

Old Malden News



The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist, Malden

December 2019

50p

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Old Malden News

**The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist Parish Church Malden**
Church Road, Worcester Park KT4 7RY

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020 8330 2817
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St John the Baptist Parish Church, Malden

Directory

Vicar	The Revd Michael Roper	020 8337 8830
Asst Priest	The Revd Milly Broome m.broome@hotmail.co.uk	020 8337 1572
Reader & Choir Director	Mrs Marilyn Burkett m.c.burkett@btinternet.com	020 8337 6017
Pastoral Asst	Mr Anthony Pullen tony@pullen.me.uk	020 8949 6784
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PCC Treasurer	Mr Alastair Harris	020 8241 1087
Parish Administrator	Mrs Amy Chan	020 8330 2817
Safeguarding Officers	Mrs Vanessa Spreckley Ms Marie McGuire	07918 051099 07535 878107
Church Electoral Roll Officer	Mr Steve Clarke	020 8337 2392
Hall Bookings	Mrs Pat Sutton	020 8942 8321
Parish Website:	www.stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk	
Parish Blog:	http://stjohnschurchmalden.blogspot.com	
Parish Office:	administrator@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk	

Parish Calendar for December

Morning Prayer is said on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am

1	Advent Sunday		17.30 Carol Singing at WP Station
	08.00 Said Eucharist	13	18.30 Junior Choir
	09.45 Sung Eucharist		19.30 Adult Choir
	With Little Fishes		
	11.30 11Up Group	15	Advent 3
	12.30 Sunday Lunch Club		08.00 Said Eucharist
3	10.00 Holy Communion		09.45 Sung Eucharist
	10.30 Mother's Union Coffee		With Little Fishes
	20.00 PCC Meeting	18	09.30 Toddler Group
4	09.30 Toddler Group	19	14.00 Tea and Chat
	19.00 Malden Manor Concert	20	18.30 Junior Choir
	20.00 Advent Course		19.30 Adult Choir
5	14.00 Tea and Chat	21	09.30 Church Cleaning
	10.00 Advent Course		
	20.00 Reading Group	22	Advent 4
			08.00 Said Eucharist
6	18.30 Junior Choir		09.45 Sung Eucharist
	19.30 Adult Choir		18.30 Nine Lessons and Carols
8	Advent 2	24	Christmas Eve
	08.00 Said Eucharist		15.00 Crib Service
	09.45 Sung Eucharist		23.30 Midnight Mass
	11.30 Thirty Minutes	25	Christmas Day
9	20.00 Julian Group		08.00 Said Eucharist
10	14.00 Mother's Union		09.45 Festival Family Eucharist
11	09.30 Toddler Group		
	20.00 Advent Course	29	Christmas 1
12	10.00 Advent Course		08.00 Said Eucharist
	14.00 Tea and Chat		09.45 Said Eucharist with Hymns

Regular Services at St John's

Said Eucharist

8.00am Sunday

a simple celebration of Holy Communion;
about 40 minutes

Sung Eucharist

9.45am Sunday

a celebration of Holy Communion with music
and ceremony; about 75 minutes

first and third Sunday with **LITTLE FISHES**

third Sunday with Ministry for Wholeness

Thirty Minutes

11.30am second Sunday

a lively service for pre-school children;
about 30 minutes

Midweek Eucharist

10.00am first Tuesday

a simple celebration of Holy Communion;
about 30 minutes

Morning Prayer

8.45am Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

(term time only)

a quiet time of prayer and readings; about 15 minutes

Vicar's December Letter

Christmas is coming once again, don't say I didn't tell you. It's not as if you've not had plenty of notice. I'm still recovering from the shock of seeing the Christmas puddings and cakes on display in the supermarket back in September. I shan't repeat what I said on that occasion.

