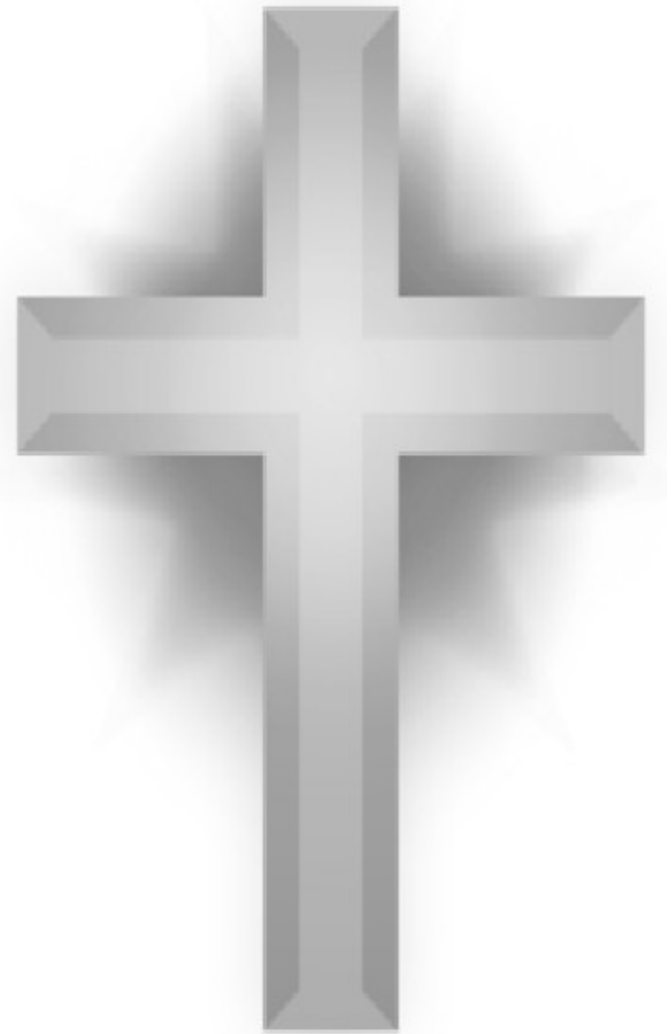


THE BEACON

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS, SEDGLEY
& ST.ANDREW'S THE STRAITS

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Kingdom People

love • compassion • justice • freedom

50p

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2018/2019

WHO's WHO

Team Rector	Revd Guy Hewlett	01902 295164
Team Vicar	Rev Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Baker	01902 882847
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader/Children's Advocate	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson John Anderson	01902 673366 01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	TBA	
Server / Verger	Len Millard	01902 676339
Junior Church	Barbara Price	01902 676591
Brownies	Heather Churm	01902 674709
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	01902 674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	01902 881374
Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	01902 672880
Noah's Ark Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Rainbows	Liz Naylor	07827 629648
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461
Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Bell Ringer	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Organist	Martin Platts	07941 173252

St Andrew's Who's Who

Warden	Canon Jan Humphries	
Treasurer	Gordon Betteley	01902 882777
DCC secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007
Little Angels baby & toddler group	Canon Jan Humphries	
Singing Angels	Claire Cox	07812 010108

DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY

Diary Dates for DECEMBER/JANUARY

December 3rd - Ladies Society - Anne Clarke

December 4th - Mothers Union - Christmas Meal.

CHURCH OPENING

There will be no Church Opening on Friday 28th December. Normal service will resume on Friday 4th January.

Funerals in November

November 13th Brian Robert Rayner - Gornal Wood

November 15th David Edward Saunders - Gornal Wood

November 19th Constance Pamela Camwell

High Days & Holy Days for December/January

- 1 Eloi – a patron saint for the euro?
- 3 Francis Xavier – the seasick missionary
- 3 Birinus – an apostle to the English
- 4 Osmund – the multi-talented saint
- 6 St Nicholas – patron saint of children
- 6 St Nicholas – another look at this much-loved saint
- 6 How Father Christmas got where he is today
- 7 Lazarus of Bethany – back from the tomb
- 11 Daniel the Stylite
- 17 Lazarus of Bethany
- 21 Winter Solstice
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas
- 26 St Stephen
- 26 On the Feast of St Stephen
- 26 Look out for Wenceslas
- 28 Holy Innocents

THE BEACON

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

Keith Tomlinson : tel. 01902 673366.

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Articles for the November magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 25th January

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

WEBSITE: www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk

CHURCH OPENING



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

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

VESTRY HOUR

Vestry hour will take place on the first and third Sunday of the month for all enquires on weddings and baptisms from 12 noon to 1pm

Letter from the Bishop of Worcester

By Bishop John

The Christian faith is essentially about love – because God is love. At Christmas we celebrate God's love for us in coming to share our human life in the person of Jesus. At Easter we celebrate the depths of that love in dying for us, and its triumph over death itself in the resurrection. At Pentecost we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, 'power from on high', to enable us to love as God has loved us.

It's as simple as that, really. The problem – in case you hadn't noticed – is that we don't manage to love as God loves us. As we celebrate the Advent of the Prince of Peace this Christmas, the world is filled with conflict. One hundred years after the ending what was referred to at the time as 'the war to end all wars' there is still so much violence, bloodshed and oppression in the world.

