



*St John-in-Bedwardine
Parish Magazine*

December 2020

50p



Comfort and Joy

*‘Rejoice with those who rejoice;
weep with those who weep.’*

Romans 12.15

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Friday

The Reverend SARAH COTTRILL (01905 426257)

Saturday

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stjohns.churchwardens@wcv.church

Gordon Templeton (01905 749025), Joy Job (01905 423051).

SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

Please check our websites and Facebook pages, or the notices published on
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OTHER INFORMATION

PASTORAL CARE: The church's Pastoral Care Group offers support if
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PARISH OFFICE

Current office opening hours are: Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 11am.

*Outside of these hours, please send an email or leave a message on the answerphone
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ST JOHN'S CHURCH ON THE WEB

Parish Website: www.stjohninbedwardine.co.uk

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Group Website: www.westworcesterchurches.org.uk

The church of St John-in-Bedwardine is a registered charity, number 1152583.



A Word from the Editors

Welcome to our December magazine. Our theme is 'Comfort and Joy' and our cover shows the Church of England 'Comfort and Joy' logo as this is the theme this Christmas for our national church too.

The theme tells us that we should be joyful at the seasonal reminder that Christ came into this world; that we must not be afraid to be joyful about the good things in our own lives; but it also reminds us that Christ came for all, especially those with burdens to bear:

“Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden and I will refresh you.”

Or in a different translation:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

Via the Church of England website you can find 'Comfort and Joy' reflections on Advent and Christmas and online music and services (see page 13 for more information).

We pray that our faith, your faith, will help you find comfort and joy this Christmas and always.

Graham and Sue Evans

Important information

Email address: parishmagazine@wcv.church

Next edition (January): Deadline is Sunday 13th December.

Distribution, towards the end of December, dependent on circumstances at the time.

Subscription form: Page 46.

Cover picture: Comfort and Joy

Pictures in this magazine: Our thanks to those whose photographs are included in this magazine including Jane Askew, Colin Nash, Maureen Ovington, Amy Rees, Sarah Wilkins, Severn Freewheelers and St Peter's Church, Cradley.

Distribution: This edition is mostly going out in paper form, although a few copies are still being sent by email.

The magazine

We publish a Parish Magazine each month, except August (exceptionally, in 2020, there was an August edition).

Articles on all aspects of Christian and parish life, letters, jokes and anecdotes are welcome - do contribute if you can. If you have a story to tell, please make contact. Do include your name as anonymous contributions will not be considered. If you can, please use e-mail (address below left). The editors will always acknowledge items sent by email; please try again if you do not receive a response. Please send all written correspondence for the magazine to the Parish Office.

The magazine costs 50p to purchase and can be obtained from the back of church. Subscriptions are available at the discounted price of £5 per year; by subscribing you make things easier for our printing team as we know more closely how many copies to print.

You can subscribe by filling in the form on page 46 or by taking a subscription form from the rack (where the magazines are) at the back of the church. Please return the form and your payment to the parish office.

Opinions!

Opinions expressed in this magazine are personal opinions of the authors concerned and may not represent the views of the editors, our PCC or The Church of England. Such material is offered as a source of debate or reflection.

To advertise

Please see page 14.

From Phil Bradford

A wealthy village in Chile, Christmas 1984, more than a decade into the Pinochet dictatorship. Parishioners arrive at midnight mass, greeted by peaceful protestors denouncing the disappearances, torture and killings that had become commonplace. The parishioners enter church, listen to the liturgy about peace and God's love, and take their Christmas communion. Then they go home and call the police, who arrive to arrest the protestors for subversion. Ronaldo Muñoz, a Chilean priest, responds by writing a bitterly ironic anti-creed a few days later, concluding with a parody of the parishioners' attitude.



And by all means the public denunciation
of social sin
is *not* Christian nor evangelical,
because the Church is called to be a sign
of reconciliation
and *not* of conflict,
and because
consensus
and *not* the truth
will set us free.

And so,
Merry Christmas!
for oppressors and oppressed,
for torturers and tortured.
Because Christmas is a great mystery,
far above such material things
as economic oppression
and torture of the body.

Muñoz's pointed words emphasised that for the parishioners, it was one thing to protest about state torture and violence in an obscure place on an ordinary night, however distasteful they may have found it, but utterly intolerable to do so *outside church on Christmas Eve*. After all, it detracted from the true meaning of Christmas.

That phrase, ‘the true meaning of Christmas’, is one that is heard frequently, not least in Church circles. The question of what we mean by that is especially poignant this year, when (as I write in mid-November) it is uncertain whether we will be able to celebrate Christmas in church or even with families. Usually, ‘the true meaning of Christmas’ means admiring the cosy, fictional stable scene created by a fusion of details lifted from Matthew, Luke and Isaiah.

But is the meaning of Christmas to be found simply in admiring that scene each year? It has become a homely scene, yet the reality was far less romantic: an utterly obscure (and probably frightened) woman in a remote and troublesome corner of the Roman Empire, experiencing all the usual difficulties and dangers of childbirth in that era. Her baby was not some angel with superpowers, nor some powerful deity in disguise, but a flesh-and-blood human boy, as fragile and vulnerable as any newborn infant.

Surely that is the true meaning of Christmas, that divine risk of the incarnation? A God who loves the world so much that he took the risk of coming to us in a form which allows us to reject him. Incarnation is a profound affirmation of humanity, an assertion by God that this world matters and that we matter.

And if we go back to Muñoz’s anti-creed, the point he was trying to make is that Christmas is not ‘far above such material things as economic oppression and torture of the body’; it is precisely such things that Christmas *is* about. If God loved this world so much that he came to it in the form of Jesus, that he took a path that led ultimately to a humiliating death on the cross, then he cares that parts of the frail humanity he assumed are persecuted, devalued, tortured and killed.

Christmas is not simply a commemoration of a past event, a chance for us to look at that serene picture and talk blandly of peace whilst blocking out its absence in the world around us. It is a continuing reality, which began with that past event but which constantly reminds us of the importance of our world, of the dignity of human beings and the struggle to uphold that dignity.

And in the midst of a world which seems especially dark and bleak this Christmas, with everything from the trauma of the pandemic through to contested elections and denial of reality itself in parts of the world’s last superpower, that is something to which we need to cling.

‘Comfort and Joy’ is the Church of England’s theme for this Christmas, and as Christians we derive those things from the hope and the promise found in a tiny, helpless child, the symbol of God’s limitless love for the world and an inextinguishable light amidst its oppressive darkness.

Phil

In Memoriam December

Alice Moulder	1 December 2009
Albert Harold Southall	3 December 1984
Sarah Rose	8 December 1985
Emily Potter	10 December 1984
Vera May Bullock	10 December 1991
William Bishop	10 December 1996
Hubert Mitford Harvey	12 December 1984
Charles Hubert John Lerigo	13 December 1983
Jack Taylor	16 December 1998
Ivy Muriel Rogers	17 December 2001
Harry Palmer	19 December 2001
John Goodsell	21 December 2004
George Frederick Harrison	23 December 1982
Ivy Hooper	25 December 1984
Derek A Bowen	28 December 2007
Ann Smith	28 December 2010
Gladys Mitchem	30 December 1995

Additions to In Memoriam are not automatic but must be specifically requested via the clergy.

