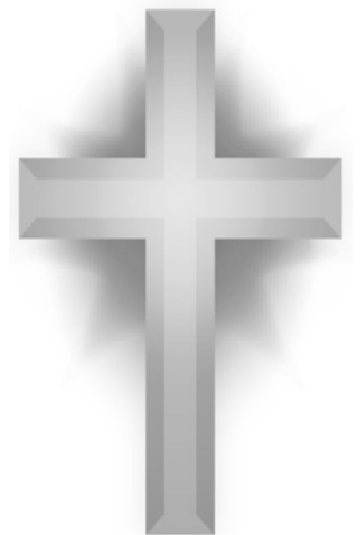
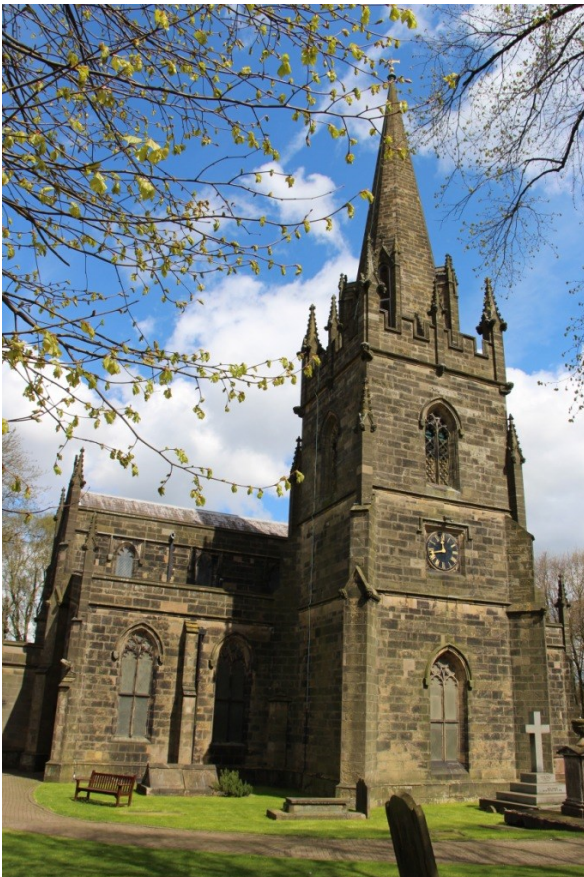


THE BEACON

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

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Worshipping God
Welcoming All
Serving our Community

50p

December 2024/January 2025

PARISH WIDE WHO's WHO

Vicar	Rev Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Baker	01902 882847
Pastoral ALM	Tracey Bate	01902 880727
	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
	Joan Sullivan	01902 661094
Worship ALM	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth ALM	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Stuart Hutchinson	
PCC Treasurer	Sheila Moss	01902 893570
Parish Office	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289

St Peters

Who's Who

Parish Warden	Edward Grist	01902 682786
Treasurer	Sheila Moss	01902 893570
Children's Advocate	Suzanne Bradley	
DCC Secretary	John Powell	01902 880055

St Andrew's

Who's Who

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

All Saints Who's Who

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

SAFEGUARDING

The Parish of Gornal and Sedgley is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults. We follow the House of Bishops guidance. If you or someone you know feels unsafe, please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Barbara Baker, Tel 01902 882847, safeguarding@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

or Acting Team Rector Rev Catherine Mitchell

Tel 01902 677 897, vicargornalandsedgley@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

(other contacts available on our website www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk)

Funerals in November

5th Joselyn Ann Hayes Gornal Wood

13th Roy Nightingale Gornal Wood

THE BEACON

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

Karen Evans: 01902 678056

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

Articles for the October magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 24th January

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk

CHURCH OPENING

**Friday mornings from
10.30am to 12.30pm**

The church is open for quiet prayer & coffee and a chat.

St Peter's District Church magazine

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

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

Gail Griffiths

At the Parish Office - tel 01902 540289

email admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM CANON JAN

Well we're almost at the end of another year, I don't know where 2024 has gone, but we are now in the crazy season.

For those with little ones it is a truly magical time, decorating the Christmas tree, letters being written to Santa , the nativity play at school, or maybe concert.

I can remember giving my two children the Argos catalogue and they would put a cross by all the things that they would like, and I would explain that they wouldn't get everything but they would have some things.

I'm sure children today look at toys , games etc on their iPads or tablets . And they seem to have so much.

But it's a time to recall once more the greatest story ever told, to pause in our busy lives.

To remember that God saw a world in such desperate need, that he had to do something.

So he chose a young girl, Mary who no doubt asked Why ME? And an ordinary man a carpenter Joseph who also asked the same question ~ why ME?

They had to make a long journey to Bethlehem , where there wasn't even a clean room for the baby to be born in.

Thanks to the kindness of an inn keeper they had a stable ~ and Joseph no doubt asked once more why here inside this stable filled with hay? The answer, because God sent his Son Jesus ,as Saviour for everyone. If he'd been born to a King and Queen in a Palace then he wouldn't have been able to experience an ordinary upbringing, to get to know people like you and me.

He was born in poverty not luxury, so he understands our struggles and needs.

Our world is in great need again, so many people are living in poverty, for many families Christmas will be extremely difficult.

Although knowing Jesus can't make everything different, it does mean that you are not alone he walks along side you, he loves you for who you are.

Like that very first Christmas well over 2000 years ago, I pray the Peace of the Christ Child will be with you this Christmas.

God bless **Canon Jan**

THOUGHTS BY CANON JAN

For some people Christmas is a very difficult time, maybe because they're alone, or it brings back very painful memories.

For some families they have no idea how they are going to even put basic food on the table let alone any nice treats or presents.

So. I think it's good for all of us to just stop and take a few minutes to remember all who will find this season very difficult, the words of this poem sum it up so well.