Why is that? I suggest that the main reason we do not love as we ought is that we cannot, deep down, believe that we are loved or even loveable. Most of our 'sinfulness' – in Christian terminology – derives from an insecurity, a deep disease within.

Ever since I became a Christian I have believed that I am unconditionally loved – in my head. The trouble is I couldn't quite believe in my heart that anyone, let alone I, could be unconditionally loved. Until I became a parent, that is. I then felt an extraordinarily powerful and quite unconditional love for my children, and still do. I spoke to my daughter about this the other day and she feels the same about her two year-old-daughter. Now I can believe that God loves me unconditionally – with my heart as well as my head. I have a long way to go but it has made me more loving. My prayer this Christmas is that, whether or not we are parents, we shall be given grace to believe with all our heart that God loves us more than we can possibly imagine with a love that is stronger than death and which will stretch into all eternity. Then we might be able better to love as God loves us. +John

From the Revd Guy Hewlett

On the 11th November 2018 one hundred years on from the signing of the Armistice we marked the centenary of the guns falling silent on the Western front.

At All Saints the wonderful research by Barbara Price regarding the local men who gave their lives in the first world war and those who returned was dedicated in the presence of a young soldier from the Mercian regiment, and in the presence of over 500 local people of all ages. The personal information of the men is now held in All Saints in bound books in a beautiful cabinet.

In the precinct opposite St Peter's a new memorial to those who have died in conflict past and present was also dedicated on the 11th November. Several hundred people were present.

And of course, in November we have marked All Saints day and All Souls day, remembering all those who have gone before us.

So we have quite rightly been remembering a lot in recent weeks!

And now we will be moving through Advent towards Christmas to remember the birth of Jesus, and then into the New Year.

We can never really be sure of what lies ahead day by day, but we can be sure of a bigger picture which God has given us in the Bible. Not only do we remember that God gave His only son Jesus Christ on that first Christmas day, but also it is easy to forget that we are called to remember that Jesus will come again! We are called to look forward!

As we respond as a parish to God's call to be His Kingdom People we will need to focus on and be deeply rooted in prayer and the scriptures as we seek to see our churches grow in number and in depth of faith; and as we seek to be dedicated to helping children and young people to

belong and be nurtured in faith, supported by Helen Laird our mission Enabler, we must look to a vision of the future which assumes the presence of people all ages being part of our worshipping community, the church.

I hope and pray that as we move towards and into the New Year, we will continue to remember that Jesus came that we might have life, and life to the fullest extent, and that our role is to share the Good News of Jesus' love and sacrifice with our community.

May we all look forwards to the coming of Jesus and may the truth of His love fill our hearts!

Jackie and I wish you and your loved ones a very happy Christmas and a truly blessed New Year,

With my love and prayers,

Guy

Learn a poem by heart this Christmas and stay sharp

So here is a challenge for you: learn a poem, by heart, by Christmas. That is the challenge that Gyles Brandreth, actor and broadcaster has set his grandchildren this year.

Memorising poetry is good for everyone. Brandreth cites scientific research to say that memorising poetry can help keep your brain fit and well.

The Duchess of Cornwall, who recently took over from the Queen as patron of The Royal Society of Literature, admits to reciting poems to herself as she goes to sleep. Dame Judi Dench can still recite the whole of *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Vicars Ponderings December 2018

Do you like change?

I often struggle with change, there's comfort in the familiar isn't there? However, change is also good for us, even though sometimes it can be difficult. Before I trained for ministry, I had worked in the same company, Jaguar Cars, and latterly Jaguar LandRover, for more than 26 years, I'd lived in the same city all my life. I had never lived anywhere else. Then, God called me to leave all that I knew, all that was familiar, to move away from my home, my friends, my family, to move north to train for ministry.

Leaving was hard, shutting the door on my house for the final time. Saying goodbye was hard. Why do it, you are probably asking yourself? When we say yes to God, we open ourselves to what He is calling us to; and I said yes, and the adventure began!

The Adventure took me first to Durham to train for ministry and then to three parishes just outside Durham city, Croxdale, Tudhoe and Kirk Merrington in the Diocese of Durham for my curacy. The adventure, the next part of the journey has brought me south, back to the midlands as Team vicar with you in the Parish of Gornal and Sedgley.

Change can be hard, but one thing I have learned in recent years is that the one thing that you can rely on is God. Having God at the centre of your life enables you to weather whatever life, and God, throws at you.

We will soon be celebrating Christmas, and the birth of Jesus; and for one young woman, having God at the centre of her life was key to her accepting God's call. Mary, a young woman, betrothed to Joseph, had her life turned upside down, when the angel visited her to tell her the news that God had chosen her to carry His Son. Mary, having had her life mapped out in front of her, being Joseph's wife, and the bearer of his children, suddenly had the course of her life changed forever; she was thrown into a very different course of life than she would ever have thought of.

God knew Mary, and her devotion to Him; and the angel told her, “for you have found favour with God! **31** You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. **33** And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!” (Luke 1:30-33). She would carry, not only a baby, which is amazing in itself, but the baby that

Mary was going to carry would change the course of history, and countless lives. After a short conversation between Mary and the Angel, Mary accepted God’s call on her life. “**38** Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’” (Luke 1:38).