In memoriam items are included until the fortieth anniversary.
An extension may be requested by family or friends of those named.

From the Registers, October 2020

BAPTISMS: *We welcome you into the Lord's family* (No baptisms)

WEDDINGS: *Those whom God has joined together* (No weddings)

FUNERALS: *Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord*

d. 2nd October 2020 Gladys Beatrice Page (Bea)

d. 3rd October 2020 James Anthony Ball (Jim)

OCTOBER SERVICES: Communicants 60. Total attendance all services 245
(including 40 at a funeral).

Sundays and Principal Feasts in December

Sunday 6th December: Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday 13th December: Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday 20th December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday 26th December: Stephen, Deacon, First martyr

Sunday 27th December: John the Evangelist

Monday 28th December: The Holy Innocents

See page 37 for Phil's December liturgical calendar.

Mid-week services

The following mid-week services are scheduled to take place during December:
 10am Tuesday at St John's, BCP Holy Communion (8th, 15th, 22nd).
 10.30am Thursday at St Michael's, Common Worship Eucharist (3rd, 10th, 17th).

Worcester Cathedral - update

The Cathedral, Cloister Café and shop are closed for general visits until 2nd December. Parts of the Cathedral are open for individual silent prayer and reflection only on Monday to Saturday 11am to 1pm, and Sunday 12noon to 2pm.

The Cathedral continues to livestream an act of worship daily on the Worcester Cathedral Facebook page:

- Monday to Saturday: 8am Holy Communion
- Sunday: 10.30am Sung Eucharist, 4pm Evensong

For services after lockdown ends, please see the Cathedral website and Facebook page.

During normal operating periods (see above) the Cathedral is open to visitors Monday to Saturday 11am-3pm, Sunday 1pm-3pm. The Cloister Café and shop are usually open Monday to Saturday, 11am-3pm. The tower is closed.

Sudoku Puzzle

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KrazyDad.com*

*The solution
is on the
inside back
cover.*

6	1			7				
					4	5		2
				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		3			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7

Please pray for Peru (12th November)

Dear friends

Most of you will by now be aware of the fact that in addition to the health and economic crises, Peru is also facing a grave political crisis, worsening over several months but resulting on Monday 9th November with the overthrow of (now ex-) President Martin Vizcarra.

A brief background to put things in context. Normal elections were held in 2016 resulting in the President, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (PPK), being from a different party to the prevailing party in Congress. This resulted in a lack of cooperation between Congress and Cabinet/President. Congress wanted to get rid of the President, and accused him of corruption. He decided that resignation would avoid future confrontations and be a better move for Peru. Therefore, in March 2018, 20 months after PPK took office, his Vice President Vizcarra took over.

The hostility continued and in September 2019, Vizcarra dissolved Congress, a move greeted with overwhelming approval by the population in general. New elections, held in January this year, led to an interim Congress with no party holding more than 20% of seats, but the hostility has been the same.

Vizcarra is not perfect. He has not been as open about some things as would maybe have been helpful, but nor is the corruption of which he has been accused affecting the day to day running of the country. It could also be said that over half the 135 members of Congress (who have just overthrown him on the grounds of moral incapacity to lead the country) ALSO have lawsuits against them, in one case for murder. Generally, people supported the idea that he SHOULD be tried, but on completing his term of office in July 2021.

Since Vizcarra was only President because the previous President had resigned, and the “second Vice President” had (for political reasons) resigned from the position a while ago, the Constitution stipulates that the President of Congress becomes President of Peru. This in effect removes any difference between Cabinet (nominated by the President) and Congress, and allows Congress to pass any laws without any check. In the last few months they have tried to pass more than one law which is against the constitution, to say nothing of laws which help the personal interests of some, such as the creation of new (private) universities which are often staffed by unqualified people.

Vizcarra survived a move to impeach him in September, but on Monday the Congress vote was 80% for his overthrow. He decided not to fight the decision, saying “History and the people will judge”. “The people” are indeed showing

their reaction to this. There is widespread rejection of the measure, and demonstrations are taking place. A comment overheard on the street that “Congress is supposed to represent the voice of the people” was a plaintive reminder of how the situation should be, and how far from that we are. A huge march is planned for this evening; tear gas has been used at demonstrations over the last couple of days and today is hardly likely to be easier. PLEASE PRAY for peace here, not only tonight but in the coming days.

PRAY too for the elections which are already timetabled for 11th April 2021 (elections are every 5 years), that God will raise up men and women for both President and Congress, who will fear Him and serve the country. The new President, Manuel Merino, has said the date will be respected, so pray this continues to be the case. Despite the fact that Peru is technically a Christian country, there has been no mention of God in anything official since the covid crisis began. Pray that those in power take into account the fact that there is a God who has far greater power, and that they will one day be giving an account to Him.

A few weeks ago it was finally recognised that people DO have spiritual needs; from 1st November Churches were allowed to offer “special” services e.g. Baptisms, weddings and funerals; Churches will be allowed to open for “normal” services from 15th November, but each individual Church has to have presented protocols to the Health Ministry and local Council in order to be allowed to open, and the Anglican Church has put 20th December as its opening date.

PRAY that we can continue to bring the light of the Lord into this dark situation.

*God bless
Juan Carlos and Penny*

Update from Peru

Exactly a week after political events here started getting complicated, there has this afternoon been good news. We have a President (well, he’ll be invested tomorrow) who seems capable of leading the country for the next 7 months until the change of government in July next year. Here is a brief timeline:

Monday 9th November: Congress impeached Martin Vizcarra by an overwhelming vote of 105 votes in favour to 19 against. Thus Manuel Merino took over, and from the beginning this was unpopular with the general public, partly because it was obvious that Congress (which has been against the President and Cabinet since it took office only in March this year) wanted to have total control of both legislative and executive parts of government.

Tuesday 10th November: Merino was sworn in. Demonstrations began. Merino started to discover that forming a Cabinet was NOT going to be easy since many of his choices refused.

Wednesday 11th November: Congress started process to open new (private) universities - an area where Vizcarra and his Cabinet had locked horns with the Congress (several of whom happen to have personal interests in this area....)

Thursday 12th November: Cabinet of 18 ministers sworn in.

First "National March" held, attended by thousands in different parts of Lima and in many towns and cities throughout Peru. The overwhelming majority of participants were young people, at least in Lima. Our son Jonny went to the march in Miraflores. In the centre of Lima, near the Congress building, police, basically unprovoked, used tear gas and "lethal arms", the latter being completely against norms for controlling demonstrations.

Those not on the streets (especially the women) expressed their feelings by banging saucepan lids in their homes at 8pm.

Friday 13th November: Whilst demonstrations DID take place, these were much smaller, mostly owing to the fact that Peru was playing against Chile in a football World Cup qualifier (we lost).

Saturday 14th November: The second National March to demand the resignation of Merino, who refused to consider this and insisted he would complete the term of office (until July 2021).

