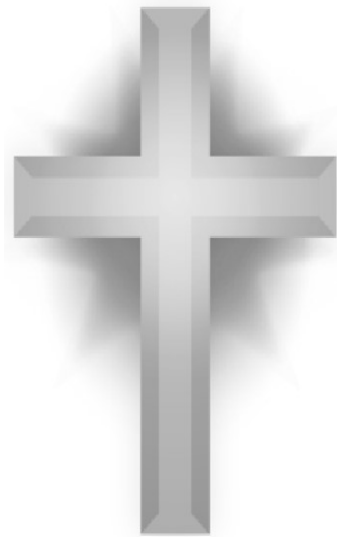
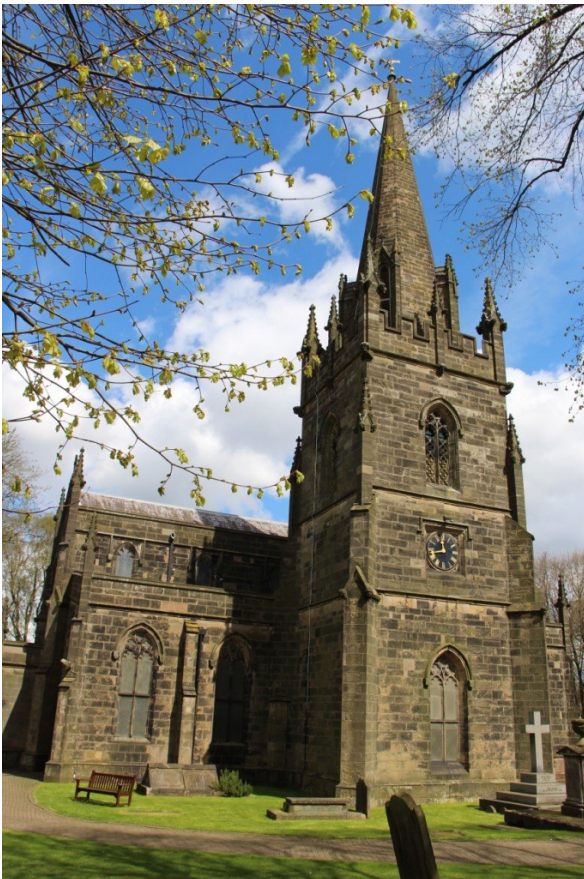


THE BEACON

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ST. ANDREW'S THE STRAITS & ST. PETERS UPPER GORNAL

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50p

September 2021

PARISH WIDE 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
Ordinand and ALM	Claire Cox	07812 010108
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Baker	01902 882847
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 880727
	Jackie Hewlett	01902 295164
	Sarah Parker	01902 885570
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader and Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Singing Angels	Claire Cox	07812 010108
PCC Secretary	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
PCC Treasurer	Sheila Moss	01902 893570
Parish Office	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461

St Peters

Who's Who

Parish Warden	David Moss	01902 893570
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
Children's Advocate	Carol Haynes	
Treasurer	Alan Turner	01902 670938
DCC Secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007
Little Angels Baby & Toddler Group	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275

All Saints Who's Who

Vestry Clerk	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson	01902 673366
	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
DCC Secretary	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Brett Morgan	07590 687982
Junior Church	Barbara Price	01902 676591
Bell Ringer	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Organist	Martin Platts	07941 173252
Youth Leader	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Brownies	Heather Churm	01902 674709
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	01902 674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	01902 881374
Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	01902 672880
Rainbows	Liz Naylor	07827 629648
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461
Server/Verger	Len Millard	01902 676339
	Steve Castle	07971 899072
Noah's Ark		
Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	01902 672556

Funerals

FUNERALS IN JULY

5TH TREVOR JOHN BUCK GORNAL WOOD
6TH MAUREEN SYLVIA WASSELL ALL SAINTS
12TH LILIAN MABLE HURLEY GORNAL WOOD
20TH AUDREY MAVIS BAKER GORNAL WOOD
27TH GLYN STANLEY DAVIS ALL SAINTS
27TH MARJORIE BURGWIN GORNAL WOOD
29TH PEGGIE MARION MOSS HAZELDINE ST PETERS

