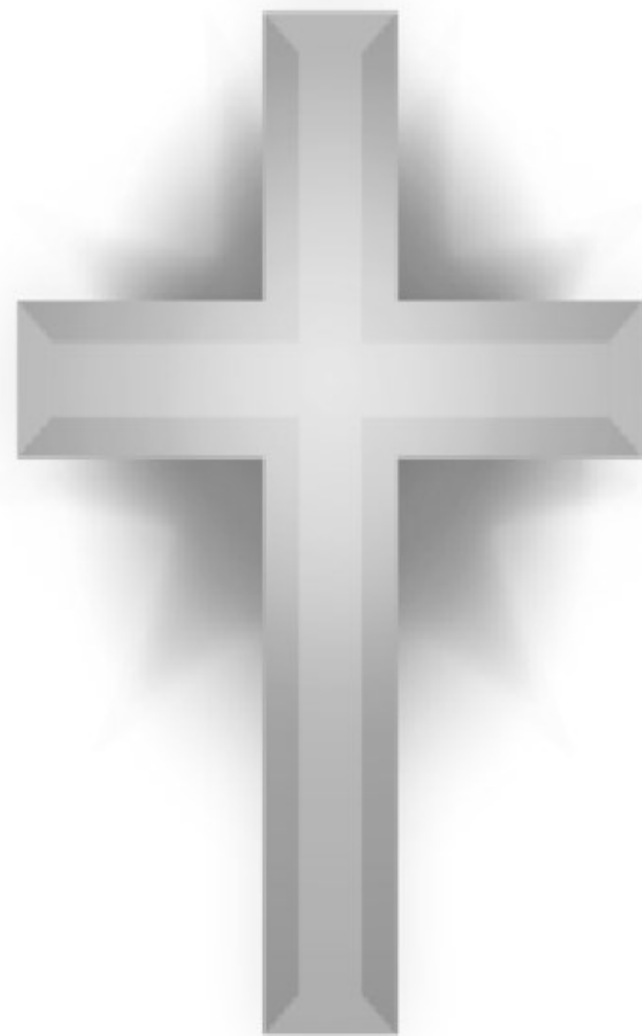
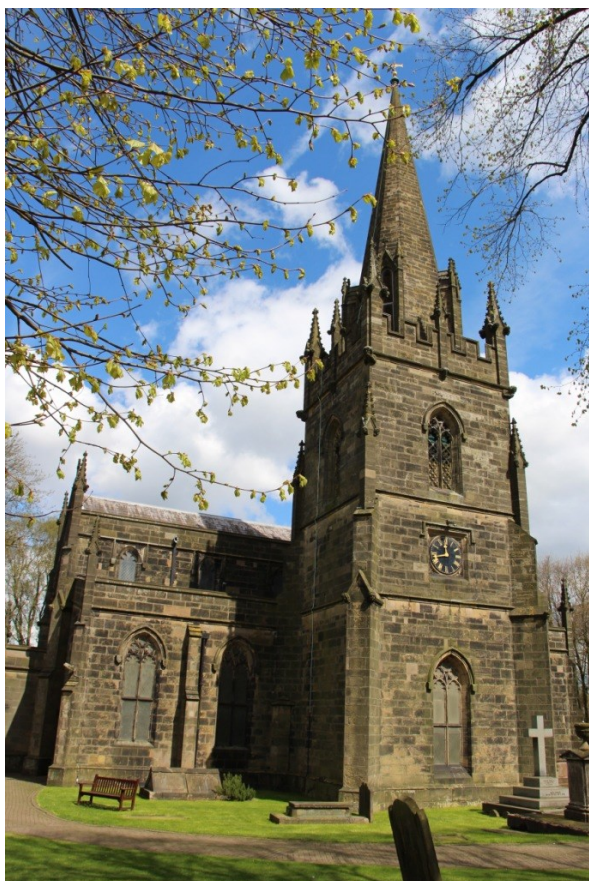


THE BEACON

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

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Kingdom People

love • compassion • justice • freedom

50p

DECEMBER/JANUAR 2019/20

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	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
Vestry Clerk	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson	01902 673366
	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Pam Pugh	07860 256535
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	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Parent & Toddler Group		
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	Paul Cox	
Treasurer	Alan Turner	01902 670938
DCC secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007
Little Angels baby & toddler group	Canon Jan Humphries	
Singing Angels	Claire Cox	07812 010108

Parish Prayers at 9.15am - All are Welcome

Tuesdays at St Andrew, Wednesdays at St Peter and
Thursdays at All Saints.