Not everyone likes Christmas, although it might seem strange,

Some people just don't like the fuss and long to rearrange.

Hearts that ache for absentees, heads threatening to explode,

The lonely and the lost ones, the penniless and poor.

No presents, food, or sparkling tree.

No family at the door.

So please don't think it's rude, ungrateful, self absorbed.

It's just at times those big events are easier ignored.

Enjoy the day you're given, love, and understand that those who ,

Don't like Christmas might need a helping hand.

Written by **Laura Ding Edwards**

The most beautiful story

A well-known atheist was being interviewed on Radio 4. When asked how he spent Christmas, he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. “But you’re an atheist”, his interviewer protested. “Yes”, he replied, “but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told.”

That ‘beautiful story’ tells of a Creator who sent His Son to share the life of His creation, to be born as a helpless baby, to grow up as a man of extraordinary wisdom, gentleness and love, who was executed by the authorities for contradicting the traditions of the time. His followers – who today number about two billion people all over the world – believe that He rose from the dead, and that by His death and resurrection He has made possible forgiveness and eternal life for men and women everywhere.

That is certainly quite a story, perhaps the greatest story ever told, and yes, beautiful. And that is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children’s Nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country. People who stay away from church all year turn up to hear it, and who can blame them? This is a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth.

Probably the best-known statue in the world is ‘Christ the Redeemer’, towering over the South American city of Rio de Janeiro, His arms outstretched in blessing. Christmas celebrates the birth of that great Redeemer – a tiny baby laid in a feeding trough.

His birth changed history, His life transformed our understanding of what it means to be human, His death was at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph. Yes, it is ‘the most beautiful story ever told’. Enjoy it again this Christmas.



All Saints' Christmas Fayre

**Saturday 7th December 2024
10.30am – 2pm**

**in
All Saints' Church Hall,
Vicar Street**

Admission: 20p

Stalls include:

***Tombola - Bottle Stall – Crafts –DVDs and books – Jigsaws -
Homemade Cakes – Fair Trade - Children's Table
Plant Stall – Craft Stall
High Flyers
Treasure Hunt
Chocolate Stall
Raffle***

Refreshments available.

The church is open for 'A Taste of Christmas'

MOTHERS' UNION

As I drew back the bedroom curtains on the morning of 19th November I could not believe what I saw – a picturesque winter scene! This wouldn't have been a problem except it was the day of the Mothers' Union Diocesan Festival at Worcester Cathedral and members from the north of the diocese

were travelling there by coach. Several phone calls and cancellations later a smaller group of intrepid Mothers' Union members made their way to catch the coach for the journey to Worcester. A very obliging driver and a lovely warm coach made for a pleasant journey. On arriving we made our way to the cathedral café for a snack before taking our places for the service. It was a lovely service, led by Bishop Martin and Mthr. Victoria, during which our President, Judith Grubb, was presented with flowers and a garden voucher in appreciation of her time as Diocesan President. I share with you a verse from one of the Communion hymns we sang:

*'All that I dream, all that I pray, all that I'll ever make,
I give to you today.
Take and sanctify these gifts for your honour, Lord.
Knowing that I love and serve you is enough reward.
All that I dream, all that I pray, all that I'll ever have,
I give to you today.'*

~~~~~

It was lovely to welcome Jill Nicholls, who is an LLM at St Mary's, King-swinford, to our November meeting, where she shared her journey of faith with us.

Jill was born with polio and her parents were told she would never walk. However, with her parents' support and her stubborn determination she proved them wrong. Despite a difficult time at school because she was different, having to wear a special boot and support, she became a nurse, had a family and undertook her Reader Training. She is also part of the hospital chaplaincy team at Russell Hall Hospital.



Throughout her life of ups and downs, including having cancer treatment, and the joys, with the birth of her beautiful granddaughter, Jill's faith has been a constant, supporting and uplifting her on her journey.

When Jill was asked to do a flower arrangement at the church's Flower Festival she chose to depict her life journey. We saw a photograph of her arrangement which consisted of two pedestals of flowers separated by blue material, on which was sprinkled sand, large and small pebbles and, placed in the centre, was a tiny child's boot. The pebbles represented the many difficulties she had encountered on her life journey and the tiny special boot, which she brought to show us, was the one she wore as a child.

To share Jill's journey was a privilege. As she said, 'When things are difficult, He is there by your side and what more do you need?'