Being open to God and open to change in our lives is an important aspect of being a follower of God and disciple of Jesus; throughout the New Testament, and after, there are many stories of people being open to God’s call on their lives and amazing things happening, in the life of the individual and the life of the church, as it moved from its small beginnings to a worldwide movement; to here in Gornal and Sedgley! The enormous change in Mary’s life wasn’t a done deal, Mary could have declined God’s offer to be the Mother of Jesus; she questioned the Angel, the news that he was bringing, and the incredible change that would come upon her life; but she did accept it.

God calls us to change, in many different ways, it might not be to carry His Son, or to up sticks and move to a different part of the country; it may be that you are being called to change or adapt how you worship; maybe changes in your prayer life, taking responsibility to nurture our relationship with God?

Maybe there are things in our lives that we need to change, that we need to repent of, to turn away from; God gives us a choice, like he did with Mary. But it is when we do accept what God is calling us, and saying yes, whatever that might be for us as individual, is when we gain new life, and confidence and understanding.

Throughout history individuals have been called by God to do new things; to make changes in their lives; in their relationship with him; in the church; and when we do, God does new things. Change can be scary; but we have confidence that we do not travel this journey alone; God is with us; there is no better time to realise this in our lives than at Christmas time; when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. When God became man, and lived amongst us. A name that we often give to Jesus, at this time of year, is Emmanuel, God is with us..... I wonder what it would be like if we claimed this promise, Emmanuel, God is with us, not only at Christmas time, but to claim it each and every day? To claim the certainty that God is in our lives, in our hearts and in our church? What difference would that feel like? When God calls us to change, we have the assurance, that He doesn't leave us on our own, that He is with us, Emmanuel. With Christmas

blessings

Catherine





Afternoon Carol Concert and Christmas Tea

With All Saints Singers and Singing for Pleasure
At All Saints' Church Hall

On Thursday 6th December at 2:30 pm

Tickets £5 available from Joyce Withers and Choir Members

Mothers' Union

It was lovely to hear Jackie Hewlett's story of 'From Nurse to Vicar's Wife' at our November afternoon meeting. Born in Coventry Jackie was brought up as a Roman Catholic.

At school she enjoyed sports and was in the netball and hockey teams. When the time came to think about a career Jackie duly sort out the school careers room. Here she found lists of careers and at the bottom of several of the lists was 'nursing'. There was also a poster promoting nursing as a career with a picture of a nurse and a hockey stick propped up in the background! Thus Jackie decided to train as a nurse. Her training took her to London which was exciting, but hard work, and at one point she nearly gave up, but for an understanding and encouraging matron. We heard about the various areas of nursing Jackie worked in which was very interesting. Jackie met Guy when she attended a friend's wedding and they got on well. She was due to go to the USA at this time as part of her training, but realized she would miss Guy, so stayed here, and as they say the rest is history. Jackie said she was privileged to have got to know so many people through supporting Guy in his parish work.

Revd Catherine Mitchell shared her passion for drums at our evening meeting. At primary school when the percussion instruments were put out Catherine wanted to play the drums but it was always the boys who got to play them. She didn't have any drums at home or later when she had a flat but promised herself that when she had a house the first thing she would have was – yes, you've got it, a set of drums. She saw an advert for drum lessons and joined a group of drummers. She also travelled to West Africa where the two types of drums she brought to show us originated. The first of these was the dundun, a group of rope-tuned cylindrical drums covered with cow skin and played with wooden sticks. They produced a variety of sounds depending on their size and kept a steady rhythm. The djembe was the other drum Catherine showed us. Made of wood with a skin head, you hold this between your legs, at an angle, with your feet crossed. How you use your fingers and palms of your hands determines the sound produced.

Catherine had brought several djembes and a dundun as well as some other percussion instruments, including shakers made out of gourds, so we were all able to have a go. With Catherine's guidance we produced an amazing rhythmic sound that filled the church. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening and the G & S Drummers are looking forward to their next session!

The Mothers' Union subscription for 2019 is £25. Anne will be collecting this at our afternoon meeting on 8th January. If you are unable to be at that meeting please give it to Anne or me by 8th January but not before the New Year.

I wish to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Dates:

8th January 2.15pm Communion followed by social &
Paying of subscriptions

No evening meeting in January

Liz Williams

Prayer for Christmas Joy

Loving, generous Father,

This Christmas, please help us to keep you at the centre of our preparations and celebrations. May our thankfulness for the gift of your precious son, Jesus, motivate all that we think and say and do. May the joy of His coming shine from us and attract those who don't know what Christmas really means, so that they want to find out!

In Jesus' name and for His glory,

Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

Events in Sedgley and at All Saints' Church to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice in World War One

Remembrance Sunday Parade marking 100 years since the Armistice.

A large assembly of local uniformed organisations paraded through the centre of Sedgley on Sunday November 11th to mark Armistice Day in World War One.

Organised by Sedgley Royal British Legion, the parade set off from Sedgley Ex Servicemen's Club in The Walk off High Street, Sedgley, passing the Crown pub, then marched through the Bull Ring up Dudley Street, wheeling right into Vicar Street towards All Saints' Parish Church for the service, which started at 10.30am.

This year around 600 people from the area's uniformed organisations took part - 200 more than previous years.

