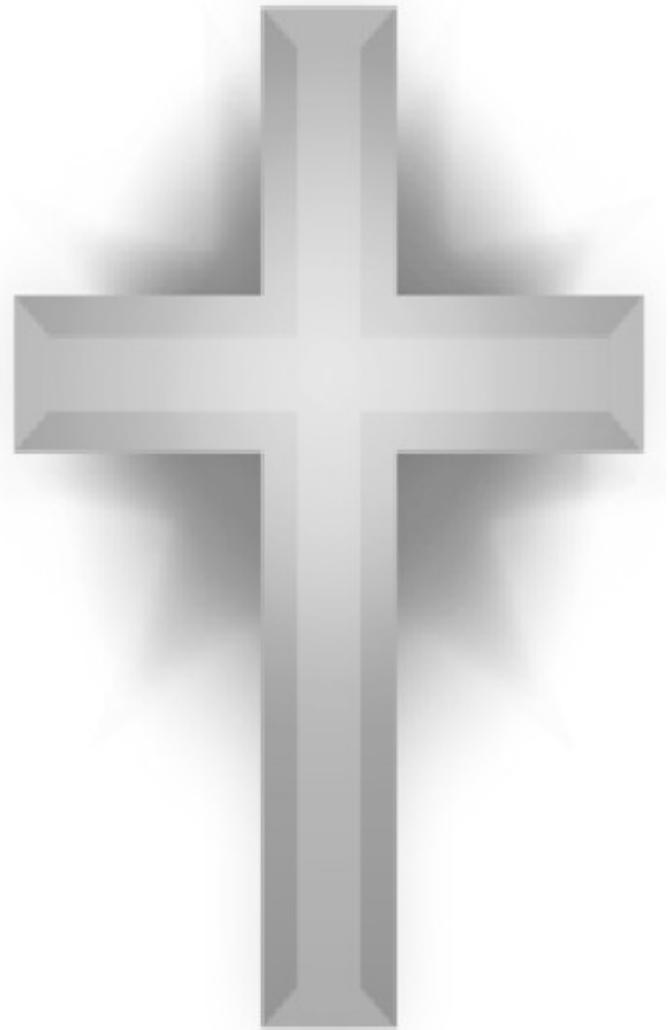
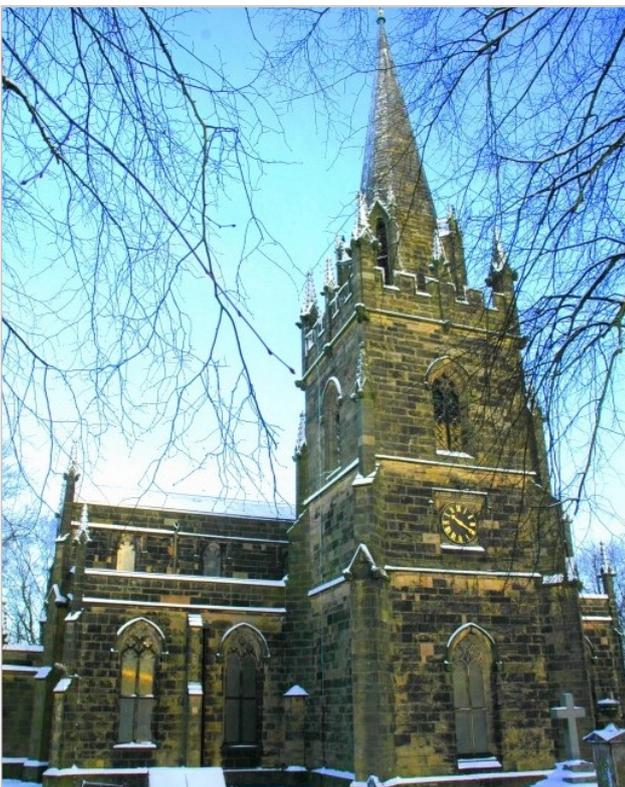


THE BEACON

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



50p

DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

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Youth Leader	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
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A Letter from the Bishop of Dudley
The Right Revd. Graham Usher

Creating a Manger in our Lives.

A fable from my childhood came to mind recently. It went something like this:

In the carpenter's shop the tools were tetchy.

"Brother Hammer, you're too noisy."

