

# 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

JULY/AUGUST 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	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	Canon Jan Humphries	
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

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### Parish Prayers at 9.15am - All are Welcome

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Tuesdays at St Andrew,

Wednesdays at St Peter and

Thursdays at All Saints.

### Funerals in June

3rd June - Norman Massey -	Gornal Wood
11th June - Neil Haynes -	Gornal Wood
12th June - Iris Filkins -	Gornal Wood
13th June - Joyce Seager -	Gornal Wood
20th June - Pauline Whitehouse -	Gornal Wood

## High Days & Holy Days for July

1 <sup>st</sup> July	Theobald – choosing God, not money
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	John Francis Regis– patron saint for relief workers
3 <sup>rd</sup> July	St Thomas the Apostle – confused and doubting
4 <sup>th</sup> July	Elizabeth of Portugal – compassion for prostitutes
6 <sup>th</sup> July	Thomas More, Reformation martyr
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Boisil of Melrose – patron saint for ordinands
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Willibald – the first ever Anglo-Saxon travel writer
11 <sup>th</sup> July	Benedict – author of the famous Rule
14 <sup>th</sup> July	Camillus de Lellis – patron of the sick
15 <sup>th</sup> July	St Swithun (or Swithin) – saint for a rainy day
16 <sup>th</sup> July	St Helier – losing a loved one to violence
19 <sup>th</sup> July	St Macrina the Younger– a sister in a million
22 <sup>nd</sup> July	St Mary Magdalene – the woman with a past
22 <sup>nd</sup> July	St Mary Magdalene – patron of repentant sinners
22 <sup>nd</sup> July	St Mary Magdalene – What do we really know about her?
25 <sup>th</sup> July	St James the Apostle – apostle to Spain
25 <sup>th</sup> July	St James the Great
25 <sup>th</sup> July	St Christopher – patron saint of motorists
27 <sup>th</sup> July	The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Proving a nap is good for you!
29 <sup>th</sup> July	St Olaf – king & patron saint of Norway
30 <sup>th</sup> July	William Wilberforce, Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson
31 <sup>st</sup> July	St Joseph of Arimathea – the man who buried Jesus

# THE BEACON

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

**Karen Evans: 01902 678056**

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Articles for the September magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

**Friday 23rd August**

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.  
Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: [www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk](http://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**

## **Bishop John**

It is now over five years since our Kingdom People Vision was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted by Diocesan Synod in 2013.

The Church is God's gift to the world, which is called to be an effective sign of God's Kingdom. God's mission is to reconcile the whole creation in Jesus and establish the reign of God. Jesus's first words in his ministry were 'Repent and believe the good news: the Kingdom of God is at hand'. As Christians, we are called to be Kingdom people: those who both hear and proclaim that message, becoming agents of the transformation of the world according to God's loving purposes in Jesus. Churches should be places where people seek to live out their vocation to be Kingdom people and where the Kingdom values of love, compassion, justice and freedom are embodied and proclaimed.

On Saturday 28 September, we will once again come together in Worcester to worship, share resources and be inspired in this vision and our 'Kingdom People' journey. You may remember our last such day in 2015: it was a great occasion, with people gathering from right across the Diocese.

Highlights this year include the presence of the Bishop of Liverpool, Paul Bayes, (formerly one of our honorary canons) and a wide range of workshops - from which you'll come away with new ideas to reinvigorate your worship, connect your faith with life beyond church walls, or help make running your parish easier. There will be sessions suitable for families to attend together as well as practical prayer stations and a chance to be involved in a 'Kingdom Arts' project.

The day will also include a ministry of hospitality with breakfast and afternoon tea provided free of charge, courtesy of a gift from a charitable trust. You'll just need to bring lunch (or take the opportunity to head into Worcester in the break to get something).

I'm hoping very many people from across the Diocese will come and join us to worship, learn, share and eat together.

Please do look out for more information on the diocesan mailing and website. To enable us to plan workshops etc, we'd be very grateful if people could book in through the Eventbrite website as early as possible and definitely before Saturday 14 September.

I hope to see you there!

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## Remembering Gerard Manley Hopkins

The poet and Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins was born 175 years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1844 in Stratford – now East London. He was the eldest of probably nine children in a family that was both well off and artistically creative, as well as High Anglican.

His father Manley, who founded a marine insurance firm, saw nature as a book written by God, and this rubbed off on his son, who wrote in one of his most famous poems: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”

Hopkins was unpublished as a poet in his lifetime, but at Oxford he established a lifelong friendship with Robert Bridges, later Poet Laureate, who printed a collection of Hopkins' poems in 1918, to immediate acclaim.