A Scottish Pipe Band again provided a rousing accompaniment to the Parade.

Dedication of six reference volumes about Gornal and Sedgley's contribution to the war.

At the beginning of this year's service there was a dedication of the six books compiled by a member of All Saints' congregation, Barbara Price.

Over the past 4 years, Barbara has travelled extensively on to the Western Front and in the UK to research the backgrounds and war records of all the servicemen in Gornal and Sedgley who gave their lives in the armed forces in World War One – there is also a special volume allocated to those who returned from the conflict.

The volumes will now reside in a special cabinet at the back of the nave and be available to anyone interested in the history of the area's contribution during the war, acting as a valuable reference source for researchers.

The dedication ceremony was performed by the Rector of Gornal and Sedgley, Revd Guy Hewlett, in the presence of Barbara Price and a serving representative of the Mercian Regiment.

National Peal of Bells

This year All Saints' Bellringers took on 6 novice ringers in April 2018 and worked with them every week to bring them to various levels of proficiency for the 'Ring on Remembrance Sunday'.

The bells rang out at 10.00am; and again at 12.30pm as part of the national Remembrance Sunday peal to mark the 100th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities.

Sedgley Morris Men who served in World War One commemorated.

On Sunday 11th November at 2.30pm, outside the West door of All Saints' Church, the 1st Sedgley Morris Men danced in remembrance of local Morris Men who fell in the First World War.

Perspex Silhouettes

Ten clear perspex silhouettes were acquired with grant funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, to represent all the young men from Gornal and Sedgley who died in the war.

They signify that the fallen are not just names on a memorial - they were real people who lived in our community, and they remain in our thoughts.

Barbara Price, who researched all the area's war dead, assigned names to each of the 10 silhouettes, also providing background information about the men - their families, where they lived, where they went to school, their regiments, where they served, where they died and where they are commemorated.

The silhouettes were on display among the pews at All Saints' Church in the period leading up to Remembrance Sunday, on the day itself and throughout the remainder of November 2018.

The histories of the 10 men chosen to represent all Gornal and Sedgley's fallen were attached to the silhouettes.

A Smile

A SMILE COSTS NOTHING, but gives much. It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it, and none is so poor but that he can be made rich by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and it is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give.

Anon.

New Year's Eve

Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to.

RINGING REMEMBERS

1918 - 2018

This year's nationwide "Ringing Remembers" initiative aimed to recruit 1,400 New Bell-Ringers. This number was chosen as it was the number of Church Bell-Ringers who died in the First World War.

A countrywide Ring of Church Bells took place on Remembrance Sunday 11th November at 12.30 p.m. to mark the anniversary of the end of W.W.I.

Our own All Saints' Ringers took on a small group of new Ringers in April of this year and worked tirelessly with them every week in order to prepare them for the Remembrance Sunday Ring.

For 6 months Mary Zielonka and Keith Williams have been instrumental in working with our new Ringers and starting them off on their long journey to proficiency.

The Novice Ringers offer their sincerest thanks to their tutors for all the hard work and commitment they have shown to them. Thanks must also go to the other Bell Ringers for their support and encouragement.

Thank you to you ALL from Dave, Stuart, Jayne, Brendan and Jean.

Expensive Christmas cracker

If you are looking to splash around a vast amount of money this Christmas, why not contact The Royal Mint? It has just launched Britain's most expensive ever Christmas crackers – which include a solid gold bar and gold diamond necklace.

A pack of six of the crackers will set you back £5000, but at least they also include a traditional hat and joke. Fortnum and Mason has previously sold sets for about £500.

There is a large demand for the £5000 crackers, which form the Mint's first gift range in its 1100 year history. And if for any reason you don't want to spend £5000 on six Christmas crackers, the other gifts on offer range from a sixpence spoon set to a gold teddy bear. Go to: <https://www.royalmint.com/gifts/>



All Saints' Sedgley ringers were delighted to have their five new 'Ringing Remembers' recruits take part in the Armistice Day commemoration, ringing half-muffled for the Remembrance Day service and parade at 10am, and then at 12:30pm for open ringing alongside bell towers across the nation and beyond!

Thank you, and well done.

What she wants for Christmas

A little girl was in the kitchen watching her mother busily preparing for the following day's Christmas dinner. She asked, 'Mum, can I please have a cat for Christmas?'

Her mother replied, 'No, you'll have turkey like the rest of us.'

Tell them of us and say for your tomorrow we gave our today

Our November meeting was, for many of us, I am sure, one of the most moving and inspirational meetings we have had. Barbara Price came to talk to us about her work in discovering more about the men of Sedgley and Gornal who had lost their lives during the Great War.

She explained that in 2013 it was decided that the church community should do something to mark the centenary of the Great War. Having researched her own family history, Barbara was aware of the challenge of finding out about the 71 men listed on the memorial in church.

In June 2014 she announced “I’ve been thinking...” and the idea of visiting some of the graves of men from the memorial whilst visiting France and Belgium began to develop. She took 50 poppy crosses on her first visit and placed them on graves of men killed during the war, 37 of whom were named on the All Saints memorial.