"Me? Brother Plane's work is all superficial. No depth."

"Me? Brother Tape Measure is always telling others what to do, measuring us all by his own standards."

"Me? It's Brother Screwdriver who drives us all crazy going round in circles."

"Me? Sister Sandpaper always rubbing the wrong way."

"Me? Sister Saw goes back and forth endlessly."

Then the footsteps of the carpenter could be heard and the bickering ceased. When he entered the shop, he put on his apron, went to his bench, and picked up Brother Tape Measure, then Brother Plane, then Brother Hammer and Sister Screwdriver, then Sister Saw, and lastly Sister Sandpaper, whom he used to smooth all the rough edges of the manger he had made. A manger for a herd of animals to snuffle their noses in so as to find the oats in the bleak midwinter.

Perhaps through the season of Advent we should make a manger in our lives, being guided by he who learnt these skills in a Nazareth workshop. Measure where we are in relation to he who gave the length of his. Plane away the places where forgiveness is needed.

Hammer against the injustices of the world and screw together the fragments in need of reconciliation.

Saw away the dead branches that need to be pruned so that we might grow.

Sand the rough edges of our tongues, our thoughts, our lack of generosity. In such a way we respond to the invitation “come let us walk in the light of the Lord” and Jesus is laid again in the manger of our lives and our communities.

From the manger he looks at us, and the whole world, with eyes of peace and forgiveness and love. Just as he will when others use their carpentry skills to fix a wooden beam to a tree outside a city wall.

Travel well this Advent in the company of the master carpenter and see again his most amazing creation, not in wood and nails, but in flesh and blood.

All Saints’ 2016 Christingle Service

5.30p.m on 24th December

Come along to celebrate Jesus’s birth !

Children, Moms, Dads, Nannys, Granddads

and even Great Grandparents are more than welcome.

But – please come early – the Church is normally packed for this occasion.

All proceeds from the collection will go to

Children’s Society

to benefit children who are not as fortunate as your little angels

“O come, O come, Emmanuel” December is Advent then Christmas...

By Suzanne E Bradley

December... Advent marks the start of the start of the Church's year and so December is a little like "... the first and the last, the beginning ... - of the Church's year -... and the end" (Revelation 22.13) – of the calendar year.

It is during most of December that, as Christians, we observe Advent – the “season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time” (Times and seasons, Church of England). Each day we are a little closer to Christmas when we celebrate God's greatest gift to us all – his Son, Jesus; Emmanuel – meaning ‘God with us’.

However, Christmas seems to arrive earlier each year... At the time of writing this it is early November and yet Merry Hill had its Christmas light switch-on at the end of October, Christmas adverts started to appear around the same time. Plastic tubs (used to be tins!) of chocolates were in the supermarkets in the summer... I have already seen a Christmas tree in a window of someone's home on the way from work...

Advent calendars with a picture behind each door, along with the home-made or shop bought fill-your-own Advent calendars seem to have been replaced by those with chocolates, toys, cosmetics, electronic ones to download, and even porcelain ornaments or precious jewels – some quite expensive – Christmas Day for 24 days before it even arrives!

The more the days pass through December the more busy we, or everything around us, seems to be – the shops, the roads, the choice of things to buy, the shopping lists, the parties, the visiting...

STOP - “Do Nothing... Christmas is Coming”

“Do Nothing... Christmas is Coming” is “An Advent Calendar with a Difference” – a book by Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford, which I have bought for this Advent. A book for both Christians and non-Christians, each day 1 – 25 December Bishop Stephen highlights a topic related to the run up to Christmas and then suggests how we can STOP and take time out.

Away from the stresses and strains of some of the commercial side of Christmas which has overtaken Advent, and in the Church, Advent is similar to Lent – the vestments and hangings in church are purple in both seasons, there are no altar flowers; even though it is a “season of expectation and preparation”, I think Advent is a beautiful season.

I hope you all will be able to take time out to appreciate the words of the Advent carols we sing, marvel at “the natural symbols of darkness and light which are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas” – the candles on the Advent wreath or the single ‘Jesus, the light of the world’ candle on a Christingle, whilst enjoying some of the Christmas wonders pre-December 25th.

I wish you all an Advent season full of expectation and hope – taking time out to be still, leading to a wonderful Christmas filled with the love and joy and hope of God in the tiny precious baby that is our Lord Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us.

