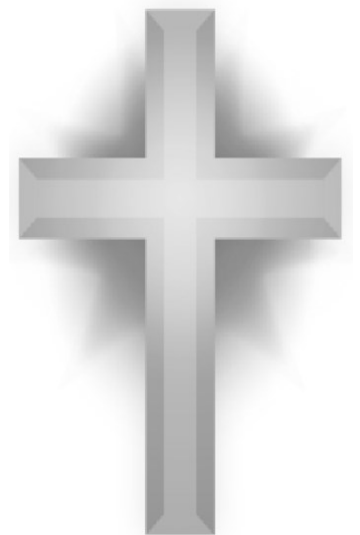
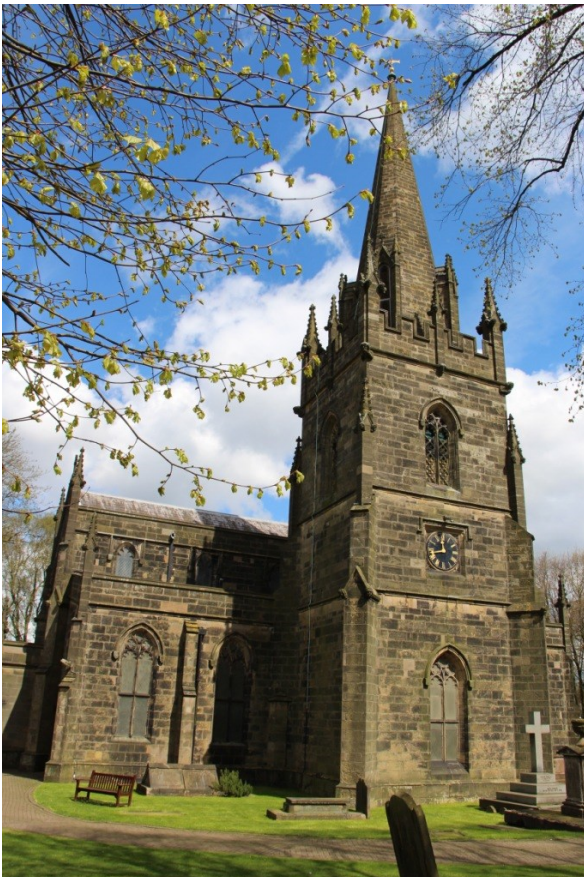


THE BEACON

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

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Kingdom People
love • compassion • justice • freedom

50p

December 2023—January 2024

PARISH WIDE WHO's WHO

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Vicar | Rev Catherine Mitchell | 01902 677897 |
| Licensed Lay Minister | Canon Jan Humphries | 01902 661275 |
| Parish Safeguarding Officer | Barbara Baker | 01902 882847 |
| Pastoral ALM | Tracey Bate | 01902 880727 |
| | Sarah Parker | 01902 885570 |
| | Kath Apperley | 01902 663253 |
| | Joan Sullivan | |
| Worship ALM | Suzanne Bradley | 01902 880055 |
| Youth ALM | Laura Robinson | 01902 678572 |
| PCC Secretary | Kath Apperley | 01902 663253 |
| PCC Treasurer | Sheila Moss | 01902 893570 |
| Parish Office | Gail Griffiths | 01902 540289 |
| Web Editor | Martin Jones | 01902 884461 |
| | Mmjones29@gmail.com | |

St Peters

Who's Who

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

St Andrew's

Who's Who

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Warden | Canon Jan Humphries | 01902 661275 |
| Treasurer | Alan Turner | 01902 670938 |
| DCC Secretary | Rosemary Reed | 01902 679007 |

All Saints Who's Who

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Parish Wardens | Keith Tomlinson | 01902 673366 |
| | Steve Castle | 07971 899072 |
| Treasurer | John Anderson | 01902 677666 |
| DCC Secretary | John Anderson | 01902 677666 |
| Caretaker | Kate Poole | |
| Bell Ringer | Mary Zielonka | 01902 672541 |
| Youth Leader | Laura Robinson | 01902 678572 |
| Ladies' Society | Geraldine Baker | 01902 674608 |
| Mothers' Union | Liz Williams | 01902 672880 |
| Web Editor | Martin Jones | 01902 884461 |
| Server/Verger | | |
| | Steve Castle | 07971 899072 |
| Noah's Ark | | |
| Parent & Toddler Group | Linda Edwards | 01902 672556 |

Funerals in November

2nd November Len Millard All Saints

3rd November Alan Graham Ellits All Saints

8th November Edgar Baines St Andrews

14th November Margaret Dellicott Gornal Wood

20th November Alan Jones All Saints

21st November Brian Rushton Gornal Wood

27th November Michael Davies Gornal Wood

29th November Samuel Hopkins Gornal Wood

THE BEACON

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

Karen Evans: 01902 678056

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

Articles for the February magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 26th 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.