Altar Flowers

Flowers for December

Pam Garrington, Rob and Jenny Lavender, Alan Turner, Pam Parton.

Flowers for January

Margaret Hall, Ladies Society, Bob Aston, Noah`s Ark, Maureen Iddles.

Thank you to all who have so generously donated to our lovely flowers throughout 2019. A special thank you to our `Flower Ladies` who put so much love and care into making such beautiful arrangements.

Funerals

Friday 8th November - Sheena Ann Eccles - Gornal Wood

Tuesday 26th November—Rita Bullock—Gornal Wood

High Days & Holy Days for December

- 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
- 11 Daniel the Stylite
- 17 Lazarus of Bethany – back from the tomb
- 21 Winter Solstice
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas
- 26 St Stephen
- 26 On the Feast of St Stephen
- 26 Look out for Wenceslas
- 26 In praise of Good King Wenceslas
- 28 Holy Innocents

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 24th January

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

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

Dear Colleague,

As you are aware, we are currently facing a challenging time in the Diocese, having made a loss of around £1 million last year. We have already reduced our expenditure by making changes to the central staffing of the Diocesan Board of Finance and are now beginning to look at our wider ministry costs.

It is essential that we work together to discern the way forward and answer the question of how we can best shape and pay for ministry across the Diocese for the growth of God's kingdom. This is a real opportunity for creative thinking about God's will for us.

So that everyone has the chance to have their say in the future of our Church, we are holding a series of open conversations and I hope you will come along, as well as encourage others from your congregations to do so. We want to hear from as many people as possible throughout the Diocese. All are welcome and the presentation at each session will include exactly the same content so it's possible for people to choose the session that is most convenient for them.

The conversations will be as follows:

- Wednesday 11 December, 2 – 4.30pm, The Old Palace, Worcester, WR1 2JE
- Wednesday 11 December, 7 – 9.15pm, The Old Palace, Worcester, WR1 2JE
- Tuesday 14 January, 10am – 12.33pm, Pershore Town Hall, WR10 1DS
- Tuesday 14 January, 7 – 9.15pm, St James' Church, Welland, WR13 6LP
- Monday 20 January, 2 – 4.30pm, St John the Evangelist, Kates Hill, Dudley DY2 7JT
- Monday 20 January, 7 – 9.15pm, St John the Evangelist, Kates Hill, Dudley DY2 7JT
- Thursday 30 January, 2 – 4.30pm, The Old Palace, Worcester, WR1 2JE
- Tuesday 4 February, 2 – 4.30pm, Catshill Social Club, Meadow Road, Bromsgrove B61 0JJ
- Tuesday 4 February, 7 – 9.15pm, Trinity Methodist Church, Kidderminster, DY10 2JL

These conversations will be a great opportunity for a wide range of people to engage in the issues currently affecting our church, so that together we can work out ways to move forward towards our Kingdom vision and enable God's Church in Worcestershire and Dudley to thrive. Please look out for postcards being distributed with the prayer diary for you to hand out (if you need more of these, please do let Sam, our Communications Officer know – ssetchell@cofe-worcester.org.uk) as well as more information on the diocesan website and in the mailing.

Although booking isn't necessary, please do encourage people to let us know that they're coming, if possible. They can do this at www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/openconversations.

Thank you for engaging with this process.

With my very good wishes,

Yours,

Dr John Inge

The Rt Revd Dr John Inge
THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER
15 November 2019

BLACK COUNTRY FOODBANK

My thanks to all of you who have faithfully donated to the Foodbank throughout 2019. Your donations enable us to help people in desperate need.

Thanks from all at 'Springs'

From Revd Guy Hewlett

As I write Christmas 2019 and New year 2020 are nearly here! As I was thinking about the sense of change which we often have with the close of one year and the beginning of another I thought of the refrain from the hymn 'One more step along the world I go':

'And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me traveling along with you'

2019 has been a challenging year for many of us personally, for the church, and also nationally. As 2019 ends we will have had another general election, but we will not have had 'Brexit' in any form – perhaps by the 31st January!

But amidst the changing circumstances of our lives God is constant; the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

In the social and commercial busyness of this time of year I hope that you will all be able to take some time to reflect on the love of God who travels with us wherever we go, and who became just like you and I in the Christ child, born of Mary on that first Christmas day.

Remember that God loves us so much that He gave his only son Jesus so that we may not perish.