May God bless you all this Holy season and always,

Suzanne



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A Christmas Winter Warmer

In a heatproof glass, put a little chopped stem ginger, a teaspoon of the syrup, a grate of nutmeg and a pinch of cinnamon.

Add juice of half a lemon, plus a few slices, and top with boiling water.

Add honey to taste.

Delicious for the festive season!

Mistletoe's smelly history

Did you know that the word 'mistletoe' means dung on a tree? The Anglo-Saxons thought that mistletoe grew in trees where birds had left their droppings. Mistel means dung, and tan means twig



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All Saints Church Hall, 2pm on Thursday 8th December 2016.

Adults £4, children free.

Tickets available from members of the choir and Joyce Withers.
Proceeds to church funds.



The story of the Christingle

The word 'Christingle' actually means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years, and according to them, this is how the first Christingle might have been made:

Many years ago the children in a village were asked to bring a Christmas gift to put beside the crib in the church. One family was very poor, and had no money for gifts, but the three children were still determined to take something. The only nice thing they had was an orange, so they decided to give the Christ-child that.

But then they discovered the top was going green, so the eldest cut it out, and put a candle in the hole. To add some colour, one of the girls took a red ribbon from her hair and tied it around the middle of the orange. It was hard to make the ribbon stay still, so they fastened it in place with toothpicks. The toothpicks looked a bit bare, so the youngest child added some raisins to them.

The children took their decorated orange lantern to the church for the Christmas Mass. The other children sneered at their meagre gift, but the priest seized upon it with joy. He held it up as an example of the true understanding of the meaning of Christmas, for the following reasons: the orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God; the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions, and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar.

26th December - Look out for Wenceslas

Most of us probably know that on December 26th (the Feast of Stephen) 'Good king Wenceslas' looked out, writes David Winter. We probably also know that the snow lay round about, 'deep and crisp and even'. Beyond that, he's just someone in a carol that's not often sung nowadays.

However, Wenceslas was a real person, a duke, and effectively king of Bohemia in the 10th century. In modern terms, he was Czechoslovakian. He was known as a generous and kind monarch, deeply Christian and given to good works. So the story in the carol by the Victorian hymn-writer J.M. Neale, while possibly fictitious, is at least in line with his recognized character. 'Page and monarch' braved the 'bitter weather' and the 'cruel wind's wild lament' to take food and fuel to a poor man living rough.

Neale's carol was enormously popular in the 19th century, because it perfectly expressed Victorian Christian ideals of benevolence and almsgiving. Christian men of 'wealth and rank' are urged to help the poor, and so 'find blessing'. Ignoring the 'wealth and rank and men' bit, it's still good advice, at Christmas or any other time.

The night before

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, except Papa's mouse.
The computer was humming, the icons were hopping,
As Papa did last minute Internet shopping.

The stockings were hung by the modem with care
In hope that St. Nicholas would bring new software.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of computer games danced in their heads.

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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 20th January

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

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.

DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

Dates for Diary

1st December Sedgley Morning Townswomen's Guild December 1st - The Sisters - Jo Frost and Josie Powell - Antiques, Silver and Jewellery. 10am.

5th December Ladies Society - Christmas Meal.

6th December Mothers Union -Christmas Celebration - 2.30pm

5th January Sedgley Morning Townswomen's Guild - Bring and Buy Sale - 10am

18th January Men's Society - AGM

Baptisms At All Saints'

20th November Erik James Fownes
27th November William Daniel Gorton
27th November Georgia Lynn Johnson
27th November Ella Rose Willetts

Funerals

14th November Doris Westwood - Gornal Wood Crematorium.
28th November Hazel Hollington - Gornal Wood Crematorium
30th November Ronald Joseph Wright - All Saints'
8th December Dorothy Jean Rogers - All Saints

Weddings

12th November Daniel Gould and Jenna North

Sarah Powell

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Some thoughts to ponder at this 'giving' and family time of the year...