St Peter's District Church magazine

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

**If you wish to enquire about a wedding or baptism
please contact**

Gail Griffiths

At the Parish Office - tel 01902 540289

email admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

Vicars Ponderings December 2023

Well, believe it or not, its nearly Christmas!

I don't know about you, but I do wonder where this last year has gone! Is it me, or but do the years pass by a lot more quickly these days?!

As we begin to think about the next few weeks, as we journey towards the “big” day, we first need to prepare ourselves during Advent; at this time we are reminded of the great Advent themes of darkness and light, which I think seem especially relevant this year. With all that is happening in the world, particularly with conflicts, political turmoil, unrest, and demonstrations, alongside climate change, there is a sense, for some of feelings of anxiety, fear, and sadness.

But despite this, there have been moments of light in all the darkness.

The great Christmas Gospel tells us that ‘the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it’ (John 1.5). with Jesus coming as the light of the world (John 8.12), and in him, the ancient prophecy has been fulfilled: ‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined’ (Isaiah 9.2; Matthew 4.16).

We do not know the actual date on which Jesus was born, but it seems very appropriate that we celebrate Christmas in the middle of winter, when the weather is at its coldest and the nights are longest.

With the darker nights, especially when it's clear, and crisp, we notice the little pins of light sparkling in the nights sky. When, I was on holiday to the Gambia, where there was very little light pollution, the skies were amazing! You could pick out all the constellations and the Milky Way. It was incredible, and you had a sense of how small we are compared to the small part of the universe we inhabit.

It would have been this type of clear sky that the Magi were studying when they noticed something new and different. Something bright in the sky that they have not seen before.

Many people think that the 'star' the Magi followed to Bethlehem might have been a planetary conjunction, or else perhaps a comet. Men and women in ancient times studied the night skies and were familiar with its patterns and movements. Abraham, the ancestor of God's chosen people, was promised descendants as many as the stars of heaven (Genesis 15.1-6). The familiar lights in the heavens became for him a sign of hope and trust in God.

Space is very dark. But the light of the stars still reaches us, bringing hope and joy to those who look up and see it. The light shines in the darkness.

Through all the challenges of the world we have the assurance that God, 'through whom all things came into being' (John 1.3) is with us.

The American theologian and civil rights leader, Howard Thurman, wrote this poem about lights in the darkness:

I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

At this Advent and Christmas time, I encourage you to seek those moments of light; seeking the one who came to overcome all darkness in the world.

With Christmas Blessings

Rev Catherine



CRAFTY CHRISTMAS TREE

This stunning Christmas Tree made from knitted and crocheted squares will be in the Narthex at All Saints from Friday 1st December until after Christmas.

Contact 01902 540289 – the church office – for more information.

The church will be open over the weekend of 1st – 3rd December, and at all church services.

This is a community effort led by the Sedgley Townswomen's Guild

Children's version of the Christmas story

- When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger.
- When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta
- Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

Mothers' Union

Zhianne and Emily, from the Women's Refuge, came to talk to us at our November meeting. They gave us an interesting and informative insight into the running of the Refuge and how they support and prepare the families, that come to them, for independent living. There was plenty of time for questions in what was a very enjoyable afternoon. Zhianne and Emily left armed with knitted teddies for the Refuge's Christmas Tree and cake!