In 1866 he converted to Roman Catholicism. Two years later he resolved to be a “religious”, made a bonfire of his poems and wrote no poetry for seven years, returning to it in 1875 with *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, based on a disaster in which nuns fleeing persecution were among the dead.

In 1884 he became a professor at University College Dublin, but felt isolated and ineffective. He died of typhoid in 1889. His last words were: “I am so happy. I loved my life.”

## From Guy Hewlett

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019, The First Sunday after Trinity, our Gospel reading was from Luke 8.26-39

### Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac

<sup>26</sup> Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. <sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me’— <sup>29</sup> for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) <sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He said, ‘Legion’; for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

<sup>32</sup> Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

<sup>34</sup> When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup> Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> ‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.’ So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.”



We live in a time of massive change – political, social and religious change are a central theme in our country and our lives, and our church is by no means immune from change; far from it.

Change can be unsettling and disturbing as well as life giving and creative.

There is a lot happening in our Gospel reading from Luke 8, and quite a few questions which we could ask:

How did the man with the demons happen to meet Jesus as he landed?

What drew him to Jesus?

Why do we not hear the prayer that Jesus first prayed when he commanded the unclean spirits to come out of the man, which then prompted the 'man's' request not to torment him?

Why a heard of pigs for the demons?

Why did the poor pigs drown?

However, I want to concentrate on the people who came out of the city when the swineherds told them what had happened – and ask:

Why were they afraid when they saw that the man who had been demon possessed was now in his right mind, clothed and sitting at the feet of Jesus?

What was it that made the people from the surrounding country of the Gerasenes become seized with fear to the extent that they asked Jesus to leave them?

Change is a very difficult thing for many of us. It is very easy for us to get stuck in our ways; even when change is likely to bring about good things, we can find ourselves rejecting it. This is often because of fear of the consequences of that change and our need to deal with those consequences.

Many years ago, a friend of mine who knew well that I was a Christian, said to me:

'I would like to follow your God, but I am afraid of what he might ask of me'.

He was not specific about what his concern might be, but he distanced himself from God by referring to 'your God ...'; not his of course. He was obviously fearful that God would ask something of him; I would go as far as to say he expected God to ask something of him if he were to follow God!

Many people understandably seek stability in their lives. I think many people are concerned about the changes that Jesus brings to our lives when we choose to sit at his feet. When the people came out of the city and saw the difference in the man who had had the demons, they were fearful of what change Jesus would bring to them.

It is as if they were happier with the status quo of the man possessed with demons and his awful life and all the dangers he brought to the community, rather than the beautiful and life-giving changes Jesus had brought to the man. The local people did not want their routine of life disturbed. Life had gone on just as it always had until Jesus stepped out of the boat!

The man who was healed of the demons wanted to stay with Jesus, the local people wanted Jesus gone.

On being asked to leave Jesus did exactly that, apparently without a quibble! But only after he had told the man who was now healed and clothed and in his right mind to 'Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you.'

I think this is what Jesus asks of us; to tell others of what he has done for us – in our homes, streets, work places, schools, churches and places of recreation.

Jesus had done so much for this man, 'So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.'

We are called to declare what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. It is in Jesus and the changes he brings about in us that we find that it is him who is our rock and refuge.

In Psalm 18.2 we read 'The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold'. In psalm 42 set for the 23<sup>rd</sup> June the psalmist again refers to God as his rock.

Any change which is of God will bring a greater stability and peace in our souls.

In Psalm 42 we read

<sup>1</sup> As a deer longs for flowing streams,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.

<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.

I pray that all our souls may long for God and find that through him any fear of the change he might bring about in us and our communities, will be gone.

I pray that we will want to share all that he has done for us!

Have you ever stopped to think about what Jesus has done for you?  
Why not do that again now, or even for the first time?  
How easy would you find it to share what Jesus has done for you?

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## **Don't know nothin'**

When Columbus started out, he didn't know where he was going. When he got there, he didn't know where he was. When he got back, he didn't know where he had been. And he did it all on other people's money. Can't help thinking that Columbus reminds me of some teenagers who go on family holidays...

# **BISHOP GRAHAM TO BECOME BISHOP OF NORWICH**

10 Downing Street have announced that the Bishop of Dudley, Graham Usher is to become the next Bishop of Norwich. Bishop Graham was ordained as the fifth Bishop of Dudley in March 2014 and has served as the Suffragan Bishop across the whole of the Diocese of Worcester. He will leave our diocese at the end of July and will be formally enthroned as the Bishop of Norwich in Norwich Cathedral in the late Autumn.