Our children await Christmas presents like politicians getting election returns.- **M Cox**

Charity gives itself rich; covetousness hoards itself poor. - **Anon**

A part of kindness consists in loving people more than they deserve.- **J Joubert**

The word 'alms' has no singular, as if to teach us that a solitary act of charity scarcely deserves the name. - **Anon**

He who is not liberal with what he has, does but deceive himself when he thinks he would be liberal if he had more. - **W S Plumer**

Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian - **G K Chesterton**

Kindness is a hard thing to give away. It keeps coming back to the giver. - **Ralph Scott**

Shake your family tree this Christmas - and watch the nuts fall.

Silence: the art of conversation most appreciated when the Christmas Day feature film is on.... – **W Hazlitt paraphrased**

Friends are God's apology for relations. - **Hugh Kingsmill**

Every large family has its angel and its demon. - **Joseph Roux**

All happy families resemble one another; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. - **Leo Tolstoy**

Around the Parish - Dec 2016 & Jan 2017

This will be the last article I write for the magazine. I have been writing "Around the Parish" for almost 20 years! Before I finish for good I would like to say thank you to everyone that has trusted me with their news over the years.

There have been many happy events and of course some sad ones too.

So, onto the news for the last time.....

We send get well wishes to Alice, Olwyn, Kerry, Tony, Rob and anyone I may have missed out.

Happy birthday to anyone that has a birthday in December or January.

On a personal note thank you for the birthday cards and get well cards. I am improving and shall be glad to get back to church.

Joyful news! How many noticed and heard the sound of the bells on the first Sunday in October celebrating 40 years of instalment at All Saints?

Sad news. Ron Wright has died and will be a great loss to wife Mary. For many years Mary arranged the flowers at church for weddings but without Ron's help with the fetching, carrying, cleaning she couldn't have done it. They were a great team. We send condolences to Mary.

I remember starting these articles with the announcement of a first granddaughter for Sheila Kendrick. It is perhaps fitting therefore to end with a similar announcement.

Congratulations to James & Laura Robinson on the birth of their son Thomas Edmund James born 3rd November 2016. He is a grandson for Barbara & and Greg Price and great grandson for Harry Shaw. Best wishes from everyone.

Dorothy Inett

Where has this year gone? I can't believe we're almost at the end of 2016. Of course the shops have been full of cards, tinsel, trees, gifts & food ideas for weeks & weeks encouraging people to spend, spend, spend.

For most children it's a time of happy anticipation. But for the hungry, lonely, bereaved, the abused and confused its a time of sadness & fear.

As Christians it's a time of preparing and waiting, making sure we prepare our hearts to receive once again the most precious gift of all The birth of the Christ child.

God was extremely careful when he decided to send his son to earth for us and chose the most humble of beginnings.

First he searched for someone to carry his Son, not a woman of wealth or status, but a very young girl engaged not married to a carpenter. She must have been terrified, and possibly asked Why Me? I'm just an ordinary girl, why him? He's just a simple man of trade. Why him? With all the rulers of world.

But she said "yes" with it would involve without knowing how her life would change, and bring hope to the world.

This is our time to prepare, by taking time in prayer, asking God to show us how we can spread the wonderful news of his transforming love, working together

We look forward in hope to the appointment of a new team Rector & team Vicar, to lead us the Gornal & Sedgley team into a new chapter. When God calls us to new challenges may we be like Mary saying yes putting our faith & trust in him.

With every gift that you receive just take a moment to recall ,a shining star, a manger and the greatest gift of all . May God bless you all. Jan

WWI TIMELINE - EVENTS OF 1916/17

December 1916

- 1st Allied forces withdrawn from Athens & Piraeus.
German raider 'Wolff' leaves Germany (approximate date).
Last meeting of War Committee of British Cabinet.
- 4th Admiral Sir John Jellicoe appointed First Sea Lord.
- 6th Mr Lloyd George becomes British Premier.
- 9th War Cabinet formed in Great Britain.
- 11th Mr Arthur Balfour becomes Sec. for Foreign Affairs.
Ministry of labour formed in Gt. Britain.
- 18th " First Offensive Battle" of Verdun ends.
- 21st El Arish (Sinai) occupied by British Forces.
- 22nd Great Britain forms the Ministries of Food, Pensions,& Shipping.
- 27th French battleship 'Gaulois' sunk by sub. in the Mediterranean.