Our support of the local Women's Refuge is very important to us and I wish to take this opportunity to thank you and members of the congregation who so generously support our collections during the year. I know that it is very much appreciated by everyone at the Refuge.

~~~~~

The Mothers' Union subscription for 2024 is £30. Judy will be collecting this at our afternoon meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January. If you are unable to be at that meeting please give it to Judy or myself by 9<sup>th</sup> January but not before the New Year.

Cheques to be made payable to:

**The Mothers' Union Diocese of Worcester All Saints'  
and St Andrew's Sedgley**

Dates:

|                     |         |                                  |
|---------------------|---------|----------------------------------|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 12.30pm | Christmas Lunch, The Lodge       |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Jan | 2.00pm  | Social & paying of subscriptions |

I wish you and your families a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

May the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem this Christmas night fill our lives and become part of all that we say and do.

**Liz Williams**

## **The first-ever nativity scene**

This Christmas, thousands of Nativity plays will be held around the UK. Ever wonder who staged the very first one?

It was St Francis of Assisi, and it was 800 years ago, in Greccio, Italy, on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1223.

Francis had been born into a wealthy family, but abandoned his noble inheritance when he became a Christian. Instead, he had turned to a life of great simplicity, in service to Christ's church.

Francis spent many hours meditating on the stories of the life of Christ, and even travelled to the Holy Land in 1219 and 1220, to see the various holy sites of Jesus's life. The sites deeply moved him, as they brought the Bible stories to vibrant life.

Back in Italy, in November of 1223, Francis was in Rome, and he had an idea. Why not share something of the inspiration of the Holy Land with his people here in Italy?

Barely 50 miles to the north, in Greccio, he knew many people to whom he had been ministering for years. He could at least show them something of the simplicity of the birth of Jesus. And so it was that, two weeks before Christmas, Francis asked his friend, the Lord of Greccio, Giovanni Velita, to prepare a nearby cave with live animals and a hay-filled manger.

That cave, beside some rocky crags, became the venue of the very first ever Nativity scene. On Christmas 1223, when the people of Greccio attended Christmas Mass as usual, they were invited to 'come and see' the simple scene.

According to his biographer, Brother Thomas of Celano, Francis wanted people to see what Jesus had "suffered for lack of the necessities of a new-born babe, and how He lay in the manger between the ox and ass."



According to eyewitness accounts of the moment, fires lit the dark scene while crowds arrived at the spot carrying candles and torches. There were also accounts of miracles happening that night. Some people had a vision of a real infant in the empty manger, and others reported miraculous healings.

All in all, the Nativity scene was an instant success, and soon other communities were staging their own.

Today, you can still visit the cave and rocks where the first Nativity was staged. It is now a Franciscan hermitage and sanctuary. Every year at Christmas, the people of Greccio stage a live, historical re-enactment of St Francis and the first Nativity scene.

Pope Francis has visited the spot two times: in 2016 and then in 2019, when he signed an apostolic letter on the importance of Nativity scenes.

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## **Help people out of modern slavery**

The Salvation Army offered more than 10,000 people modern-slavery victim support last year, under its government contract. It was the highest since the arrangement began, and included more than 3,000 new referrals.

It is now 12 years since the Government contracted the Salvation Army to provide specialist support for adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales.

The victims had experienced a range of abuse, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and domestic servitude.

The Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Revd Vivienne Faull, said that the figures were “a stark reminder of the persistent challenges we face in our own community, and a testament to the vital role played by dedicated organisations.”

## **The story behind ‘The Night Before Christmas’**

It was 200 years ago this Christmas, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1823, that the famous poem ‘*The Night Before Christmas*’ was first published (anonymously) in the Sentinel newspapers in Troy, New York.

It was light-hearted and full of fun, and not at all what you might have expected from its author, Clement Clarke Moore.

For Moore had been born in 1779 into a prominent New York family. His father, Benjamin Moore, the Episcopal bishop of New York, had even taken part in the inauguration of George Washington as the nation’s first president.

As for Clement Moore, he was a scholar of Hebrew and a professor of Oriental and Greek literature at the General Theological Seminary in Manhattan.

But on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1822, the night that Moore composed the poem, he was traveling home from Greenwich Village. He had gone there to buy a turkey, in order to fill the last of a number of baskets that his family donated to the poor during the Christmas season.

Perhaps Moore was inspired by the plump, bearded Dutchman who took him by ‘taxi’ sleigh on his mercy errand through the snow-covered streets of New York City that night. But whatever it was, Moore scribbled down ‘A Visit from St. Nicholas’ for the amusement of his own six children, to whom he read the poem when he got home that evening. His description of St Nicholas drew upon the Dutch-American and Norwegian traditions of a magical, gift-giving figure who appears at Christmas time.