Christmas comes and goes year after year with an ever-increasing build-up that makes it very difficult to appreciate the true meaning of the season itself. Anyone with teenagers knows what it's like when Christmas is effectively over before the Queen's Speech and disappointment and disillusionment is already making itself felt. Our modern celebration is awfully top-heavy with expectations and pressure to make it all perfect, to live up to this idea of what Christmas ought to be or how we imagine it should be. But for many Christmas is a difficult time, not only for those who have lost a loved one through bereavement or are separated by long distance, but also because Christmas itself is evocative of the past, of all the other Christmases before. The here and now may all too often be lonely and bleak compared to the happier times of Christmas Past.

The key to making the most out of Christmas is never losing sight that beneath the mountains of wrapping paper and glittering decorations, noisy toys, and endless food is the simple truth that God has come into the world in a new and exciting way that no one ever imagined possible, in order that we might, each one of us, come to see just how much he loves us. For God to come into the world, entrusted to a young homeless couple fleeing for safety far from home, as a helpless babe in a cold stable; speaks volumes about the lengths God will go to connect with us. That connection made all the harder by the challenges of keeping the season as we sometimes feel we ought, distracted by the glitter and the expectations of the past.

Let us enjoy ourselves by every means, but let us make a bit of room in our busyness for some reflective quiet time with the newborn king. Christmas comes but once a year, and they grow up so fast. We won't have the babe very long, make the most of him while you can.

Michael



ROMANIA: a huge thank you to all those who continue to knit and crochet for us – we receive contributions from the knitting and crochet group, but also from the wider parish. We have collected sixteen large black sacks of blankets, knitted squares, jumpers, cardigans, hats and gloves - together with a number of bags containing brand

new sheets and pillowcases – still in their wrappers! All these are being collected from me to join the next consignment to Romania through the Romanian Aid Foundation.

The lorry will be setting off



in the next week or so for its long journey to North-East Romania.



These are just a small selection of your donations. We know that all of our donations are so gratefully received and we know that they will reach the families who need them. Winters can be particularly harsh in Romania so warm clothing is essential.

Our donations are still needed with a request for knitted and crochet blankets and new knitted babywear. As yet, no one is sure what will happen with tariffs and border checks after Brexit but at the moment, there are no new checks in operation. We pray that vital aid work will be able to continue. In the meantime, a big thank to all who have donated over these past weeks.



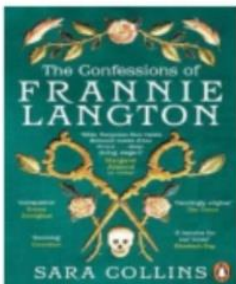
Marilyn Burkett



St John's Reading Group December

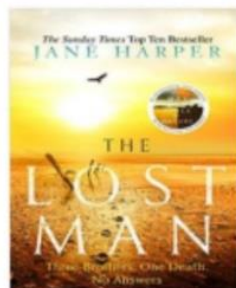
At our November meeting, we returned to the wonderful world of classics with George Eliot's **Silas Marner**. Perhaps some of you may have read this lovely novel when you were at school – but it is well worth re-visiting.

This the shortest of Eliot's novels is often the best loved with its themes of hope, redemption and the indomitable human spirit. Even if you have read this novel some time ago, it is still well worth re-reading. Silas Marner – the weaver of Raveloe, settles in a fictitious village in Warwickshire. Formerly living in a slum street in Northern England, Silas is 'framed' by his best friend, and is falsely accused of stealing funds from the local Calvinist church. Silas' fiancée marries his best friend so Silas leaves the area with a broken heart, having lost his trust in God. In Raveloe, Silas lives a solitary life as a weaver and his sole focus becomes the gold he earns and hoards from his work as a weaver. However, catastrophe is about to strike – and Silas' gold is stolen. On a bitterly cold and snowy night, Silas' life is changed for ever as a two-year old child wanders into his house. As the story unravels, we meet the squire's sons, Dunsey and Godfrey, and Silas' friendly neighbour Dolly Winthrop. The themes of loyalty, love, redemption, religion and good overcoming evil are beautifully entwined – producing a brilliant read. 8½/10.



At our December meeting, we shall be discussing '**The Confessions of Frannie Langton**', set in 1820s London as Frannie's trial at the Old Bailey begins. Having left Paradise, Jamaica, she begins her new life in London. She is accused of murdering her employers, Mr & Mrs Bentham but is she guilty?

