

# **ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH WHITTINGTON PARISH NEWS**



**FEBRUARY 26**

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75p

# **St Philip and St James' Parish Church, Whittington**



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**In the Worcester South East Team**

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### **St. Martin with St. Peter**

**Team Rector:** Rev'd Peter Hart 01905 355119

**Assistant Curate:** Rev'd Richard Wood

**Assistant Curate:** Rev'd Mike Bunclark

### **Holy Trinity & St Matthew Ronkswood**

**Curate in Charge:** Rev'd Richard Wood

### **Team Administrator:**

Rebecca Caskie: Team Office, St Martins Church,  
London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED

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*For enquiries about Baptisms, Thanksgivings, Marriages and Blessings,  
please contact the Team Administrator as above.*

***The Team Office at St Martin's is open on Mon, Tues, Thurs & Friday,  
10am - 1 pm; visits ideally should continue to be by appointment.  
Rebecca can always be reached by phone and email.***

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### **The invasion of Ukraine**

The eleventh instalment of Denys Bielov's account of his escape from Mariupol will be found on pages 14/15, again this month. Denys spends time recuperating in Berlin. See page 26 for ways that we can help Ukrainians fighting on the front line. More on page 27 with a picture of the National Flag flown by the troops on the front line.



# *Letter from the Vicarage*

*February 26*



Hi Everyone,

How are you doing? I hope and pray that you have been able to keep fit and well and that you had an enjoyable and blessed Christmas and New Year.

The new year has of course has brought our new Diocesan Bishop - Bishop Hugh Nelson, previously the suffragan Bishop of St. Germans in the diocese of Truro.

Saturday, 17th January, saw the welcome and installation service for Bishop Hugh and what a wonderful service it was too. I was particularly struck first of all by a sense of continuity between the final acts of Bishop John's leaving service and the opening acts of this welcome service for Bishop Hugh.

Many of us at Bishop John's leaving service were struck, I'm sure, by the final act of that service being for Bishop John to lay down his Bishop's staff and to walk alone, dressed in a very simple robe the whole length of the Cathedral aisle and out through the West Door which then closed behind him.

This welcome service for Bishop Hugh, began with him being similarly quite simply dressed in a plain white robe and having to seek admission to the Cathedral by knocking on the closed West door. Children from one of the schools asked who was at the door, and then told him he was very welcome to the Diocese.

The rest of the service proceeded with Bishop Hugh making declarations and promises concerning his ministry among us, being presented with the various splendid vestments of the Bishop of Worcester - a pectoral cross, a stole (scarf of office worn around his neck), a cope (a splendidly fine robe) and finally his Bishop's mitre (hat). He was then led to his Bishop's chair to be 'installed' as our new Bishop.

A sermon was preached by Bishop Hugh; prayers were said by our archdeacons (in English) and by visiting Bishops from our link dioceses (in their native languages); messages of welcome were conveyed and Bishop Hugh was finally presented with the Bishop's staff, that Bishop John had laid down all those months before. He then went back to the west door and with the doors opened wide and looking outwards, prayed a prayer of blessing upon the whole of his new diocese.

In all of this I was struck by the fact that underneath all the fine robes and trappings of his new office, was the simple white robe of humility and servanthood.

February brings with it the beginning of the season of Lent (Ash Wednesday falls on the 18th, this year) and the call to us to give up some of the trappings of our own lives in order through a more simple life to draw nearer to God, to know more clearly his love and compassion for us all, particularly as we focus ourselves on the journey towards the cross of Good Friday and the blessings of Easter Sunday.

What might you give up, I wonder, in order to make more space in your life for God's love to be felt and shown?

Every blessing,

Andy.