FUNERALS IN AUGUST

2ND MICHAEL JAMES WHEELER GORNAL WOOD
11TH GAVYN JOHN EVANS ALL SAINTS
13TH CHRISTINE HILL GORNAL WOOD
19TH DAWN ANN BRAIDEN ALL SAINTS
25TH VALERIE CHRISTINE TIMMIS 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 September magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 24th September

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: **www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk**

To Magazine Deliverers

Could you please get email addresses for all the people that you deliver to and let either Gail Griffiths or Karen Evans know .

MAGAZINE COLLECTORS

all people that kindly deliver the magazines can you now please start collecting the money and let Karen Evans know when it is ready for picking up. Thank you.

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 for 2021 or 2022, please contact

Chris Williams chriswilliams550@btinternet.com.

From Guy Hewlett

After more than 25 years of ordained ministry and after a period of prayer and discernment I have decided, with Jackie, that next year is the right time to retire from stipendiary ministry.

Leaving is never easy but we do believe that God is calling us to the next phase of our lives and of our ministry.

I have discussed this with the Archdeacon and the Bishop and my last Sunday in the Parish of Gornal and Sedgley as Team Rector will be Sunday the 27th of February 2022.

I know that this is nearly 6 months away but as we begin to look to next year in our parish planning it felt right to let you all know now.

The PCC has a meeting with Archdeacon Nikki and the Area Dean David Hoskin on the 14th of September. This is an early meeting to begin the discussions regarding my retirement and the hoped-for appointment of a new Team Rector.

The meeting will cover the need to begin some local discussions about how ministry is best shaped across the wider area.

This doesn't mean the Diocese will not be filling my post, but it reflects the more creative and constructive way the Diocese are now considering all vacancies as they arise. It will help to see how future deployment of Clergy can best enable healthy and sustainable churches taking into consideration the amount of ministry parishes can afford.

The Diocese will need to gain an understanding of the needs of the area, and how this links in with neighbouring parishes, and then work out a way forward.

Change is always a challenge, but in scripture we read:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." —*Philippians 4:6*

Please pray for us as we pray for you. We are here for the next 6 months!

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

With our love in Christ,

Guy and Jackie

Flying bishop

The new Bishop wanted a bird's eye view of his new diocese, so he had an idea. He rang his local airfield to charter a flight, and was told that a twin-engine plane would be waiting for him. Arriving at the airfield, the bishop spotted a plane warming up outside a hangar. He jumped in, slammed the door shut, and shouted, "Let's go!"

At once the pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind and took off. Once in the air, the bishop spent several minutes enjoying the views, and looking for local landmarks. Finally, he instructed the pilot, "Fly down the valley now and make low passes so I can take pictures of some of the best of the old parish churches."

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I'm the new bishop," he replied happily, adjusting his camera, "and I want some good aerial views of my diocese."

The pilot was silent for a moment. Finally he stammered, "So, what you're telling me, is, you're NOT my flight instructor?"

Becoming new

When a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, it's hard to believe it's the same creature. But at both stages of its life, it has a body that is perfectly suited to living in a particular environment.

This insect can help us understand the afterlife and the significance of the resurrected Jesus. Paul, on his journeys, discovered that some members of the church in Corinth were confused about life after death. Paul wrote a lengthy letter to them to explain the importance of the resurrection of Jesus, and how it affects our future existence.

Paul doesn't mention caterpillars and butterflies but describes a seed becoming a plant. By just looking at an individual seed there is no knowing what it is going to look like! But out of its death comes a beautiful new life form.

Paul points out that all living beings have a body that enables them to live in a particular environment. There are earthly bodies for living in a physical world and a spiritual body for living in the heavenly realms. And so God will give to us a new spiritual body to enable us to live with Him in heaven.