For January – our choice is 'The Lost Man' by Jane Harper



For February – our choice is 'The Man with No Face' by Peter May. (Not a horror story – but a reprint of an earlier novel, set in Brussels in the 1970s with a thriving European Common Market. What could go wrong?)



Our December meeting will be our 'Christmas Special' – on Thursday 5th December at 8.00pm in the Coffee Lounge at church.

In the meantime – sort out your Christmas list to include some wonderful books.

Marilyn Burkett



For Remembrance Day 2018, I assembled a collection of your photos of loved ones/family friends/relations who served in WW1. This was to mark the extra special Remembrance Sunday and to commemorate one hundred years since the Armistice was signed in 1918, ending one of the most terrible conflicts in world history. All of the contributions have now been assembled into a Book of Remembrance – which is now available for you to see in St John's library. The Book also pays tribute to those who served in the Royal Flying Corps, formed in 1918, which became the Royal Air Force. We remembered also those named on our own War Memorial – and I would like to express my thanks to David Rymill who has recently provided me with additional material on some of our named local men who were casualties of war. As I read your contributions to our collective story, I was so moved by the courage which so many must have shown in the face of death. It is difficult for us to even contemplate the terrible conditions which those young men experienced. We paid tribute to all those who served – whether they were killed, injured or survived. It was poignant to put faces to names – these were real people.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning - We will remember them.

Miss Mary Ralph, who died peacefully on 31st October 2019 after a short illness, was born in Worcester Park on 30th September 1936, the daughter of Leslie (Lel) and Elsie Ralph. She grew up in Fullbrooks Avenue, where her parents had set up home following their marriage in 1932, and where the family lived until 1962. Mary was baptised and confirmed at St John's, where she and her parents were regular members of the congregation - her mother issued Sunday School attendance stamps, and her father was a sidesman. Mary attended the Parochial School, subsequently Rosebery County School for Girls and finally City of Birmingham Training College. After graduating, she spent a period teaching in Clapham, before returning to Birmingham and later Solihull to take up various primary school teaching posts. Her Christian faith and church involvement were key to her life, and she retained a great love of St John's.



Christmas



**Our Service of
Nine Lessons & Carols will be on
Sunday 22nd December at 6.30 pm**

Christmas Services:

Christmas Eve Tuesday 24th December

Crib Service at 3.00 pm

Midnight Mass at 11.30 pm

Christmas Day

Wednesday 25th December

Said Eucharist at 8.00 am

Family Festival Eucharist at 9.45 am





**The Parish Church of
St John the Baptist,
Malden
(Church Road)**

**Service of Nine
Lessons &
Carols**

**Sunday 22nd
December 2019
at 6.30pm**



Alastair K Daniel and Louise Howlett



Songs and Stories of the Night



Saturday 21 December: 19.30h - 20.45h
Price: Adults £8; Children/concessions £4;
Family Ticket £20

St. John's Hall, 411 Malden Road,
Worcester Park KT4 7NY
Performances followed by seasonal refreshments
Tickets are limited: for more details,
or to make a reservation, call 020 8330 6558

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign 2019

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign. It takes place each year from **25 November** (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until **10 December** (International Human Rights Day).

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins with many others, globally, to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence in *all* forms and in *all* societies, including among the LGBT+ community and those in care.

Violence against women and girls: how does our Christian faith guide our understanding?

God exists in, and created equality of relationship. The relationship of the Trinity powerfully illustrates this; each distinct from but equal to the other; relating together in loving agreement. The equality of human relationships is established at the beginning of creation:

God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

All are created in the likeness of God, whatever our gender; as such all are entitled to be treated as God's precious children, whose image we reflect.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Thus, any culture of violence against one another, whether physical or emotional, is a distortion of relationships as originally intended; equality and respect in the sight of God.

Throughout the Old Testament God's attitude to women is positive and pastoral. There are many instances of women in positions of influence and leadership; also provision made for those in positions of vulnerability, as in *Deuteronomy 26:12*. A woman's choice in marriage is highlighted in *Genesis 24:57* and other examples; whilst in Proverbs "wisdom" is personified as a woman.