On his appointment, Bishop Graham said:

“It is a delight, but also somewhat daunting, to have been nominated to be the next Bishop of Norwich and I’m looking forward to the adventure with God in Jesus that lies ahead. What I’m truly grateful for is how the people of the Diocese of Worcester have shaped me as a bishop. You have taught me much, as has Bishop John and other colleagues; thank you with all my heart. Having lived in Dudley for the last five years, I will miss the warmth of those who begin almost every conversation with the word ‘awlroight’. The people of Dudley’s care and encouragement, together with those in the rest of the diocese, have meant much to Rachel and me. I look forward to hearing about how the diocese flourishes in the years ahead and you will remain much in my prayers.”

Bishop John said:

“I shall miss Bishop Graham greatly, as will many others. He has been a wonderful gift to the Diocese of Worcester and has given an enormous amount to individuals, churches and wider society. The leadership role he has played in the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley has been invaluable there. I am personally very grateful to him for his friendship and support and am sad that we are losing him. It was only a matter of time, I suppose, and the people of the Diocese of Norwich are very fortunate to be receiving him. He and Rachel and the family go with our heartfelt gratitude, our love and our prayers.”

Before becoming a Bishop, Graham was Rector of Hexham Abbey. He has also lived and worked in inner Middlesborough and Ghana, Africa. As Bishop of Dudley, Graham currently chairs the Churches' Housing Association of Dudley and District (CHADD) which provides the women's refuge, housing for homeless teenagers, and residential support for elderly people who live with long-term mental ill health. He also serves as Dudley Council's Independent Person for standards and leads on the community strand of the 'Forging Ahead' vision for Dudley.

Graham maintains an interest in ecology as a member of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group and in medical ethics as a board member of the Human Tissue Authority. He is a member of the International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue.

Following his announcement, Bishop Graham will be touring the Diocese of Norwich, visiting a local housing trust, a primary school garden and outdoor reflective space, a church after-school club run by volunteers. Later this afternoon he will be welcomed to the diocese at a special Evensong at Norwich Cathedral where he will give the blessing.

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### **“Dear Vicar...**

- I know God loves everybody but then He never met my sister. Yours sincerely, Arnold. Age 8.
- Please say in your sermon that Peter Peterson has been a good boy all week. I am Peter Peterson. Sincerely, Pete. Age 9.
- My mother should be a minister. Every day she gives me a sermon about something. Robert, aged 11.
- I'm sorry I can't leave more money in the plate, but my father didn't give me a raise in my allowance. Could you have a sermon about a raise in my allowance? Love, Patty. Age 10.
- My mother is very religious. She goes to play bingo at church every week even if she has a cold. Yours truly, Annette. Age 9.

# In praise of stalwarts

Tony Horsfall

In the church I belong to we recently suffered two deaths in quick succession. Two of our older members (both in their eighties) passed away within a short time of each other, and we will miss them dearly.

Doreen was with us from when we first started the church some 27 years ago. The matriarch of a large family, she was quiet and unassuming, yet deep in her faith and she never missed a Sunday. Kath was full of life, a woman of prayer who witnessed keenly to anyone she met, and whose constant prayer was for revival. They will leave a huge gap in our fellowship, because they were both 'stalwarts'.

'Stalwart' is a Scottish word usually applied to someone who is physically strong, hardy, robust and courageous. It is used nowadays to describe someone who is loyal and reliable, hard-working and deeply committed to a cause, especially over a long period of time. At the same time, it may give a slight suggestion of someone who is not very exciting, even a little boring because they never seek the limelight or do anything particularly dramatic.

Most churches would not function without a good number of stalwarts because they are foundational people. They are the ones we all rely on to do the jobs that need doing without fuss. They are always there, and we can depend on them, but it is easy to take them for granted. And that is the danger.

Stop and think for a moment about the stalwarts you know. Who are they? How can you encourage and appreciate them? And if you are a stalwart yourself, don't undervalue your contribution. You are vital to your church's stability

# The Beatitudes: 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness'

*'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.'* (Augustine).

We all have deep longings in our lives that we seek to satisfy, however Jesus points out that we can only be truly satisfied by God Himself: *'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'* (Matthew 5:6). The words *hunger* and *thirst* are strong words referring to a truly desperate for righteousness. But what does this mean? *Longing for right relationship with God:* It means putting God at the centre of all we are and do and trusting Him with the whole of our lives. It's a response to Jesus' death on the cross, rather than anything we can do for God: *'This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.'* (Romans 3:22).