Of course, all butterflies eventually die, but in our resurrected body we will not be subject to decay or death. How do we know this? Jesus said: "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Jesus pioneered the way for us. He died on the cross, arose from the grave, and so opened up the way for all believers in Him to go to Heaven. Thanks be to God!



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INVITATION

As someone involved in education, we would like to invite you to join with us on

Sunday 5th September from 3 - 4pm

to pray for each other as we prepare for the new academic year.

As we commence as a new school, we wish to put God first in all we do, invite his presence into our classrooms, and to know we have good relationships with like-minded professionals.

Hot drinks & scones will be served at the conclusion, so please RSVP.

The Bread we eat

The majority of Sunday morning service in churches throughout the world are based on the Last Supper of Jesus.

At the Passover meal, on the night before His death, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples saying, “This is My body given for you;” (Luke 22:19a). He also took wine and passed it to each of them and said, “This is My blood, given for you.” These two elements, the bread and the wine, continue to be the central focus for Christians: doing what Jesus asked us to do, ‘Do this in remembrance of me’. (Luke 22:19b)

What we call this service varies between denominations and even between churches within the same denomination. It is a way of giving ‘thanks’ as Jesus did (the word ‘Eucharist’ comes from the Greek by way of Latin, and it means ‘thanksgiving’), reminding us not only of the tremendous sacrifice that Christ had made on our behalf, but also recalling the love and joy that Jesus brings to the community.

The word ‘Communion’ comes from something done with others – the community. It’s done with Christ. It’s done with other worshippers. In sharing the meal, ‘I’ becomes ‘us’.

The word ‘Mass’ comes from the conclusion to the traditional service – which was in Latin: ‘Ite, missa est.’ ‘Go. You are being sent.’ Today we use similar words, ‘Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.’

At the moment many churches, especially the Church of England, are only giving bread to the congregation with the priest alone consuming the wine. So the meaning underlying the taking / the giving of bread is more crucial than ever. In some denominations the bread is literally the ‘daily bread’, whilst in others it is a ‘wafer’ or yeast free bread – as was used at the original Passover.

This month: Have a look at the bread that is placed into your hands the next time you ‘receive’. How does it reflect receiving Christ into your life?

Mothers' Union

Finally we were able to meet, face-to-face, as a branch, in July! It was lovely to come together, share Communion, and spend time chatting with friends many members had only spoken with on the phone for so many months. We had our belated AGM where we had the opportunity to thank Anne Ridge for her years of service to the branch as our Treasurer and to welcome Judy Clements who has taken over the position.

The weekend of August 6th to 9th was important to members of the Mothers' Union as it marked the centenary of the death of Mary Sumner, our founder.

Churches across the diocese with Mothers' Union branches had flower arrangements and displays showing the many projects and campaigns supported by members.

All Saints' and St Andrew's Churches opened to visitors on Friday 6th and remembered Mary Sumner and the work of the Mothers' Union at their Sunday services.

Thank you to Rosemary Moss and Karen Turnock who did two beautiful flower arrangements, one for Mary Sumner, and the other in memory of past members. We had many compliments about them.

I have taken the knitting, that was blessed at our service, to the Women's Refuge, and the Baby Unit and 'Forget-me-Not' Dementia Unit at Russell Hall Hospital.

Margaret Dain and I attended the Mary Sumner Day Service at Holy Trinity, Amblecote on Saturday 8th. Father Alan gave an excellent address and afterwards we chatted to members from around the diocese while enjoying a buffet lunch.

Over the weekend we had £70 in donations, towards the 'Summer of Hope' Appeal, which Worcester Diocese Mothers' Union are match-funding.

Deanery Festival

We are hoping to have our Deanery Festival at St Mark's, Pensnett at 2.00pm on Tuesday 7th September. I have a Branch Leaders' meeting on 23rd August (after the magazine goes to print) at which we will be discussing the festival and whether it will still go ahead at this time. I have provisionally booked our church hall for that afternoon so we would be able to meet if the festival is cancelled. I will contact you all with arrangements after our meeting.