The following year, Christmas 1823, the poem was made public, without his permission. Moore was said to have been at first embarrassed to be named as the author of such a light-hearted verse, and then astonished by its quick rise to popularity. He finally published it under his own name in 1844.

## Beatrix Potter

It was 80 years ago this month, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1943, that Beatrix Potter, the children's writer and illustrator, died. Her animal characters such as Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, and Jemima Puddle-Duck brought her worldwide fame – and made her loved by children right round the world.

Helen Beatrix Potter (28 July 1866 – 22 December 1943) had enjoyed an upper-middle-class childhood, but it was also solitary. Instead of access to childhood friends, she was given numerous pets and spent holidays in Scotland and the Lake District, where she learned to love landscape, flora and fauna.

Beatrix Potter was in her thirties when she first self-published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1902. Its immense success meant that she began writing and illustrating children's books full-time. In all, Potter wrote more than 60 books. Her best-known ones were her 23 children's books. Her books went on to sell more than 250 million copies. When in 1903 Peter Rabbit was made into a patented stuffed toy, he became the first fictional character to have this honour.

Potter used the sales of her books and a legacy from an aunt in 1905 to buy Hill Top Farm in Near Sawrey, a village in the Lake District. Over the following decades, she bought many additional farms, in order to preserve the unique hill country landscape from developers.

In 1913, when she was 47, Beatrix married William Heelis, a local solicitor in Hawkshead. By now she was also a prize-winning breeder of Herdwick sheep and a farmer.

In 1943, when she was 77, Potter died of pneumonia and heart disease at her home in Near Sawrey. She left most of her property to the National Trust, which means that she deserves the credit for so much of the land that now makes up the Lake District National Park.

More at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/helen-beatrix-potter-1794#>

ideal carehomes

# Sedgley Court

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# Join our vibrant community

When you move in with us, you'll join a person-centred dynamic environment where your social life will flourish.



Purpose Built Home



Person-Centred  
Care



Daily Activities



Nutritious Food



All Inclusive Fee



Couples  
Welcome

## Join us every week for fun filled activities



### Talkin' Tables\*

Tuesdays

11am - 12pm

Pop in for a cuppa and a chat  
to help tackle loneliness one  
Talkin' Table at a time.



### Blue Light Breakfast

Last Wednesday of each month  
10am - 11.30am

Join us each month for  
delicious breakfast treats and  
drinks. It's our way of saying  
thank you!



### Stay and Play\*

Wednesdays (Starts 6th Sept)  
11am - 12pm

Bring along your little ones  
for fun and games with our  
residents and make new  
friends.



### Dementia Café

Last Friday of each month  
10.30am - 12pm

We'll have delicious  
homemade refreshments and  
a variety of entertainment  
and activities.

*\*Please call our friendly team to confirm your space.*

# 01384 928 404

Brick Kiln Way, Dudley, DY3 4BA

sedgley.court@idealcarehomes.co.uk | idealcarehomes.co.uk





# Creative Learning Classes

| Course Title                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Start Date | Weeks | Time          | Fees    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|---------------|---------|
| <b>Floristry</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 19/09/23   | 6     | 19.00 - 21.00 | £70.00  |
| Classes designed for all abilities to introduce you to the skills and techniques required in the Art of Floristry                                                                                                |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Flower Arranging</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | 20/09/23   | 6     | 19:00 - 21:00 | £70.00  |
| Taught in an easy friendly manner, ideal for all abilities who wish to start from basics or improve their skills.                                                                                                |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Festive Door Wreath Workshop</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | 02/12/2023 | 1     | 10.00 - 15.00 | £67.50  |
| A day of seasonal inspiration creating a festive door wreath that will last over the whole Christmas period.                                                                                                     |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Dressmaking and Fashion Sewing – Getting Started</b>                                                                                                                                                          | 21/09/2023 | 6     | 19.00 -21.00  | £70.00  |
| Ideal if you have ever wanted to learn how to sew but feel a little in the dark about where to start.                                                                                                            |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Dressmaking and Fashion Sewing - Moving On</b>                                                                                                                                                                | 20/09/2023 | 6     | 19.00 -21.00  | £70.00  |
| For those who have the knowledge of how to sew but need more guidance and inspiration to continue their designs.                                                                                                 |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Guitar Lessons for Absolute Beginners</b>                                                                                                                                                                     | 21/09/2023 | 10    | 18.00 - 19.00 | £50.00  |
