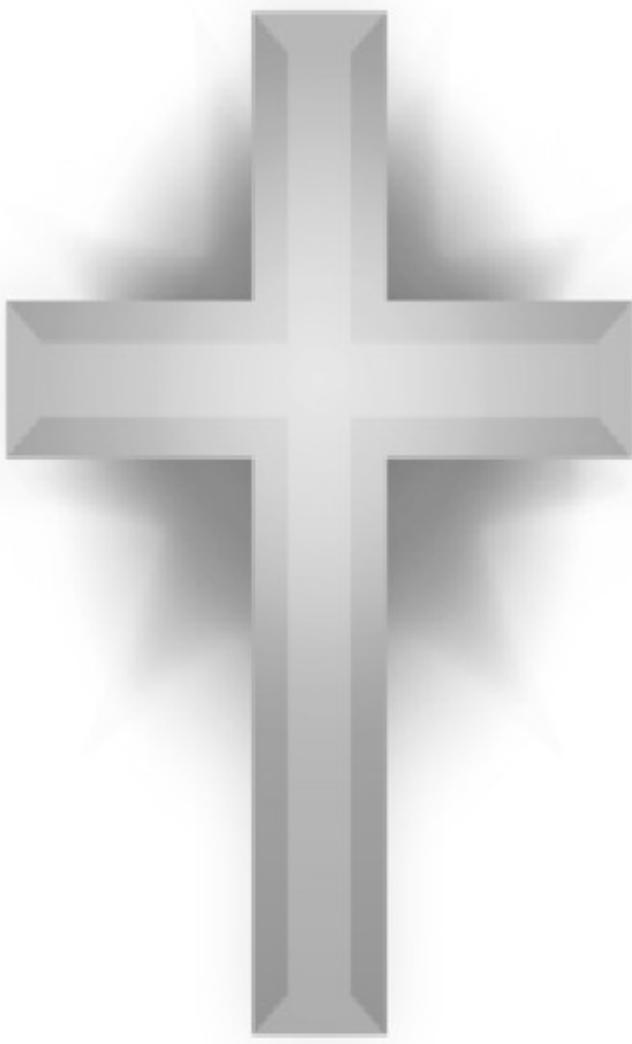
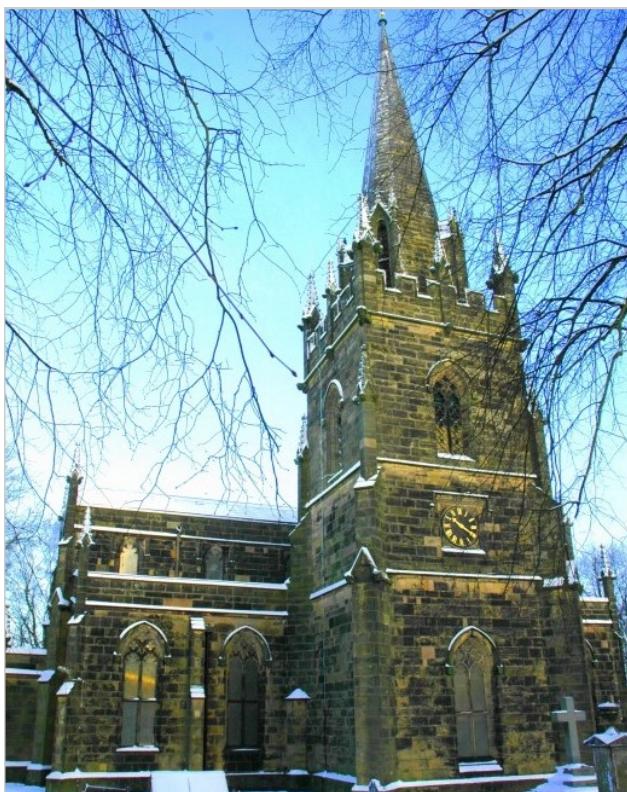


THE BEACON

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



50p
MAY 2018

WHO's WHO

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Team Vicar	Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minster	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson	01902 673366
	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Dave Bell	07933 204132
Server / Verger	Len Millard	01902 676339
Junior Church	Barbara Price	01902 676591
Brownies	Heather Churm	01902 674709
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	01902 674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	01902 881374
Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	01902 672880
Noah's Ark Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Rainbows	Liz Naylor	07827 629648
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461
Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Bell Ringer	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Organist	Martin Platts	07941 173252

DIARY DATES FOR MAY 2018

Diary Dates

Mothers' Union

May 1st - 2.15pm - Communion - St Andrew's - From Engineer to Vicar -
The Revd Catherine Mitchell

May 15th - 7.30pm - Adventures in Dordogne - Anne Ridge

Men's' Society

May 21st - PC to Priest - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Peter's

4-7 May - Pentrenant Hall Parish Weekend

12th May - Summer Fayre

Every Monday afternoon the Salvation Army meet in the meeting room and on the third Monday of the month there is a Singing by Heart Group for Dementia in the hall. For more details please contact Margaret Hollis 07957 112393.