Where instances of violence against women are recorded they are described as a wrongful action with negative consequences, for example the rape of Tamar by her half brother in 2

Samuel 13 which led to serious family conflict and bloodshed. God's position remains constant.

Within Jewish society attitudes began to change towards women through the times of exile and inter-mingling with other cultures. The religious leaders attempted to protect the purity of their race through more restrictive laws, many of which had a negative effect on the lives of women. Thus by the time of Jesus' birth Jewish men would pray every morning and thank God that He had not made them a Gentile, a slave or a woman.

However, Jesus radically challenged this culture through his actions and teaching. He treated women as completely equal to men calling them "Daughters of Abraham", *Luke 13:16*.

He openly conversed with women; met their needs and included them amongst his followers and supporters. He disregarded Jewish edicts when he healed the woman suffering from a haemorrhage for twelve years; choosing compassion over the letter of the law. He revealed his divinity to Martha, *John 11:25-26*, and chose to appear firstly to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection, *John 20:10-18*.



In a situation where violence against a woman was allowed under Jewish law, that of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus averted the aggression with wisdom and compassion; using the situation to challenge her accusers without condoning her wrongdoing.

Thus the arrival of Christianity transformed life for women. The New Testament indicates that they played a significant role in the life of the early church. They were involved in leadership roles alongside Paul and others; they used their homes for gatherings of believers and had important input into the missionary growth of the church. Relationships between Christian men and women were surely ones of equality and mutual respect.

Within the marriage relationship the sometimes controversial edict by Paul for wives to submit to their husbands, *Ephesians 5:22*, becomes less so when seen in the context of the previous verse, *submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*, and the instruction to husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church v25: that is, to be prepared to lay down their lives for them. With this perspective there is no room for violence of any sort; whether psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

However, history has unfolded since New Testament times, both in the church and the world: there can never be any justification for violence against women. In our campaigning against it we seek to follow the example of God. We look for inner change within perpetrators as they are enabled to conduct equal loving relationships, respecting women as made in the image of God.

We build our campaign on God's command: to love our neighbour as ourselves. Where this is followed there will be no place for violence against anyone.

Liz Pullen



St John's Carol Singing 2019

You are invited to come along to Worcester
Park Railway Station between

5.30pm - 6.45pm

Thursday 12th December when St John's will be carol singing to
raise money for The Princess Alice Hospice.

[South Western Railway has kindly given us permission to do this]

This is 'General Election Day' (and maybe one of the few days in
December when the trains are set to run) - so let's sing and raise
people's spirits. Let's 'Rejoice and be Merry!'

Please help us to make this a really festive and worthwhile start
to Christmas! All ages - all voices- families welcome! (Parents
must accompany and take responsibility for children at all
times)

Please sign the lists in the porch/coffee lounge if you are
able to come along and sing with us.

Advent Short Course

Have you ever wondered why we have the Christmas stories we do?
Come and join us for a short course as we look at the two different
accounts of the Nativity of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke and
where some of the traditions surrounding his birth come from. No
prior Biblical knowledge needed, just a willingness to share and learn
together in this laid-back way. The course will be held on
Wednesday evenings at 8:00pm (4th & 11th) and Thursday mornings
at 10:00am (5th & 12th) in the Coffee Lounge at St. John's. Everyone
is welcome so do join us!

AN EASY WAY TO INCREASE YOUR GIVING TO ST.JOHNS:

GIFT AID FOR DONATIONS

When you buy anything which you subsequently donate to St.Johns, you can increase the value by claiming Gift Aid. Note that if you buy something using funds from a budget of St. Johns, this is NOT a donation by you, and so the method below cannot be applied. However, if you buy something and then donate it, please keep the receipt to identify the item and the amount paid, and then complete a Gift Aid form from Alastair Harris, our Treasurer. He can then claim back 25% of the amount you paid, and place it into general church funds. This is a useful way of increasing church income in a recognised way. If you are only buying even small items, but perhaps on a regular basis, then it is perfectly acceptable to group these receipts together rather than presenting them one at a time. Clearly, if you are buying a one off larger capital item, as for example the new chairs in the coffee lounge, then this method should be used to increase the income to St.Johns. This method can be used for anything that is donated – for example the bottles for the bottle stall at the Fair. So please look carefully at what you buy and donate, and this might reveal more possibilities than you first might imagine. One can claim Gift Aid on items purchased within the last four years. If you have any questions, then please contact myself or Alastair.