As we read in John's Gospel chapter 3 verses 16 to 18:

"This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again'. ('The Message' translation of the Bible).

Remember wherever you are on your journey through life, God is with you. Let's pray that in this season and through the years to come we remember to ask God to come with us; as the hymn says:

One more step along the world I go,
one more step along the world I go;
from the old things to the new
keep me travelling along with you:

Refrain:

And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me travelling along with you.

Round the corner of the world I turn,
more and more about the world I learn;
all the new things that I see
you'll be looking at along with me:

As I travel through the bad and good,
keep me travelling the way I should;
where I see no way to go
you'll be telling me the way, I know:

Give me courage when the world is rough,
keep me loving though the world is tough;
leap and sing in all I do,
keep me travelling along with you:

You are older than the world can be,
you are younger than the life in me;
ever old and ever new,
keep me travelling along with you:

A Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year to you all,

With love and prayers from **Guy and Jackie**

Vicars Pondering December 2019

Well it's nearly that's time again!

When the pressure is on with all the things to do to prepare for the 'Big' day; the shopping, the sorting, writing all those cards and trying to not miss the deadline to get the cards sent to relatives across the globe (note to self – write the Christmas cards to the relative in Australia, New Zealand and Canada!).

Trying to decide what presents to buy for which relative and friend.

Making sure you don't double book yourself with all the Christmas events that are available; and most important of all, order the turkey in time!

It all seems never ending doesn't it? The pressure, the commercialisation.....

From 1st December the season of Advent begins, the four weeks leading to Christmas day; a time where Christians prepare themselves to not only celebrate the birth of Jesus, but also a time when He will come again. It's a time of preparation, a bit like Lent, preparing not only in the practical jobs of getting ready for the big day, which are important of course, but also preparing ourselves spiritually. Trying to strip away those things that take our hearts and minds away from the true meaning of what God is doing through Jesus and the incarnation and also the promise, and being prepared for, the day when he will return. There are many ways to help us prepare through Advent, from formal courses and Advent books. Whatever method we use, it is good to prepare ourselves.

One way I have prepared myself in the past, is to read the book by Jostein Gaarder called *The Christmas Mystery*. Although this is not a Christian book, it tells the story of a young boy who finds a magical nativity calendar; and sets off through the calendar, becomes part of the nativity story through a journey of time and distance. It is accessible to read through advent as each chapter relates to each door in the calendar. One comment about this book says that *“Gaarder, as always, takes the reader on a wonderful joy filled journey of enlightenment, it really brings home the Christian message of Christ being present to His people in human flesh and all people can turn to Him and see him alive in all ages and times”*. Through the busyness of the season and to recapture the mystery of Christmas I commend this book to you.

I pray that you all have a joy filled Christmas, celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Blessings **Catherine**

The little button

At a clearance sale, the wife of a senior judge found the perfect green tie to match one of her husband's sports jackets. Soon after, while the couple was relaxing at a resort to get his mind off a complicated cocaine-conspiracy case, he noticed a small, round disc sewn into the tie. The judge showed it to the police, who were equally suspicious that it might be a 'bug', planted by the conspiracy defendants.

The police took the tie away for some serious analysis. A few days later, the judge phoned Scotland Yard to find out the results of their tests. “Well, we're not really sure where the disc came from,” the police told him. “But we did discover that if you press it, it plays Jingle Bells.”

Ladies Society – October 2019

“Bring Me Sunshine” – The story of Morecambe and Wise

This month we enjoyed an energetic and highly entertaining talk by Andrew French. He talked about the lives of Morecambe and Wise from their initial performances together in 1941 until Eric's death from a heart attack in 1984.

For most of us The Morecambe and Wise Christmas specials are one of our key memories of Christmases past and Andrew reminded us that in 2000 they were voted 14th in the top 100 TV programmes of all time. In 2006 they were voted second in a public poll to identify the 50 greatest stars of all time. The 1977 Christmas show attracted 28 million viewers, a figure that will surely never be matched.

Andrew talked about their early years as performers – Ernie as a song and dance man from the age of 8 and Ernie whose “pushy mother” entered him into talent shows aged 7. They performed with many partners in those early years and learned by watching musical acts like Tommy Trinder and Tessie O’Shea. They loved Laurel and Hardy as well as Abbott and Costello and built an act, like them, based on a warm relationship and mutual affection.