| A complete introduction to playing the guitar for those who have never played a note.                                                                                                                            |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Guitar Lessons for Improvers</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | 21/09/2023 | 10    | 19:00 - 21:00 | £100.00 |
| Continuing your learning with a repertoire of songs that you can play instinctively without the need to read from song-sheets or music notation.                                                                 |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Keep Fit for All</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | 13/09/2023 | 12    | 11.30 - 12.30 | £60.00  |
| Fun, laughter, friendship, improved mobility, balance and coordination through carefully planned gentle exercise classes – All abilities welcome.                                                                |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Spanish Lessons for Beginners</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | 23/09/2023 | 10    | 09.30 -11.30  | £100.00 |
| Specifically designed for those of you with little or no prior knowledge of the language.                                                                                                                        |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Spanish Lessons for Improvers</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | 23/09/2023 | 10    | 12.00 - 14.00 | £100.00 |
| Conversation is key in this class giving an array of opportunities to build confidence in speaking and listening.                                                                                                |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Cake Decorating and Sugarcraft</b>                                                                                                                                                                            | 21/09/2023 | 10    | 19:00 - 21:00 | £100.00 |
| Transform your cakes by learning the skills and techniques required for Cake Decorating and Sugarcraft.                                                                                                          |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Discover Pastels</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | 18/09/2023 | 8     | 19:00 - 21:00 | £80.00  |
| Discover Pastel Art and the techniques involved in creating your own masterpieces of images and textures, with a variety of subjects, including landscapes, flowers, human and animal portraits.                 |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Painting with Acrylics</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    | 19/09/2023 | 8     | 19:00 - 21:00 | £80.00  |
| Explore the benefit of using Acrylic paints and learn a variety of techniques you can achieve with this medium.                                                                                                  |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Making Gifts with Air Dry Clay</b>                                                                                                                                                                            | 20/09/2023 | 8     | 19:00 - 21:00 | £80.00  |
| For anyone wanting to get creative with clay, an introduction to the basic skills of modelling with air dry clay giving you a “kiln free hobby”                                                                  |            |       |               |         |
| <b>British Sign Language – Introduction</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | 21/09/2023 | 10    | 19:00 - 21:00 | £100.00 |
| This 10- week programme will introduce you to the Deaf community and you will learn how to greet and meet deaf people. The lessons are fun and engaging and you do not need any experience to join.              |            |       |               |         |
| <b>Learn to Sign for Families</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | 21/09/2023 | 12    | 16.30 – 17.30 | ☎       |
| Would you like to learn basic sign language skills? Do you have children, teenagers who would like to learn too? A fun class where no experience is required making it suitable for all ages.                    |            |       |               |         |
| <b>British Sign Language – Level 1 Qualification</b>                                                                                                                                                             | 21/09/23   | 33    | 7.00          | ☎       |
| Interested in gaining a qualification? Do you meet deaf people at work? Would you like to work with deaf adults or children? This course delivered by our award-winning team will help you achieve this.         |            |       |               |         |
| <b>British Sign Language – Level 2 Qualification</b>                                                                                                                                                             | 18/09/2023 | 33    | 6.00          | ☎       |
| Have you completed BSL Level 1 and want to develop your language skills to Level 2? Please contact us to discuss further details of this course.                                                                 |            |       |               |         |
| <b>British Sign Language – Level 3 Qualification</b>                                                                                                                                                             | 06/09/20   | 46    | 9.30          | ☎       |
| Are you interested in a new career working with Deaf People? Do you want to develop and enrich your use and understanding of British Sign Language? Please contact us to discuss further details of this course. |            |       |               |         |

**The Dormston Centre, Mill Bank, Sedgley, DY3 1SN**

To register your place Telephone 01384 816389 email [admin@dormston.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:admin@dormston.dudley.sch.uk)



