayer for Christian Unity
19th	Wulfstan, bishop
20th	Gornal & Sedgley Team
21st	Agnes, child martyr
22nd	Royal School of Church Music
23rd	World Debt
24th	Francis de Sales, teacher of the faith
25th	Conversion of St Paul
26th	Timothy & Titus, companions of Paul
27th	Kingswinford Deanery
28th	Thomas Aquinas, priest and teacher of the faith
29th	The work of the food bank
30th	Charles king & martyr
31st	John Bosco

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Dr Joanne Hales of Cotwall End Road on passing her gaining her P.H.D. in Physics. Well done Jo.

Jean Bradley

DECEMBER 6 ST NICHOLAS – PATRON SAINT OF CHILDREN

Father Christmas seems to be as old as Europe. Once he was Woden, lashing his rein-deer through the darkness of northern midwinter. Then he encountered the Church, and She transformed him into a saint, the much-loved Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (in south-west Turkey) in the fourth century. St Nicholas became the patron saint of children, and was given 6 December as his day. Since the 6th century St Nicholas has been venerated in both East and West, though virtually nothing is known of his life. Some believe he may have been one of the fathers at the Council of Nicea (325), imprisoned during the Emperor Diocletian's persecution.

According to legend, Nicholas was an extremely generous man. He revived three schoolboys murdered by an innkeeper in a tub of pickles. He rescued three young women from prostitution by giving their poverty-stricken father three bags of gold. (Hence the use of three gold balls as the pawnbroker's signs.)

Over the centuries many, including children, sailors, unmarried girls, pawnbrokers and moneylenders have claimed him as their patron. Perhaps it was on account of S Nicholas' generosity that in recent centuries children began to write little notes sometime before 6 December, to tell him about the toys they specially wanted. These notes were then left on the windowsill at night - or else on a ledge in the chimney.

But St Nicholas Day chanced to lie in the magnetic field of a much more potent festival, and after awhile his activities were moved towards Christmas. Then in Bavaria the children still left their notes on the window sill, but they addressed them to Liebes Christkind - Krishkinkle as they knew him - and the saint's part in the matter was simply to deliver the letters in heaven.

The most popular result of the cult of St Nicholas has been the institution of Santa Claus. He is based on Nicholas' patronage of children and the custom in the Low Countries of giving presents on his feast. Santa Claus has reached his zenith in America, where the Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam (New York) united to it Nordic folklore legends of a magician who both punished naughty children and rewarded good ones with presents.

“DON'T FIRE THE CANON”

My thanks for all the good wishes, cards and gifts on the occasion of my “Canonisation”; they are much appreciated. Those of you who attended the service in the cathedral will have noticed that prayer desks were placed for myself and Heather Humphrey as we are both so ancient neither of us could kneel down and get up again without something to lean on!

Stephen Buckley

CHARITY OF THE MONTH

As in past years we shall be raising money for “Embrace the Middle East”, the new name for “Biblelands”. Here are two examples of their work in the field of education.

Arab Evangelical School, Hebron

In 2011, the Arab Evangelical School in Hebron opened a class for children who have fallen behind their peers in school. One of the children to have already benefited is a seven-year-old boy by the name of Abdullah. When his parents first came to the school they were desperate. Abdullah had already been rejected by all the schools they had applied to in Hebron. When he was accepted at the Arab Evangelical School they were elated!

It soon became clear that Abdullah had a pleasant personality and the ability to learn in the right environment, however, he lacked social skills and was easily distracted. Within a few months in this specialised class, Abdullah had become more focused in his studies and more socially adept. He has made so much progress that he has even been able to join some of the mainstream classes and hold his own. His progress is a delight to the school and a great encouragement to his parents!

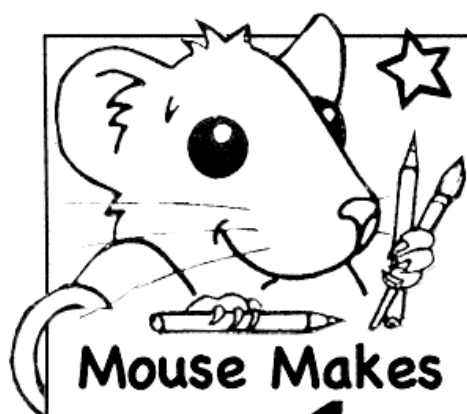
More than just a medal

For any young person, winning first place in a swimming contest is something to celebrate. But for Murad, it's even more special. Ten years ago, Murad joined the Helen Keller School in Jerusalem. Since that time, he's received specialised support from highly trained staff who have helped him to overcome the many obstacles he faces as a result of cerebral palsy and significant visual disability.

Life will never be easy for Murad. He knows he's different from his friends, and he can find it hard to express his emotions. However, his perseverance and determination to complete a task, no matter how long it takes, are outstanding. His tenacious personality, coupled with the love and care of the dedicated staff team, are helping him to grow and thrive. Murad may never be an Olympic champion, but in many ways his achievements are even more significant. Thanks to the support of the inspirational staff team, he's living life to the full and becoming all he can be.

“Embrace the Middle East” are not only involved in education they also support hospitals, orphanages, homes for the disabled for people of all ages etc. We have seen on our televisions how dreadful the situation is in many middle eastern countries for ordinary people, so please be generous in your support so that this charity can continue their vitally important work.