During the war the theatres in London closed and so Eric and Ernie became “fire watchers” and were paid 2 shillings and sixpence. Ernie saved his while Eric spent his on cigarettes. He was a chain smoker and this, combined with OCD and a weak heart, led to his poor health in later life. They were then conscripted – Eric became a Bevin Boy and Ernie joined the Merchant Navy – but they were reunited in London after the war. They bumped into each other in Regent Street and found work in “Strike a New Note” for six weeks at a rate of 10 shillings per week. After this they found it hard to find work but their landlady gave them credit on their rent and so they were able to watch and learn from other performers.

In the 1950s and 60s their careers developed: working at The Windmill Theatre between the nude tableaux; radio work; touring; and surviving The Glasgow Empire which was regarded as a really difficult venue for performers.

In 1954 they performed on TV and the review was unkind: “definition of the week: TV set – the box in which they buried Morecambe and Wise”. Eric carried this review in his wallet until the day he died.

Eventually they joined the BBC and achieved the success that they had worked so hard for. The Christmas shows, whose scripts were always kept secret, attracted many leading stars of the era: Shirley Bassey, Tom Jones, Glenda Jackson, The Beatles, Elton John and the news readers singing “There is nothing like a dame”. They would often appear talking in bed together but Eric insisted on smoking his pipe to emphasise his masculinity!

Andrew finished by reminding us of some of the many “running gags” which they included in their shows: the short, fat, hairy legs; “what do you think of it so far – rubbish!”; Des O’Connor’s poor singing; and “Not now Arthur.” Arthur Tolcher was a harmonica player who had looked after them as young performers and so they gave him this short role in each show as it provided him with an income.

The talk finished with performances of Bring Me Sunshine and Positive Thinking. Thank you, Andrew, for a lovely evening.

Next month we are looking forward to a talk by Barbara Price on the war poets. I look forward to seeing you there.

Karen Evans

Bakery

Did you hear about the bakery that was burgled at Christmas?
Everything was stolen!

MOTHERS' UNION

In November we shared 'Memories' within the group. Reminiscences of the games and toys we played with as children were triggered by a Pelham Puppet. The hours we spent in simple and imaginative play, how we would go off all day with our friends – coming back when we were hungry. There were the scenes of the countryside, on the way down Sandyfields that brought to mind the words of a song that Joyce shared with us. A small piece of china remaining from a service collected over a period of time from a china shop visited by a group of friends in their lunch hour from work, and some humorous and poignant memories. Finally who can remember Kunzle Cakes?

It is good to take time together and share our thoughts and memories from time to time amid the busy lives we lead.

We were pleased to welcome Camilla Clarke, the Families Worker based at Upper Gornal Methodist Church, to our evening meeting where we shared in the breaking of bread and wine. Camilla's enthusiasm for her work with families is tangible. There are many activity initiatives organised for children and families from the 'Twinkle Town' toddler group, to Acorns and Oaks, which is a friendship group for under 5's and over 65's celebrating and learning from one another, and Kings Club for 7-13 year olds. There are in addition 'one off' events like the Scarecrow Festival, which involves the community (St Peter's have taken part in this), and this year the Polar Express Tea Party. Volunteers to help with these activities are encouraged by Camilla to take on a small task that is 'doable' and builds confidence. Camilla's faith and dedication to her work is inspiring and it was great to hear what other churches are doing to encourage and support families.

It must be said at this point that through the Calling Young Disciples Hub Group and Helen, our Mission Enabler, we are interacting with families in the Gornal and Sedgley Team with activities such as the successful Pancake Party and Teddy Bears Picnic. We have Singing Angels, Youth Group and Holiday Workshops and our two Toddler Groups.

There is also the Baptism Book initiative, which keeps in contact with families who have had their child baptised, and our Worship Together Service on the first Sunday of the month.

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:

4th Dec 2.30pm Christmas Lunch, The Lodge

7th Jan **2.15pm** Communion followed by Social &
paying of subscriptions

There is no evening meeting in January

Liz Williams

Popular toys for Christmas?

According to the toy shop Hamleys, board games are going to be popular this Christmas – but not as you knew them. Instead, the 'smart' version of Pictionary has been called one of the 'must-have' toys this Christmas. It is just one of many classic board games which have been given a digital makeover, including Monopoly.

Another toy that is set to be popular is the Scruff-a-Luv Rescue Pet. The toy begins its life as a matted furry ball, and with love and care from the child, it is slowly revealed to be a pink or blue dog or cat. The toy features over 35 sounds and interactions with the child, from shivering and whimpering to feeding and even the hiccups.