~~~~~

Our support of the local Women's Refuge is very important to us and I wish to take this opportunity to thank you and members of the congregation who so generously support our collections during the year. I know that it is very much appreciated by everyone at the Refuge. If anyone still has ladies' gifts for the Refuge I will be taking them the week beginning 16th December.

~~~~~

The Mothers' Union subscription for 2024 is £31. Judy will be collecting this at our afternoon meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January. If you are unable to be at that meeting please give it to Judy or myself by 7<sup>th</sup> January, but not before the New Year.

Cheques to be made payable to:

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

**Dates:**

|                     |               |                                  |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec | 12.30pm       | Christmas Lunch, The Lodge       |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan | <u>2.00pm</u> | Social & paying of subscriptions |

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

Lord, we pray that you will grant us the happiness that was Mary's, the trust that was Joseph's, the joy of the shepherds, and the love of the Christ child, this Christmas and always.

It was with sadness that we heard of the death of Joyce Withers'. Joyce had been a dedicated member of the Mothers' Union for 29 years. She joined All Saints' and St Andrew's Mothers' Union and began the Mothers' Union Choir. On moving to Wall Heath Joyce continued her membership at Church of the Ascension.

We hold her sister Maureen, brother-in-law Dennis and their family in our prayers at this time.

**Liz Williams**

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## **Ladies Society – November 2024**

In November our speaker was the highly-entertaining Dave Heeley and his beautiful guide dog Peter. Dave is known as "Blind Dave" as he was born with an eye condition which was eventually diagnosed, when he was aged 10, as retinitis pigmentosa. This is hereditary and his grandfather had the same condition.

Dave started by telling us how he has been supported by five guide dogs in his life. When he went to meet his first dog, he wondered what a dog could do for him. After three weeks of training with him his confidence had been boosted and his life enhanced. He realised that a dog is an ice-breaker – people talk to you when you have the dog with you. The first dog, Peter, was a labrador/retriever cross who was an absolute rogue but a hard worker. He was banned from many houses for eating cakes, gateaux and, on one occasion, goldfish!

Carla, the second dog, was also a labrador/retriever and the only female he has owned and she was faultless. Dave called her "my princess". She was a hard worker but died of cancer aged just 10.

His third dog was Wicksie, a German Shepherd/retriever cross and he was like a big bear. Dave described him as being so dopey that he often guided Dave into trees/vans/walls and so he was retired after 6 years. Seamus, his fourth dog, was a full German Shepherd and was more like a big donkey. He looked ferocious but was daft and very nosey. He loved to take Dave to the butchers so that he could get treats. He died in 2018 after 9 years from cancer.

Dave explained that, once your dog dies or is retired, it can take 4 years to have another dog. This impacts considerably on the blind person's independence. Dave eventually had Peter in 2022. He is a full retriever and works well and, as we saw at the meeting, loves biscuits! Peter is very quiet and so Dave has attached a bell to him so that he knows where he is.

When he left school at age 16 Dave wanted to be a soldier but, after doing the entrance tests, he was told that he was exempt. This made him feel bitter and upset and, for the next three years, he had a number of jobs and had several friends, but remained angry. At age 20 he began to realise that he could live for another 50 years and that "life was for living". He decided to concentrate on what he could do, not what he couldn't do.

Dave started to raise money for the charity Guide Dogs for the Blind. A man approached him and suggested that they run the London Marathon. Dave didn't own any trainers and had not been running for many years. 12 months later they ran the London Marathon – he has done 16 marathons to date.

Three years later Dave was listening to Sir Ranulph Fiennes on the radio – he had completed 7 marathons on 7 continents in 7 days. This inspired Dave and on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2008 he found himself at 11.58pm on the Falkland Islands ready to start the challenge. He and his guides then went to Rio de Janeiro, Los Angeles, Australia, Dubai and Tunisia in order to run marathons and they finished in London on 13<sup>th</sup> April. He was the first person (and the first West Bromwich Albion supporter) to complete the challenge. They had flown 35,000 miles and slept just 19 hours in the 7 days.

He had also met a physiotherapist who had encouraged him to have an ice bath after each marathon and this helped his legs to recover.

Dave had been unemployed for 18 months by now but he quickly developed a career as a public speaker.

In 2011 Dave took on another challenge with the people who had now become part of “Team Blind Dave”. They included his guide runner and physio. Dave had lost his dad to cancer and wanted to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support in its centenary year and so they did the “Top to Toe” challenge. He describes the 10 days of cycling and running as “lots of fun” and he even added an extra 80 miles onto the route so that he could go to The Hawthorns. The team members were now keen to do more.

In 2013 the team did a tandem bike ride through 7 countries in 7 days – Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, UK and Luxembourg. His guide runner was on the front of the tandem and operated the steering and brakes whilst Dave was on the back and operating the gears.

The Marathon des Sables is a 7-day ultramarathon which is the distance of about 6 regular marathons. Entrants are totally self-sufficient and sleep in Bedouin tents which are moved each day to the next rest site. The runners are allowed 2 litres of water each morning and night to drink and wash with. They are followed by a mobile hospital and have strict medical tests. The runners carry backpacks with their food, sleeping bag, a compass and headtorch in – even though, as Dave pointed out, a torch wouldn’t help him! The runners climbed 4 mountain ranges that week – at one point he was 2000 feet up on a one-foot-wide ledge. How brave.

In 2016 Dave was talked into doing The Escape from Alcatraz. This is a triathlon which includes a 1.5-mile swim in very cold water (with strong currents and sharks!) then a cycle ride and running. The only problem was that neither Dave nor his guide could swim and so they had to learn at the local swimming baths. They then had to jump off the top deck of a boat and start swimming – 1300 people jumped off the boat in 2 minutes.

Dave's next adventure was to complete – in partnership with the Albion Foundation - all of the “Great Runs” in 2017. He did 25 runs in total, starting in Edinburgh and finishing in Ethiopia. This was followed in 2018 by a 6-day walk along the Great Wall of China, accompanied by his family. 2019 saw Dave and his guide Tony take on his bucket list challenge – the Comrades Ultra Marathon in South Africa. This is a strictly timed event – you must complete 56 miles in 12 hours. Dave managed this within the time but Tony collapsed just before the end.