In the autumn of 2014 she was contacted by Chris from St Peter’s Church who added another 54 names to the challenge! At this stage there were simply names with no details of the regiments the soldiers had belonged to. Fortunately, Barbara’s friend is a guide at Lichfield Cathedral and so, in June 2015, she visited the cathedral where the transept is devoted to the Staffordshire regiment. A book there listed all of the parishes within the Diocese of Lichfield, the names of the men who had enlisted and the regiments to which they belonged. Together they were able to identify the men from Sedgley and the locality. Of those identified from the Sedgley, Upper and Lower Gornal, Etingshall and Hurst Hill areas, 298 soldiers had died and 540 returned. Barbara had a particular interest in Castle Street, Sedgley as her family had lived there. In this one street there were 27 soldiers and 9 of them were killed in action.

In September 2015 Barbara returned to France and found the first of what was to be many graves belonging to the men who had died in the Great War. This was the grave of Gilbert Rubery, who came from a quite well-off family. A memorial window dedicated to him can be seen in the vestry. The grave of Lance Corporal George Shepherd was discovered in the Serre Road cemetery and Barbara took photos. Unfortunately, during this visit Barbara fell, broke her ankle and finished the visit in a wheelchair!

After a long period of recovery, Barbara returned to France and Belgium in March 2016. Over a period of 4 days she visited 10 memorials, 43 cemeteries and 59 graves and travelled 1500 miles – quite an achievement!

Her next visit in October 2017 lasted 5 days during which time she travelled 1153 miles, visited 4 memorials and 39 cemeteries and placed a poppy on the graves of 52 soldiers. She also visited two naval memorials that year, one in Portsmouth and the other in Chatham.

In 1914 most regular soldiers from Sedgley and Gornal were in the Staffordshire or Worcestershire Regiments. They went to war immediately on joining: 1100 fought at Ypres and very few survived. One wounded soldier wrote, “I have been woundedsuch a scene has been enacted...”

Territorial soldiers were part-time members of the regiments and they replaced the regulars as the regiments were decimated. The South Staffs Territorials, who had never worn uniforms before the war, fought in France in 1915. In April 1915 they fought at the Battle for Hill 60. The British captured it but with a terrible loss of life. Many of the soldiers appear on more than one church memorial locally.

Barbara visited the Loos memorial and took poppies to three local men who had all died on the same day – 13th October 1915. She discovered later that eight local men had died there, all members of the 1st/6th South Staffordshire Regiment.

The Battle of Loos was the first time that chlorine gas was used with 140 tons of gas being released. There were 8-10,000 casualties in a period of 4 days.

On 13th October 1918 the regiments were ready for the battle at Hohenzollern. At 1pm the gas was released. 180 British officers and 3583 men were killed in a period of 10 minutes as they left the trenches. This was a huge loss of experienced men and was described as “hell with the lid off.”

The story of huge loss continued as Barbara described her travels. Between 1st July and 18th November 1916, at the Battle of the Somme, 615000 Allied casualties occurred – 35 from our locality, with 5 on the first day. All of this for a gain of seven miles. Sadly, a lot of these men were never found. The Thiepval Memorial lists 25 local soldiers, 22 of whom died at the Somme. The graves of 12 men were found in cemeteries and one is named on the Arras memorial.

The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 took place during the worst rain for 30 years. Drainage systems had been destroyed before the battle and horses and men drowned in the quagmire. 15 of the men from Sedgley and Gornal are mentioned on the Tyne Cot memorial.

Five of the men served in The Royal Navy and four of them died when their ships were torpedoed. Members of the Royal Naval Reserve, who had fought as soldiers, are also listed on memorials.

The Russians withdrew from the fighting in March 1918 and so men were moved from the Eastern Front to the Western Front in order to fight. There were 160,000 casualties here, 90,000 were taken prisoner and 42 local men died. In August 1918, the 100 days offensive started. The American forces had joined the war and men left the trenches and began to fight in the open. 46 local men died on the Western Front and are buried in the villages where they fell.

The age of the soldiers, and the sheer enormity of the sacrifice they made, was brought to life by Barbara. She explained that 103 of the local men (1/3 of the total) died in 1918. 69 of them were under 25 years of age and 28 of them were 18 or 19 – they would have been at school when the war started. 250,000 men under the age of 18 served in The Great War, even though the rules stated that you could not enlist until you were 19. Recruitment officers were paid 2 shillings and sixpence (12 ½ p) for every recruit. Soldiers needed to be at least 5ft 3ins tall and have a 34 inch chest. There was a lot of peer pressure to enlist. Con- scription started in 1916.

Barbara then told us a little more about some of the men.

Private Stephen Fiddler – enlisted at the age of 16 and was wounded in 1916. He died of a gunshot wound to the head at the age of 17.

William Hartill – died at the age of 17. He had been a member of the Sedgley Troop of Boy Scouts.

Bombadier Isaac Fownes – a Boer War veteran, he was a civilian in 1911 but joined a Canadian regiment and was killed in 1915 at the age of 37.

Private Harold Bourne – from the local Post Office, he is buried in Ire- land. He was sent to Ireland to help quell the Easter Rising in Dublin.

Everyone who died whilst serving there is recorded as having died “at home” and the Irish deployment is never mentioned on memorials.

One of the local men is buried in Malta – this was the hospital island and 20994 men were treated there in one day during the fighting in Salonika and Gallipoli.

Twenty-five of our men are buried in our churches. They were brought home to die, suffering from wounds, mental illness or shell shock. Eleven died in hospital, 12 at home and one of manslaughter.