*Longing for right living for God:* A righteous or holy life is one that is righteous 24 hours a day. It's an integrated Christian life lived out of our ongoing relationship with God, affecting everything we do, say or think. *Longing for right relationship with others:* God's righteousness will influence how we relate to others in the community, so that all our relationships are loving and just e.g. at work, with family, friends or neighbours.

When we are really desperate Jesus says that God will *fill* us and our desire for righteousness will be satisfied. The problem is that often we are not desperate enough! We don't want to let go the deep desires that get in the way of God. *'It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are far too easily pleased.'* (C S Lewis).

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## You are what you eat

"Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you what you are," said the pub's philosopher.

Whereupon a meek little man, sitting a few feet away, called softly to the waitress: "Cancel my prawn salad, please."

# **Ladies Society**

## **Teaching with a cross in my pocket**

In June we were delighted to welcome Deb Castle to our meeting. Deb spent 30 years as a teacher and enabled many of us to reflect on how teaching has changed over that period. Deb taught French and German initially but moved on to teach Maths, RE and English later in her career. Deb studied for her degree at the University of Exeter and then continued there in order to achieve her PGCE. She worshipped at Exeter Cathedral and liked being “anonymous” whilst she worshipped there. Her first teaching placement was at a school in Exmouth, where she arrived dressed in a skirt, blouse and jumper. The teachers, however, would not give her access to the staff room as they thought she was a pupil! Deb made the point that clothing was important in her role. The clothes should not be too revealing and she always wore heels as the pupils could hear her coming along the corridor.

Deb then talked about applying for a full-time job. She had attended six interviews and then someone advised her to go to the interview without a handbag as men never carried a handbag – she got the job! She spent four years teaching in Trowbridge and worshipped at Bath Abbey during that time.

When she first started teaching, in the late 1980s, Deb carried a cross, chalk, keys (the more keys the more important you were), a lanyard, hankies and a red pen in her pocket. In those days she would write on a Blackboard which then was replaced by a roller board.

Having married Steve she returned to the West Midlands and taught at a variety of schools under a variety of contracts. She also returned to worship at All Saints.

In the 1990s her pocket still had a cross in it but now it was accompanied by whiteboard markers and floppy disks although these were later replaced by a remote control for Power point presentations, memory sticks and a green pen as red was now deemed too aggressive for giving



feedback to pupils. Deb and her parents now moved to worship at St Peter's in Wolverhampton where her sons joined the choir.

So why did she carry a cross in her pocket? Deb described many times when she appreciated its presence with her: working in Trowbridge with its community of white witches; the school trip to Paris where the passports were left in the hotel and she had to rush to retrieve them; and the day trip to Calais when a 12 year-old was taken ill and she had to stay in the hospital overnight and then get the pupil safely back home. Deb is now engaged in a number of roles in St Peter's church including teaching, choir training, working with "Pebbles", the pre-school group and being a church warden.

Thank you Deb for a really entertaining talk about your interesting life, both as a teacher and in the church.

Finally, this month Anne Wakefield celebrated a very special birthday. All of us who had the pleasure of sharing the celebrations with her would, I am sure, like to wish her a very happy birthday.

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## **Sky fright**

An airliner flew into a violent thunderstorm and was soon bumping around in the sky. One very nervous lady happened to be sitting next to a clergyman and turned to him for comfort. "Can't you do something?" she demanded forcefully.

"I'm sorry ma'am," said the minister gently. "I'm in sales, not management."

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## **Grows**

The fastest growing thing in nature is a fish – from the time the fisherman catches it until the time he can tell someone all about it.

## **Our clergy are under stress**

“The hardest work I have ever done and the most stressful.” That was how Archbishop Justin Welby described his time as a vicar. “It was isolated, insatiably demanding, and I was, on the whole, working without colleagues. That wears people down.”

Stress, anxiety and other mental health issues account for one-third of all clerical sickness, according to a study conducted for St Luke’s Healthcare for the Clergy. This was recognised by every one of the Bishops I consulted for this article. Bishop Robert Paterson told me that stress was frequently caused by the relentless pressure on the diary of conscientious clergy, saying: “If only they would discuss this pressure with their key laypeople, who are aware that we are all only human.”

Another retired Bishop looked critically at the advertisements for vacant parochial posts compiled by PCCs, saying they listed too many activities, paid insufficient attention to the core functions like pastoral care and Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, and left little time for prayer and study. A common concern was the amalgamation of numerous parishes with just one priest, which has been common in rural areas and is now increasingly the practice in towns, so that clergy are often rushing from church to church, with little time to spend with the worshipping communities.