Evening Meeting

Our evening meeting on Tuesday 21st September at 7.30pm, in church, is entitled 'Who and What?'

There will also be a discussion about evening meetings in 2022. It is important that those members who attend evening meetings come so that we get everyone's views.

Congratulations to Kath and Graham Apperley who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary and Anne and Crispin Ridge who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in August.

While away last month we visited RHS Harlow Carr, 'one of Yorkshires most relaxing and innovative gardens at the gateway to the Yorkshire Dales'. It was lovely to wander around this stunning 58 acre garden. To relax and take in the colours and scent of the flowers, to appreciate the planning that had gone into the design of the borders and the hours of tending to the garden by dedicated horticulturists. God is certainly at work in this place.

There were various quotes around the garden and I share this one with you.

Yesterday I was.
Tomorrow I will be.
Today I'll take my time
and enjoy being me.

Take care
Liz Williams



Macmillan Coffee Morning

We will be holding a Coffee Morning
on
Friday 24th September
10.00am - 12noon
at
All Saints' Church, Sedgley

We will comply with social distancing and request that visitors wear masks, other than when consuming food and drinks

Anxious neighbour?

If you have elderly neighbours who are on their own, it is worth bearing in mind that many of them will have been hit by pandemic anxiety. They may feel frightened to leave their homes.

Such is the finding of a recent study by the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London into the effects of the pandemic on the elderly. So, any act of neighbourly kindness on your part may be most welcome. Helpful jobs such as tidying the garden, doing some shopping, running errands, and simply sitting outside with them over a cup of tea might be greatly appreciated

Emma Whitehouse (Melhuish) will be taking part in the Ride Across Britain - Lands End to John O'Groats Ride starting on the 4th September. The ride will take 9 days and will finish on Sunday 12th September - the ride is fully supported however each night will be spent in a tent, not the luxury of a hotel!

Emma has paid to do this ride herself, but has decided to raise money for Parkinson's a cause close to her heart.

If you would like to sponsor her there are a couple of ways there will be a form left at the back of the church or you can do it online via Just Giving using the link below

You can donate to my JustGiving page here:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/emma-whitehouse15?utm_source=Sharethis&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=emma-whitehouse15&utm_campaign=pfp-email&utm_term=dca0555b0e544614bdf5433ed891edac

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to Parkinson's UK, so it's the most efficient way to give - saving time and cutting costs for the charity.

If you want to follow her journey she will be posting to Facebook daily during her trip.

Emma Whitehouse

Diagnosis

A man went into a drop-in medical centre where the diagnosis was done by a computer. The patient keyed in his symptoms. The machine whirred and buzzed for a few seconds and then presented its findings on the screen. It said simply: "There's a lot of it about."

Daughter-in-law

A young man rang his mother to announce, with great excitement, that he'd at last fallen in love and was contemplating marriage. He went on: "Just for fun, I'm going to bring over my girlfriend and two of her friends. I would like you to try and guess which one I'm going to marry."

The mother agreed. So, the next day her son arrived at his mother's house with three beautiful young women. They sat on the sofa and chatted for a while with the family.

When his mother went out to the kitchen to put the kettle on for tea, her son followed her. "Okay, mum," he said. "Guess which one I would like to marry."

She replied at once: "The one in the green dress." Her son was astonished and asked how on earth she had guessed. The mother shrugged. "That's easy. I don't like her."

Croutons

Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?

Grammatical sense

If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

Others

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?



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Female clergy

In 1992 the Church of England voted to allow the ordination of women. Since 2014 they have also been able to become Bishops. The percentage of female clergy across all denominations in the UK in 1992, the first year it was counted, was 7% (of which 5% was Church of England).

By the year 2000 it was 10% for all denominations, by 2008 19%, by 2016 21% and in 2019, the latest year available, it is 24% (but 29% for Church of England and 23% for their senior clergy).

The Salvation Army has the largest proportion of female officers – an estimated 49% in 2020. The United Reformed Church has also had a high percentage – 36% in 2020.