Jonny went with some University friends to the central march in the centre of Lima; a serious young man he was not entirely joking when he said "I hope I don't die." During the march in the centre of Lima police again used repressive tactics and two young men were killed (not together).

The whole country in shock but increasingly determined that Merino should go.

Sunday 15th November: Just after midnight one of the Cabinet ministers resigned, followed at different points during the morning by 12 others (plus a good number of vice ministers and other officials).

7.45am Merino invited the chiefs of the armed forces and police to meet him in the Presidential Palace. None went, showing that he did not have the support of the armed forces should he have decided to call them in to control the situation.

9.15am Representatives of the nine parties in Congress meet to find the best way of getting rid of Merino. (Correct! Representatives of the very people who put him there less than six days earlier.)

12.15 (midday) Merino resigned (before he could be removed). People on the streets erupted with joy, fireworks were set off, saucepan lids sounded. We were in the middle of the Cathedral Zoom service, and I had just asked Sara to read. I thought it was a bit strange that she seemed totally distracted and later she explained that they were in the garage for the service where the internet is better, and when the saucepan lids and fireworks started outside she thought there was something terrible going on.

4 pm Emergency Congress meeting (plenary) to accept Merino's resignation and to choose a new Governing Board for Congress, of which the President would become President of Peru. First item no problem. Second item - despite having only one list of candidates (chosen basically from the 19 who voted against impeachment of Vizcarra, but with one exception), Congress did not achieve support from a simple majority - only 52 of the 119 'present' (most was by Zoom) voted in favour and at around 10pm they gave up. A blow to Rocio Silva Santiesteban who would have become the first female President of Peru.

Meanwhile, people on the streets demonstrating peacefully.

Monday 16th November: Party representatives met to draw up another list. Closing time for lists was 1pm. Plenary vote to be held 2pm.

1pm Two lists presented, one comprising people who voted against the impeachment (including two from the previous list) and one comprising people who voted FOR impeachment. Second list immediately rejected; one of the four names had no signature.

2pm Plenary meeting began and in less time than had been anticipated the result became clear - List 1, headed by Francisco Sagasti, would easily get the votes needed. In the end the vote was 97 in favour, 26 against and no abstentions. Rejoicing and a general feeling of relief.

Tuesday 17th November:

Sagasti will be invested and will form a new Cabinet. We shall see who accepts, but Sagasti is from a party which has always basically given support to Vizcarra and the Cabinet so maybe we will see some familiar faces.

Please keep praying! We hope for a quieter week this week.

*God bless
Juan Carlos and Penny*

Phil Bradford commented "This strikes me as a rather interesting diary of a chaotic week in which Peru has had three presidents, which puts some of our problems in perspective."

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Comfort and Joy



Comfort and Joy holds together the hope that Christmas will bring joy and celebration, with an acknowledgement that, for those who have lost loved ones or livelihoods, or who are still separated from loved ones, it may be the Church's role to provide consolation, rather than assume everyone will be ready to join in jubilation.

This Christmas the Church will need, in the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, to 'Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep'. We will aim to celebrate where we can together in one place. But we also embrace a wider community that wants to join in the celebration but may not be physically able, or emotionally ready, to do so. We hope that Comfort and Joy will enable us to reconnect with the rich and joyous traditions of the past and to offer God's consoling love in the present.

Reflections: There will be weekly reflections published on social media and available by email for each Sunday of Advent. A number of public figures have produced short reflections exploring the theme. *Comfort and Joy: Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas* mirrors the structure of a traditional carol service, exploring both biblical texts and the words of much-loved Christmas carols.

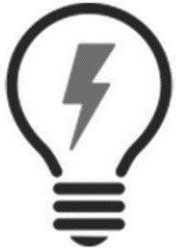
The daily reflections from Christmas Day to 2nd January feature contributions from Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcott, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby.

Online services and events: In collaboration with a range of Christian charities and organisations, we will produce nine online services throughout Advent and Christmas. This will include an online service for each Sunday of Advent, a Christingle, nine lessons and carols and midnight services.

Printed materials: Bookmarks, Christmas cards, banners, booklets and other printed items are available to purchase, along with copies of the Reflections booklet, via Church House Publishing (www.chpublishing.co.uk/comfortandjoy)

Download our Advent activity calendar: www.churchofengland.org/media/22357

www.churchofengland.org/resources/preparing-advent-christmas-2020-comfort-and-joy



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The Parish Magazine is published A5 in size, in black and white. There are eleven issues each year, July and August being a combined issue.

An advert can be full-page, half-page or quarter-page in size and the booking can be from one month to one year. If you are interested to advertise, please contact Sue Hussell on 01684 893397 or by email at sue.hussell@talktalk.net

You can help bring comfort and joy!

Dines Green Community Café

A weekly Community Cafe used to take place in the DG Den each Friday, before lockdown closed it. St Michael's Church is part of a group now making plans to restart the cafe in January.

The new cafe will be different to what came before. Instead of providing meals, this new format is looking to serve hot drinks and cakes and be a place for people to meet and talk. Alongside this, it is hoped that this new cafe will be able to become a place for people who need help and support to come to find out where appropriate help is available, as well as offering prayer support to the community.

More details will be available as the plans develop, but we know we will need help with baking cakes! Would you be willing to bake a cake once a month (or less often if we get lots of offers!)? If you would be able to help with this, please let me know.

Philip Evans (email: philip.evans@wcv.church)

Severn Freewheelers



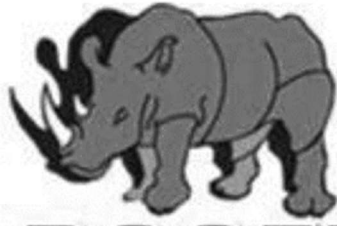
During lockdown I have been taking part in occasional zoom meetings hosted by the Worcester leukaemia care charity. The latest had a speaker from Severn Freewheelers. This is a group of advanced motorcycle riders transporting urgently needed blood, human tissue and other essentials. All volunteers are on call 365 days a

year between 7pm and 7am weekdays and all day at weekends. Three bikes are on the road delivering whatever can be carried on a motorcycle to hospitals, pharmacies, care homes, private homes (e.g. prescriptions after someone has been discharged from hospital without having to wait for hospital pharmacy) and more.

Due to Covid the service has been extended to daytime and volunteers are now using their own bikes to transport medicines and urgent materials around the three counties. In doing so they save the NHS a lot of money and time.