Sensitive laypeople who are familiar with this syndrome will take on as many of the administrative and pastoral responsibilities as they can. I know a couple in a multi-parish Benefice which has had no priest for some years, who organise a rota of retired clergy for Sunday services and visit parents who want their children Christened. In many parishes, it’s churchwardens, sacristans and other volunteers who keep churches going. And that’s how it should be.

With an increasing number of part-time and self-supporting clergy, most with families and some with a full-time job outside the parish itself, lay-people can come into their own. Visiting bereaved neighbours doesn't require a degree in counselling, and you don't need to be ordained to compile a parish magazine or newssheet if you have access to a computer and some enthusiastic amateur reporters. There are hidden talents in every parish, which means some of God's gifts aren't being used.

Finally, a heartfelt plea, please don't phone the vicarage after 8 o'clock in the evening, unless it's an extreme emergency

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## **Prayer spaces in public places**

Churches across the UK are to launch Hope Spaces in 2020.

The Talking Jesus research found that 41% of practising Christians say that a spiritual experience or an experience of the love of Jesus was a key influence in their coming to faith. The aim of Hope Spaces is to help people to experience God's love and presence, so they can come to know Him for themselves.

In 2020, 24-7 Prayer and HOPE Together are inviting churches to unite in their village, town or city, to host a creative, public prayer space.

Rachel Jordan-Wolf, National Mission and Evangelism Advisor to the Church of England, and one of the team behind the projects says, "Invite your community to experience God through talking and listening to Him in prayer. Imagine, all over the country, people meeting the God of hope in schools, work places, high streets, gardens and unexpected public places. Will you offer your community a place they can meet God in prayer?"

HOPE Together and 24-7 Prayer are developing an information pack and resources to give churches everything they need to set up HOPE Spaces in an empty local shop, a gazebo in a park, a beach hut ... wherever local people might feel welcome and comfortable to explore prayer for themselves.

To register your interest email: [hopespaces@24-7prayer.com](mailto:hopespaces@24-7prayer.com). You will be contacted by 24-7 Prayer and HOPE Together about the project as soon as the information pack is ready

# MOTHERS' UNION

Sheila from High Flyers was the speaker at our evening meeting in May. Based in Wombourne, High Flyers aims to 'release the potential of adults with learning difficulties'. They provide and organise activities such as swimming, horse riding, cookery, drama and dance, and art and craft as well as visits out. Sheila spoke of how the concept for High Flyers grew into the amazing group it is today – a wonderfully dedicated team achieving a sense of achievement and happiness in the adults who attend. We are fortunate that there are such committed people in our community who provide the experiences these young adults need to enrich their lives. Sheila has a strong faith, which is evident as you listen to her, and during the evening she led us in prayer.

I was privileged to meet our Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, when she visited the Women's Refuge during her visit to the Diocese. Accompanied by our President Judith, and Provincial President, Nicky Sweatman, we had a tour of the Refuge and heard about the valuable work they do. Sheran and Nicky were very complimentary of the Deanery's support of the Women's Refuge.

Members attended the 'Thy Kingdom Come' service in Coventry Cathedral at the end of May. This was an opportunity to join with members from around the country in a wonderfully uplifting service, with an excellent address by Revd. Bob Key. Amazingly the service was also relayed, via Facebook, across the world.

We had an enjoyable afternoon in June when Jean Swift spoke on '4 better 4 worse'. Jean is passionate about marriage and organises a Mothers' Union stand at several Wedding Fayres in the Diocese. A Mothers' Union Wedding Pack is available to couples giving information about church weddings, legal requirements and suggested readings and music. The couples are able to chat to members on the stand and the feedback from them is very positive.

I have taken the twiddle muffs we had blessed, into the 'Forget-me-Not' Dementia Ward at Russell Hall Hospital, where they were greatly appreciated.

There is a change to our July evening meeting. Instead of a meditation by Joan Sullivan, her nephew and his wife are coming to speak to us about 'Volunteering at a Mission Hospital in Zambia'.

Our meetings are open to all, whether you are a member or not you are most welcome.

Dates:

2nd July	2.30pm	Cream Tea, Church Hall
3rd July	7.30pm	MU Council, St Saviour's, Hagley
16th July	7.15pm	Communion followed by 'Volunteering at a Mission Hospital Zambia', Phil & Cath

Please note this meeting is at St Andrew's, The Straits  
Anyone needing a lift please let me know.