2022 was a year of difficulties for Dave. He rode 800 miles from Colditz Castle to West Bromwich, then had his right knee replaced, then walked Hadrian's Wall in 5 days and then had a new left knee.

The final challenge Dave talked about – and one that he found very moving – was the 1000-mile bike ride along the Western Front Way. He told us about the route through Switzerland and Belgium and the cemeteries and memorials that he saw on every corner. At the Menin Gate a former WBA player called Harold Bache is remembered and Dave took his WBA cap to the memorial.

This was a wonderful, entertaining and thought-provoking talk about how one man has triumphed through adversity. Thank you, Dave. Our meetings take place at 11.30am on the first Monday of the month and new members would be very welcome.

**Karen Evans**

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## **Church rules**

Six year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel sat together for the Christmas concert in church. Joel kept giggling and whispering until his big sister had had enough. “Be quiet in church!”

“Why?” Joel demanded. “Who is going to make me?”

Angie pointed to the back of the church and said: “See those two big men standing at the door? They're hushers.”





Grief is hard.  
Death can impact  
all of life.

The Bereavement  
*Journey*  
a place to talk

7 Sessions of films  
and discussion  
**for *anyone* bereaved *anytime***

Topics include:

- Attachment, separation and loss
- The pain and responses of grief
- Anger and guilt
- Coping with others' reactions
- Delayed and suppressed grief
- Adjusting to change
- Moving forward healthily
- Faith questions – a Christian perspective (optional)

To find out more visit:  
**[thebereavementjourney.org](http://thebereavementjourney.org)**

Running soon:

**All Saints Church,  
Community Room  
Ladies' Walk, Sedgley**

Commencing Jan 7th 2025 at  
2:00 p.m. - 4:00p.m.  
(and following 6 Tuesdays)

Contact: 01902 540289 to book.  
Total suggested donation £6.00



# **Times Past**

CHESTER COURANT, Tuesday, December 29, 1795

## **STAFFORDSHIRE COLLIERIES**

WANTED, in the Coal and Iron-stone Mines, in the parishes of Dudley, Tipton, Wednesbury, and Sedgley, SEVERAL HUNDRED MINERS, who will find constant employment at the said works.- Wages from two shillings and sixpence, to three shillings and sixpence per day, with two quarts of ale.

COUNTY EXPRESS, Saturday, December 25, 1875

## **SEDGLEY**

CLEVER CAPTURE OF A THIEF. – At the Police Court on Monday, before Mr Isaac Spooner (Stipendiary), John Swaine, labourer, was charged with stealing turnips belonging to Mr Samuel Bannister, farmer, Sedgley Park, on the morning of the 19th inst. – Police constable Barton stated that recently robberies in the Sedgley rural districts had become very frequent, and on the morning in question, at about six o'clock, he was watching in a field at Sedgley Park, and saw the prisoner enter the field with a truck by breaking through the fence, after which he gathered about thirty turnips, upon which witness pounced upon him and caught him. Mr Bannister claimed 1s. as the value of the turnips. – In defence prisoner said he did not steal any turnips, neither had he any intention of stealing them. – Mr Spooner said the turnips were found in his possession, and he should order him to pay 1s., the value of them, and a fine of £5, in default of which two months' imprisonment.

BIRMINGHAM DAILY GAZETTE, Tuesday, December 22, 1914

## **EXTENSION OF HOURS**

At Sedgley Police Court, yesterday, Mr. W.A. Foster applied on behalf of the local licensed victuallers for an extension of the hours of opening their premises from 10 to 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day.

Mr H. H. Ward (chairman of the Bench) said he thought the extension granted by the Bilston magistrates applied to Sedgley. In any event the Bench would ratify the decision of the Bilston justices.

# The Challenges of Christmas

Christmas is a great time of year, but it's not without its challenges! After one family had put up 250,000 Christmas lights outside, they didn't dare boil a kettle for fear of blowing the system!

## *The challenge of over-indulging*

We all remember the episode of the Vicar of Dibley, where she had to consume four Christmas dinners! Christmas is a time when we usually eat and drink far too much, the average person gaining six pounds in weight. But Christmas is not simply about gaining weight, but losing what weighs us down. *'Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.'* (1 Peter 5:7). Whatever your concerns or worries this Christmas, bring them to God.

## *The challenge of overspending*

In the rush to buy Christmas cards, a woman bought a pack of 50 identical cards. Without reading the verse, she hastily signed and sent them off, but for one. A few days later she read the message: *'This card is just to say a little gift is on the way.'* Christmas is not about getting into debt, but God getting us out of debt. He spent exactly what was needed on the first Christmas night: *'You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.'* (Matthew 1:21).

## *The challenge is over too quickly*

Christmas doesn't last very long, yet the effect of the first Christmas is long-lasting. *'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.'* (John 3:16). Jesus has come to bring us life in all its fullness, both for now and all eternity.

How do we face the challenges of Christmas? *'Yet what I can, I give Him – give my heart'.*

# Think twice before buying that goat in Ghana

What are you buying your friends for Christmas this year? If you are tempted by ‘socially responsible’ gifts that involve you NOT giving your friends anything at all, but instead giving your money to a charity ‘in their name’, you may wish to think again. Such gifts as goats in Ghana or chickens in Chad can make you feel virtuous, but may damage your relationships.

A recent study has found that people who buy others ‘socially responsible’ gifts can actually be considered to be self-serving and inconsiderate by the people to whom they give them. It seems that such givers often over-estimate how appreciative their friends will be to receive nothing. A study at the University of Southern California found that to be successful, a gift must make the recipient feel ‘extraordinary, and special.’ I

f you suspect giving your various loved ones news about a goat won’t achieve that, there is only one solution: instead of *giving* only socially responsible gifts, insist on *receiving only them*. Then your mantelpiece will be full of photos of happy goats and chickens, and your family and friends will enjoy your more usual gifts, and still be speaking to you.

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## Old love

During a wedding the mother of the bride managed to keep from crying until she glanced at the grandparents. As the bride and groom took their vows, the grandmother had reached over to the grandfather’s wheelchair and was gently touching his hand. That was all it took to start the mother’s tears flowing. After the wedding, she went over to the grandmother and told her how that tender gesture triggered her outburst.

“Well, I’m sorry to ruin your moment,” the grandmother replied, “but I was just checking to see if he was still awake.”

# **What sort of a Christmas card person are you?**

The time to send and receive Christmas cards has come round again – time for our annual shock at the cost of a coloured card, and disbelief at what the Post Office intends to charge us to deliver them.

It seems there are three kinds of people when it comes to Christmas cards: the total abstainers, the total givers and the selective givers.