When I was a little girl my wonderful granny always said as you get older the year goes by much quicker, of course I used to think that was really silly but as I have got older I completely understand this statement . The year certainly does go by much quicker . I do not know where this year has gone, we are almost at the end of November and Christmas will soon be upon us.

For little children it is a wonderful season of excitement, the thrill of seeing the twinkling lights, the Christmas trees and of course Father Christmas.

But for many families it is a time of much worry and stress. How on earth are they going to afford to buy presents for their children and friends.

There's lots and lots of worry and stress with a fear of debt. Then for many the season brings much heartache, the pain of loss for those who are not here.

Some will have lost loved ones this year and it will be the first Christmas without them.

Some will have lost loved ones long ago, but the pain is still the same and those you love are not here to celebrate and share.

For some their families live many miles away or they have no family. So it isn't always the season of happiness.

I came across a poem the beginning of this year, but I think it sums up what a lot of people are feeling and if this isn't true for you, I'm sure you'll understand so I wanted to share it.

Not everyone loves Christmas although it might seem strange .

Not everyone loves Christmas although it might seem strange .  
some people just don't like to rearrange.  
Hearts that ache absentees  
Heads threatening to explode.  
The lonely and the lost ones the penniless and the poor.  
No presents food or sparkling tree, no family at the door.  
So please don't think it's rude, ungrateful, self absorbed,  
It's just at times those big events are easier ignored.  
Enjoy the day you're given, love and understand.  
That those who don't like Christmas might need a helping hand.  
Written by Laura Ding Edwards.  
I wish you all a blessed and Peaceful Christmas.  
Knowing that we are so fortunate not to hear the noise of war.  
May The Peace of the Christ Child Jesus ,  
Who came to a world in such desperate need over 2000 years ago  
Once more remind us of the real reason for Christmas.

God Bless you all

**Canon Jan**

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## **Hunger in Zimbabwe – a hidden killer**

The World Food Programme is warning that in Zimbabwe, about 24% of the children aged five years old and under are chronically malnourished.

This leaves them weak, often diseased, low on energy and concentration, and therefore unable to do their best in school.

And so Barnabas Fund continues to appeal for help in delivering ePap to such children. It is a simple porridge fortified with vitamins, minerals and protein, which provide a nutrient rich diet. The Fund has already provided young children with more than a million servings of ePap this year, with great success.

If you want to help feed a child in Zimbabwe, please go to:

<https://www.barnabasaid.org>

# **The first Christmas – A Black Country Tale**

There was this girl called Mary and er lived in a place called Nazareth. One day er mom went out an er was left to do the ousewerk.

All a sudden the room went all bright and when er turned round er saw somebody stondin by the winder. Er wor arf surprised and nearly fell off er chair.

“Oom yow?” er asked, “yow day arf gie me a tern.”

“Doh be scared,” answered the bloke. “I wo urt ya. Me name’s Gabriel, an arm an angel.”

“Yo ay, am yer?” said Mary.

“I am, an I’ve cum to tell yer summat. Yo’m gooin ter av a babby,” said the angel.

That shook er, and er looked at im an said: “Doh be saft. I ay marrid.”

“That dow mek no difference,” ee answered. “If God says yo’ll av a babby, yo’ll ava a babby, yo will an that’s it. Yo’ve got ter call im Jesus.”

The chap what Mary was engaged to was called Joseph. When Mary told im about the babby er was having, ee day know what ter think. Ee said: “Yor mum wo arf kick up a chow row. Er’s bound to blame me. An they wo arf rattle down our street. It ay good enough.”

Any road, ee day get is air off, an when ee went ter bed that night, an angel cum to im in a dream.

“Doh get mad at Mary about the babby,” ee told im. “It’s God’s son er’s avin, an is name’s Jesus. Sumbody’s got ter av im, or ee wo get born, an yower Mary was picked. So just yo marry er, me mate. There ay nuthin ter worry about.”

Soon after they was married, Joseph cum in an told Mary: “Arv ad a letter from the tax mon, and that Ceasar of Rome says as we’ve got to goo to wheer we was born to be taxed. So we’ve got to traipse all the way to Bethlehem.”

So Joseph got the donkey out, put Mary on, an away they went.

“Cheer up, our kid. It ay far now,” Joseph told er. “Yo can see the lamps in Bethlehem down the road. We’ll soon av a rest. I shore be sorry neither. I keep gettin bricks an sond in me sandals.”

When they got into town, Joseph knocked on the door of an inn an asked for a double room.

The bloke what answered said: “Oi cor elp yer. There’s that mony on em eere they’m avin ter sleep in the passage.”

The next un was like it an all, but Joseph said to the chap: “Ain’t there anywhere we can goo? Mar missus is out theer on a donkey, an er’s gooin ter av a babby soon.”

The chap scratched his yed, then ee ad an idea. Ee said: “We cleaned the stable out after tay, so it ay mucky. If I shift a couple of osses an a camel, you could kip down theer.”

Joseph day even bother to ask Mary. Ee said: “We’ll tek it,” straight off. In the noight, Mary woke Joseph up an said: “The babby’s ere.”

So Jesus was born, an they wrapped im up tight an put im in the manger what the osses et out on. Mary an Joseph wor arf proud. the innkeeper cum with is missus an brought Mary sum ot milk.

Up in the ills, there was sum shepherds luckin after the sheep. It was cold, so they was sittin by the fire lettin their dogs do the werk while they ad summat to eat an a smoke.

Suddenly the sky lit up loike bonfire noight, an an angel cum. They day know owt about angels and they was that frit they all fell on the ground. “Yo’m a silly lot,” said the angel. “I shore urt yer. I got a message for yer. There’s a babby bin born in Bethlehem. Is name is Jesus an ees God’s son. Goo an ave a look at im. Ee’s in a stable lyin in a manger.”

The shepherds cum down the ill into Bethlehem an they kep on about the angels.