Richard Burkett

Finance Committee

A Christmas Tale from the Saddle.....

The late December afternoon was chilly, but dry and bright and the motor cycle rider was looking forward to a good brisk ride home to family and friends for Christmas. He got the OK to finish work earlier than usual and after putting on all his winter riding kit was ready to join the hurly-burly of pre-Christmas traffic. What he did not anticipate was how different this trip home would be. Leaving the city environment and bright lights behind him he decided to turn off the main road and use the quieter route across the moors. The miles soon rolled by under his wheels but at a particularly lonely stretch the engine started spluttering and misfiring and eventually stopped altogether just as he was able to coast into the safety of a lay-by. Feeling slightly despondent he tried to re-start the engineit would only spin over but would not fire up....then the cold truth of reality descended upon him....in his rush to get away from the city he forgot to fill up with petrol before leaving the main road. He removed his crash helmet and ear plugs and searched through his pockets for his mobile phone, luckily there was a good signal and he was able to contact his road-side recovery company and sheepishly describe his situation to them. They assured him they would come to his rescue as soon as possible but did warn him it could be at least an hour. With that the hapless rider pulled up his coat collar, found a convenient tree to sit down and lean against and just wait. After a short while he felt something tugging and shaking his shoulder and through slightly blurred eyes he saw this large cheery fellow with a white beard, a round ruddy face with thin spectacles perched on the end of his nose, dressed in a red suit with black shiny boots. His visitor helped him to his feet and led him towards his vehicle parked in the lay by opposite with a line of reindeer attached to the front of it, the lead one then turned round to see what was going on and revealed a red shiny nose!! Within a few minutes the rider and this stranger were off up the road and took off into the night sky soaring over the inky darkness of the moors towards the warm orange glow of the town that lay ahead. As they approached it they swooped down low over the rooftops and above the brightly lit streets, looking down they could see children and grown ups all looking back up at them waving and cheering...they flew low over the market square where a light-covered Christmas tree stood tall and proud surrounded by carol singers who all looked up and while still singing waved their song sheets at them. Around the edge of the square could be seen small buildings with spirals of smoke creeping up into the night sky while clusters

of people stood around all of whom stopped and looked up at what was going on. With the opposite side of the town blending into the darkness of the moors the vehicle took a sharp turn to the left and the bemused motorcycle rider felt himself start to fall out just as he became aware of someone tugging and shaking at his shoulder as if to save him, he came round to see standing in front of him a large cheery fellow with silver stripes down the arms of his jacket and whose vehicle this time was adorned with orange flashing lights. To his relief it was the recovery man with a container of the liquid that would see him on his way again. With his bike now running sweetly the recovery man advised him of a garage in the next town just along the road. After an exchange of good natured banter and wishing each other well the rider set off towards the town, as he got nearer to it the orange glow looked familiar and a strange unusual feeling came over him...there were children and grown ups all out and about enjoying the pre-Christmas evening, he approached the market square to see before him a brightly lit Christmas tree standing tall and proud with carol singers nearbyaround the edge of the square was a cluster of small buildings selling hot food and drinks, chestnuts being roasted on a brazier and the aroma of sausages and onions being cooked with spirals of smoke going up into the night sky. Were these the same people who earlier on waved up at him as he flew overhead ?...Did they know or even think it might have been him waving back as he flew overhead he certainly could not ask anybody....it would be a secret only to himself. Just along the road he found the garage and topped up with petrol to see him safely on his way and while warming his hands around a cup of coffee reflected on the events of the evening. He then phoned home to say he was safe and well, apologised for being late but was too embarrassed to give the reason why and even more reluctant to relay the other events of the journey home. Would you ????

Happy Christmas...***John Williams***

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