Abstainers write ‘Happy Christmas everyone’ on Facebook, and consider the job well done. Total givers spend a fortune on cards and stamps and send them to everyone they know. Selective givers try to cut corners, but then cannot remember who sent who what, and as the cards pour through their door, spend time worrying...

However you do it, it is good to stay in yearly touch with your widest circle of friends and family. Proverbs points out that: ‘Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.’ Prov 25:25. Your loved ones will enjoy hearing from you!

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## **Waiting**

After 40 years of living in various damp and cold vicarages, we retired and were finally able to move into our own home. It took several weeks to settle in, but then we were nearly done – just waiting for the arrival of the new couch and chairs.

As the delivery truck pulled into the driveway, I hastened to welcome it. “Finally!” I exclaimed, flinging open the front door. “I’ve been waiting for years for this!”

“Don’t blame me, lady,” he retorted. “I only got the order this morning.”!



## **Millions at breaking point as “shockingly low incomes” leave them hungry**

Chronically low incomes are devastating the lives of millions of people who don't have enough income to afford food, essential bills and a safe home to live in.

That's according to the latest report by UK debt advice charity, Christians Against Poverty (CAP).

CAP's YouGov polling, which accompanies the report, shows that 11.8 million (22%) of UK adults say they currently have a deficit budget, which is when a person's income doesn't cover the cost of the core essentials they need to live on.

CAP's clients, on average, are £273 a month short of what they need to be able to cover their basics such as food, energy bills and rent

The report highlights that when CAP's debt coaches go into clients' homes, they find people living in cold properties and with empty fridges. Clients describe sitting in the dark with the lights off and curtains closed, often hiding in terror because they're afraid of bailiffs knocking at their door demanding money that they don't have.

The report reveals that almost half (47%) of CAP's clients have deficit budgets, even after an expert debt advisor has supported them to review their finances, and has worked through suggestions to maximise their income and cut out non-essentials.

Christians Against Poverty's Chief Executive Officer, Stewart McCulloch, said, "Our expert debt advisors, alongside local churches we partner with, are continuing to help thousands of people across the UK to become debt free.

"But it's frustrating for our team when they have the tools to help someone out of debt, but the person's income is so shockingly low that even when the burden of debt is removed, they still can't afford life's essentials.

If you would like to help: <https://capuk.org>

## **Dwight L Moody – extraordinary evangelist and peace-maker**

It was 125 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1899, that Dwight L Moody, the famous American evangelist, died.

Moody was born in Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1837 and raised in the Unitarian Church. But his father died when he was four, and he had a hard upbringing as one of nine children. At 17 he moved to Boston to work in his uncle's shoe shop – a job he got on condition that he attended the Congregational Church of Mount Vernon. There he was converted to evangelical Christianity through his Sunday school teacher, Edward Kimball.

One of Moody's favourite quotes was "Faith makes all things possible. Love makes all things easy." He devoted himself to bringing the Gospel to as many people as possible. Unwilling to fight in the Civil War, he worked among the troops with the YMCA, and then built up a strong evangelical church in Chicago – only to have the building, his house and the homes of many in the congregation destroyed in the Great Fire of 1871.

Re-evaluating his priorities, Moody teamed up with Ira D Sankey, a hymn writer, and they made a number of tours to Great Britain, where he avoided divisive doctrines, preaching "the old-fashioned gospel". They drew large crowds, inspiring many local people to start Sunday schools for children and young people. News of this had a big influence in Sweden, though the Americans had no knowledge of Swedish.

Moody showed his fearlessness in going to Ireland, where Catholics and Protestants were at loggerheads. He ignored the sectarian divide and was welcomed by both, leading to revival there.

He had meanwhile returned to Northfield to live, and ten years after his death the Chicago church was renamed the Moody Church in his honour. President Dwight D Eisenhower, born in 1890, was named after him.

# **Sol Invictus, Emperors and how Christmas began**

It was 1,750 years ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> December 274, that the Roman Emperor Aurelian founded and launched the cult of Sol Invictus as an official religion. He erected a temple and declared 25<sup>th</sup> December a national holiday, to be known as the Feast of the Unconquered Sun. In 336, after the conversion of the emperor Constantine, the Church in Rome began to celebrate Christmas on 25<sup>th</sup> December.

Aurelian, who was born in Moesia – the south-eastern Balkans – rose from modest beginnings to become a strong and successful Emperor at one of the most difficult times in Roman history. He defeated many attempts to destroy the empire from without and within, notably attempts by the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires, and improved the lot of the common people.

His idea in promoting Sol Invictus as the main divinity of the Empire was to try to give everyone a god to believe in without betraying their own gods. However, when Constantine the Great, who was born during Aurelian's reign, became Emperor in 306 and converted to Christianity, it was the beginning of the end for Sol Invictus – and the start of the dominance of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

The date of 25<sup>th</sup> December was taken over and celebrated as the birthday of Jesus – and has been ever since, though scholars agree that this is an impossible date because flocks of sheep would not have been out in the fields in the dead of winter, and therefore shepherds would not have been out either. Other dates have been suggested, of which perhaps the most convincing is September 11.

It is a happy irony that in English, Christmas can be described accurately as the Feast of the Unconquered Son.

# **Hedgehog extinction fears grow as population plummets**

The status of hedgehogs in western Europe has recently been downgraded to “near threatened”, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

If European numbers decline any farther, hedgehogs will be listed as being at risk of extinction. Numbers have shrunk in more than half the countries where hedgehogs live – including the UK, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. Some national declines have been as much as 33 per cent.

Our rural population of hedgehogs here in the UK has fallen by up to 75 per cent since 2000, although city-dwelling hedgehogs are doing a bit better.

But the combined pressures of intensive agriculture, domestic pesticides, garden strimmers, busy roads and urban development have taken their toll. An eighth of all hedgehogs in the UK die every year just as roadkill.

Now a national hedgehog conservation strategy has been launched by the People’s Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS).

---

## **In place of cabbage**

On Sunday after the church service, a woman told the minister that when she had sent her husband to buy a cabbage for lunch, he had fallen and broken his leg. “That’s terrible!” said the minister. “What did you do?”