3rd Sept	2.30pm	It's a Wonderful World, Joyce Bush
24th Sept	7.30pm	Hong Kong to Russia, Alan Turner

**Liz Williams**

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## Too grand a piano

The story is told how after the concert hall at Broadcasting House was built there was doubt whether the door would admit a concert grand. "Try it," said somebody. But the musical director objected on the ground that if his beautiful Bechstein got stuck it would be damaged. So they instructed the carpenter to take measurements and make an exact replica in plywood. This was done, and then they found they couldn't get the model out of the carpenter's shop. *(from Alexander Donald)*

# STRAITS MOBILITY

Your local mobility specialist  
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Please bring your own drinks/glasses & nibbles

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## The Bible that was thrown away

The story is told by Brother Andrew, who worked for many years with the Persecuted Church, of a Christian pastor who was travelling some years ago on a train in the old Soviet Union.

There was just one other passenger in the railway car, and soon the two men were chatting. The subject of religion came up, and the other man extolled the logic of atheism and criticised religious belief. Then the Christian bravely expressed his own views, and even took out his Bible to show the man some relevant verses. But the atheist was both unmoved and annoyed.

As the futility of their argument became clear, the men lapsed into silence. When a little later the Christian was nearing his stop, he left the compartment for a few moments to get his suitcase. He returned to find his Bible was missing. The atheist was just closing the train window and sneered at him. It was clear that he had thrown the Bible out. The journey continued the final few miles in stony silence.

A few months later, a stranger came to call upon the Christian pastor in his village. It was a man from a neighbouring village who asked to be baptised. The pastor was astonished and asked him what he knew about such things.

The stranger told him this story:

“Until a few months ago I knew nothing of Christianity. I am just a local builder, working on a site near the railway track. Then suddenly one afternoon a book came flying out of the window of a passing train and landed in the dust nearby. I walked over and picked it up. It was a Bible – the first I had ever seen.

“So I took it home and out of curiosity began to read it. I was amazed by what I read, and I have become a Christian.

Now I want to be baptised and meet with other Christians. I have heard rumours that you are also a Christian, so I hoped that you would help me.”

The astonished Christian pastor did indeed baptise the builder, and also confided his side of the story of the flying Bible. Within a few years the builder had converted several of his neighbours, and a tiny Christian church had been planted within his own community. All because of a thrown-away Bible.

---

## Signs found outside churches

- It is unlikely there'll be a reduction in the wages of sin.
- If you don't like the way you were born, try being born again.
- Looking at the way some people live, they ought to obtain eternal fire insurance soon.
- This is a ch\_\_ch What is missing? (U R)
- Forbidden fruit creates many jams.
- In the dark? Follow the Son.
- Running low on faith? Stop in for a fill-up.
- If you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd.

---

## Water

“I was intrigued to discover a bottle of natural water claiming to come from a source ‘fully protected from the environment’.” (from Emma Coleman)

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## **Jars of clay**

The Apostle Paul's understanding of resilient ministry is summed up in 2 Corinthians 4:7: 'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.'

Here is the great paradox of the Christian life: God has placed His treasure (the life of His Son communicated to us by the Spirit) in the hearts of weak and fallible human beings. God's treasure is wrapped in our humanity. This seems to be a risky strategy, but human weakness in its many expressions is no barrier to the power of God.

The imagery of jars of clay, or earthen vessels, reminds us that as human beings we are made of dust and therefore are inherently weak and fallible (Genesis 2:7, 3:19). This may be a reference to the small pottery lamps, cheap and fragile, that were readily available in Corinth. More likely it is a reference to the earthen ware jars that were commonly used for storage – rough, unglazed, without decoration and easily chipped or cracked. Roman generals returning triumphantly from their campaigns would often conceal their plunder in such unlikely containers.

During World War II the King ordered that the crown jewels be hidden away to stop them falling into enemy hands. They were placed in a secret vault under the floor of Windsor Castle, the location known only to a handful of trusted people. Some of the main jewels were removed from the collection, wrapped in cloth and placed in a biscuit tin for even safer keeping. A double bluff, and typically British!

That is what God has done by placing the light of the Gospel in our hearts, a most unlikely place to find the power of God at work.

---

## **Together forever**

The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat are really good friends.

# TO ADVERTISE IN THIS MAGAZINE CONTACT

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# Lyfe Journal: a helpful way of learning about the Christian faith

Bible Society has launched a regular magazine called Lyfe Journal. Its stated aim is to provide ‘inspirational articles and activities to help you deepen your faith’.

It is aimed at people who “love to engage with their faith in a more thoughtful way, but who don’t have the time to read long books.” And so the magazine provides “insights and reflections in manageable sizes from engaged Christians.” Each edition draws on the Scriptures and invites the reader to explore different spiritual practices in more depth.