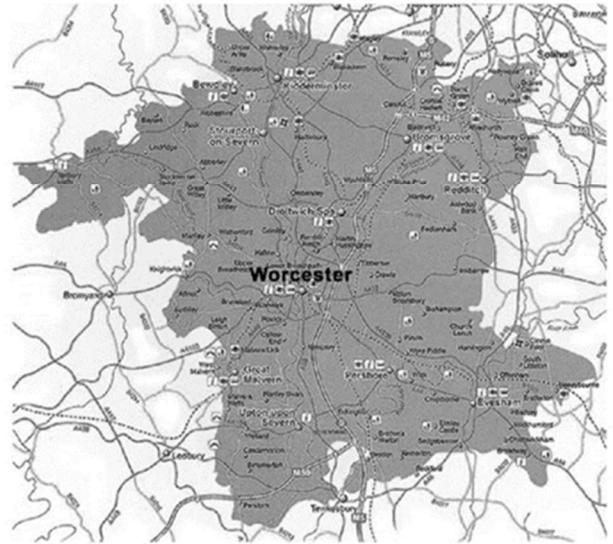
Normally the Prescott Bike Festival is their main fundraising event but, as you might expect, has had to be cancelled. They are interested in raising their profile within the community and looking for support. See their website for how you can donate or get involved: severnfreewheelers.org.uk

Margaret Miller



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Shoebox Appeal



I have to say ‘Hats Off’ and a great big thank you to all the people who have so kindly knitted beautiful, warm colourful hats, scarves and gloves to put into the shoe boxes this year. This personal gesture is so welcomed by the children receiving the gifts. A thank you to all those people who have kindly donated money that allows me to buy items to go in the shoeboxes. Two years ago, we were stopped from putting sweets in and last year, although we can send toothbrushes we are unable to send toothpaste. It is becoming more difficult to choose items that children would enjoy. But again this year you have managed, by your generosity to send items to put a sparkle of joy into a child’s life.

The virus has meant that donations are down on previous years and the collection date has moved into December so I am not sure whether the gifts will get to the children in time for Christmas Day. But I do know that the children, when they receive them, will be filled with joy and hopefully feel the love that has gone into their gifts. Lockdown has meant that we are unable to pack the boxes with the children as we usually do. I will let you know how many we have been able to send this year in next month’s magazine.

Thank you again for all your support.

Jane Askew

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A Towering achievement



Last month I told you about the poppies I had crocheted for the poppy cascade being created for Remembrance by St Peter's Church in Cradley. Here is a picture of how it looked. Below is a report from their Facebook page about it.

Sue Evans

Over the last twelve months the people of Cradley and many further afield, have been busy knitting hand-made poppies for our poppy cascade.

Almost 5,000 poppies have been created and donated, each one unique and carefully made. The cascade measures seventy-five feet and has been made possible by many people working together

from the whole community. We even had poppies donated from a family in Canada!

During the first attempt to install the cascade, part of it started to rip, so it was quickly lowered to the ground. It was repaired and attached to netting to give it more support. On Saturday 7th November it was successfully put on the tower.

At 11am on Sunday 8th November the people of Cradley fell silent to remember all those who gave their lives during all conflicts. It was wonderful to see between 50 - 70 people gathered around the cenotaph.

Rev. Katryn Leclezio, Team Vicar for Cradley said "Little did we know, when Doreen had the idea last year how significant it would be! The poppy cascade is the work of so many people commemorating the sacrifices made in a striking visual way. It is visible for miles around and will serve as a reminder to all this Remembrance tide, especially as we cannot gather together this year."

Many thanks to everyone who has donated knitted poppies, to Doreen Clifton for suggesting the idea, to the small team who attached the cascade to the netting and to those who climbed the tower to fix it in place. The cascade has now been taken down to protect it from the weather. We hope that we can display the cascade again next year and if anyone wishes to knit more poppies, perhaps a second cascade can be made for the other side of the tower.

St Peter's Church, Cradley

Remembering Jock and Albert

October was a sad month for the people of St Clements as we lost two of our regular members.

Jock Mitton died on October 8th and Albert Grosvenor on October 21st. Both men were faithful and much-loved members of our church family and neither, due to Covid, could be given the sort of send off we would have liked them to have.

Jock, a comparative newcomer, had earned the love and respect of his church family.

For me, Jock will be remembered as a quiet, courteous and kind gentleman – in every sense of the word – who always had a kindly twinkle in his eye.

At his funeral service we were told of a time in the 1940s when a very young Jock and his brother sneaked out into the fields near their house to watch an exciting firework display – until their father dragged them to safety from the German bombing raid they had been watching!

Angela also told me that she and Jock met through attending church where most of the congregation were officers and as she and Jock didn't know anybody else to talk to, they talked to each other. Another example, perhaps, of Jock's kind and gentlemanly nature – not wanting to see somebody on their own.

Anthony ended his tribute to his father by saying; "Above all, he was a good man. He was honest. He was moral. He was loyal."

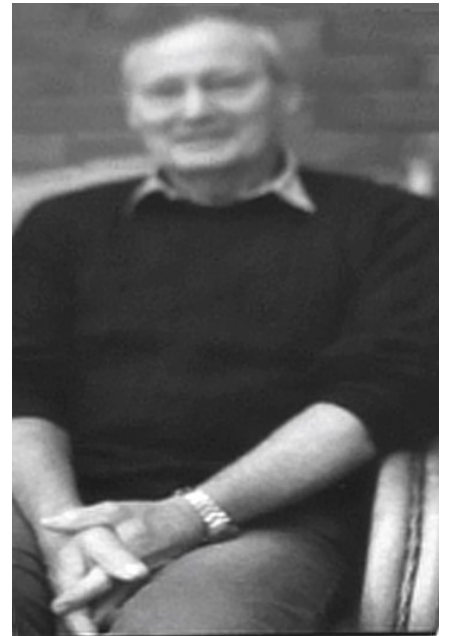
What better accolade could anybody wish for? Rest in peace Jock.

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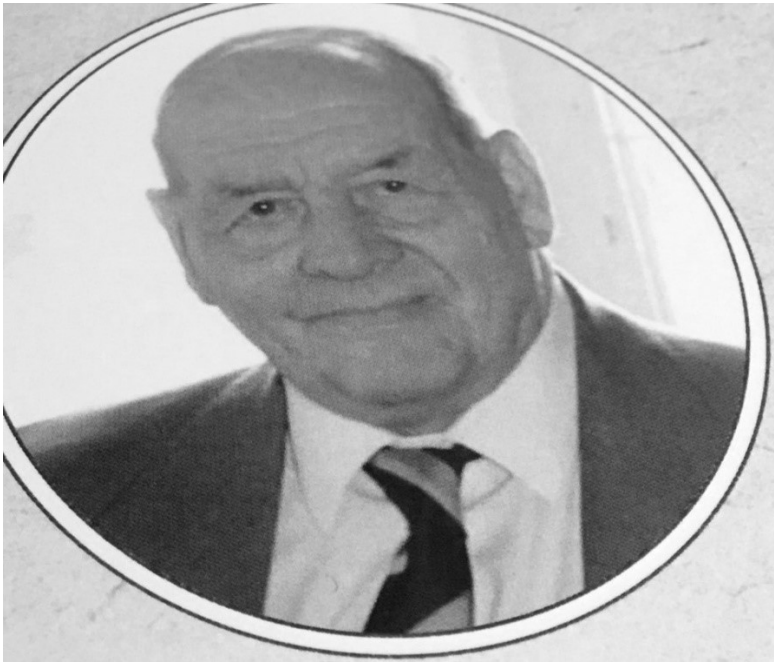
Frederick Albert Grosvenor - known to us all as Albert - was a long-standing member of the church family, having married his first wife, Barbara, in St Clements church in 1951. Between his long involvement with the church and his job as a postman, there were very few people in the local area who Albert didn't know.