January 1917

- 1st German forces take Focsani (Rumania).
Portuguese Expeditionary Force land in France.
General Sir D. Haig promoted to Field-Marshal.
- 4th Russian battleship 'Peresvyet' sunk off Port Said.
- 9th HMS 'Cornwallis' sunk by sub. in the Mediterranean.

January 1917 (cont)

- 11th Austro-Hungarian & German Governments issue Note repudiating responsibility for continuance of war, & declaring they will prosecute the war to a successful end.
- 17th Inter-Allied Conference (Russia, France, Gt. Britain, & Italy represented) assembles in Petrograd to discuss war policy, supplies, & co-operation.
- 23rd Harwich flotilla action with German 6th Torpedo boat flotilla in the North Sea: HMS 'Simoon' sunk.
- 31st German Government announce forthcoming "unrestricted" sub. warfare & threaten to sink hospital ships.

Christmas.

Soldiers stationed behind the lines sometimes spent Christmas day at the homes of French or Belgium civilians - befriended over the preceding months.

After the battles of Verdun and the Somme a Christmas truce was not possible, but after the 'Battle of the Boar's Head' in 1916, the Royal Sussex Regiment spent a 'restful time'. The war diary says that 'every effort was made to provide festive food and entertainment'.

Those at home were encouraged to send Christmas items to let their loved ones know they were not forgotten.

Soldiers often had to improvise Christmas cards to send home: a hard biscuit sent from Gallipoli to a family in Hastings, a piece of khaki jacket, or a shell fragment.

Rosemary Moss



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the Gornal and Sedgley area**

Sedgley Community Archive Touch-screen Project

Over the past six years, I have arranged three exhibitions about the village of Sedgley at All Saints'. The first was a showing of Ron Baker's drawings of the village from 1947 onwards; the second was a collection of personal stories about life in the village over 60 years of the Queen's reign for her Diamond Jubilee. This year we added newspaper cuttings from the Dudley Herald to cover the period before the Queen acceded to the throne, to mark Her Majesty's 90th birthday.

Many people have conducted research about the village over the years. For example, EA Underhill and Andrew Barnett both published books; Trevor Genge published volumes of photos; Christine Buckley did a huge amount of research into the history of the church and village while she was living at the vicarage.

In addition there are thousands of documents at Dudley Archives, in the collections at William Salt Archive in Stafford and at Wolverhampton Archives – as well as Diocesan records at Worcester and Litchfield.

Sedgley Archives Group has been formed to attempt to bring these resources together into an accessible hub. We aim to do this by acquiring a 60 inch touch-screen computer in coffee table format, on which will be stored photos, maps and documents about Sedgley's past. This will be located at Sedgley Library.

There will be an interface on the touch-screen desktop, enabling users to access information of interest to them simply and quickly. Records will be tagged so that materials on specific topics can be assembled via a search facility.

We have submitted an expression of interest to the Heritage Lottery Fund, received advice on how to approach a full application and a note of the areas that need additional work for our bid. We aim to submit the final application by 30th January 2017.

During the project we aim to gather more information and photos for the Touch-screen by running reminiscence sessions during coffee mornings at Sedgley Community Centre, St Andrew's Bilston Street, St Chad's and at All Saints'. All new information gathered during the Project will be lodged with Dudley Archives.

We will be meeting on Saturday mornings at 11am from 10th December continuing in December and January at Café Cappella, to discuss the application. If you'd like to assist us, contact Martin by e-mail at: mmjones29@blueyonder.co.uk or ring him on 07947 068023.

Martin Jones

200 CLUB

A friendly reminder that the annual subscription of £20.00 is due in Jan 2017 (ease don't leave it until the dinner).

Our annual dinner will be on Sat 11th March 2017 commencing 7.30pm, members will be asked to contribute £5.00 towards food costs as previous years.

Non-members, who are most welcome will be asked to contribute £15.00 each.

Menus will be circulated nearer the date and should be returned asap, also bring your own drinks and glasses.

Roger Berry

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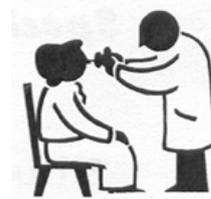
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Just thoughts.

Hope believes in life when it seems like no one else does.

Hope opens doors where despair closes them.

Hope lights a candle instead of curing the darkness.

Hope discovers something can be done instead of resigning itself to “nothing can be done”.