*Here are details of the first two issues, which each costs £4.99:*

Issue 1: PRAYER. Whether you consider your prayer life to be dynamic or deep, this issue will help you reflect on and discover new ways of praying. Includes interviews with Krish Kandiah and Pete Greig, founder of the 24/7 prayer movement.

Issue 2: HOLY SPIRIT. How do we relate to the Holy Spirit? Including features from Christy Wimber and Paul and Becky Harcourt, leaders of New Wine England, this issue will inspire you to pursue a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Details at: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/9780564046478/>

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## Going going...

Auctioneer: Now what am I offered for this beautiful bust of Robert Browning?

Man in crowd: That isn’t Browning – that’s Shakespeare!

Auctioneer: Sorry – just goes to show how much I know about the Bible.

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## **Job interview**

Would-be employer: So, do you have references from your last place of employment?

Applicant: Yes indeed, sir. Here's their letter. It reads: 'To whom it may concern: We have had Sam Jones working for us for the last three weeks, and we can say we are satisfied!'

## **What a cup of coffee can do for the elderly**

Here is a curious thing: even just one cup of coffee a day can reduce the risk of an elderly person falling – by up to a third.

A recent study of thousands of older patients from the UK and Spain has found that even small amounts of coffee are enough to make them steadier on their feet.

That is good news for many elderly folk, as about one in three people over 65 will have at least one fall a year, and half will fall frequently. This is because older people can suffer balance problems, weaker muscles, dementia or low blood pressure.

The study was done at a university in Madrid. All in all, it costs the NHS £2.3 billion a year to treat and care for elderly patients who suffer a fall

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

**The Secretary to the Trustees: 12 Larkswood Drive,  
Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 3UQ**

## **Walking on the moon in July 1969**

American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin ‘Buzz’ Aldrin became the first people to walk on the surface of the Moon 50 years ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1969.

There had been some dispute over who would step first on to the Moon’s surface, but Apollo 11 commander Armstrong was given the privilege partly for technical reasons. Lunar module pilot Aldrin followed him almost 20 minutes later.

Both men were Christians. Aldrin, who was an elder at Webster Presbyterian Church, Texas, had got special permission to take bread and wine with him to space and take Communion privately. He did this with Armstrong watching in silence.

Armstrong wrote later: “We had come to space in the name of all mankind – be they Christians, Jews, Muslims, animists, agnostics or atheists. But at the time I could think of no better way to acknowledge the Apollo 11 experience than by giving thanks to God.”

The two men spent 21.5 hours on the lunar surface before rejoining the command module Columbia in lunar orbit.

Armstrong’s first step onto the lunar surface was broadcast on live TV to a worldwide audience. He described it as “one small step for a man – one giant leap for mankind”

---

## **Britain is sobering up**

We are drinking less alcohol. In fact, one in four adults in the UK does not drink at all. That is the finding of a recent study by the Lancet. The trend is noticeable among millennials, with baby-boomers far more likely to drink alcohol – and consume it at higher levels.

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## The Rectory St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren



The estimate for re-hanging the bells in our church tower came as a great shock. The church council discussed fund-raising at length. Someone suggested selling part of the Rectory garden for building, another for getting 200 parishioners to loan £1,000 each, interest-free. Then Mrs French suggested holding a jumble sale. The jumble sale won – mainly because it was achievable without a great fight, and also gave everyone an opportunity to see what their neighbours think of as junk.

Expensive articles were brought with an ostentatious show of modesty when everyone was sorting donations. Genuine jumble, such as odd plates, old blankets and mysterious kitchen gadgets, were left at the church door in the dead of night.

On the day of the jumble sale, our helpers were ready behind wobbly tables stacked high with stuff. Had the tables collapsed, half the congregation would have been smothered. Little Miss Faversham was having a wonderful time flitting from table to table like a woolly bumble bee, kit-kitting herself out for another year.

When the doors opened and the customers poured in, I realised how the Italians must have felt when they saw Hannibal with his elephants pouring down the sides of the Alps. That is when the mettle of our ladies really showed. They were tremendous – haggling at great length over whether something worth £10 should go for 10p or 11p. I noticed that those who are used to riding with hounds seem best able to control the crowds – even if they occasionally tended to regard the customers as the fox.

As it happened, the youth club were going pot-holing that day, so most of the teenagers bought complete sets of clothing for 10p which could then

But I wondered what their caving instructor would think of teenagers arriving dressed in dinner jackets and tweed skirts.