Several years ago, Albert wrote a letter which he wanted to be read at his funeral and in this letter he described himself as being "The richest man on God's earth" due to his wonderful family and friends. What a wonderful attitude!

I was pleased to be able to honour Albert's wish to lie in state in St David's Church the night before his funeral at St Clement's. This was the first time I have received a coffin into church and I found it a deeply moving experience –



especially when the family laid personal items (Albert's old school tie and postman's cap) on the coffin.



Rev Owain Bell, former vicar of St Clements, wrote telling me of the time he and Albert had performed in a Passion Play together and Albert, forgetting his lines, replied to Owain's scripted question: "What are you doing here, my Lord?" with the totally unscripted: "Oh! Just admiring the flowers!"

My fondest memory of Albert is the way he always greeted me with the words "Hello, young Sarah" and during the Peace always said "God bless you, young Sarah." For a woman (slightly) closer to her 60th than her 50th birthday, to be addressed as young was always a cheering event.

The last word though, must go to Albert's cousin John and his wife Jean who wrote, on their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary, reminding Albert of how well he carried out his duties as John's Best Man. Albert had, they said, made it a perfect day. We were so lucky to have you as our best man ... you made it a perfect day ... God bless you and thank you once again."

On behalf of us all, God bless you, young Albert.

Sarah Cottrill



March 1975 or 76:

l to r John Chidlow*,
Bob Bell**,
Bishop Robin Woods,
Rev Owain Bell,
Albert Grosvenor**
and Clive Simpkins*

* St Clement's
Churchwardens.

** Deputy wardens
with responsibility for
St David's).

Euro-crèche....

Again this year we shall have our crèche (crib scene) at St John's despite the difficulties posed by Covid-19. All over Europe churches will be hosting similar Advent preparations. What is wonderful to see is the inventiveness of some of these responses to the same Christian message.

In Portugal most churches have the very orthodox catholic presentation of the Holy Family surrounded by the animals, shepherds, three wise men with their gifts, which is housed in an area of a specially selected chapel, close to the main altar. All the elements are of about 1/25th of real height, are realistically presented with the straw, wooden beams, and suitable illumination - to bring all to life!

There are churches in France which take a similar approach.

In Germany, on a visit to Hiedseide, near to Hannover, there was a light show as a backdrop to a crib containing the Holy Family. This showed a series of countryside images of the rural life of the surrounding area, so bringing a special local view of the context of the Christ child's birth.



Traditional crèche



Creche y cymru

Young children, given the right enthusiasm from their teachers, can also bring a beautifully naïve look to the Advent crèche. This construction from rock and slate came from a school in mid-Wales. Another example of the use of local materials to convey the message of the story that children love to hear.



Santons shop

Back to France and the Santons (Provençal: "santoun," or "little saint") which are small hand-painted terracotta nativity scene figurines, produced in the Provence region of south-eastern France.

Found in Italy too, they are used to create village scenes of the Christmas story. Some are now

renowned for their extensive size and complexity. Some villages compete for the quality of their work!

There are some 55 professionally produced figurines, but many local makers add the essentially personal touches by making recognisable "locals" to add to the pastoral scene. Perhaps a project for the 2021 crèche at St John's? Any offers?

Arthur Miller

Christopher Whitehead Christmas Fayre

Regulations permitting, there will be a Christmas Fayre at Christopher Whitehead Language College on Saturday 12th December from 11am - 3pm. This will feature local crafts, gift and food stalls; BBQ and wood-fired pizza; hot and cold drinks. With a special guest appearance by Santa.

Entrance will be via Swanpool Walk (next to Sainsbury's). Visitors are required to follow Covid guidance and one-way system to keep everyone safe.

Di Howland (d.howland@cwlc.email)

University College Oxford, recorded services

Audio recordings of services in the College Chapel of my college at Oxford, including sung items by the College Choir, are available to listen to at www.univ.ox.ac.uk/live-at-univ/online-evensong The services available include:

- Advent Carol Service (available 5.45pm on Sunday 29th November onwards)
- Christmas Carol Service (available 5.45pm on Friday 4th December onwards)
- Many recordings of Evensong services

Graham Evans (MA Oxon ☺)

Diddy Disciples

Hello,

It has been so lovely seeing children come back to church after the first lockdown and we've had lots of fun together in our bubble.



We finished our topic on God the Maker by celebrating harvest and learning about Jesus calming the storm. The children made some incredible boats out of junk as well!

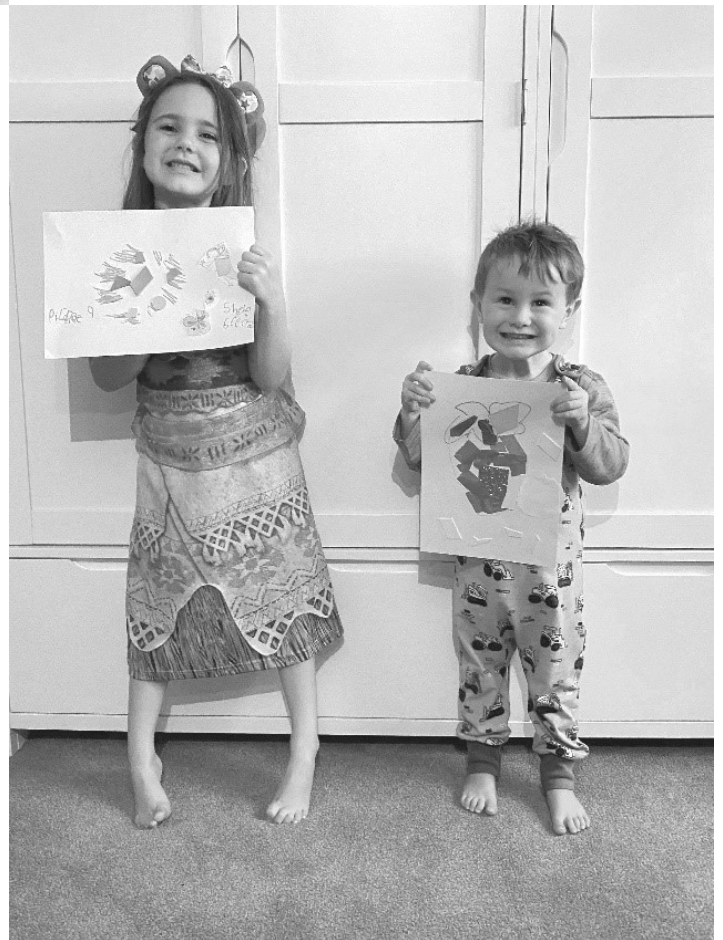
We then now moved on to our next unit, 'In November, we remember'. We managed to squeeze in our session to remember the saints with some fabulous halos to remind us that God calls us all to be saints.





When we came to Remembrance Sunday we were back in lockdown, but we managed to share a lovely service with each other with a video recorded at St Michael's.

It's so nice when we hear that children (and older members of the congregation) have been joining in at home.