Likewise in 2020, the Methodist Church of Great Britain had 36%, and the Church of Scotland had 28%. In 2020 the Baptists had 15%, New Churches (especially Vineyard, Newfrontiers and Pioneer) 16%, and Pentecostals 15%. The Roman Catholics and the Orthodox have no women priests at all.

How do these percentages compare with female leadership generally? Globally there are 21 women serving as the head of state or government in 193 countries, which is 11%. In the UK, of the top FTSE 100 companies only 5% of the CEOs are women. Of the MPs returned in the 2019 general election, 34% were women. In the UK regular Armed Forces, 11% are women.

One can always make other comparisons, but by these few examples, the percentage of female ministers is at least comparable to, if not better than, other sections of British society.

The Church grass roots revolt

Giles Fraser reports on the **Unherd** web site that there is:

“A quiet but unmistakable rebellion is taking place within the Church of England, a groundswell of anger bubbling up from that most British of institutions: the Parish Church. And support for it shows no sign of waning.”

George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote:

“The current trajectory of our church is a huge mistake and the leadership is out of touch with ordinary churchgoers. It is time to rally the troops.”

The former Archbishop was writing in support of the newly formed “Save the Parish movement”; a somewhat damning statement for a former Archbishop to say about the present church leadership.

It was 1976 that the central Church decided that the parish was an inefficient way of running things and brought the ownership of parish assets under the control of the Diocese and power shifted from the parishes to the Diocesan structures as a result.

The “Save the Parish” met for the first time in early August at ancient St Bartholomew’s church in Smithfield. At that meeting Alison Millbank, Canon Theologian from Southwell Cathedral, said:

“the Church of England has totally capitulated to market values and managerialism... There has been a tendency to view the parish like some inherited embarrassing knick-knack from a great-aunt that you wish were in the attic.”

Fr Marcus Walker, the Rector of St Bartholomew’s, said of the Save the Parish:

“the last chance to save the system that has defined Christianity in this country for 1000 years”.

The senior clergy say they value the parish. And some do. But many on the ground are just not feeling the love.



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Back2Gather Service All Saints 17th October 4:00pm

The CYD Hub Team have been developing a new service called Back2Gather. It is a service for everyone!

There will be different ways to engage with the theme, which for this service is Harvest; learning about God's Kingdom and our place in it.

There will be activities including crafts, music, play, prayer and discussion, so something for everyone.

We'll learn some new worship songs and our time together will conclude with refreshments.

Why not come and experience something different?

We hope to be able to offer this style of service again with the second one on the 5th December, which is the 2nd Sunday of Advent.

If you would like to know more about the service please contact Rev Catherine, or one of the CYD Hub Team.



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Harry Secombe – genius for buffoonery

One hundred years ago, on 8th September 1921, Sir Harry Secombe was born in Swansea. The comedian, actor, writer, singer and TV presenter was one of the stars of the anarchic 1950s radio series, *The Goon Show*.

His family belonged to St Thomas Church, and his elder brother, Fred, became a Church of Wales priest. Later in life Sir Harry was a presenter of religious programmes, such as the BBC's *Songs of Praise* and ITV's *Highway*.

He met Spike Milligan during the war in North Africa and later bumped into him again at the Windmill Theatre, where he was doing comedy routines. There they also met Peter Sellers and Michael Bentine – forming the team that eventually produced *The Goon Show*. A natural clown with a “genius for buffoonery”, Harry was the focus, and he moved on to star in a series of films, including *Oliver!*

He was also a talented and popular tenor. He was knighted in 1981, referring to himself as Sir Cumference in reference to his size – he was later forced to diet for medical reasons, and died at the age of 79 of prostate cancer. His tombstone bears the inscription “To know him is to love him”.

Children and tea-drinking

Put the kettle on. Children should begin to drink tea from the age of four, in order to combat later stress, obesity and heart disease.

So says the results of a recent study which appeared in the *Nutrition and Food Technology* journal. It says that green tea and the more traditional black tea contain compounds which can aid concentration and cognitive function.