One said: “Fancy angels cummin to we. We ay nobody. It ay as if we’m important.”

Another agreed an said: “It wor arf a good tune what they sung, but I cor remember the words, con you?”

“Summat about glory an God in the ighest,” answered is mate. “When we get back we’ll try an get it writ down between we.”

They must av or we wouldn’t know it today.

Any road up, they cum to the town. One on em said: "It's or roight im sayin we'll find the babby in a stable, but they'm all over the plairce. We cud be looking for wicks."

Is friend snapped at im: "Why doh yo shut yer moanin? Us two'll look this soide, an yo pair look the other." Another said: "It ay much use lookin in stables what'm shut. An if there's a new babby, they'll a the loight on."

Then they eard their mates whistle an they fun em outside a stable built in a cave. Someone whispered: "Doh mek such a clatter. We'm ere."

One knocked on the door and Mary called: "Come in."

They took off their ats an went in on tip toe. The chief shepherd said: "Adoo missus. A angel tode we ter cum an see yower babby."

Mary smiled and beckoned them in. Joseph said: "Eere ee is. Cum an look."

The shepherds knelt down round the manger an looked. "Ay ee tiny?" said the youngest. "An ay ee got little onds?"

"Course ee's tiny, yo saft ayorth," said the leader, "ee's new, ay ee?"

Then the shepherds turned to goo, an little Jesus smiled. The leader said after as it was wind, an all babbies did it, but ee wor as sure as ee med out.

While all this was a-goo in on, three wise kings was in a country far away lookin at stars. Suddenly, one on em put down is telescope an called: "Cum eer yo lot. Oi've fun a star wot wor theer afore, and it ay arf a big un."

"Yo'm roight mate," they said when they looked. "Oil bet it's that one what's to tell us a new king was born." They checked up an it was.

One day, they cum to Jerusalem an went up to the Palace an knocked on the door.

A sentry opened it an they asked: "Is the King in?"

The sentry said: "Arf a mo, Oil goo an see."

The King's name was Erod, an ee was in. "There's three kings to see yo," the soldier told im. "Oh ar?" said Erod. "Weer?" Ee ad a fit when the soldier told im "Outside."



“Yo cor leave kings stondin on the step,” said Erod. “Get em in.”  
So they all come in, an Erod said ow noice to see em, an wot cud ee do fer em. They said they was looking fer a new king, and wondered if ee was theer.

Erod said: “Ee ay ere, but when yo’ve fun im, drop in on the way back so’s Oi can goo anay a look meself.”  
They said “Righto,” an off they went.

When they’d gone, Erod said to isselt: “Theer’s ony room fer one king ere, an Oi’m it. When Oi know weer the new un is, Oi’ll have im killed.”  
The star stopped over the ouse where Jesus was, an the kings day worry cos it wor a Palace.

They went in an knelt down by Jesus an gid him their gold, frankincense and myrhh.

Mary looked at the presents an said: “Thank yo, they’m smashin, but Oi’ll keep em till ee’s bigger, if yow doh moind.” The kings took off their crowns and bowed.

Then they said: “Tarrah abit” an went all the way back wum.  
But they day goo back past Erod’s palace cos a angel ad told em what a awful bloke Erod was, an ow ee wanted to kill the little Jesus.

---

## **Tips to protect things from freezing**

This may look silly, but it works: cover your windscreen wipers with old socks, to stop them sticking to the windscreen on a freezing morning. The RAC warns that if windscreen wipers cannot move, there is a risk the circuit will overheat and blow a fuse.

If you are cycling to work, try wearing a swimming cap under your cycling helmet – Cycling UK recommends it as a good extra layer, to keep warm.

If you need to be outside for long, wear several thin layers instead of one big chunky one. The UK Health Security Agency says that the air which gets trapped between the layers also helps keep you warm.

## **Mother in a storm**

One cold winter night, during a violent storm, a mother was tucking her small, frightened little boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he said with a tremor in his voice: “Mummy, will you stay with me tonight?”

## **REELING IN THE YEARS**

Now as ‘librarian’ for Reeling in the Years, I need to build up a collection of DVD’s of films from 1940- 1970’s. Thanks to those who responded to my earlier request - that delivered some gems. But now, can I ask you again, to look in the darkest corners and see whether you can let me have any films from this era. You may be interested to hear that at the last showing we had 30 attendees who really enjoyed the session.

**John Anderson**



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**18th January—”It’s a Wonderful Life”**

Refreshments 1.30pm

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# **Reeling In Years Programme**

**All Saints Church Hall**

**Refreshments at 1:30pm**

**Film starts 2pm**

**January 18th**

**It's a Wonderful Life 1:36**

\*\*\*

**February 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Seven Brides for Seven Brothers 1:42**

\*\*\*

**March 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Meet me in St Louis 1:53**

\*\*\*

**April 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Me and My Gal 1:44**

\*\*\*

**May 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Roman Holiday 1:53**

\*\*\*

**June 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**Summer Holiday 1:47**

**Dementia Friendly**

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## **Transforming Trade – an update from work in the field.**

### **Coastal farming and new markets in a climate crisis**

This year we have worked with 1500 farmers in two coastal districts of Tanzania. As weather patterns become increasingly unpredictable, farmers are having to adapt to meet the challenge.

Farmers have received training and attended practical demonstrations in regenerative practices and climate resilient farming, so they can produce quality crops in a volatile climate.

We also analysed local honey, sunflower, fruit tree, poultry and vegetable chains to connect these climate resilient practices with the right kind of markets. A business forum was formed between farmers and buyers to negotiate better contracts, prices and supply.