Some of the men who have war graves have surprising stories. Gunner John Bond fell from a Dover cliff while collecting seagull eggs. He de- serted in 1914 after 11 days. He was tried and then deserted again. He is recorded as an “accidental death”. Private James Martin picked a fight in the barracks and died from a wound. Private Thomas Hyde fell out of a swing boat in Cologne and died.

By contrast, John Harries was wounded, became a Prisoner of War, received a war pension and died in 1922 of dementia. He does not have a war grave as he died after 1921.

Barbara showed us a replica set of the three medals awarded to soldiers of The Great War – known as “Pip, Squeak and Wilfred”. The soldiers from Sedgley and Gornal received 15 Military Medals, two Distinguished Conduct Medals, two Distinguished Service Orders and four were mentioned in despatches.

Barbara has photographed 265 graves and memorials of the 298 local men who fought in the First World War. She has laid 288 poppies, travelled 4000 miles and viewed 600 war records. In every visitors book she has written the message “not forgotten” on behalf of all of the people of Sedgley and Gornal.

This has been an emotional journey for her. In 2016 she went to Cambrai East Military Cemetery to leave a poppy. It is a German cemetery and she found the grave of Private James Wilkes. His grave has a very simple inscription – “Jimmy” – and she found it dreadfully sad that “he should have ended his life in such a miserable place”.

Finally, at the end of this incredible journey, Barbara stood at the grave of her Great Uncle – 100 years after his death. She explained to us all that this had been a life changing experience and that she felt that she had “brought them home”. I am sure that everyone who listened to her speak will agree wholeheartedly.

We meet again on 3rd December when we will listen to a talk from Anne Clarke and, I expect, share some mince pies. I look forward to seeing you there.

Karen Evans

Sharing Christmas cheer!

By Sam Setchell

The Children and Youth Councils are bringing Christmas Cheer to the streets of Worcester.

On Saturday, 1 December, the diocesan Children's and Youth Councils will be in Worcester city centre offering to pay for car parking and giving out sweets to shoppers.

Children's Officer, Emma Pettifer, said: "We've done something similar before and it's always a great way to start the Christmas season. It's an opportunity to give something back to the people of Worcester and for our young people to have an experience of giving while not expecting anything back in return.

"However, it can be quite a challenging activity. People don't understand why we'd want to pay for their parking and they definitely don't like taking sweets from children! It's good for us to persevere though as it's a great way to spread a bit of Christmas cheer at the start of Advent."

This Christmas...

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.

There are only two things a child will share willingly around Christmas – communicable diseases and his mother's age.

Just been let down by the people who work at the fancy dress shop after I tried to order a shepherd's outfit for the nativity play. You just can't get the staff these days.

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.

Children's Society News

I am delighted to tell you all that the Children's Society Autumn Fayre, in All Saints' Church Hall on Saturday October 13th, raised: - **£ 1,383.81**

an excellent result particularly considering the appalling weather on the day.

We're greatly indebted to everyone that helped, those arranging tables, providing goods for sale, working in the kitchen and of course looking after the stalls. We must also thank all who attended, despite the weather, for their contribution to the total and for their presence which created a lovely social event

A very special thanks is due to 'Little Angels Choir' - shining out on a dull, dreary day.

Christingle

As usual our Christingle Service takes place in Church at 5.30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. In recent years the Church has been packed so please be there early if you want a seat.

Christmas Cards sales have gone well but I still have some left.

A very happy Christmas to you all - Anne

Too long in the army

I knew I had been in the army too long when my five-year-old daughter sang her version of "Silent Night." It went like this: "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, Round yon virgin mother and child, Holy infantry, tender and mild ..."

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

'Hobbies & Pastimes'

All Saints' Church, Sedgley



**Friday 30th November – Sunday 2nd December
&
Friday 7th - Sunday 9th December**

**Friday & Saturday - 10am - 4pm
Sundays – 2pm – 4pm**

**Friday 30th November, Blessing of Trees
at 10am followed by school choirs**

**Admission: Free
Light Refreshments available
Donations to The Salvation Army**

200 CLUB

A reminder that the annual subscription of £20.00 is due in Jan 2019. Cash may be given to either Jenny, Jean or myself, cheques made payable to All Saints Church 200 Club.

Our annual dinner will be on Mar 9th 2019, commencing at 7.30pm, members will be asked to contribute £5.00 towards food costs as previous years.

Non members, who are most welcome, will be asked to contribute £17.50 each, and who perhaps might consider joining us on a permanent basis.

Menus will be circulated nearer the date and must be returned by the advised date or sooner. BYO drinks and glasses.

Thank you on behalf of the Trustees, Roger Berry

Best regards & thank you,

Roger

Carol singing

Samantha decided to go carol singing on Christmas Eve. She knocked on the door of a house and began to sing. A man, holding a clarinet, opened the door to the house. In a few seconds tears were streaming down his face.

Samantha continued singing for at least a further 20 minutes. She sang every carol she knew. At last she stopped. 'I understand,' she said softly. 'You are remembering your happy childhood Christmas days.' Choking back the tears the man replied, 'No...I'm a musician.'