Two days of preparation yielded a battle that was over in less than an hour. We emerged bloodied but unbowed, with only scraps of jumble left. Then it was home for a bath and a strong restorative, in the knowledge that the first step to saving the bells has been taken. Only another 2,500 jumble sales and we shall have reached our target. Indeed, the only jarring note of the day was to discover someone with a peculiar sense of humour had put a note on my car: “Sold – to be collected later”.

Your loving uncle,

---

## **More of us are ‘going out’ on popular music**

Hymns are on the decline at funerals. A recent survey by the Co-Op found that not a single one has made this year’s top 10 most popular pieces of music for funerals.

It is the first time ever that no hymns have appeared on the list, which was last compiled in 2016. Then the list included ‘The Lord is My Shepherd,’ ‘All Things Bright and Beautiful’, and ‘Abide with Me’.

This year the top three funeral songs are ‘My Way’ by Frank Sinatra, ‘Time to Say Goodbye’ by Andrea Bocelli, and ‘Over the Rainbow’ by Sarah Brightman and Eva Cassidy. Other popular requests include ‘Supermarket Flowers’ by Ed Sheeran and ‘We’ll Meet Again’ by Vera Lynn. It is thought that the results mirror the decline in religious funeral services



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## **For peat's sake, stop!**

Are you a gardener? Then please consider this: the gardeners of Britain are continuing to use up the country's endangered peat supplies, despite repeated warnings from environmentalists.

Now Plantlife, the campaign group, warns that commercial extraction of peat from our peat bogs can remove more than 500 years' worth of peat growth in a single year. But despite alternatives being available for use as compost, British gardeners continue to buy peat. Sales are at three billion litres a year – and rising.

As one environmentalist said: "In the fight against climate change, the peatlands of the British Isles are one of our greatest assets – we cannot underestimate their importance for carbon capture. In the UK they hold more carbon than forests. Governments across the UK need to act immediately to end the use of peat for horticulture and other commercial purposes."

Peat extraction in the UK is estimated to release a million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. The National Trust has been peat-free for several years and the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens are 97 per cent peat-free

---

## **Tin foil**

What do you do with your used tin foil? Councils are asking us to give it a good rinse from any food or grease, so that it can be recycled. Foil trays could be added to your dishwasher, so that you don't waste time or water washing them separately.

As the Aluminium Recycling Packaging Organisation says, "It doesn't have to be squeaky clean.... But if it is really greasy, wash it with soap." Most councils can now recycle aluminium foil.



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## SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

### August 2019

**Sunday 4th August** - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett  
10.30am - Holy Communion - Canon Judith Oliver  
6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries  
St Andrew - 9.30am - Open the Book - Canon Jan Humphries  
St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion with Baptism - Revd Guy Hewlett

**Wednesday 7th August** - 10am - St Peter - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Sunday 11th August - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell  
10.30am - Morning Prayer - Canon Jan Humphries  
6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Revd Guy Hewlett  
St Andrew - 9.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett  
St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

**Wednesday 14th August** - 10am - St Peter - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

**Sunday 18th August** - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett  
10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett  
6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Revd Catherine Mitchell  
St Andrew - 9.30am - Morning Prayer - Canon Jan Humphries  
St Peter - 10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

**Wednesday 21st August** - 10am - St Peter - Revd Catherine Mitchell

**Sunday 25th August** - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell  
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 - Morning Prayer - Suzanne Bradley

**Wednesday 28th August** - 10am - St Peter - Revd Guy Hewlett

Every Sunday at St Andrew - Singing Angels - from 4pm for children age 4+ and 5pm Archangels for children 9+

# SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

## July 2019

**Wednesday 3rd July** - 10am - St Peter - Canon Judith Oliver

**Sunday 7th July** -All Saints - 8am - Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

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

St Andrew - 9.30am - Morning Prayer - Canon Jan Humphries

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

**Wednesday 10th July** - 10am - St Peter - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

**Sunday 14th July** - All Saints - 8am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am - Morning Prayer - Canon Jan Humphries

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

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

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

**Wednesday 17th July** - 10am - St Peter - Revd Guy Hewlett

**Sunday 21st July** - 8am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Andrew - 9.30am - Morning Prayer - Canon Jan Humphries

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

**Wednesday 24th July** - 10am - St Peter - Revd Catherine Mitchell

**Sunday 28th July** - 8am -Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am -Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Holy Communion - Revd Guy Hewlett

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

St Peter - 10.30am - Morning Prayer - Suzanne Bradley

**Wednesday 31st July** - 10am - St Peter - Revd Guy Hewlett