Hope draws its power from a deep trust in a divine God and the basic goodness of humankind.

Hope seeks out the good in all situations instead of assuming the worst.

Hope regards problems, small or large as opportunities for growth.

Hope loves life and the chance to dance with it.

hope does not yield to fear or cynicism.

Hope sets big goals and is not frustrated by difficulties or setbacks.

Hope pushes ahead when it would be easy to quit.

Hope puts up with modest gains, realising that the longest journey starts with the first step.

Hope is a good companion as it brings the divine assurance of final victory. So therefore the message is clear, we all must Hope.

Life lies, life dies. Life laughs, life cries. Life gives up, and life tries again. Life looks different through everyone's eyes

Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.

Be the best you can be.

Your life only gets better when you get better.

Everyone is the artist of their own life.

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

Education is your best friend for life.

Think good and kind thoughts and you will feel better.

Be the hero of your own story.

Experience is what you get, when you don't get what you want straight away.

Take responsibility for the choices you make every day.

Have courage to admit when you are wrong.

Choose friends who are open and truthful.

Compassion for others begins with kindness to oneself.

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

The creation of a more peaceful and happier society has to begin from the level of an individual, and from there, it can expand to one's family, one's neighbourhood, one's community - - - one's society, one's country, and ultimately one's world. (If only !!)

Be aware that your actions have consequences.

Show consideration to others.

Compiled by David Melhuish.

The story of mince pies

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.

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I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



All Saints' Church, Sedgley will be holding a Christmas Tree Festival from Friday 2nd December to Sunday 4th December and Friday 9th December to Sunday 11th December. The theme this year is 'Charities' and each tree will be decorated to depict a different charity. There will be a Blessing of the Trees at 10.00am on Friday 2nd December followed by singing from local school choirs. Admission will be free, light refreshments will be available and any donations during the weekends will be for the Salvation Army.

We look forward to seeing you and your family and friends.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

'Charities'

All Saints' Church, Sedgley

Friday 2nd - Sunday 4th December

&

Friday 9th - Sunday 11th December



Friday & Saturday - 10am - 4pm

Sundays - 2pm - 4pm

Admission: Free

Light Refreshments available

Donations to Salvation Army

Remembrance Sunday

We were fortunate to enjoy bright, sunny weather again this year. This is surely Sedgley's most impressive show of community spirit – over 400 people combine to remember the sacrifice made by people from our village (and servicemen and women throughout the country) for freedom and for peace.



From 10am, organisations begin to arrive and gather together in **The Walk, Sedgley** - outside the ex-servicemen's club and The Crown pub. Organisations include the **Scouts and Guides, Brownies and Beavers** and **St John Ambulance**.

They are put into marching order by **David Screen and Bob Hill** of Sedgley Royal British Legion, and at 10.15am the march begins, proceeding down **High Street** towards the **Bull Ring**.

Police and a team of volunteers provide marshalling along the route. Roads are temporarily sectioned off to allow safe passage through the Bull Ring and up **Dudley Street**, wheeling right into **Vicar Street**.

Once in Vicar Street, the procession is led into **All Saints' churchyard**. Colour parties remain outside on the piazza as organisations file into church.

On the return parade, the procession back to The Walk is led by **Sedgley Branch of the Royal British Legion**.

Martin Jones

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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.

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

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MOTHERS' UNION

Gwen Taylor reflected on the faith of women in 'A Celebration of Faith', at our afternoon meeting in November. The faith of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who accepted God's gift. We can only begin to imagine the feelings of Mary and the initial reactions of Joseph and their families. What faith she had to say yes to God, a faith that was so strong to bear the pain of Christ's death.

In 1876, when her eldest daughter Margaret gave birth, Mary Sumner was reminded how difficult she had found the burden of motherhood. Inspired, Mary publicised a meeting of mothers in her parish to offer mutual support. Her plan was quite radical in its day as it involved calling women of all social classes to support one another and to see motherhood as a profession as important as those of men, if not more so. It was Mary's faith and belief that sustained her and from which beginnings the Mothers' Union has grown into the worldwide organisation it is today. Two people whose faith supported them in their life – I am sure you can think of others.

November, being a time of Remembrance, seemed appropriate to have Chris Smith talk about 'Letters from the Trenches'. Chris is interested in the First World War and has done a lot of research including visiting the National Archives in London. Here he came across the letters of Tommy Jackson written to his mother.