Baptisms

22nd April - Mia Ovenall, Sawyer Harris and Quinn Harris

Funerals in April

6th April -	Hazel Katrina Cotterill - Age 94 - Gornal Wood
9th April-	Phillip Anthony Hipkiss - Age 88 - Gornal Wood
10th April -	Maurice Dixon - Age 87 - Gornal Wood
11th April -	Lily Bentley - Age 91 - Sandwell Valley
12th April -	Joyce Lyn Jones - Age 88 - All Saints'
12th April -	Ronald Prince - Age 86 - Gornal Wood
13th April -	Mark Jason Higginson - Age 45 - Gornal Wood
17th April -	Benjamin Bowater - Age 82 - Gornal Wood
20th April -	William Knight - Age 89 - Gornal Wood
24th April -	Eunice Banninster - Age 89 - Gornal Wood

High Days & Holy Days for May

1st May: May Day – unbridled merriment

1st May: Philip, the apostle with common sense

1st May: James the Less – quiet son of Alphaeus

2nd May: Athanasius – the theologian who gave us the Nicene Creed

6th May Rogation Sunday (Sunday before Ascension)

8th May: Julian of Norwich – a voice from a distant cell

9th May: Pachomius - the patron saint of administrators

10th May Ascension Day - 40 Days with the Risen Christ

15th May: Matthias the Apostle – called by lots

15th May: St Matthias – the replacement apostle

16th May: Caroline Chisholm - helping the emigrants to Australia

19th May: Dunstan - the abbot who restored monastic life in England

20th May Day of Pentecost – Whit Sunday

20th May Pentecost in Jerusalem

NEW 21st May Helena, Protector of the Holy Places

24th May: John & Charles Wesley - evangelists & hymn-writers

24th May: John & Charles Wesley: Let's Sing a Hymn

26th May: Augustine of Canterbury - apostle to the English

30th May: Joan of Arc – saving France from the English

31st May: Mary, the Blessed Virgin, visits Elizabeth

THE BEACON

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

Keith Tomlinson : tel. 01902 673366.

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 May magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 25th May

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.

VESTRY HOUR

If you know anyone who wishes to enquire about weddings or baptisms, please tell them that from 1st February, the Vestry Hour will only be held on the first and third Sundays in each month, from 12noon to 1.00pm.

Letter from Archdeacon of Worcester

A worldly faith?

Sometimes we imagine that our faith is about becoming more religious. However the French priest and palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin said, ‘We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.’ A palaeontologist is someone who studies fossils, and like any scientist is an observer of things in a search to discover more about them. I think what he meant was since we are created in the image and likeness of God, as we grow as humans we grow more and more into God.

He also said, ‘by virtue of Creation, and still more the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see.’ Our humanity in all its shapes and sizes is God’s way of fleshing out and manifesting His beauty. ‘Nothing is profane for those who know how to see’: Heaven isn’t very far away, and faith isn’t about religious stuff. Indeed common humanity is the home of God: this is what Christmas is all about, when God in Jesus made his home amongst us.

So we should tread the earth lightly: We are already walking on holy ground. Perhaps that is why Jesus gives us such an earthly prayer as the Lord’s Prayer: we pray that God’s kingdom will come here on earth as in heaven; we ask God to give us our daily bread, just enough for today. In the Gospels Jesus shows us God by the way he looks, listens, speaks and touches. Galilee sees signs of heaven in everyday life.

This is why the heart and high point of Christian worship is the Eucharist, when we take the raw material of the world, bread and wine, and it is transfigured by God’s Holy Spirit and shows us God. The Orthodox Church speaks of the ‘sacrament of the world’. The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins writes that ‘the world is charged with the grandeur of God.’ And this month we celebrate the feast of Pentecost: we celebrate when the Church is born, very much here on earth, to live the life of Jesus, very much here on earth.

Pentecost is the moment when the penny drops for the apostles and they begin to see clearly what Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Day mean. Pentecost completes the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus as the birthday of incarnate Christianity. Far from taking us out of this world, the Spirit, which brooded over creation from the very beginning, empowers us to see everything in a new light: the whole world is charged with the grandeur of God.

So let's not become too religious: our faith is world-facing and life-affirming. St Paul even makes the great claim that our bodies are 'temples of the Holy Spirit': this is who we really are, spiritual beings having a human experience. The Church is being truly faithful when we live out Jesus' message to love God, neighbour and self, seeking to encounter him not just in worship but in the faces and concerns of the people we meet day by day. No wonder the liturgy ends with the words 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.' Go where He may be found!

Archdeacon Robert Jones

Use it or lose it

If you are retired, or about to retire, beware: brain function declines rapidly as soon as people stop work and decide to put their feet up.

Recent research that tracked 3,400 retired civil servants found that short-term memory declined nearly 40 per cent faster once employees become pensioners. It seems that when you stop being regularly stimulated to think, your cognitive function slows down, and your memory loss and risk of dementia speed up.

And so, experts at University College London and King's College London advise older people to keep physically and mentally active, and to make sure they also interact with people on a regular basis.

New Life – we are loved.