Hopefully we'll be back in church for our advent sessions!

*Love,
Amy and family*

Remembrance

This year we could not mark Remembrance Sunday in the normal way. In line with Government regulations there was a small socially distanced and discrete act on Sunday November 8th with none of the normal pageantry that we have come to know at St John's over the years. That said it was still a moving event, that was attended by about 30 people plus some passers by who stopped to watch and partake in the Act of Remembrance.

Colin Nash





Reports to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

In the previous edition, we presented some of the reports from the AGM: The Vicar's annual report, the Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council 2019-20, the Treasurer's Report (Financial review of 2019), the Safeguarding Report and the Electoral Roll Report (April 2020).

We now present 'edited highlights' from the remainder of the reports presented at the APCM. In reading these, please bear in mind the timeframe actually being described, given that the APCM was postponed from April, and was finally held in October. Most ongoing events are not currently happening, despite the present tense in the reports.

The Editors

Good Old Days Talks and Coach Trips: These talks by Paul and Helen Harding from Discover History continued to grow over the past year, with attendance increasing from about 60 to 100. We've had to increase the number of the helpers and set up two refreshment points to get everyone through during the break.

These talks continue to reach out to other areas of our community. We get people from all four West Worcester churches plus individuals and other groups from the wider community.

The talks are free, but donations are welcome, and these generally cover the cost of the talk.

In addition to the talks a number of coach trips were arranged during the year which were well attended by people from across the community.

Pastoral Care Group: Meetings were put on hold during the winter period, but care and concern was still maintained within the church. Due to the pandemic pastoral care has mainly been emails and phone calls of which there has been a steady flow. It seems we will not be back to 'normal' for some time, but we can at least be there for a comforting chat when needed.

Charities Committee: Over the twelve months since the last APCM we have supported: Our Mission Partners in Peru, Penny and Juan Carlos, The Holiday Association, MAGGS, Walsall Acorns, Food Bank, Street Café, and Angel Tree Project. We have also responded to an individual request for help in the face of personal financial difficulty.

Friends of St John-in-Bedwardine: The aim of the Friends is to have financial assistance from those who are not members of the congregation, but feel the church building is important to them. This year we have had a few new members

but have lost members as well. Last year some of the funds raised were used to help the organ repairs.

Communications: The website is now being regularly used, and we have had just under 3000 separate users come to the site in the last year. We tend to get about 30 active users a day. Our Facebook page is also used regularly and is used as a referral point to the Website. All stories go on the website and then a link is created to the website from the Facebook page. The vast majority of our website users are referred there from Facebook. There is a strong core of people who follow us on Facebook.

Churchyard: The key areas tackled this year have been trying to keep the car park tidy, especially during the autumn, and the development of a wildflower area. Various wildflower seeds have been sown about a third of the way along the wall from the arcade entrance down towards Malvern Road. The hope is to slowly work down to the road with a narrow strip of wildflowers to add some colour at the back of the churchyard. Various other plants have been donated and these have been added in around the churchyard.

The wildlife area has continued to be allowed to grow untamed to provide shelter and food for the local wildlife. It has been reported by the owner of the Birder Store in the arcade that he has seen a Red Kite, a Hobby and a pair of Ravens flying over the church in the last year.

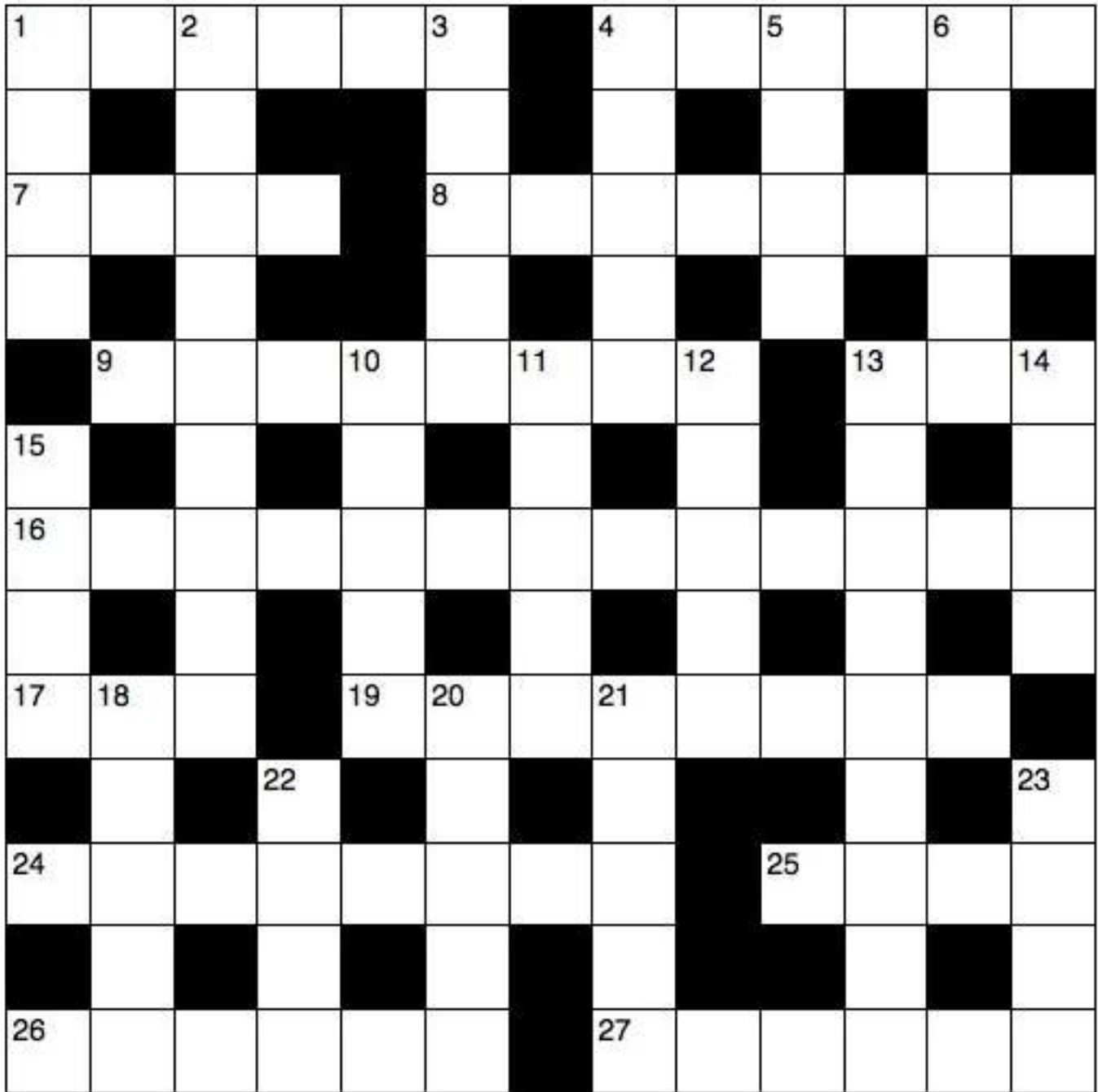
St. John's Flower Arranging Team Report: Last year, 2019, was a disappointing year for us all. We had few church marriages and no orders for church wedding flowers. We all enjoy doing the flowers for weddings and even more so for our great festivals. Maybe this was due to the uncertainties of Brexit or just one of those years. However, thanks to the generosity of many people we have managed to keep financially afloat and have tried to keep the church looking beautiful.