Tommy came from Tipton, the son of a miner, who joined up to fight the enemy. He trained in this country before being sent to France where there was more training, which included digging trenches to a set plan then filling them in, over and over again, so that they knew the layout when at the front. His letters home spoke of the training and wanting to get on with fighting the enemy, of a great camaraderie. Even when he was injured Tommy spoke of being sent home and being able to see his mother and not to worry. However he was sent to a hospital in Scotland where he met Alice, a nurse.

His next letter to his mother said that in the twelve days he had been there he had fallen in love with, and married, Alice. Returning to France Tommy's letters changed - life in those mud infested trenches, surrounded by death - he writes that he 'hates war' and 'he wishes it was over'.

Alice writes and tells Tommy she is having a baby. He no longer wants to be fighting this war, he wants to be caring for his wife and unborn son. Sadly, like so many others, Tommy was killed in action. His son was born and Alice named him Thomas. Thomas fought in World War II and was killed 45 miles from where the father he never knew was killed.

Chris's talk brought home the change in mood and attitude to war by these soldiers. The photographs that accompanied his talk gave very powerful images of a war in which so many gave so much. It is hard to comprehend the numbers killed in the First World War but Chris illustrated it starkly – 10 million men died, which is the equivalent of the population of Sedgley being killed every five days for a year and a half.

Congratulations to **Margaret Dain** who celebrated her 80th Birthday in November

Dates

10th January 2.15pm Communion followed by social & paying of subscriptions.

Liz Williams

A heart-felt thanks to our Church Wardens.

Since the end of November last year All Saints' Church has been in interregnum. In the absence of a Vicar or Rector the ultimate responsibility for the conduct and worship of the Church or Team then lies with the Church Wardens, "The buck stops with them", to miss-quote former President of the USA, Harry S .Truman.

There are of course many members of our congregation that have, during the interregnum, worked even harder than ever to ensure that worship at All Saints' continues as close as possible to normal. In addition, the various organisations that contribute to Church activities remain in place and effective. Our gratitude must go out to all who organise and support their work.

However the burden on our Church Wardens has been additionally heavy during the 2016 interregnum for a number of reasons.

When Fr. Bernard retired in 1993 and Fr. Peter left in 1999 two ordained priests remained in the Parish. Since Fr. Andrew Stand left in April we have had none: so, for a Church that expects two Eucharistic services every Sunday this presents a huge problem

The Deanery and Diocese are short of ordained priests. Consequently the problem of covering worship at All Saints' and our other two Team Churches is an additional headache. The compromise solutions have attracted some criticism but we owe the local Area Dean and our Arch-deacon thanks for their efforts in difficult circumstances.

The lead on the roof of All Saints' Church, was stolen about two years ago and it has taken almost that time to resolve the problem. It has involved both Church Wardens in long negotiations with various bodies, some insensitive to the needs of All Saints' Church and its congregation, to ensure that the situation has at last been resolved.

The vicarage required a major internal refit and cleaning operation. Additionally, the concrete raft on which it was built had allowed a corner of the building to sink, endangering the whole property. The repair and restoration took many months and, heaven only knows, how much of our Wardens' time to ensure that it was completed.

Generally people in public office – MPs, Borough Councillors and Church Wardens - take a lot of what the R.A.F. called 'flak'. Some is understandable because people don't understand the problems about which they are complaining. Some is unfortunately unfair.

Fortunately the strong faith of our Wardens has allowed them to accept 'flak' and rise above it. May God bless them and their families at this coming Christmastide and for ever after.

Tony Hart

Today's riddle for seniors...Here is the situation:

No cheating now!!!

You are on a horse, galloping at a constant speed.

On your right side is a sharp drop-off.

On your left side is an elephant travelling at the same speed as you.

Directly in front of you is a galloping kangaroo and your horse is unable to overtake it.

Behind you is a lion running at the same speed as you and the kangaroo.

What must you do to get out of this highly dangerous situation?

Think logically. Answer on page 41

Ladies Society

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf By Joan Sullivan

This talk by Joan was one of the most interesting I have ever heard. She began her visits to the Middle East in the 80's so that she could so that she could visit her husband who was working in that area.