Well at last we seem to have had some real signs of summer – several days of sunshine and temperatures in the 20's. Yesterday was a hot day, but this morning it is cool and there is a thick mist hanging over Sedgley.

Life can change for the worse very quickly, through illness, bereavement, an accident. One day all seems well, bright and sunny, the next it can seem overcast and dull.

There is a story about a man who was relaxing at his hundredth birthday when a local radio reporter asked, 'what is the secret of your long life?' The man considered this for moment and then replied, 'every day at 9 PM I have a glass of port, it is good for the heart'. The reporter replied 'Is that all?' The man smiled and said, 'that and cancelling my voyage on the Titanic'.

Life can sometimes feel random, but the one thing that is not random is the eternity of God's love for us.

In the good times and the bad times his love is constant. 'Life happens' as they say.

But of course, life can change for the good very quickly. An operation is successful, a baby is born, we suddenly understand the truth of the resurrection of Jesus; we realise that we are loved by God. We are loved by God whatever the circumstances of our life.

In this season of Easter, as we see the flowers and trees blossoming, as the birds sing and make their nests I pray that we will allow the new life which comes through the resurrection of Jesus to blossom in our souls and that we would know ourselves to be loved by God.

I pray that we will allow the risen Jesus into the whole of our lives and that we would know, whether or not the sun is actually shining on us or whether or not the mist is hiding its rays, that we are loved – eternally.

Outside in Sedgley the sun is breaking through ...

Guy

Vicar's ponderings May 2018

One of the great metaphors of the Bible is “the journey.” The Bible is filled with journey upon journey. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture is full of people on the move.

In the beginning of the Old Testament, Abraham journeys from Ur of the Chaldees to the Promised Land. Many generations later, Abraham’s descendants journey from slavery and oppression in Egypt into the land of Israel.

Many generations after that, they journey back to their Promised Land after the tragic downfall of their civilization and their forced exile in Babylon. In the New Testament, Jesus himself journeys through Palestine, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God. As he journeys, he shows people what that Kingdom looks like by his deeds of love and power.

After the Resurrection, Paul and the apostles journey all over the Roman Empire and their message reaches to the ends of the earth – and here we are, millennia later, with our journeys touching theirs.

It makes sense that the concept of “the journey” would be so central to Scripture, because we human beings are journeying people. We often make sense of our lives by understanding them as journeys, as the unfolding story of who we are and what we do in the world.

There are many influences in our lives that often take us in new directions, significant moments could be the school we went to, whether we went to university, the people we meet; maybe significant health issues, or maybe our career choices; these and many more can inform and change the direction of our life’s journey.

Our journey in life is also influenced by our spiritual life, and often people will speak of their journey of faith, where they have felt a closeness

to God, or God speaking to them through prayer, scripture and other's. Recently I have been reflecting with friends my own life and faith journey; and often it's helpful to look back and to see where God has been in the decisions we make, and where we have felt close to God, especially when we seek His guidance.

In my own journey of faith, finding a welcoming church community was key, and I sense that God was right at the centre of that and in many other ways too, too many ways to include here. One significant moment, however, was taking the decision to be confirmed. Although, in many respects, it was still early in my own personal journey of faith, it felt that it was the right thing to do to make that public commitment of faith to my family and friends, and church community.

On the 29th April this year, five of our church community will be making their own public faith commitment in their confirmation. I encourage you, as I will be doing, at this significant moment in the lives of Janet, Amelia, Penny, Millie and Grace's lives, to reflect on your own journey of faith and the commitments that you made at your own confirmation. Being confirmed is not the end of the journey, it's part of it. A journey of faith is exciting and at times challenging, and often it's in the challenging times that we grow and deepen our faith. So I encourage you all, those being confirmed on 29th April, and those of us who have been confirmed for many years, to continue to seek God in all that you do, and allow him to guide you throughout your journeys of life and faith.

It says in Proverbs

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Enjoy the journey!!

Blessings Catherine

Mothers' Union

We were pleased to welcome Val Rushton to our afternoon April meeting. Val shared memories of her life as we reflected on how 'That 4 Letter Word' – LOVE – is expressed within families; that heady love of newly-weds which changes as it grows and matures over the years; and love that can be damaged because it is often difficult to forgive. A talk full of truths, humour and honesty which gave us all something valuable to take away. Say 'I love you'; smile at the person you meet in the street; ask people how they are; and when things happen within families and between friends don't let them fester but forgive.

The Charity of the Month for March was the Mothers' Union project, 'Make a Mother's Day' which raised £100. Thank you to all who donated to this worthy cause.

Thank you to all who brought items for our Lenten Collection for 'New Beginnings'. As always the response from across the deanery was wonderful and it was lovely to have Karen with us and to hear her news. Thank you to Cicely and Guy who, along with Karen and Chris and I, loaded up their cars to take everything to the Refuge. Once all the items had been unloaded Karen showed us around the Refuge and we were able to appreciate more fully the amazing work and support that is given there.