We are fortunate to have such a faithful team, all helpful, cheerful members keeping our parish church looking beautiful.

West Worcester Churches Young Adults Group: Young Adults is still thriving. It is a fun social group for those aged 18 to 40 who worship in the West Worcester Group of Churches. Meet ups during 2019 haven't been as often as in previous years as we all seem to have been extra busy but when we have met, we usually have between half a dozen to a dozen people at events. During 2019 we enjoyed meeting up for example for pancakes; evenings playing board games; meals out; picnic and discussion sessions during Advent.

Continued on page 33

Crossword



Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4 ‘He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in’ (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah’s ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
- 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
- 9 Judah’s last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
- 13 ‘They all — and were satisfied’ (Luke 9:17) (3)

- 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
- 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
- 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
- 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
- 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
- 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
- 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
- 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

The solution is on page 47.



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Continued from page 29

Children and Youth: Children's worship had a very successful year in 2019 with 7 regular attendees of Diddy Disciples and 1 for Explorers, plus around 6 other children who come less frequently. The Nativity was a definite highlight of the year with around 20 children from church and the community putting on a fantastic performance! The children have also been heavily involved in the 2nd Sunday services and have loved sharing their developing faith with the rest of their church family. Children from Little Lambs have also been involved in making props for the services which is a lovely link for the group.

Little Lambs had a very successful 2019 with between 20 and 40 children with their various adults attending each week. There are a dedicated team of helpers who keep carers supplied with tea and coffee and help to set up, pack up and entertain children. We have lots of encouraging comments from families as to how much they enjoy this outreach.

Baptism Report: Since 2010 anniversary cards have been sent out, numbering between 35 and 45 each year. During 2018 the number fell to 25. In 2019 the number was 21.

Organist and Choirmaster's Report: The choir has 19 regular members. During the year one member left, having moved to Southampton and another has joined. The choir sings on most Sundays at the 10.30am Eucharist and twice a month at 5.00pm for Choral Evensong. We also sing at major festivals during the Church's year. The choir is available for Weddings.

Annual Report of Music Group: The Music Group's principal involvement with the Parish in the past year has continued with the All Age Worship service on second Sundays and the Wholeness and Healing service on fourth Sundays.

Bell ringers' Report: In a major change from last year's report, our membership is now an embarrassment of riches. Some weeks our practice evening is standing room only, with 15 ringers all trying to get some rope time. It started with two ringers from Christopher Whitehead school who had a link with church. The school participates in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and bell ringing is a good skill for them to use for this. From there the influx started with 3 adult learners and another young ringer from the congregation and we have had two returners to ringing.

Our amazing group of existing ringers rose to the challenge and 'learnt to teach'. Not an easy thing to do but we now have a large pool of ringers and teachers for church needs and a thriving, happy tower. *Continued on page 35*

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Continued from page 33

Women's Breakfast Meeting: This continues on the second Saturday of the month from 8.30 to 10am. 2019 was another good year with lots fun, fellowship and good food. The speakers were inspirational, challenging and encouraging, helping us with our discipleship and spiritual journey.

Café Church: On the 4th Saturday of the month we've had 15 to 27 people come for coffee and Danish. Thought for the day has had a good response with questions being asked of the speakers who share their 'Thought for the day' with us.

Parish Magazine: The magazine continues to be produced eleven times a year (monthly except August). Our monthly sales are about 140 through subscriptions and 35 from the back of church. Our subscription numbers have, sadly, declined since the same time last year, mostly due to people moving away or passing away.

The magazine is a valuable form of outreach and communication to the church family. Financially, the magazine (through sales and advertising) more than covers its costs and makes a net contribution to the church's income.

Fourth Friday Friendship Group: In November 2019, we celebrated our first anniversary with a "Bonfire Night" style meal (sausages and beef burgers), sparklers and a birthday cake!

In the 17 months that Fourth Friday Friendship Group has been meeting we have enjoyed a vast amount of fun, laughter and some fiercely fought battles over games of Snakes and Ladders or cards! New friendships have been forged and, along the way, money has been raised for some excellent causes.

Buildings: During the year we had some quinquennial work done to our roof and guttering mainly on the north side of the church. We also had to do some repair work to the roof above the flat. The normal routine cleaning of all the rainwater goods has been carried out.

The exterior stonework on the tower needs some serious restoration as some pieces of stone have fallen off, many stones are in a poor condition and much repointing needs to be done. If all work was carried out at the same time the cost is estimated to be something in the order of £150,000. The difficulty in doing the work piecemeal is that more would be spent on access equipment than on the repairs themselves. The PCC are still considering how to tackle this work and whether any external funding can be obtained.

Despite the above, the church is in a good of state of repair. The only large job in the pipeline is the five-yearly electrical safety inspection.

The end!



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Your choice - obscure or murky?

The bias of festivities in December leans heavily towards the end of the month, with Advent rather than saints' days the main focus before Christmas. Compared with the rest of the year, December has a paucity of saints to commemorate.

The calendar doesn't start until the 3rd and the sixteenth-century Spanish missionary Francis Xavier, known as the apostle of the Indies. The 4th hosts both John of Damascus, the sixth- and seventh-century monk and teacher of the faith, and Nicholas Ferrar, seventeenth-century founder of the Little Gidding Community.

Perhaps the most notable of the December saints' days falls on the 6th with the celebration of Nicholas, bishop of Myra (in modern Turkey, although his bones were later appropriated and moved to Bari in Italy) and associated with gift-giving in several countries today; this year, however, he is supplanted by the Second Sunday of Advent.

Ambrose, fourth-century bishop of Milan and theologian, is on the 7th.

Unless one wants to remember the obscure Cynidr (Wales on the 8th) or the equally murky Finnian of Clonard (Ireland on the 12th), there is then a long gap until the 13th. Then we would celebrate Lucy, martyr at Syracuse in Sicily in 304 and since associated with light, except that this year she is replaced by the Third Sunday of Advent.



To the right, Saint Lucy, by Niccolò di Segna, mid 14th-century Sienese painting, circa 1340. The saint holds the dagger with which she was ultimately executed and the lamp, her attribute.

Continued on page 39

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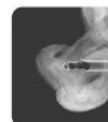
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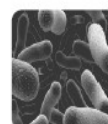
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Continued from page 37

On the 14th we recall John of the Cross, the sixteenth-century Spanish poet and teacher of the faith best known for writing about the ‘dark night of the soul’.

Saints then fade into the background for the week before Christmas. Since the publication of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, each day has been ascribed an antiphon which proclaims one of the ‘names’ given to God in the Old Testament: O Sapientia (O Wisdom, 17th); O Adonai (O Lord, 18th); O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse, 19th); O Clavis David (O Key of David, 20th, also the Fourth Sunday of Advent); O Oriens (O Dayspring, 21st); O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations, 22nd); and O Emmanuel (23rd).