In 1991 they bought a holiday cottage in Cyprus which was where they usually stayed, so that they could go whenever and for how long they wished to stay.

There was a small Anglican Church in Aenappa (The town where their house was). There was no resident priest except in the summer when there were many tourists who boosted the congregation numbers. The Church was very small and in the summer very hot! When the indoor heat became impossible they held their services in the shade, in the cloisters. As the church struggled to keep up it's work, at last they now have a resident priest and more Churches have been opened.

Joan's talk was illustrated throughout with lovely pictures of scenery and new Churches. There was one lovely picture of an elderly man being baptised in a pool and another of a baby being baptised in a Church in Fama-gusta. Most of the palm crosses that we have each year on Palm Sunday are made in Cyprus. One of the pictures showed members from three Churches who were all making palm crosses, competing who could produce the most! We were all given a palm cross each at the end of the talk.

The talk concluded with an interesting DVD narrated by a Bishop. There is now a full time Archdeacon in the Gulf region and even a small Anglican community in Saudi. The Cyprus Anglican Church celebrated their 40th Anniversary in 2015.

I felt so uplifted after this wonderful talk. I had begun to think there was no chance for our faith to survive with the things that are happening in that part of the world.

Thank you so much Joan for a wonderful talk and I hope you and your husband will enjoy many more holidays in Cyprus.

Well ladies look to preparations for Christmas. We are looking forward to meeting for a Christmas meal at the Forge in Gornal on Monday November 28th, and then on December 5th we enjoy a “Bring and Share” meal of Christmas snacks.

I hope to see everyone there.

MOLLY TAFT

New Year’s Eve is coming soon...

The bagpipes are the missing link between music and noise. - **E K Kruger**

The inventor of the bagpipes was inspired when he saw a man carrying an indignant asthmatic pig under his arm. Unfortunately, the man-made sound never equalled the purity of the sound achieved by the pig. - **Alfred Hitchcock.**

Bring not a bagpipe to a man in trouble. - **Jonathan Swift.**

Answer to the riddle:

Quietly get off the merry-go-round, then go home, take your pills and take a nap!



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SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

DECEMBER 2016/ January 2017

4th December - Advent 2

All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Canon Peter Kerr
St Andrew's - 9.30am - NO SERVICE AS TEAM SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'
All Saints' - 10.30am - Team Service with The Venerable Nikki Groarke
St Peter's - 10.30am - NO SERVICE AS TEAM SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'
All Saints' - 6.30pm - Jan Humphries

11th December - Advent 3

All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Canon Peter Kerr
St Andrew's - 9.30am - Morning Prayer with Jan Humphries
All Saints' - 10.30am - The Revd Canon Peter Kerr
St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Canon Judith Oliver
All Saints' - 6.30pm - Jan Humphries

18th December - Advent 4

All Saints' - 8am - NO SERVICE
St Andrew's - 9.30am - The Revd James Makepeace
All Saints' - 10.30am - The Revd James Makepeace
St Peter's - 10.30am - Morning Prayer with Suzanne Bradley
All Saints' - 6.30pm - Jan Humphries

24th December - Christmas Eve

All Saints' - 8am - NO SERVICE
St Andrew's - 9.30am - Jan Humphries by Extn
All Saints' - 10.30am - NO SERVICE
St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Canon Judith Oliver
St Andrew's 4pm - Christingle
St Andrew's 5.30 - Christingle
All Saints' 5.30pm - Christingle
All Saints' - 6.30pm - NO SERVICE
St Andrew's 11.15pm Midnight Communion
All Saints' - 11.30pm - Midnight Mass - The Revd Lyn Rowson

25th December - Christmas Day

All Saints' - 8am - NO SERVICE
St Andrew's - 9.30am - NO SERVICE
All Saints' - 9.30am - The Revd James Makepeace
St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Canon Judith Oliver
All Saints' - 6.30pm - NO SERVICE

1st January

Team Service (Eucharist) at St. Peter's at 10.30am. (This is the only service in the Team on that day.)

8th January

8.00am Said Eucharist; 10.30am Sung Eucharist; 6.30pm Evensong

15th January

As 8th January

22nd January

As 8th January

29th January

8.00am Said Eucharist; 10.30am Sung Eucharist; 6.30pm Compline