Revd Guy Hewlett gave us an insight into his life, and how he had come to the priesthood, in his talk 'From PC to Priest'. As a child Guy attended Sunday School, was confirmed, and on leaving school went to university. He joined the Air Training Corp and had a passion for motorcycling. Two tragedies in his late teens had a profound effect on his outlook on life. Guy told us of his career in the police force during which time he was part of the Riot Squad who attended the Brixton and Tottenham riots, advancing with riot shields along roads littered with bricks and broken glass, flames from petrol bombs, realising that behind the orchestrated violence there were genuine grievances that were not being addressed. Guy met Jackie and they were married while he was still in the force.

He enjoyed being a pursuit car driver and a motor cyclist, riding a 800cc BMW and being paid for doing it! He finished his career in the police force as an instructor at Hendon Police College where 70% of his colleagues were Christians. One of his friends there took him to hear Billy Graham speak and the seeds that had always been there blossomed. He was being called to 'be a priest'. Jackie supported him in his journey to become a priest and the rest, as they say, is history. We look forward to hearing about Guy's work as a hospital chaplain later in the year.

Our Deanery Festival on 6th June at All Saints' will be at **2.00pm**.

Dates

1st May 2.15pm Communion followed by 'From Engineer to Vicar',
Revd Catherine Mitchell

PLEASE NOTE THIS MEETING IS AT ST ANDREW'S, THE STRAITS

15th May 7.30pm Adventures in Dordogne, Anne Ridge
6th June 2.00pm Deanery Festival at All Saints', Sedgley

Liz Williams

Thank You

Thank you to you all for your love, thoughts and prayers during the last few weeks. They have helped me through an anxious time. My operation went well and I am recovering, albeit slowly.

Thank you too for the lovely cards, get well wishes and phone calls.
Hope to see you soon.

Anne Round

“GOOD COMPANY”



Those who enjoyed the Good Company concert last July will be pleased to hear that they will be performing again on Saturday 7th July, 7.30pm in church.

Tickets: £8 including a glass of wine

Contact Gail on 01902 540289
or Liz Williams, Mike Edwards, Kath Apperley, Tony Hart

TODDLER GROUP

It was our Easter Bonnet parade on Tuesday 27th March.
We had cake decorating, a chicken craft and a free raffle. The winners of the Easter Bonnet were:

1st Prize Evie, 2nd Joshua, 3rd Edith and 4th Lavarnah the judges were Jean and Maureen they had a hard job deciding on the winners. All the children had Easter eggs after.

It was a lovely morning all the children had a knitted chicken with an egg inside when they left.

Linda, Jenny and the Team

Ringing for Peace – Armistice 100

Bell ringers urgently needed!

More than 1,400 bell ringers laid down their lives for peace in World War I. These ringers came from all walks of life as ringers still do today and we are all united in wanting to ring out a message of peace around the world. On November 11th 2018 we would like to be able to ring our bells to commemorate this BUT WE NEED MORE RINGERS!

Is anyone interested in joining us and learning how to ring for this very important occasion? There is a nationwide initiative to recruit 1,400 new ringers for this event and we would like to contribute to this number. Bell ringing is fun and

a traditionally English 400 year old activity for individuals, couples, families and groups;

a service to church and community;

a great way to make friends and be a part of a team;

for all ages (10 years+), no need to be musical or strong;

great exercise for the mind and body (burns calories, tones muscles);
an enjoyable year-round hobby (you can even get paid for ringing at weddings);

skill for life with endless new experiences and places to visit.

If you are interested in learning more about us please contact Mary on 01902 672541 or email the team on: belts@allsaintssedgley.co.uk.

Mary Zielonka

All in the month of MAY

It was:

400 years ago, on 23rd May 1618, that the Thirty Years' War (Central Europe, mainly present-day Germany) began. One of the longest and most destructive conflicts in European history. Millions of people were killed. Finally ended on 15th May 1648.

200 years ago, on 4th May 1818 that Britain and the Netherlands signed a treaty on the prevention of the slave trade.

Also 200 years ago, on 5th May 1818 that Karl Marx, influential German revolutionary socialist, sociologist, economist, philosopher and journalist, was born. Best known for his pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto* and his book *The Capital*.

150 years ago, on 26th May 1868 that the last public execution in England took place. Irish nationalist Michael Barrett was hanged at Newgate for his role in the Clerkenwell explosion in London in December 1867, in which 12 people were killed.

75 years ago, on 16th & 17th May 1943 that the Dambusters Raid took place. Britain's RAF launched Operation Chastise, deploying bouncing bombs to bypass anti-torpedo nets and breach dams, causing catastrophic flooding in Germany's Ruhr Valley.

70 years ago, on 14th May 1948 that Israel was declared an independent state as the British mandate in Palestine came to an end. (Several Arab states invaded Israel the following day.)

50 years ago, on 8th May 1968 that British gangsters the Kray twins were arrested for murder. They were convicted in 1969 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

20 years ago, on 23rd May 1998, that in a referendum, the people of Northern Ireland voted to accept the Good Friday Agreement. 75% were in favour of a Northern Ireland Assembly.