As one doctor said, “Including three cups of black tea daily as a part of a healthy lifestyle could help to preserve physical and mental health in childhood... and into old age.”

Parents could offer tea as a substitute for sweet and sugary drinks for children.

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* If you have the magazine delivered or are on our newsgroup we
* would love to hear from you.

* Anything from recipes, walks you have done, programmes you have
* watched, new hobbies you have taken up.

* You can email me on:

* admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

* Or post your article to me at:

* Parish Office

* Ladies Walk

* Sedgley

* DY3 3UA

* Look forward to hearing from you.

* **Gail**
*

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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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Remembering Dante

Dante Alighieri, the Italian ‘supreme poet’, died 700 years ago, on 13th September 1321. Regarded as the most important poet of the Middle Ages, he is best known for his *Divine Comedy*, widely considered the greatest literary work in Italian and an influence on such English writers as Chaucer, Milton and Tennyson.

Born in Florence in about 1265 but exiled from the city in 1301 amid political turmoil, Dante – a forerunner of the Renaissance – established the use of the vernacular instead of Latin in literature and helped standardise the Italian language.

His work and life were inspired by his love for Beatrice Portinari, whom he first met as a child: he claimed to be overwhelmed by her beauty. He never knew her closely, and when he was 12 his family arranged for him to marry Gemma, a member of the powerful Donati family. But Beatrice remained his inspiration, appearing in the *Divine Comedy* as a guide and depicted as semi-divine, in the style of a muse-like guardian angel.

The word Comedy does not indicate humour, but belief in an ordered universe: in this case it depicts a pilgrimage from Hell to Paradise, beginning with moral chaos and ending with a vision of God.

If you can't sleep well, then walk

A recent study by the Universities of London and Sydney has found that brisk walking for 150 minutes a week may reduce the risk of an early death caused by poor sleep.

Lack of sleep has links to an increased risk of stroke, heart disease and cancer. But according to the study, published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, exercise in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines ‘eliminated most of the deleterious associations’ of poor sleep with early death.

The WHO recommends 150 minutes brisk walking, or 75 minutes of running a week.

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Dead Sea Scrolls – brought to light 30 years ago

Thirty years ago, on 22nd September 1991, photographs and transcripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls were made available to scholars generally for the first time.

The Scrolls – ancient, mostly Hebrew or Aramaic manuscripts of leather, papyrus, and copper – were first found in 1947 near the shore of the Dead Sea. They come from various sites and date from the third century BC to the second century AD.

The decision by the Huntington Library, which is in San Marino, California, to make the Scrolls public was hailed by its director, Dr William A Moffett, as a bold move “equivalent to breaking down the Berlin Wall”. Up to that time access to the scrolls had been restricted to a fairly small group of ‘authorised’ scholars.

The Huntington photograph collection was created by philanthropist Elizabeth Hay Bechtel in 1980, with Robert Schlosser taking the actual pictures. After her death in 1987 they became the property of the library, with no agreed restrictions on their use – unlike the official collections, which certain experts reserved for their own use “to ensure scholarly accuracy”.

Last year the Museum of the Bible, in Washington DC, confirmed that all 16 of the fragments it owns are modern forgeries

How different churches cope with adversity

When a Methodist minister falls down the stairs, he picks himself up and says, “That was an experience, how do I learn from it?”

When a Catholic priest falls down the stairs, he picks himself up and says, “I must have done something really bad to deserve that.”

When a Presbyterian minister falls down the stairs, he picks himself up and says, “That was inevitable, I’m glad it’s over.”

When a vicar falls down the stairs, he picks himself up and says, “Will I need a faculty to get the staircase repaired?”

THIS LINK WILL TAKE YOU TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ONLINE RESOURCES INCLUDING SUNDAY SERVICES:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/church-online>

DAILY HOPE PHONE LINE

You can continue to access services at Daily Hope, which is a free national telephone line, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of the phone: 0800 804 8044.