“I opened a can of peas,” she replied.

# **Teachers struggle with ill health**

As you prepare for Christmas this year, spare a thought – and a prayer – for our teachers. Their job is even more demanding at this time of year, as school Christmas activities are added to an already over-crowded school curriculum.

Also, recent figures from the Department for Education show that, for whatever reason, our teachers struggle with some ill health. About 14,000 teachers in England called in sick every day last year, a recent analysis has found.

That means that overall, about 66.2 per cent of England's teaching workforce were off school last year because of illness. That means that a whopping 2.5 million schooldays were lost in 2022-23, as more than 326,000 teachers missed class, owing to sickness.

---

## **Problem solving**

There was a bishop, an archdeacon and a curate driving down a steep mountain road. The brakes failed and the car careened down the road out of control, nearly going over the cliff. They all got out, shaken by their narrow escape from death.

The bishop said: "To fix this problem we need to organize a committee, have meetings, and through the process of exchanging ideas, develop a solution."

The archdeacon said, "No that would take too long. I will simply open the bonnet, isolate the problem and firmly correct it."

The curate said, "Why don't we push the car back up the hill and see if it happens again?"



# Home Schooling

*Back in the 'good old days', we didn't appreciate how much education was given at home...*

Our mothers taught us TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE: "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

Our fathers taught us RELIGION: "You better pray that that will come out of the carpet."

Our mothers taught us LOGIC: "If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the shops with me."

Our fathers taught us MORE LOGIC: "Because I said so, that's why."

Our mothers taught us about CONTORTIONISM: "Just you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

Our fathers taught us about the science of OSMOSIS: "Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

Our mothers taught

Our mothers taught us about ESP: "Put your sweater on; don't you think I know when you are cold?"

And finally, our fathers taught us about JUSTICE: "One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

---

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## A BIG THANK YOU FROM CANON JAN

I would like to say an Enormous Thank You, to everyone who came to support St Andrews's Christmas Faye , on November 16th.

Thanks to all the wonderful friends of St Andrews's, who had Stalls , sold raffle tickets. Put a lovely hamper together, donated things for the Great Tombola Stall.

Did a grand job waiting on tables, taking the money, and the Ladies in the Kitchen who never stopped. The wonderful support of the community.

Those who helped to tidy up afterwards . We raised an incredible amount, which all helps to keep our dearly loved little church open.

May God Bless You All. **Canon Jan** and Everyone at St Andrew's



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## Creative Learning Classes @ The Dormston Centre, Sedgley

| Course Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Start Date | Weeks    | Time                           | Fee     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Spanish for Complete Beginners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 25/09/2024 | 10       | 7.00-9.00pm                    | £110.00 |
| This course is suitable for those who have never studied Spanish before and would like to be able to communicate effectively in everyday situations. It is specifically designed for those of you with little or no prior knowledge of the language.                                                                                                                                   |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Spanish For Improvers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 28/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 9.30am-11.30am                 | £110.00 |
| This course is aimed at those of you who have attended at least 2-3 terms of our beginners' program. During this improvers course you will re-visit basic topics extending vocabulary and enabling you to use a broader range of skills giving your own opinions, likes and dislikes.                                                                                                  |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Spanish – Lower Intermediate</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 28/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | £80.00  |
| This course is aimed at those of you who have attended at least 3 terms of our improvers program. During this improvers course you will again re-visit basic topics further extending vocabulary and enabling you to use an even broader range of skills giving your own opinions, likes and dislikes.                                                                                 |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Art - Introduction to Pastels</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 23/09/2024 | 8 Weeks  | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | £88.00  |
| This 8-week course is designed for beginners interested in exploring the vibrant and versatile medium of pastel painting. You will learn foundational techniques, colour theory, and composition while developing your unique artistic style.                                                                                                                                          |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Art – Introduction to Acrylics</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 24/09/2024 | 8 Weeks  | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | £88.00  |
| This course introduces you to the vibrant world of acrylics, covering essential techniques, colour theory, and composition. The course includes practical projects like still life, landscapes, and personal pieces, fostering individual style development.                                                                                                                           |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Art Introduction to Print Making</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 25/09/2024 | 8 Weeks  | 7.00-9.00pm                    | £95.00  |
| An introduction to foundational skills and techniques in mono prints and Lino cuts. You will start with the basics of mono prints, exploring texture, composition, and layering. You will then learn Lino cutting, focusing on design, carving, and inking techniques.                                                                                                                 |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Flower Arranging for All</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 24/09/2024 | 5 Weeks  | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | £65.00  |
| <b>Flower Arranging for All</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 05/11/2024 | 5 Weeks  | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | £65.00  |
| This class is designed for all abilities, taught in an easy, friendly manner with many laughs along the way, in fact the ideal way to relax and have a bit of me time, whilst learning something that could even turn out to be a new profession.                                                                                                                                      |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Floristry Christmas Wreath Workshop</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 23/11/2024 | 1 Day    | 10.00am-1.00pm                 | £60.00  |