10 years ago, on 25th May 2008 that NASA's Phoenix robotic lander spacecraft landed on Mars. It searched for environments suitable for microbial life and studied the history of water on Mars.

Christian Aid Week 2018

By Sam Setchell

Information about Christian Aid Week 2018.

This Christian Aid Week, we are inviting people to come together to support the thousands of people in Haiti, who regularly experience some of the worst natural disasters on earth.

Today, more than 40 million people across the globe are forced from their homes, and yet remain within their own country. They outnumber refugees, people who flee across an international border, two to one. In countries like Haiti, where repeated natural disasters have resulted in thousands of people being forced to flee their homes, often not able to return for years.

People like Vilia.

Vilia was left homeless by the earthquake in 2010. As she walked the streets following the disaster, she no longer recognised her home or neighbourhood, and was surrounded by falling wires and crumbling houses. Devastatingly, she never found her mother.

Bereaved and homeless, for Vilia, her husband and their seven children, life became a struggle. She didn't even have a safe place to sleep. Vilia is not alone. Eight years after the devastating earthquake that hit the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, an estimated 38,000 people are still displaced. Despite the resilience and strength of its inhabitants, the country has struggled to recover as they continue to face relentless earthquakes, storms and hurricanes, with many people living in precarious houses or in temporary shelter.

Hurricane Matthew, in November 2016, wreaked further havoc across the south of the country, destroying up to 90% of some areas. Haiti narrowly escaped disaster when Hurricane Irma swept across the Caribbean in 2017, and it's only a matter of time before the next hurricane strikes.

Each time a crisis hits, people lose their dwellings and livelihoods, making it increasingly hard for them to rebuild.

Our local partner, KORAL, helps local people prepare for disasters. In the aftermath of the earthquake, they reached out to Vilia and built her and her family a new home, that was safe, stable and strong enough to stand up to natural disasters.

Ahead of Hurricane Matthew KORAL were able to warn local communities, helping evacuate around 5,000 families and saving many lives. In the immediate aftermath Christian Aid and KORAL distributed urgently-needed shelter kits, hygiene kits, food seeds and cash transfers. We also build disaster-resistant homes to give people safe, secure places to live. Of the dozens of new houses we built before the hurricane hit, only one lost its roof in the disaster.

And Vilia's home was able to shelter 54 people over several days. Yet, we have more houses to build for families, like Vilia's, to provide them with a safe place to weather the next disaster.

Just £25 could buy a hygiene kit to prevent disease after a disaster; £5 could buy a jar of seeds so someone like Marcelin can grow beans to feed his family; and £210 could pay to train a local builder in Haiti to build a safe, secure home for families in need.

This Christian Aid Week, you can help to change the lives of people forced to lose or leave their homes due to disasters and conflict by donating online at www.caweek.org calling 08080 006 006, or texting 'GIVE' to 70040 to give £5.

Signs of the times

My 10 year-old niece says her prayers every night and instead of 'amen', she says 'click, send.'

What is Holy Spirit all about?

At Pentecost, we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples. It was a powerful experience, when along with wind and fire, ‘all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:4).

Power is experienced in two ways: it can be either unleashed or harnessed. The energy in petrol can be released explosively by dropping a lighted match into it. However, in the engine of a car, it will transport people in a controlled way! The Holy Spirit works in a similar way. At Pentecost, he exploded onto the scene and 3000 people were added to the church, because of Peter’s preaching. He also equips us with his gifts to engage in the mission and ministry of the church.

However, the Spirit's power also enables us so to grow in our faith. He assures us of God's love and acceptance in our lives, despite our fears, doubts or failures: ‘God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us’ (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit is also committed to producing the character of Jesus in us, enabling us to live as Jesus would in our place ie job, family and time: ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.’ (Galatians 5:22,23).

The Spirit gives us a new love for God, a longing to read the Bible and pray, a desire to meet with other Christians and a readiness to share our faith. He will also challenge wrong habits, attitudes, words or lifestyle in our lives.

‘Let the church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him’

Andrew Murray

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Godparents – a real role to play

To be asked to become a godparent is a real honour. Ideally, it should go on to become a lifelong commitment that turns into a deep and loving relationship between godparent and child. Sadly, too often it wanes into a duty to be met by Christmas presents and birthday cheques.

A godparent is a member of the family ‘once removed’, and in an ideal position to enjoy the company of the young person without any parental responsibility. Godparents can share their life experiences, hobbies and past-times with the youngster, and thus greatly enrich their childhood. These days many godparents are chosen with the idea of guardianship in mind, in case anything ever happen to the parents. But the practise of appointing godparents goes back many hundreds of years.

Godparents were originally known as sponsors, from the Latin word spondere, meaning ‘to promise’. In pagan times a sponsor had to be known to the bishop when a person was introduced into the church. Godparents have the job of speaking up for the child. They must themselves have been baptised, though not necessarily confirmed.

Canon Law advises that ‘for every child there are no fewer than three godparents’

Often parents choose two people from the same sex as the baby, and one other male/female. They can be friends or even members of the family.