All Saint's Singers and Singing for Pleasure

Presents

Christmas Tea Carol Service

All Saints church

Thursday 12th December 2.30pm

Tickets £5.00

The writer who gave us *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*

Robert Louis Stevenson died 125 years ago, on 3rd December 1894. The Scottish novelist, short story writer, poet and travel journalist was best known for novels such as *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*.

He travelled widely, but always suffered from serious bronchial trouble. During his early years his parents and nurse immersed him in Presbyterianism and Calvinism, and although he rebelled and became an atheist in his twenties, by the time he died he had returned to the basic doctrines of Christianity.

His family were lighthouse engineers, and he spent a great deal of time as a child with his mother's father, Lewis Balfour, who was a Church of Scotland minister. But although he was given both those names, he dropped Balfour completely and changed Lewis to Louis.

He married an American divorcee, Fanny Van de Grift Osbourne, and after trying various climates to ease his lung disease, the family ended up in Samoa, where he was much loved by the locals. He died at 44, not of lung disease, but of a stroke.

He was much admired by distinguished fellow writers during his life, though he was overlooked during the early part of the 20th century before his outstanding qualities as a writer for adults were once again appreciated

Wise?

When I told my children the story of how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus, my six-year-old daughter was not impressed. "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

Ethical Christmas presents

How much damage to the earth will we manage to do this Christmas? Those hundreds of millions of presents we are going to buy come from somewhere – usually raw resources. Are the presents worth the strain on our already struggling planet?

Here are some alternative presents, that are eco-friendly, useful, and fairly traded.

Christian Aid (christianaid.org.uk/christmaspresents) invites supporters to send them a donation, and in return, they will send a ‘lively’ personalised card to your friend or relations, describing the gift you have chosen to give on their behalf.

Send a Cow (sendacow.org/gifts) also invites supporters to send a donation for a range of practical gifts, for use in helping people from Ethiopia to Zambia.

Traidcraft (traidcraftshop.co.uk) offers everything from bamboo tights to clocks to food and cosmetics.

WaterAid (shop.wateraid.org) provides sanitation equipment (such as taps to promote hand washing) to villages in Africa, Asia or Central America. The person you nominate will receive a card to let them know this has been done in their name.

World Vision (musthavegifts.org) offers you the choice of sending various specific items from mosquito nets to garden tools, all of which they say are specifically asked for and needed.

With WWF (wwf.org.uk) you can adopt a wild animal, from a dolphin to an orang-utan. WWF will send your nominated person an adoption certificate and even cuddly toy

200 CLUB

A friendly reminder that the annual subscription of £20.00 is due in Jan 2020, (please don't leave it until the dinner). Cash may be given to Jenny, Jean or myself, cheques made payable to All Saints Church 200 Club.

Our annual dinner will be on Sat Mar 14th 2020 commencing 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 your own drinks and glasses.

Thank you for your continued and valuable support, for and on behalf of the Trustees.

Roger Berry

Namely...

The vicar had a standard liturgy for funerals. To personalise each service, he used the 'Find and Replace' command on his computer to replace the name of the deceased from the previous funeral with the new name.

One morning at a funeral, all was going smoothly until the congregation reached the Apostle's Creed. "Jesus Christ," the congregation intoned, reading from the programme, "born of the Virgin Edna..."

Ladies Society –November 2019

“Corners of a foreign field” – Barbara Price

In November we welcomed Barbara Price back to give a talk which linked her two great passions in life: poetry and the First World War. Barbara explained to us that the war poets had left a rich legacy but that their view of war had changed as the conflict developed.

Rupert Brooke was born in Rugby and attended Rugby School before Cambridge University. He joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve and set sail for the Dardenelles but died aboard ship and is buried in Skyros. Barbara read “The Soldier” to us – a poem with a romantic view of fighting for one’s country which includes the famous line “there’s some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England.”

John McCrae was Canadian with a strong family history of military service. He fought in the Boer War and, in 1914, he became a medical officer with 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery. His horse “Bonfire” was his constant companion throughout the war. John’s friend died at Ypres and he noticed the profusion of poppies there. Barbara read his poem “In Flanders Fields” to us. The poet had seen a lot of suffering but argued that the fight should continue. He died, aged 45, from pneumonia in 1918 and Bonfire followed the cortege.

William Noel Hodgson, from Bristol, fought with the Devonshire Regiment and won the MC at the Battle of Loos. He died at the Somme in 1916 together with a large number of men from the regiment who were left in the trench where they fell. The trench has a sign which reads “The Devonshires held this trench. The Devonshires hold it still.” The poem chosen by Barbara is a very reflective one, “Before Action”.