| Come along and join us for a day of festive fun. Our class is for all abilities. Our tutor will guide you through how to create a Festive Door Wreath using seasonal foliage and a selection of festive adornments to dress your wreath.                                                                                                                                               |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Introduction to Sign Language</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 23/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | £100    |
| During this introduction course You will cover topics such as Greetings, Weather, Transport, Numbers and much more. It's fun and interactive learning throughout, with no exams or assessments, unless you decide you want to.                                                                                                                                                         |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Sign Language Level 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 23/09/2024 | 33 weeks | 7.00pm-9.00pm                  | POA     |
| Achieving this qualification means that you will be able to communicate with Deaf people in British Sign Language on a range of themes that involve simple, everyday language use. You will gain basic skills and confidence in production and reception of BSL.                                                                                                                       |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Guitar Lessons for Complete Beginners</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 03/10/2024 | 10 Weeks | 6.00pm-7.15pm                  | £62.50  |
| Have you always had a fascination with the guitar but do not know how to get started? Take the first step with us here at Dormston by joining our Guitar for Absolute Beginners                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Guitar Lessons for Improvers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 03/10/2024 | 10 Weeks | 7.15pm-9.15pm                  | £100.00 |
| This course is appropriate for nearly all skills levels with the minimum requirement of having the ability to change smoothly between a few basic major and minor chords and wish to build their knowledge                                                                                                                                                                             |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Keep Fit for All</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 18/09/2024 | 12 Weeks | 11.30am-12.30pm                | £65.00  |
| Come, join our nifty exercise class, and feel the benefits!<br>Regular physical activity is important for so many reasons, not only can you gain improved mobility, balance, and coordination through carefully planned gentle exercise classes designed specifically for you, no matter what your ability!                                                                            |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Boxercise</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 23/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 6.15pm-7.15pm                  | £50.00  |
| Boxercise is a total body workout: It directly stimulates all your muscles, including your chest, shoulders, back, arms, legs, and core muscles. Training in this style not only allows you to lose weight but also gives you a leaner and fitter physique.                                                                                                                            |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Pilates</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 26/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 6.15pm-7.15pm                  | £50.00  |
| Pilates focuses on stretching and strengthening the whole body. It is a low impact class that aims to strengthen muscles while improving postural alignment and flexibility and is suitable for men and women of all ages, levels, or abilities. If you have been looking for a new workout routine that can give you a good balance of all the above, then Pilates may be the answer. |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Aerobics</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 24/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 7.00pm-8.00pm                  | £50.00  |
| A great class set to dance music and led by our instructor who will take you through a variety of stretching and strength-training routines combined with aerobic exercise that works on all areas of your body.                                                                                                                                                                       |            |          |                                |         |
| <b>Yoga</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 25/09/2024 | 10 Weeks | 6.00pm-7.15pm<br>7.30pm-8.45pm | £55.00  |
| Yoga – Hatha: Yoga is a workout designed to aid in relaxation and revitalisation of the mind and body. It also helps to improve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |          |                                |         |

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## Dean Street - in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

While I was looking at the 1871 census for Sedgley I came across an entry for 4 Church Street – it's now called Dean Street - the street's name was changed in the 1870s.

Most surprisingly it was then described as a 'boarding school' with 8 girls and one boy, aged 9-17.

The property was occupied by Joseph Sherwin, a grocer, and his wife Eliza who was a Teacher, and their 4 year old son. An Assistant Teacher and a domestic servant were also listed at the property.

The pupils listed as living there were from various parts of the Midlands, with one from London.

The boarding school was a few doors down from the Sedgley National School, (now the site of Iceland and its car park), which would still have been going in the 1870s - Queen Victoria School didn't take over responsibility for village children's education until 1896, at which point the National School became All Saints' Sunday Schools.

Whether there was any relationship at all between the private boarding school and the National School, ie sharing facilities or even teachers, isn't known.

There was a substantial 3-storey building and an adjacent 2-storey building that are probably the only properties that could have accommodated a small boarding school – and both structures are designated as 'No. 4' on the 1883 Union Map of Sedgley which can be viewed at Dudley Archives.

Also, there is a 1890 plan at Archives showing the full extent of the National School with its boys' and girls' teaching blocks and playgrounds (as stated above, the area is now Iceland, and its car park).

The infant schoolroom recorded on the corner of Vicar Street and Dean Street had a curious dual role – it was once used for ‘Vestry Meetings’ ie for parish administration. This was before Sedgley UDC took over most civic responsibilities from the church in the 1890s.

Listed at 2 School Street (Dean Street) in the 1871 census was John Egginton, father of John Tertius Egginton. His occupation is given as 'Relieving Officer' which was a role at the Workhouse (by 1871 relocated to Shaver's End in Dudley) assessing clients' eligibility for the institution. His son John Tertius Egginton started the chemist's business in the Bull Ring at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> centuries, where it remained until demolition in the late 1960s.