Parish nurses

Are you a registered nurse? Parish Nursing Ministries is a Christian charity which helps local churches to appoint nurses, who in turn support people and communities towards whole person healthcare. This is care for the person’s overall well-being, incorporating body, mind and spirit. More details at: <http://parishnursing.org.uk/>

Top four myths about mission - Myth three: Mission is about doing things for people in need

By Naomi Steinberg, Church Mission Society

“Mission is helping people.”

“Mission is spreading the love of God in places which maybe are a bit more disadvantaged and they might need a little more help.”

These are a couple of the responses we received when we asked the question, “What is mission?” at festivals during the summer of 2017. In fact, when asked, many people said that mission is essentially about helping people.

And they are right, aren’t they? Isn’t helping people an integral part of mission? The Anglican Church sets out Five Marks of Mission, one of which is to “respond to human need by loving service”, and we only have to glance at the Bible to see God’s desire for justice for the poor. Then how come the Church has been accused of being colonial and paternalistic and why do interventions to help people not always work?

For more than 200 years, Church Mission Society people have travelled to all corners of the earth to follow their call to God’s mission. They have frequently grappled with the question of when to help, and when to simply listen, learn and be.

In today’s diverse society these principles apply equally to mission over the road as much as they do overseas. How can we examine our impulses to “help the needy” and discover mission that is transformative in every way?

Sometimes the default position for churches or individuals today is to think in terms of deficits. We focus on what makes people in our community “needy” (whether lack of material or spiritual goods) so that the church mainly does things “to or for” them? We can find it difficult to spend time “being with” people who are not yet Christian, for no other reason than to get to know them better.

Think about your or your church's current outreach activities. Are they more about being with people or doing things for them? Are there opportunities for some of your "doing" activities to include more "being" with people?

Content for this article was inspired by What is Mission? A Myth-Busting Bible Study for Small Groups, session three by Nigel Rooms. This four-part study contains videos, activities, biblical reflections and prayers and is free to download on the CMS online Mission Resource Hub: churchmissionsociety.org/resources

Israel celebrates 70 years as an independent state

Israel became an independent state 70 years ago this month, on 14th May 1948, as the British mandate in Palestine finally came to an end. The very next day Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Syria invaded Palestine, and a 13-month war began. The Arabs and Jews had been in tension with each other and the British ever since the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1920 creation of the British Mandate of Palestine.

The war had consequences that the Arabs had not foreseen, for Israel defeated both the Arab armies and the Palestinian militias, and in the process created 700,000 Palestinian refugees.

The UN partition, which the Palestinians had rejected, had promised 56% of British Palestine to the Jewish state. By the end of the war, Israel possessed 77%. She had everything but the West Bank and eastern quarter of Jerusalem (controlled by Jordan), and the Gaza Strip (controlled by Egypt).

It all meant that Israel now had a state, but not the Palestinians. The problem is still a bone of contention. Today, the West Bank is nominally controlled by the Palestinian Authority and is under Israeli occupation. Gaza is controlled by Hamas, an Islamist fundamentalist party, and is under Israeli blockade, but not occupied by ground troops



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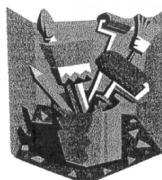
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01902 670282 or 07754 801659

Rogation Sunday

Sam Setchell

Rogation Sunday is on 6 May.

Rogation Sunday is the day when the Church has traditionally offered prayer for God's blessings on the fruits of the earth and the labours of those who produce our food.

The word "rogation" is from the Latin *rogare*, "to ask." Historically, the Rogation Days (the three days before Ascension Day) were a period of fasting and abstinence, asking for God's blessing on the crops for a bountiful harvest. Less of us today directly derive our livelihood from the production of food, yet it is good to be reminded of our dependence upon those who do and our responsibility for the environment.

Traditionally a common feature of Rogation days was the ceremony of beating the bounds, in which a procession of parishioners, led by the minister and churchwardens would proceed around the boundary of their parish and pray for its protection in the forthcoming year. As it is no longer practical to follow exact boundaries many services will be held that have a focus on specific elements of creation such as livestock, fields, orchards and gardens.

A prayer for Rogationtide:

Remember, Lord, your mercy and loving-kindness towards us.

Bless this good earth, and make it fruitful.

Bless our labour, and give us all things needed for our daily lives.

Bless the homes of our parish and all who live within them.

Bless our common life and our care for our neighbour.

Hear us, good Lord. Amen.

Well dressed!

Where do you go to hear the terms pettling, flowering, barking or puddling?

Derbyshire, or course – where the tradition of ‘well dressing’ goes right back to 1394, when two annual displays in Tissington and Buxton began. Nowadays, there are dozens of well dressings held across Derbyshire each summer.

So - how does one dress a well?

First, you take hard board, and wet it for up to three weeks. Then clay is puddled into just the right consistency and mounted on the board. The clay is then barked (dot to dot) so that you can plan the display in great details. Next, pettling – when flower petals, dried fruit and veg is pricked out onto the clay board. Finally the display is mounted next to the historical well.

Well dressing can be a reminder to thank God for the blessing of water, as well as a fun activity for the whole community, and it certainly keeps an old tradition alive and well. It can also raise money for charity.