Stephen Buckley

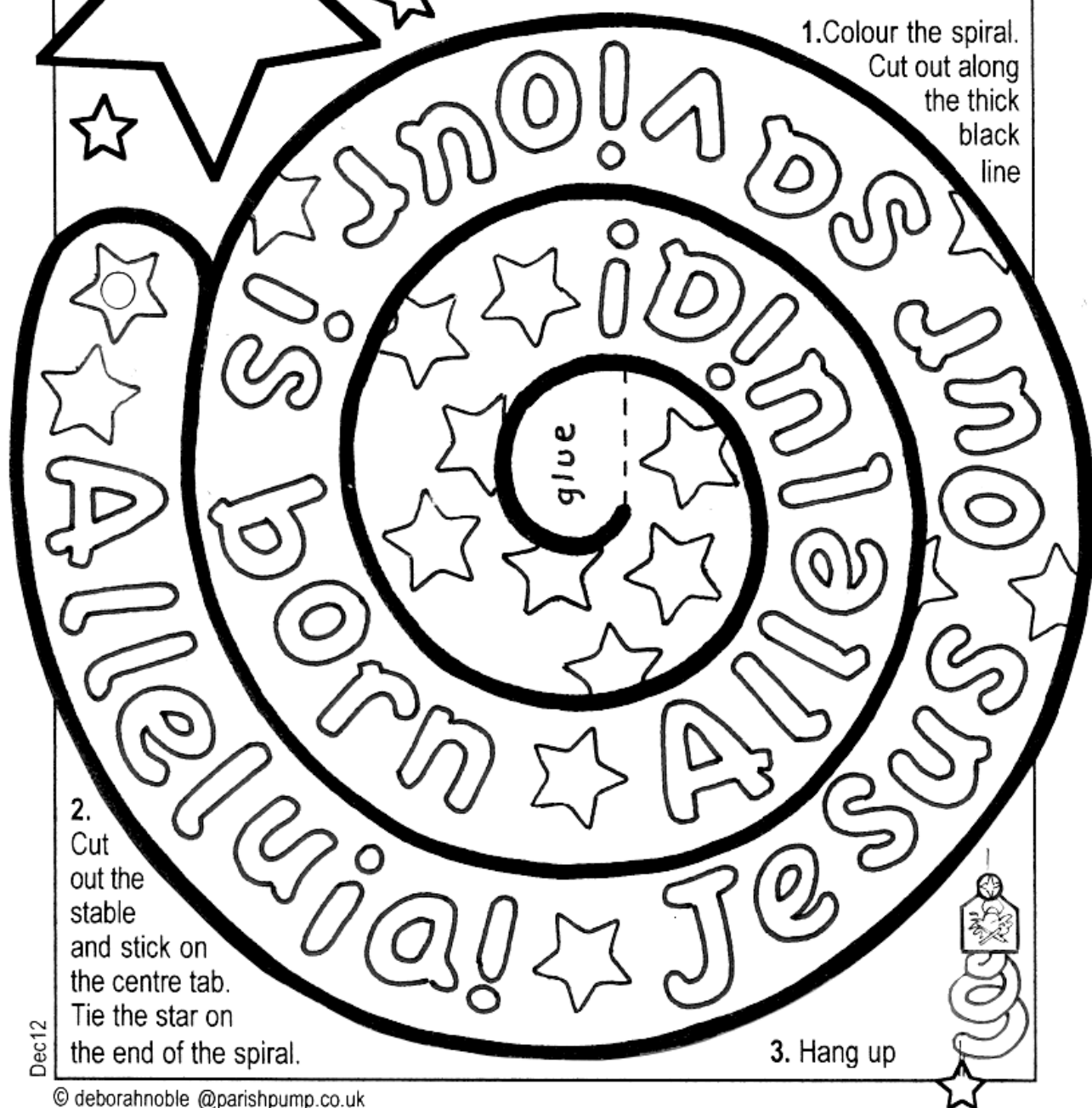


"I bring you **good news** that will cause **great joy** for *all* the people. Today in the town of David a **Saviour** has been born to you; he is the **Messiah**, the Lord"

Read:
Luke 1-20



1. Colour the spiral.
Cut out along the thick black line



2. Cut out the stable and stick on the centre tab. Tie the star on the end of the spiral.

3. Hang up

Dec12

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DIARY DATES: DECEMBER

Sunday and weekday services at All Saints', St Andrew's and The Straits Community Church are advertised on page 2 of this magazine. Details of Christmas services are on page 6 and the Christmas Tree Festival on page 13

All Saints'

Mon 3 Dec	7.30 pm	Ladies' Society meets in the church hall
Tues 4 Dec	2.30 pm	MU meets in the church hall
Wed 5 Dec	5.30 pm	Shane Watson Memorial Service
Thu 6 Dec	1.30 pm	Funeral in church
“ “	7.30 pm	Confirmation class meets in the social club
Sat 8 Dec	7.30 pm	MU Christmas Concert
“ “	6.30 pm	Annual Memorial Service
Mon 10 Dec	7.30 pm	“Living the Life” Group 1 meets at 9a Turls Hill Rd
Tues 11 Dec	2.30 pm	“Living the Life” Group 2 meets in the social club
Thu 13 Dec	1.30 pm	Alder Coppice Carol Service
Mon 17 Dec	7.45 pm	Men's Society meets in the social club
Tues 18 Dec	2.00 pm	Cotwall End Carol Service

‘Noah's Ark’ Mums & Toddlers meets in the hall on Tuesdays at 9.30 am in term time.

‘Little Angels’ Mums & Toddlers meets in the hall on Mondays at 9.30 am in term time.

St Andrew's ‘Silver Threads’ (over 60s) meet each Wednesday from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm in the church hall.

Diocesan, Deanery & Parish Events

Sun 9 Dec	3.30 pm	Priesting of the Revd Jean Arnold at Kingswinford
“ “	6.30 pm	Advent Carol Service at All Saints'
Sat 15 Dec	9.30 am	‘Dad's Breakfast’ in All Saints' church hall



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