Advent Hymn 8.8.8.8. O, Waly, Waly

The nights grow longer day by day.
The leaves of autumn blow away.
The cold rain falls, and turns to snow
and bitter winds begin to blow

But then the Advent lights appear,
Shining around us crystal-clear,
making our days and evenings bright
with that most precious gift of light.

Then joyful music fills the air,
the sound of carols everywhere,
In supermarket, street and mall,
the name of Christ is heard by all

The world in every corner sings
praises to Jesus King of Kings.
The light of God shines round the earth
to celebrate our Saviour's birth.

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Advent

A time of waiting and preparing – not for Christmas gifts and food shopping but a time of waiting for Jesus to return and preparing ourselves for that time.

Are you ready.. waiting.. expectant.. prepared?

Some online advent calendars for you to engage with.

Puppet Advent Calendar register here: thatadventpuppetapp.org.uk
Bible Society – Advent Challenge: <https://biblesociety.cmail20.com/t/r-ellkyh-ujldllhkly-p/>

Good News about Traidcraft!

Traidcraft has a new plan for ethical trade! New ways of working will start in January 2019. It will be a much smaller organisation with only 12 employees, but it will focus on working with partners predominantly active in Christian churches. Products we love will still be available from the online shop and by mail order. The aim is to have a simpler range of products – core grocery lines, but fewer craft goods. We will still be able to get goods from the Wolverhampton shop, and, hopefully from the warehouse.

It has been a distressing time for some of the craft producers, but Traidcraft Exchange will continue to support them. For this we hope to send a substantial donation after Christmas, when our funds might be boosted by your generous purchasing from our stalls at the Christmas Fair, and in church.

Some of the projects helped are Manjeen, India, Tara project, India, CORR, Jute works, Bangladesh, Apicoop, Chile, Noahs Ark, India. All of these will have to lay off staff and close projects, which will affect the lives of many, many families. So, please, as our Christian family, support Traidcraft and their work.

As the people of God we need to offer a warm welcome to families that come to our services. We would like to start a rota of people whose job it would be, to watch out for families in our churches, ensure they have what they need, to be shown where the toys, toilets etc are, basically just helping them through their time with us. If you feel you have the gift of welcome, please feel free to chat to Guy, Catherine, Jan or Helen Laird J.

Helen Laird

Mission Enabler : Calling Young Disciples

07931175890

Highly successful concert in All Saints' Church

The concert held on Saturday 17th November was a tremendous success with about 125 people attending.

The double bill provided by the Salvation Army Dudley Citadel Band together with the choral group Acoustic Voices resulted in a highly entertaining programme.

The total raised was **£ 1,020** which was split four ways, £ 100 to the Salvation Army for their work, - £ 100 to Acoustic Voices for their chosen charity, £ 400 to **Crisis at Christmas** leaving the remaining £ 420 for All Saints' general fund.

Thanks are due to everyone who helped in the organization before the event and on the actual day.

Please keep an eye open for concerts that we plan to organise in 2019.

The Events Team

Yo-yo dieting is 'worse for your health than being fat'

What are you doing at present? Losing weight to be ready for Christmas celebrations, or planning that diet for early New Year? Either way, bear in mind that crash diets are NOT a good idea. And now a recent study has found that heart attacks and strokes are more common among people who shed and regain the pounds repeatedly.

See-sawing weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels are all dangerous. Yo-yo dieting is gaining or losing more than 10 pounds on four separate occasions, regardless of time involved. The study was carried out at the University of South Korea.

God's Special Gift

The Rev Paul Hardingham

For those of us about to spend Christmas with a new child or grandchild, we will know how very special the arrival of a baby is! This Christmas we celebrate again God's gift of Jesus: *'Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!'* (2 Corinthians 9:15). What can we say about this baby?

He is God Himself: The unthinkable has happened: God has become a human being! The eternal, creator God enters the world of time and space, both fully human and fully divine. This divine baby can bring hope to our messy world, because He has fully become part of it. He doesn't stand apart, but demonstrates a commitment to be with us and on our side in the midst of sin and suffering.

He is human like us: Jesus fully engaged with the jungle of human experience. By His cross and resurrection, He can release us from the power of wrong, hurt and shame to secure for us a life of love, peace and forgiveness. Remember, the crib and cross are made of the same wood!

He is one with us: In the coming of Jesus, God doesn't draw us simply into a cosmic event, but into a relationship. Just as you or I can hold and hug our children and grandchildren, so we have a God who wants to be intimately involved in our lives. As Emmanuel, *'God is with us'* (Matt 1:23).

Therefore, the question is: *Are we with Him? Are we ready to make space for Him at the centre of our Christmas Celebrations this year?*

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

Santa a man?

How do you know Santa is a man? Well, no woman is going to wear the same outfit year after year.

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Christmas stamps

Maria went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards.' What denomination?' asked the clerk.

'Oh! Good heavens! Have we come to this?' said Maria, 'Well give me 50 Methodist and 50 Church of England ones please.'

The loneliness of our young people

With Christmas coming and with it the annual 'celebration' of family happiness and parties and get-togethers, many of our young people will be feeling even more lonely than ever. And that is very lonely indeed. A recent survey has found that 16 to 24-year-olds experience loneliness more often than any other age group. Two in five admit to being lonely often or very often, as compared with only 29 per cent of people aged 65 -74.