**Martin Jones**

---

## **How the New Year and Resolutions began**

1<sup>st</sup> January was not always the start of a New Year. The Babylonians began their New Year on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. For them, it was a logical choice, as with the arrival of Spring, crops were being planted, and a new cycle of life was beginning.

For centuries the Romans agreed with them, but they chose 1<sup>st</sup> March for New Year. It was the Romans who brought in the idea of making resolutions at New Year, mostly along the lines of acting more noble, and doing good to others.

Then in 46BC Julius Caesar changed the Roman Empire's calendar. His new Julian calendar realigned the year to the sun, and also began on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Caesar wanted to honour Janus, the two-faced god who looks backwards into the old year and forward into the new. January 1st didn't have any astronomical or agricultural significance, it was just a random date selected by Caesar.

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**July 18th**

**Annie Get Your Gun 1:47**

\*\*\*

**August 15<sup>th</sup>**

**The Lavender Hill Mob 1:17**

\*\*\*

**September 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Singing in The Rain. 1:43**

\*\*\*

**October 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Calamity Jane 1:41**

\*\*\*

**November 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Paris When It Sizzles 1:46**

\*\*\*

**December 12<sup>th</sup>**

**The Gang's All Here**

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# The Rectory

## St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

So, you are excited about being invited to plan your first Carol Service. The dangers involved are only slightly less than being invited to judge the best cake made by the Ladies' Group. You seem to have no idea of the lifelong offence you will inevitably cause. In decades to come when you will either be a seasoned old clergyman – or more likely a double-glazing salesman – you will be remembered as “the Curate who offended Mrs Smith.”

First, you have to decide which groups are going to be represented to give the readings. If the Brownies were asked last year, then it has to be the Cubs this time. But don't forget that every third year, the Boys' Brigade must be asked, or they will take their revenge and get their flag tangled in the nave chandelier come Remembrance Sunday. If someone represents the choir, then over a four-year period, all four voice parts must be called on – and if the organist isn't asked on the fifth year, then all hymns subsequently will be played at double speed and with one verse missing. Should one person have been invited to read for two successive years, then their annual appearance thereafter will be taken as an inalienable right for the rest of their lifetime – and probably longer than that. To drop them may well invoke legal proceedings,

Then there is the batting order to be considered. Someone from the church council will take it as a deliberate slight if they are placed lower in the order than a representative of the Men's Fellowship and no self-respecting bell ringer would voluntarily follow a brass cleaner.

If you do not specify where they should read from and how the readings should end, then a form of ecclesiastical inflation will happen.



If the first reader speaks from the chancel step, the next one will go to the lectern; after the sanctuary and pulpit have been utilised, the final reader will probably ask you to move so he can take your place. The variations on “Here endeth”, “This is the Word of the Lord”, and “Thanks be to God”, are endless and will increase in length as the Service progresses. The final reader will probably end with a lengthy exegesis on what he thinks the passage means, correcting whatever you said in your sermon.

I once made the mistake of not telling all readers which Bible translation to use. One, an Old Testament expert, therefore decided to read in Hebrew. Not to be outdone, another read her Gospel passage in Greek – apologising beforehand that it may not be a perfect rendering, as she was spontaneously translating it from the English. And some say Christians are not competitive.

You have two alternatives: either repeat last year’s Service without any alteration, saying that it could not be improved, or design your own – and then take Christmas off.

Your loving uncle,

**Eustace**

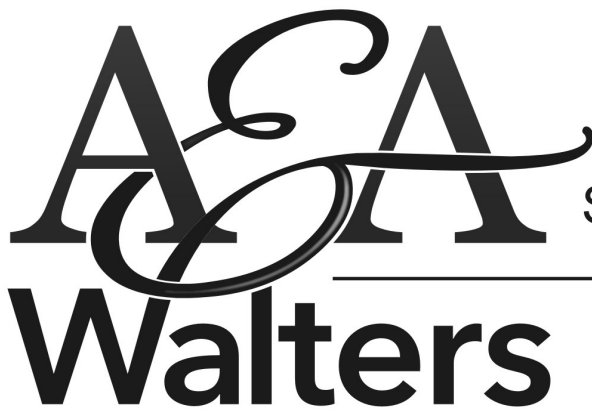
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## **That coin in your Christmas pudding**

There is a tradition, which dates from the Middle Ages, of putting silver coins into Christmas puddings. The first coins used were a silver farthing or penny. After World War One, it became a threepenny bit and then a sixpence. Finding one was supposed to bring you good fortune, but probably it was more likely to break a tooth as you bit into the pudding. We now pay for most things with plastic or by tapping a mobile telephone. In future, will people put old credit cards or phones in their Christmas pudding? Hope not.

Other coins ‘appear’ at this time of year. Chocolate coins are traditionally given to children at Christmas time, and in Jewish tradition during Hanukkah. It is said that one night Saint Nicholas climbed on a roof and threw a purse of money down a chimney, which landed in a pair of stockings that a little girl had hung up to dry. Good throw

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# **JANUARY 2025 SERVICES**

PLEASE NOTE NO SERVICE AT ST PETERS WEDNESDAY 1ST JANUARY 202

**SUNDAY 5TH JANUARY** 9.30AM HOLY COMMUNION ST ANDREWS

11AM HOLY COMMUNION ALL SAINTS

6.30PM EVENSONG ALL SAINTS

**WEDNESDAY 8TH JANUARY** 10AM HOLY COMMUNION ST PETERS

**SUNDAY 12TH JANUARY** 8AM HOLY COMMUNION ALL SAINTS

9.30AM WORSHIP FOR ALL ST ANDREWS

10AM WORSHIP FOR ALL ST PETERS

11AM HOLY COMMUNION ALL SAINTS

**WEDNESDAY 15TH JANUARY** 10AM HOLY COMMUNION ST PETERS

**SUNDAY 19TH JANUARY** 9.30AM WORSHIP FOR ALL ST ANDREWS

11AM FAMILY SERVICE ALL SAINTS

**WEDNESDAY 22ND JANUARY** 10AM HOLY COMMUNION ST PETERS

**SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY** 8AM HOLY COMMUNION ALL SAINTS

9.30AM WORSHIP FOR ALL ST ANDREWS

10AM HOLY COMMUNION ST PETERS

**WEDNESDAY 29TH JANUARY** 10AM HOLY COMMUNION ST PETERS

# **SERVICES FOR THE MONTH - DECEMBER**

**SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER** 9.30AM ST ANDREWS PATRONAL  
11AM ALL SAINTS HOLY COMMUNION

**WEDNESDAY 4TH DECEMBER** 10AM ST PETERS HOLY COMMUNION

**SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER** 8AM ALL SAINTS HOLY COMMUNION

9.30AM ST ANDREWS WORSHIP FOR ALL

10AM ST PETERS WORSHIP FOR ALL

11AM ALL SAINTS HOLY COMMUNION

**WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER** 10AM ST PETERS HOLY COMMUNION

**SUNDAY 15TH DECEMBER** 9.30AM ST ANDREWS CAROL SERVICE

11AM ALL SAINTS FAMILY SERVICE AND NATIVITY

6.30PM ALL SAINTS NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

**WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER** 10AM ST PETERS HOLY COMMUNION

**SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER** 8AM ALL SAINTS HOLY COMMUNION

9.30AM ST ANDREWS WORSHIP FOR ALL

10AM ST PETERS CAROLS

**TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER** 4PM ST ANDREWS CHRISTINGLE

5.30PM CHRISTINGLE ST ANDREWS

5.30PM CHRISTINGLE ALL SAINTS

6PM CHRISTINGLE ST PETERS

11.15PM MIDNIGHT MASS ST ANDREWS

11.30PM MIDNIGHT MASS ALL SAINTS

**WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER** 10.30AM HOLY COMMUNION  
ALL SAINTS