After Christmas Day on the 25th follows a trio of festivals.

Stephen, commemorated as the first Christian martyr, is on the 26th.

To the right, Stoning of Saint Stephen, altarpiece of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice, by Jacopo & Domenico Tintoretto.

The 27th is the feast day of John, celebrated as apostle and evangelist even though the two were certainly not the same man.

Holy Innocents recalls the legend in Matthew’s gospel of Herod’s killing of all infants after Jesus’ birth, a story without historical warrant but theologically important.

Some misguided souls like to remember the troublesome and infuriating clerical opponent of the great King Henry II on the 29th, but such things are not permitted in this Group on my watch. Finally, the year ends on the 31st with John Wycliff, fourteenth-century reformer (or heretic, depending on one’s viewpoint).



Phil Bradford

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Extracts from Wendy's 1982 scrapbook

December 8th - Levertons moved to Dines Green.

December 17th - Frank lovely at early service.

December 18th at 12 o'clock Judith Milledge became Judith Adderley.

December 19th - Read at Carols.

December 26th - Very mild. Nice evensong. Frank lovely as ever. Did not go up in the pulpit. Preached from centre aisle. Status symbol? No status in God's son being born in a manger. He shook hands and said 'Wendy, I hope it's been a really great Christmas for you.' I said 'Yes, it's been lovely.'

Included in the scrapbook are:

- The order of service for the Christmas Carol Service 1982. The names of the readers are hand-written in the margin:

Ruth Slater
David Lindop
Wendy Dedicott
Peter Godrich
Pat Clifton

Yvonne Bentley
Bessie Lee
Arnold Fisher
Jim Leverton

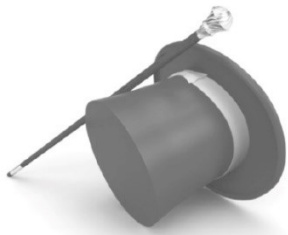
- A clipping from the Worcester Evening News reporting that 'For the first time ever, Worcester's Christmas illuminations have been extended by the City Council this year to the St Johns shopping centre.'
- A page from the magazine, including items that:

The price of the magazine will rise in 1983 to 10p (from 8p). 'This is unavoidable, due to increases in cost of the magazine inset. It will remain one of the least expensive magazines considering it contains two insets - The Sign and Diocesan News.'

The 'Church Older Teens and Twenties (C.O.T.T.) will meet for a video film evening "Chariots of Fire" in the Vestry on Sunday 5th December at 7.45p.m. For a C.O.T.T ticket please apply to the Vicar. Numbers are limited.

This is the final extract from Wendy's 1982 scrapbook. We thank her for letting us share this with you.

The Editors



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We would like to wish Sheila Chance, 'A Very Happy Retirement'. Sheila has worked with Worcestershire County Libraries for over 50 years and has dedicated her working career to serving the public.

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From the magazine archive (December 1951)

WINDOW SPOTTING COMPETITION, 1951

WINNERS

	Max. 19.
1ST PRIZE, 30/- each.	
Kathleen Harrison, 48, Pitmaston Road. ...	17
Christine Love, 29, Powell's Row. ...	17
2ND PRIZE, 6/8 each.	
Joan L. Appleton, 23, St. John's. ...	16
Ann Griffiths, 30, Catherine Road. ...	16
Margaret Oliver, 39, Blenheim Road. ...	16
Walter Stallard, 26, Pitmaston Road. ...	16
Wendy Stone, 34, The Avenue, Bromwich Road.	16
Ann Tidder, 7 House, 5 Court, Tybridge Street.	16
3RD PRIZE, 5/- each.	
Barbara Bowen, 2, Bull Ring. ...	15
Sylvia Burridge, 14, St. Clement's Square. ...	15
Miss Griffiths (or Mrs.), 30, Catherine Road. ...	15
Valerie Phillips, 227, Bromwich Road. ...	15

O. H. LAFLIN, *Hon. Sec.*

CHILDREN'S FANCY DRESS PARADE

THE Children's Fancy Dress Parade was held at the Christopher Whitehead Hall on Saturday, November 10th.

There was a great variety of beautiful costumes and the judges had a very hard task in making their choice. The judges were Mrs. H. L. Davies, Miss L. G. Potter, and the Rev. R. C. Riley. Our best thanks are due to everyone who helped in any way to make the afternoon a success, especially the parents, who must have spent much time and thought in designing and making such wonderful costumes.

The Prize-winners were:—

- Group I. Susan Telfer (Autumn Fayre).
Diane Morgan (Little Miss Muffett).
Roland Charge (Pixie).
- Group II. Alan Withers (Window Cleaner).
Roger Ricketts (Wolf).
Diane Whitmore (Dutch Girl).
- Group III. Michael Charles (Crinoline Lady).
June Shervington (Waitress).
Yvonne Ratcliffe (Flower Girl).
- Originality Betty Stokes (Twenty Questions).

Puzzle solutions

6	1	5	2	7	3	8	4	9
3	8	9	1	6	4	5	7	2
7	2	4	5	8	9	1	6	3
5	7	1	8	3	6	9	2	4
8	4	2	7	9	5	6	3	1
9	6	3	4	1	2	7	8	5
4	3	7	9	5	8	2	1	6
1	9	6	3	2	7	4	5	8
2	5	8	6	4	1	3	9	7

D	E	P	E	N	D		C	A	N	O	P	Y	
E		E			R		U		U		U		
B	E	A	K		I	R	R	I	T	A	T	E	
T		C			N		I		S		I		
	Z	E	D	E	K	I	A	H		A	T	E	
I		A		X		S		O		T		Z	
J	O	B	S	C	O	M	F	O	R	T	E	R	
O		L		E		A		F		E		A	
N	A	E		L	A	N	G	S	Y	N	E		
	S		G		B		R			T		L	
B	L	O	C	K	A	D	E			F	I	V	E
	A		M		N		E			O		A	
E	N	I	G	M	A		D	R	E	N	C	H	

And finally....

"I am looking for a Christmas Card that contains inclusive language, and yet retains the richness of 16th century English and is overtly Christian whilst being sensitive to the multi-faith patterns of our day ... any suggestions?"





Services for Sundays and Christmas Day in the West Worcester Group December 2020

	St. John's	St. Clement's	St. David's	St Michael's
6th December	10.30am Eucharist	9.30am Morning Prayer	4pm Eucharist	10.30am Eucharist
13th December	10.30am Morning Worship	9.30am Eucharist	4pm Evening Prayer	10.30am Eucharist
20th December	10.30am Eucharist	9.30am Morning Prayer	4pm Eucharist	10.30am Eucharist
25th December	10am Eucharist			10am Eucharist
27th December	10am Group Eucharist			
3rd January	10.30am Eucharist	9.30am Morning Prayer	4pm Eucharist	10.30am Eucharist

The information above is provisional at the time of going to press and may have to be altered in accordance with lockdown regulations and Government and Church of England guidance.

Please watch the weekly church newsletters and website for the latest information.