John William Streets was the first poet discussed who was not a commissioned officer. He came from a poor family, became a miner and joined the Sheffield Pals. He began writing poetry in the army but died at The Somme and never saw his poems published.

His poem “A Soldier’s Cemetery” contemplates the thoughts of a man who may not survive the war.

Ewart Alan Macintosh fought with the Seaforth Highlanders and won the MC in 1916 when he organised and led a raid on enemy trenches. His poem “In Memoriam” talks about that night, “Happy and young and gallant, they saw their first-born go”. At 23 he felt that he was the father of the group and needed to look after the soldiers.

Robert Graves fought at The Battle of Loos in 1915 where he met and befriended Siegfried Sassoon. Wounded at The Somme, he was sent home. He suffered from shell-shock and then dementia and would return in his mind to the horrors of the trenches. In 1929 he wrote the book “Goodbye to all that”.

Sassoon was called “Mad Jack” by his men because of his manic courage. He was very depressed by the war and, despite being awarded the MC in 1916, he became friendly with some pacifists and wrote a letter to the press which argued that “a war of defence had become a war of aggression.” This was viewed by some as treasonous but Graves intervened on his behalf and Sassoon was sent for rehabilitation where he met Wilfred Owen. Sassoon’s poem, “To the Warmongers” is highly critical of war and includes the line “young faces bleared with blood, sucked down into the mud.”

Wilfred Owen, from Oswestry, also earned the MC in France. He died on 4th November 1918 and his mother was told about his death as the bells in Shrewsbury were ringing out news of the Armistice. His poem “Dulce et Decorum Est” emphasises the lack of glory in war. Barbara’s talk, which moved us all, ended with a reading of “For the Fallen” by Laurence Binyon.

“They shall not grow 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.”

Karen Evans

How to help someone who is lonely this Christmas

‘It’s gonna be a lonely Christmas’. The pressure to have fun with friends and family is real over the Christmas period. In fact, over nine million people in the UK say they’re always or often lonely. (Red Cross).

When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, she probably felt very alone. Her situation would be seen as scandalous, as few believed that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit! Yet, God was with her: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call His name Immanuel’ (which means, ‘God with us’). (Matthew 1:23).

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be with us. The separation we may feel from others is nothing compared to the distance that God has already gone for us.

Here are 5 tips for helping those who are lonely:

Take time to talk

Take time to talk to an older person this Christmas, at the supermarket, pub or on a walk. Just saying hello can make a big difference to someone who’s lonely.

Give someone a Call

Take the time to speak to friends and family that you won’t be with this Christmas. A short phone call can have a big impact.

Give a neighbour a card

Ring the doorbell and give your neighbour a Christmas card. Start a conversation and make a connection.

Having a party?

Hosting a Christmas party or meal? If you know somebody who might be alone, invite them to join you!

Pray for Others

If you hear of someone who’s on their own, pray for them. Pray that God would show you how to respond!

‘The most important thing I can tell you is that we are never alone when we know Christ.’ Billy Graham).



All Saints' Christmas Fayre

will be opened by
Marco Longhi Parliamentary Candidate

**Saturday 7th December 2019,
from 10am – 2pm**

in
All Saints' Church Hall

Admission: 20p

At 12:00 Come and listen to a traditional sound of Christmas:

Penn Handbell Ringers



Stalls include:

***Tombola – Bottle Stall – Crafts – Cake Stall
Jigsaws & Toys – Fair Trade – Children's Craft Table -- and more.***

Refreshments available.

THE WAY I SEE IT: Protecting the Innocent

David Winter on Holy Innocents

The day most of us call 'Boxing Day', was when tradesmen used to collect their annual tips from customers. It is named in the Church Calendar as St Stephen's Day, in memory of the first martyr, stoned to death by an angry crowd because of his faith. That is a shocking footnote to the celebration of Christmas, but worse is to follow.

Three days later the Church asks us to remember the 'Holy Innocents'. These were the young children of Bethlehem killed by Herod's soldiers in a vain attempt to annihilate the potential new-born king. The Magi – the so-called 'Wise Men' – had told him the child had been born in that town. In fact, the child Jesus was by then safely across the border in Egypt, his parents having been warned to do so in a dream.

But that did not save the innocent toddlers of Bethlehem, who were brutally put to the sword. They were subsequently named the 'holy innocents' because that is what they were: holy and wholly innocent, victims of a man's determination to cling to power, whatever the cost.