# What's on at Whittington February & March 2026

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February**    **Candlemas**  
11.00am    Parish Communion

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February**  
10.30-12noon    Yew Brew at **Crookbarrow View**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February**    **2 before Lent**  
11.00am    Family Service  
1.00pm    Baptism

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February**    **Next before Lent**  
11.00am    Parish Communion

**Wed. 18<sup>th</sup> February**    **Ash Wednesday**  
**10.00am**    Holy Communion at **St Mark's**  
**7.30pm**    Holy Communion at **St Martin's**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**    **Lent 1**  
11.00am    Family Communion

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March**    **Lent 2**  
11.00am    Parish Communion  
3.30pm    Forest Church

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March**  
10.30-12noon    **Illustrated Talk by Malcolm MacCloud**  
**Followed by Refreshments**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March**    **Lent 3**  
11.00am    Family Service



February  
2026



**CHURCH OF ST PHILIP & ST JAMES**  
**CHURCH LANE, WHITTINGTON**  
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**Saturday 7 March**

**10.30am**



***WW1 Soldiers Commemorated  
in Worcester Cathedral Cloister***

***Illustrated talk by Malcolm MacLeod***

***Followed by refreshments***

**Free entry with donations to church funds**

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**Team Office 01905 358083 [worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com](mailto:worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com)**



# FOREST CHURCH

**NEXT FOREST CHURCH ON SUNDAY 1 MARCH**

Not meeting in February



**Where?** Whittington Churchyard, WR5 2RQ with occasional outings elsewhere.

**When?** We usually meet on the 1st Sunday of the month at 3:30pm for about an hour.

**What?** Suitable for children and their families. A chance to get outdoors, worship God, learn from nature and explore creative activities together, followed by refreshments.

We'd love to see you at Forest Church.

If you are coming for the first time or you'd like further information please contact: [revrichwood@gmail.com](mailto:revrichwood@gmail.com)



## *Church of St Philip & St James, Whittington*



**You are invited to The Yew Brew  
10.30am – 12 noon  
Saturday 7th February  
at Crookbarrow View**

**Call in for tea/coffee, and light refreshments**

**All welcome**



# Easy Fundraising for the Church

Help us to get 2026 off to a great start by signing up to support St Philip and St James Whittington on #easyfundraising. Your online shopping turns into free cashback for us with over 8000 retailers including John Lewis & Partners, eBay, Argos, M&S, Amazon, Tesco and many more donating – at no extra cost to you. Once you've reached your first £5 easyfundraising will double it. Whether you shop on your phone, laptop or tablet you can earn free cashback donations for our church. Using easyfundraising does not add any cost to your online shopping. The retailer covers the cost of the donation, meaning it's 100% free to use. Most give between 1% and 4% of your purchase price.



Your personal data is private – only you can see it.

Get started by downloading the app from Apple or Google Play stores and choose St Philip and St James Whittington as your cause. If you add the browser extension you will get a pop up whenever a retailer is offering a donation – just click to activate. This is entirely optional.

Using easyfundraising does not impact loyalty points for most major providers.

The donations will be paid to the church once a quarter when we reach a £15 threshold.

The scheme is supported by our Diocese and many churches are signed up as beneficiaries, including St Martin's from our Team. A few of us in our congregation have joined as an experiment and started shopping online this way so we have begun receiving donations. Please consider joining us. The website has a video explaining how it all works, and do have a word with me if you would like further information. If we can sign up some more supporters in February our donations will be doubled. It doesn't matter whether you shop online regularly or only occasionally - every little helps our church finances.

Janet Pearson

## Remembering Miss Fanny Clifton

On 21st January 2026 we remembered Fanny Clifton, one of the two local benefactresses whose Will's have helped the poor of Whittington Parish over several centuries. The reason for marking the occasion was the 138<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death in 1888. We found out the actual date, after hunting for her grave in Whittington churchyard and finding it hidden last September. As part of the Sunday Service nearest to 21st January, we laid a handmade wreath on her grave. During the service at St Philip and St James Church in Whittington, the vicar Revd Andy Stand blessed the wreath. Miss Clifton's history (what we currently know) was read out and prayers were said. It was quite a wet day, so not all the congregation went out to take part in the wreath laying, but it was a fitting occasion.