Sarah Powell

Foot Health Practitioner

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

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

**The Secretary to the Trustees: 12 Larkswood Drive,
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The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

As with many of your ideas, your intentions are admirable; it is just that they don't work.

So it was with the recent wedding in your church, where you allowed the happy but quite mad young couple to try and imitate the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. It was kind of them to want to celebrate Will and Kate's recent 10th wedding anniversary, but it did not seem to occur to anybody that your church, converted from a 1960s warehouse, is fractionally less impressive than Westminster Abbey. And I feel that a backdrop of a car park and canal make a poor substitute for the Houses of Parliament and the Thames. Finally, even 43 very enthusiastic young people can hardly pretend they are a congregation of several thousand.



However, I do applaud your decision to invite me to take it, in order to impart a degree of gravitas to the proceedings, though of course I would not presume to upstage the Archbishop of Canterbury. (Although were he to ask my advice on how to run the Anglican Church, I have several helpful suggestions to hand.) But even I struggled to keep things on a proper course when the bride, lacking a horse-drawn carriage, simply walked up the lane with her ancient pony. (Which then tried to bite me at the church door!)

Her arrival was greeted with music. I will pass no comment on this, as the Bible says we are to make a joyful noise, not necessarily music, unto the Lord. I am sure that drums and kazoos and guitars all have their place – somewhere or other.

It was a pity that the groom, unlike Prince William, had not thought to get to the church on time – or indeed, at all. It was fortunate that the bride's mother found him in that pub nearby, or really, we would have struggled to complete the wedding.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

World Wide Fund for Nature celebrates 60 years

The World Wildlife Fund (now the World Wide Fund for Nature) was founded 60 years ago in Switzerland, on 11th September 1961. It is now believed to be the world's largest conservation group, working in wilderness preservation, and reducing human impact on the environment. A group of distinguished scientists, conservationists and businessmen, including Sir Peter Scott and Sir Julian Huxley, put the organisation together and chose its original name and the famous panda logo. It changed its name to the World Wide Fund for Nature in the UK and several other countries in 1989, but it still uses the initials WWF all over the world in advertising campaigns. The late Prince Philip has been President of both the UK and international branches, and he was concerned particularly with encouraging faith communities to involve themselves in the environment. This led to a major conference in Italy in 1986, resulting in huge global publicity and tens of thousands of faith-led environmental initiatives around the world. Although there has been criticism centring on the placing of environmental issues above human rights in some areas, the WWF now has more than five million supporters worldwide, working in more than 100 countries and supporting around 3,000 projects.

Gym?

Before setting off on a business trip to Birmingham, I called the hotel where I'd be staying to see if they had a gym. The hotel receptionist's sigh had a tinge of exasperation in it when she answered.

“We have over 100 guests at this facility,” she said. “Does this ‘Jim’ have a last name?”

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SERVICES FOR THE MONTH - SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 1st September – St Peters – 10am – Communion

Sunday 5th September

8am – Communion – All Saints

9.30am – Worship For All – St Andrews

10.30am – Worship For All – St Peters

10.30am – Communion – All Saints

6.30pm – Compline on zoom

Wednesday 8th September – St Peters – 10am – Communion

Sunday 12th September

8am – Communion – All Saints

9.30am – Worship For All – St Andrews

10.30am – Communion – St Peters

10.30am – Communion – All Saints

12.30pm – Baptism – All Saints

6.30pm – Compline on zoom

Wednesday 15th September – St Peters – 10am – Communion

Sunday 19th September

8am – Communion – All Saints

9.30am – Worship For All – St Andrews

10.30am – Communion – St Peters

10.30am – Communion – All Saints

6.30pm – Compline on zoom

Wednesday 22nd September – St Peters – 10am – Communion

Sunday 26th September

8am – Communion – All Saints

9.30am – Worship For All – St Andrews

10.30am – Communion – St Peters

10.30am – Communion – All Saints

12.30pm – Baptism – All Saints

6.30pm – Compline on zoom

Tuesday 28th September – St Andrews – 9.30am – Communion

Wednesday 29th September – St Peters – 10am – Communion