Transform Trade works with partners Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory and CAJAM.

---

### **Are you ready for the winter storms?**

There are storms coming this winter. So warns Ecclesiastical Insurance.

And so, it has been giving advice on how to prevent damage to property during the coming storm season. Its recommendations include removing loose roof materials, repairing damaged guttering, and clearing blocked rainwater gullies.

According to the Association of British Insurers, last year's storms led to more than 170,000 claims, amounting to an estimated £500million for property damage.

**Jeremy Trott, claims director at Ecclesiastical Insurance,** said: “Unpredictable and extreme weather is becoming more prevalent in the UK, from heatwaves to flooding.”

# THE SEDGLEY EDUCATIONAL TRUST

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.

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by Karen B

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## Stronger

Statistics prove we're all getting stronger.

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*From the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly observed in what he made.*

*Romans 1:20*

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# THE CHRISTMAS TRIO

There was a little Christmas tree sitting on a shelf,  
Next to him sat a Santa and a little Elf,  
People had been buying trees and Christmas toys,  
To make a special Christmas, for little girls and boys.

But the little Christmas tree, Santa and the little Elf,  
Had all been overworked and left upon a shelf,  
The store was close to closing, shoppers going home,  
And there was the little trio still left all alone.

They were sorry that they would miss out on the joy,  
Then suddenly a mother came with a little boy,  
The little boy saw the trio looking very sad,  
And counted up his money to see how much he had.

The shop assistant saw the boy had a worried frown,  
So she went to the shelf and took the trio down,  
She said these are now on special, how much can you pay?  
The little boy told her and she sold them right away.

Now the little trio will never be alone  
The lady and the little boy are taking them all home

**M J McGinty**

---

## **Joanne and John**

Wish to thank all who enquired, sent cards and messages  
of sympathy on the death of their mother Ivy Slater.

# The Rectory

## St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang ‘While shepherds watched ...’ had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with ‘Jesus loves You’, singing ‘Little donkey’, in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir men were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.

Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys’ Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first – ‘*pour encourager les autres*’. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,

**Eustace**

## **The First Christmas**

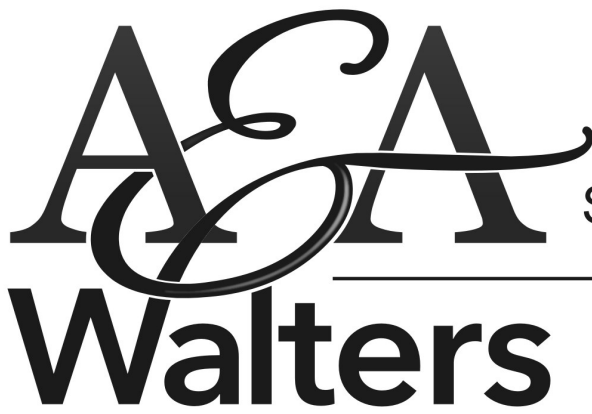
By Marian Swinger.

It never snows at Christmas in that dry and dusty land.  
Instead of freezing blizzards there are palms and drifting Sands.  
And years ago a stable and a most unusual star, and three wise men who  
followed it by camels not by car.

While sleepy on the quiet hills, a Shepherd gave a cry, he'd seen a crowd  
of angels in a silent starlit sky.

In the stable ox and ass stood very still and calm and gazed upon the  
baby , safe and snug in Mary's arms.

And Joseph lost in shadows, Face lit by an oil lamps glow , stood  
wondering, on that first Christmas Day 2000



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# SERVICES FOR THE MONTH - JANUARY

## **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January**

10am Holy Communion St Peters

## **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January**

8am Prayer Meeting All Saints

9.30am Holy Communion St Andrews

11am Holy Communion All Saints

6.30pm Evensong All Saints

## **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January**

10am Holy Communion St Peters

## **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

8am Holy Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship for All St Andrews

10am Holy Communion St Peters

11am Holy Communion All Saints

## **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January**

10am Holy Communion St Peters

## **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

8am Prayer Meeting All Saints

9.30am Worship for All St Andrews

10am Worship for All St Peters

11am Family Service All Saints

## **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January**

10am Holy Communion St Peters

## **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January**

8am Holy Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship for All St Andrews

10am Holy Communion St Peters

11am Prayer Meeting All Saints

## **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January**

10am Holy Communion St Peters



# SERVICES FOR THE MONTH - DECEMBER

## **3<sup>rd</sup> December**

9.30am Holy Communion St Andrews

11am Holy Communion All Saints

6.30pm Evensong All Saints

## **6<sup>th</sup> December**

10am Holy Communion St Peters

## **10<sup>th</sup> December**

8am Holy Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship For All St Andrews

10am Holy Communion St Peters

11am Holy Communion All Saints

## **13<sup>th</sup> December**

10am Holy Communion St Peters

## **14<sup>th</sup> December**

7.45pm Nine Lessons and Carols with Worcester Cathedral choir All Saints

## **17<sup>th</sup> December**

9.30am Worship for All with Carol Service St Andrews

10am Worship for All St Peters with Carol Service

11am Family Service with Nativity All Saints

## **24<sup>th</sup> December**

8am Holy Communion All Saints

9.30am Worship for All St Andrews

10am Holy Communion St Peters

4pm and 5.30pm Christingle St Andrews

5.30pm Christingle All Saints

6pm Christingle St Peters

11.15pm Midnight Mass St Andrews

11.30pm Midnight Mass All Saints

## **25<sup>th</sup> December 9**

9.30am Holy Communion All Saints

9am Holy Communion St Peters

## **31<sup>st</sup> December**

11am Team Service All Saints