Innocent children still suffer, of course: in refugee camps, in enslaved families, in unhappy homes and at the hands of abusers. Because they are weak and helpless, and utterly innocent, the rest of us have a duty to protect them.

When Jesus wanted to portray pure innocence, He took a small child in His arms. He then uttered a warning, probably the harshest words to leave His lips. Anyone who offends against such little ones would not escape severe punishment.

The fate of the 'holy innocents' is a sharp reminder, just after the Christmas celebrations, that Jesus was born into the world as it is: light and darkness, compassion and cruelty, love and hatred. He didn't come to endorse that world, but to change it. Darkness cannot defeat light. In the end the angel's song will be fulfilled: 'Peace on earth' in the kingdom of God



COMES TO ALL SAINTS', SEDGLEY

**Come along to our Christmas Tree Festival
to see trees decorated as Disney films and characters**

Friday 6th December – Monday 9th December

**Friday 6th December
Blessing of Trees 10am, followed by school choirs**



**Friday, Saturday & Monday – 10am - 4pm
Sunday – 2pm - 4pm**

Admission: Free Light Refreshments available

Donations to 'The Salvation Army'

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL DONATIONS

We would like to thank all the Sedgley Traders (and a few further afield) who have generously contributed towards the cost of the trees for the Festival. The Festival could not take place without their support.

A.& A. Walters Funeral Directors

Beacon Crafts

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Owning a dog is good for your heart

Thinking of getting your family a dog this Christmas? On the plus side, here is an interesting statistic: dog owners have a 24 per cent reduced risk of all-cause mortality and are 65 per cent less likely to die after a heart attack.

Such were the recent findings of researchers at the American Heart Association. They found that owning a dog can lead to better cardiovascular outcomes, especially for heart attack and stroke survivors who live alone.

On the minus side, dogs require a lot of time and care, so just make sure you have the time needed to properly care for one. Coming home to find that your dog has destroyed your sofa, through boredom and loneliness, is not good for your heart either!

Generous

Christmas is a time for giving, and we do it well. The British have been ranked among the most generous nations in the world, after a recent study found that six out of ten of us have helped a stranger in the past month.

The research, which surveyed 1.3 million people in 128 countries over a decade, found that despite a growing culture of charitable giving, there has been a downward trend in thoughtful behaviour in many of the world's wealthiest places.

However, the report, commissioned by the Charities Aid Foundation, found that the UK now appears 7th in the worldwide rankings for generosity.

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The countries which topped the global rankings are: United States, Myanmar, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Canada. At the bottom of the table, ranked lowest in terms of generosity, were the State of Palestine, Serbia, Yemen and Greece. China was ranked the least generous of all nations.

Biscuit

As we were putting out biscuits for Father Christmas on Christmas Eve, one fell on the floor. When I picked it up and placed it back on the plate, my four-year-old was horrified. "You can't do that!"

"Don't worry," I assured him. "Father Christmas will never know." He shot me a suspicious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good, but he doesn't know the biscuit fell on the floor?"

Sarah Powell

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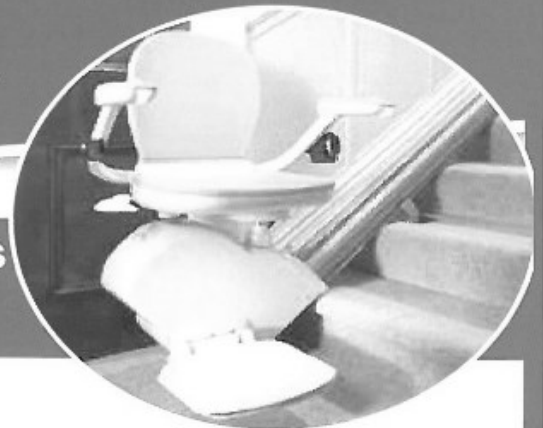
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The Sedgley Educational Trust is established to advance education, including religious education, in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England in the area of benefit: that being the ecclesiastical parishes of All Saints', Sedgley, St Mary the Virgin, Sedgley and St Chad's, Coseley.

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:

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St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I am sorry I was not alive during that wonderful four-year period when Oliver Cromwell abolished Christmas. Just think! No Christmas parties, no carol services, no cards to send and no frantic last-minute shopping. That man was a hero.