In many communities the churches join in by offering to organise hymns and prayers at the well dressing, as well as some tea and cake. One lady who had gone through a difficult time was so warmly welcomed by the church when she visited her local well dressing that she went on to join the church.

You asked for it

The student, when asked by the teacher to write an essay on ‘The Effects of Laziness’, turned in a blank sheet of paper.

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Why children find pencils difficult

Here is an unexpected problem: children are struggling to use pencils these days, because the excessive use of touchscreen phones is damaging their dexterity.

Now paediatric doctors, handwriting experts and orthopaedic therapists are warning that although kids may swipe a screen, they no longer have the hand strength and agility to learn to write correctly when they start school.

It seems that the traditional skills of writing, drawing, painting, and cutting -out boost fine motor skills and co-ordination.

But now 'children coming into school are being given a pencil but are increasingly not able to hold it, because they do not have the movement skills,' says a paediatrician from the NHS. 'They need to manipulate play-dough, hold scissors, scribble with pencils, and so develop muscles in their shoulder, elbow and wrists.'

Dementia Awareness Week

By Sam Setchell

Dementia Awareness Week is from 21 to 27 May

A number of churches around the diocese are becoming more dementia-friendly, discovering that the journey begins with some simple steps. Some are starting to go further. You can see one example, the Evesham Tea Service, on our diocesan web site, and we will soon be telling more stories.

This week doesn't only offer an opportunity to think about how your church could become more dementia-friendly. It's also a reminder of the importance of praying for those who are living with dementia, for their families and carers, and for all who are affected by the emotional and mental symptoms of the various physical illnesses we call dementia.

Here is a prayer you can use:

God of hope and resurrection, you know us better than we know ourselves, and draw us to peace and wholeness in your love.

We remember before you those who are unable to remember their own lives.

Guard and treasure their lost memories for them, and hold their past in your safe hands, that when the death of the body comes, you may bring them to the full life of the resurrection, restore and heal the memories of their lives, and give them back to themselves, that we with them may rejoice in your love, and find the fullness of life in your presence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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WWI Timeline - Events of 1918

April 1918

- 1st Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Services of Great Britain amalgamated: becomes a separate service as the Royal Air Force.
- 4th Battle of Ayre (France), a phase of the allied defence of the line during the German Kaiserschlacht: Operation Michael.
- 5th Battle of the Ancre 1918 ends First Battles of the Somme 1918.
- 9th Fourth Battle of Ypres (Battle of the Lys) begins with the Battle of Estaires (ends 11th). Neuve Chapelle taken by German Forces.
- 10th Battle of the Messines 1918 - taken by German Forces.
- 11th Armentieres & Merville taken by German Forces.
- 12th Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig issues his 'Order of the Day' to the British Army in France on the serious situation (Backs to the Wall).
- 16th Passchendale reoccupied by German Forces.
- 17th First Battle of Kemmel Ridge begins - ends 19th.
Second Battle of Kemmel Ridge begins on 25th.
- 24th Action of Villers - Bretonneux (Somme)

Haig's Orders of the Day'

With the Allies under severe threat by the onslaught, Haig issued a famous order on 11 April:

There is no other course of action open to us but to fight it out.
Every position must be held to the last man:
there must be no retirement.

With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight to the end.

May 1918

1st Sevastopol taken by German Forces.

7th Kirkuk (Mesopotamia) taken by British Forces.

9th Blocking attack on Ostend. H.M.S. 'Vindictive' sunk to block harbour.

15th German submarines bomb St Kilda (Hebrides).

17th Sinn Fein leaders arrested in Ireland & interned. Account of Irish - German plots published 25th May.

18th First British retaliatory air raid on German towns. Cologne is bombed by day

19th Last German night aeroplane raid on London resulting in casualties; 49 killed, 177 wounded.

German air raid on British camps & hospitals at Etaples; heavy casualties.

Germans take Caronne - Third Battle of the Aisne, (27th), Soissons (29th), Fere-en-Tarderois (31st). They reach the Marne on the 30th.

27th May - 6 June.

The Germans launched their third large scale attack at Chemin des Dames and the River Aisne. The artillery barrage shattered French units. The Germans advanced 14 miles on the first day, on the Western Front this was an unprecedented success. 2 million shells were fired in the 4hr 30min preliminary bombardment!

R. Moss

National Doughnut Week 12th – 19th May

Eat some doughnuts – and help raise money to help desperately ill children through the Children's Trust.

That is the aim of National Doughnut Week, and this year you will find about 600 participating bakeries, cafes and shops, all over the country. There you can choose from all sorts of doughnuts with various toppings and fillings.

Through the support of these bakeries, cafes and shops, National Doughnut Week has raised more than £755,000 in the past 23 years for children's charities. And it is hoped that at least £30,000 will be raised to make this the best year ever.

The Children's Trust is a national charity working with children who have multiple disabilities and complex health needs

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Church Mission Society shines spotlight on ‘vital, but hard to fund’ mission in the UK

In parts of the UK, there is a kind of poverty more profound than in Uganda. This is the view of Rev Jenny Green, a missionary working with Church Mission Society on the Faxfleet estate in Bradford.