The survey was conducted by BBC Radio 4's All in the Mind, in conjunction with the Wellcome Trust. Claudia Hammond, the presenter, said she believes the research reveals an 'epidemic of loneliness'. 'To help them to connect with others, young people today have social media. They are more connected than ever before. But this can bring its own problems. If you're feeling lonely, looking at pictures of other people appearing to have endless fun isn't going to help...'

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From The Rectory, St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

It really is time to get some new figures for the crib. After a series of accidents over the years, we are now down to two wise men, two shepherds, and one three-legged sheep that only remains upright if it is leaning against a shepherd.



Joseph, having been obliged to stand outside the shelter of the stable for the last four decades, is now comprehensively veneered with bat droppings. In a rather desperate effort to enlarge this rather frugal cast, Miss Timmins hit on the idea of introducing characters from the children's Easter garden. This would have all been very well if both sets of figures had been to the same scale, but we now have the shepherds apparently being threatened by two ten feet rabbits.

One of our local farmers – I am sure very kindly meant – donated far more straw for the stable than was necessary. Our decorators, refusing to let his generosity go to waste, used the lot. The result is that Mary and Joseph stand up to their waists, looking as if they are being engulfed by a straw snow drift. The crib, along with baby Jesus, has disappeared entirely. The latter is not entirely to be regretted, since no one can now see that Jesus has no nose and only one arm, the result of one of our children dropping Him on the floor at last year's Crib Service.

I am sure your ecologically appropriate Christmas tree, made of recycled dustbin liners will be much appreciated by your congregation, knowing that they are saving the planet for future generations. We however remain traditional, with a tree always donated by the local squire from his estate, even if it is at the cost of adding another degree to global warming. Not only does it look more fitting, but it gives our verger something to do on twelfth night, as he sweeps up several hundred-weight of pine needles.

I sometimes wonder if it is entire coincidence that the tree is always delivered by the estate staff on a day when there has been torrential rain in the area. Carrying it into church up the aisle makes it look as if the parting of the Red Sea has unsuccessfully taken place inside St. James'. The major problem every year is getting the wretched thing to stand upright in the sanctuary. It takes so long that I sometimes feel it would be quicker to re-align all the church pillars to the same angle as the tree itself.

Last year's decision to have tree lights which flashed in succession was not a success. Those members who stared at them for too long while singing carols tended to fall over – although I suspect that Major Crump's inability to remain upright at the midnight Service was for rather different reasons. Not using flashing lights this year, the Major will have to find a different excuse.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Bible Puzzles for Fun **by Tony Spiller, BRF, £8.99**

This collection would make a good stocking-filler. It is packed full of biblical brain-teasers – clever crosswords, tantalising anagrams, word searches, mazes and magic squares.

The puzzles have been compiled to show how people worked, lived and died in the Middle East over 2,000 years ago. All the clues are linked directly to a verse in the Bible.

Tony Spiller spent most of his career teaching technical drawing, maths and religious studies at a secondary school in Manchester. To encourage pupils to read the Bible, he started inventing puzzles to teach them to look up the reference. He sadly died shortly after completing this book.



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SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

December 2018

1st December - All Saints - Christmas Tree Festival 10am - 4pm

2nd December - All Saints - Christmas Tree Festival 2pm - 4pm

2nd December

All Saints - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

4pm - 7pm - Church Open for Sedgley Lights

St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries

St Peter - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

7th and 8th December

All Saints - 10am - 4pm - Christmas Tree Festival

9th December

All Saints - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries

2pm - 4pm - Christmas Tree Festival

6.30pm - Evensong - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrew - 9.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

4pm - Carol Service

St Peter - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

6.00pm - Carol Service - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

16th December

All Saints - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Nine Lessons and Carols -

The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries

St Peter - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

December 2018 (cont)

23rd December

- All Saints - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
6.30pm - Holy Communion - Book of Common Prayer
The Revd Guy Hewlett
St Andrew - 9.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
St Peters - 10.30am - Worship for All - Suzanne Bradley

24th December

- All Saints - 5.30pm Christingle
St Andrews - 4pm & 5.30pm - Christingle
St Peter - 6pm Christingle
All Saints - Midnight Holy Communion-
The Revd Guy Hewlett
St Andrew - 11.15pm Midnight Holy Communion -

25th December

- All Saints - 9.30am Christmas Day Communion -
The Revd Catherine Mitchell
St Peter - 10am Communion - - The Revd Guy Hewlett

30th December

- All Saints - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
All Saints - 10.30am - Team Service - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
All Saints - 6.30pm - Healing Service - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

January 2018

6th January 2019

- All Saints - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - Canon Judith Oliver
6.30pm - Evensong using the Book of Common Prayer -
Canon Jan Humphries
St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries
St Peter - 10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

13th January

- All Saints - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries
6.30pm - Evensong using the Book of Common Prayer -
The Revd Guy Hewlett
St Andrew - 9.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
St Peter - 10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

20th January

- All Saints - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
6.30pm - Evensong using the Book of Common Prayer -
Canon Jan Humphries
St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries
St Peter - 10.30am - Canon Judith Oliver

27th January

- All Saints - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
6.30pm - Holy Communion using the Book of Common
Prayer - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
St Andrew - 9.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
St Peter - 10.30am - Worship for All - Suzanne Bradley