Planning for Christmas at St James' normally starts on 2nd January. By Easter, the flowers for church have been colour coordinated, the seating plans and table decorations for the Christmas party have been allocated (with nominated reserves in case someone should inconveniently die in the intervening eight months). Long before Summer is over, the tree lights have been tested, music for the 9 Lessons and Carols Service has been chosen and the service sheets printed. Way before the dark nights set in, car parking attendants will have been found, those who are to light all the candles will have been rehearsed to perfection and the brass lectern has had its annual polish.

We do not do spontaneity at St James the Least of All. If ever there was a service when time for something unexpected was allowed, its place would be announced in the order of service, how long it would happen unexpectedly would have been decided by a committee and who was to be spontaneous would have been allocated on a rota.

The one person none of these well-meaning, efficient, committed organisers can control is the Rector. You could call it a staff perk.

Carols will (accidentally, of course) be announced in the wrong order; if verse 3 was to be omitted, I announce it will be verse 4. This keeps the organist on his toes while the choir hovers on the point of a collective nervous breakdown. At the Christmas supper, my introductory welcome speech and extensive grace make those in the kitchen wonder if the vegetables being boiled should better be served as thick soup.

I offer the helpful suggestion that the tree, having been installed and decorated in the chancel, may perhaps look better in the sanctuary and I turn all the heating off throughout the season, explaining that it will help the flowers to last. All Services will start five minutes early (was my watch rather fast?) so I can look disapprovingly at those still coming in while we are singing the first carol and making it clear that I think they had spent too long in the pub next door.

And so we all reach Christmas morning, with 12 months of planning having gone yet again slightly awry, with parishioners exhausted and I exhilarated at the chaos that has been created with such ease. Mr Cromwell, your spirit lives on.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

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SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

December 2019

Sunday 1st December - All Saints - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - All Age Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - NO SERVICE
St Andrew - 9.30am - Canon Jan Humphries
St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 4th December - 10am - St Peters - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Sunday 8th December - All Saints - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - Family Worship - Canon Jan Humphries
6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
St Andrew - 9.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 11th December - 10am - St Peters - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Sunday 15th December - 8am - All Saints - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell
6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Revd Catherine Mitchell
St Andrew - 9.30am - Family Worship - Canon Jan Humphries
St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

Wednesday 18th December - 10am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

Sunday 22nd December - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - Carol Service - Revd Guy Hewlett
St Andrew - 9.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell
St Peter - 10.30am - Worship For All - Suzanne Bradley

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS ON SEPERATE PAGE

Sunday 29th December - 8am - Holy Communion - All Saints - Revd Guy Hewlett
St Andrew - 9.30am - Joint Service - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett
All Saints - 6.30pm - Healing Service - Revd Guy Hewlett

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

January 2019

WEDNESDAY 1ST JANUARY - NO SERVICES

Sunday 5th January - All Saints - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am - Worship Together - Revd Catherine Mitchell

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship Together - Canon Jan Humphries

St Peter - 10.30am - TBC

Wednesday 8th January - St Peter - 10am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

Sunday 12th January - All Saints - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - Worship Together - Canon Jan Humphries

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Holy communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Andrew - 9.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 15th January - St Peter - 10am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Sunday 19th January - All Saints - 8am - Holy Communion -

Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship Together - Canon Jan Humphries

St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 22nd January - St Peter - 10am - Holy Communion -
Revd Guy Hewlett

Sunday 26th January - All Saints - 8am - Holy communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrew - 9.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Peter - 10.30am - Worship Together - Suzanne Bradley

Wednesday 29th January - St Peter - 8am - Holy Communion -
Revd Catherine Mitchell

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS ALL SAINTS SEDGLEY, ST ANDREWS THE STRAITS AND ST PETERS UPPER GORNAL

ALL SAINTS SEDGLEY

6th December - 9th December - Christmas Tree Festival

7th December - 10am - 2pm - Christmas Fair - Church Hall

8th December - 4pm - Singing Angels Nativity

22nd December - 6.30pm - Carol Service (Nine Lessons and Carols)

24th December - 5.30pm - Christingle

24th December - 11.30pm - Midnight Mass

25th December - 9.30am - Christmas Day Communion

ST ANDREWS THE STRAITS

15th December - 4pm - Carol Service with Singing Angels Nativity

24th December - 4pm and 5.30pm - Christingle

24th December - 11.15pm - Midnight Mass

ST PETERS UPPER GORNAL

8th December - 6pm - Carol Service

24th December - 6pm - Christingle

25th December - 10am - Christmas Day Communion