Prior to being community chaplain in Bradford, Jenny Green spent 20 years with CMS in Kisoro, south west Uganda, where she set up Potter’s Village, a children’s crisis and medical centre. And while it is true that one third of the population of Uganda subsists on less than \$2 a day, Jenny points out that at least: “In Kisoro, almost everyone has someone... there is help from extended family networks and the local community. But in Faxfleet, as in many other parts of the UK, community and even primary family structures are so broken that many find themselves completely destitute.”

Jenny tells of one woman in Bradford who spent three months living in a tent in the woods, with no income or benefits, surviving on food from her local food bank. For many in the area, ‘vandalism, arson and fly-tipping are rife, and people are frightened and lonely. A few frail elderly people find themselves unable to sell the homes they bought years ago, as their value has been so eroded. They’ve been joined by people from a mix of nationalities, unfamiliar with each other’s cultures and languages, and struggling in isolation with their own issues.’

As a community chaplain with Church Mission Society (CMS), Jenny helps bridge the gap between church and community, supporting those whose lives have been torn apart by poverty, unemployment and family breakdown.

Naomi Steinberg, CMS head of communications, said, ‘People don’t realise how much work CMS does in the UK. Unfortunately, this vital UK mission can be harder to raise support for. But the reality is that so many others in our nation feel utterly abandoned and without hope or help. Yet they matter so dearly to God.’

To read more about Church Mission Society’s work in the UK go to www.churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope.

Some miscellaneous one-liners ...

In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism your count votes.

The best vitamin for a Christian is Bl.

The Church: under the same management for over 2000 years.

Soul food served here.

Don't give up on yourself. Even Moses was once a basket case.

Satan subtracts and divides. God adds and multiplies.

What he lacked in depth as a preacher he made up for in length. Mark Twain

Was Noah's wife called Joan of Ark?

Lead me not into temptation. I can find it myself.

The things that come to those that wait may be the things left by those who got there first.

Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.

If you lend someone £20, and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

Birds of a feather flock together and mess on your car.

On church towers, rock cakes, scaffolding and the merits of confirming bats

My dear Nephew Darren

We are finally about to start repairing our medieval church tower. Would that we still paid medieval prices for having it done; there would be a degree of satisfaction in giving the builders a hogshead of ale and 10 sheep once the work was completed. I would even be prepared to throw in an Indulgence, sparing them 100 days in purgatory (the architect probably claiming 15% of them for himself).

After several endless jumble sales, coffee mornings – where we were obliged to eat Mrs Jarvis's rock cakes (many of us would have been happier to make a substantial donation to the fund provided we didn't have to eat them) – sponsored events (Mr Peat has yet to return, five years late, from his sponsored cycle ride across the Sahara – but fortunately, we had his sponsor money collected before he departed) and a substantial loan from the bank that makes the National Debt seem trivial (and has the same probability of being repaid), we are now able to begin. The only sponsored event I regretted not having was paying to have Lady Trotter remain silent for a month. Even sponsoring her to keep quiet for half an hour would have been pleasant.

We received a substantial donation from a local manufacturer. It was suggested that as a sign of appreciation we advertise their products from the top of the tower – until it was gently pointed out that they produce nuclear warheads. I would have had no objection; knowing that council members possessed tactical nuclear weapons would make discussion at meetings rather brisker.

Scaffolding has now been erected around the tower, with the first 20 feet covered in sheet metal in order to stop the Young Farmers, after refreshing themselves at their Tuesday meetings in the pub, from trying to see who could be the first to reach the top. Personally, I suspect it is to stop the more athletic members of the Ladies' Guild from attempting the same feat. 80-year-olds these days can have fearsome energy and determination.

Fulfilling current safety regulations, there is now a security cordon around the tower of approximately 10 square miles. "Lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone"? These days, a dashed foot would involve court proceedings and damages of several million pounds.

Inside the church, the organ has had to be covered in polythene sheeting in order to protect it. Parish relations were somewhat strained last week when our deputy organist, Mrs Ffrench, while playing for Evensong, overheard me refer to the large bag on the organ and got quite the wrong impression.

The greatest inconvenience will be caused to our population of bats, but if it dissuades them from flying into church so much the better. The only other possibility is to get them all confirmed; we will then never see them inside church again.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

The same yesterday...

Why did Moses wander in the desert for 40 years?
Because even back then men wouldn't ask for directions.



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SERVICES FOR THE MONTH MAY 2018

- 6th May - All Saints'** - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
6.30pm - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries
- St Andrew's - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries
- St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
- 13th May - All Saints'** - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries
6.30pm - Evensong - The Revd Guy Hewlett
- St Andrew's - 9.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
- St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
- 20th May - All Saints'** - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries
- St Andrew's - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries
- St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
- 27th May - All Saints'** - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - Compline - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
- St Andrew's - 9.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
- St Peter's - 10.30am - Worship for All - Suzanne Bradley