The Charity trustees have been trying to find out more about Miss Clifton and her past. Morman records show she was the second youngest of 13 siblings. She was buried with two of her brothers. Her eldest, John Hill Clifton, was a Worcester solicitor and Clerk to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral. He was a great friend of Dean Peel who buried him after his death in Whittington in November 1870 aged 71. Fanny would have been about 55 years of age at that time.

During her life Fanny Clifton gave sacks of coal to the poor every Christmas, she was also Whittington school's chief benefactress, and all the children attended her funeral. In her Will she left £1000 to the poor inhabitants of the Chapelry of Whittington, and that enabled coal and fuel to be distributed on St Thomas's Day as part of the Fanny Clifton Charity.

Susan MacLeod, Secretary and Trustee, the Elizabeth Stephens and Fanny Clifton Charities.



***Fanny Clifton's  
Memorial  
and below  
Laying the Wreath***



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# Whittington Church of England Primary School

## *Head Teacher, Kelly Leeming*

### Whittington Spring Newsletter

Whittington CE Primary School has made a positive start to 2026. Our Reception children enjoyed a visit to The Hive Library, where they explored the space, took part in crafts, and listened to a range of stories.

Our Eco Council has been busy planning ways to promote upcycling, recycling, and energy saving as we continue to develop our school as an eco-friendly environment.

Our Mini PTA has already been hard at work planning our first event of the year – a Silent Disco, which is always a great success. We are extremely grateful for the continued support of our PTA. Last term, they funded Design and Technology resources, updated our book selection, paid for a science workshop for the whole school, supported wreath-making for parents, and contributed towards school trips.

The children were fantastic at the Young Voices concert in Birmingham, where I had the pleasure of seeing them shine. Year 4 will also be visiting Whittington Church to celebrate Lent.

We recently held a coffee morning for our school families, providing an opportunity to talk and share ideas, and we hope to run these each term.

Looking ahead to Spring 2, we will be celebrating Easter with a service led by our Year 3 children. The PTA will be hosting a flower

shop for Mother's Day, alongside Rock Steady concerts and World Book Day celebrations. There is much to look forward to in the coming weeks.

I am always so proud to lead a school with dedicated staff, supportive families, and flourishing children. Thank you to the wider community, including the amazing support of the Parish Council, and I look forward to continuing to work together.



#### School Vision

*Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last.'*

John 15:16

We are inspired by Jesus to learn with joy and flourish in love, faith and wisdom. Together, we live and grow well, valuing and respecting our differences and sharing our God given gifts. We aspire to be courageous and responsible, caring for our world and one another today – for a better tomorrow.



# Escape from Mariupol

## by Denys Bielov - 11

### Two months in Berlin

I was at last in Berlin ( February 2024), still felt vulnerable and I knew I had a long way to go. I had to be prepared for surprises and twists of fate. 'Success loves concentration and silence,' I told myself. 'Now I need to recharge my internal battery' and for that I had a wonderful opportunity. I had to wait for a message from the migration office, take care of myself and study English. I put on my running shoes, which I had brought from Mariupol, and started running several times a week in a park in the centre of



Berlin. 'Ha-ha! Finally, I don't have to be jealous of the Poles and Germans who can run whenever they want! Now I'm running too!' as I went for my first run in two years. There was a small sports ground in the park with horizontal bars. I enjoyed exercising regularly. I even took a photograph of myself on the first day of training so that I could take another to compare a month later. Exercise helped me to rediscover the joy of life and strengthen my body and spirit.

Once, Ruslan and Olya told me that there is an entire neighbourhood in Berlin where flats are reserved exclusively for people with disabilities. They said that I had a good chance of having my disability validated in Germany and obtaining social housing. I thanked them for their advice. It sounded like a really tempting offer. But I felt that I had to move forward.



### ***But let me digress and tell you a little bit more about myself:***

At the age of 4 I underwent an operation to remove a brain tumour somewhere in the back of my head. This was done in Donetsk in 1989. It was unsuccessful, given that medicine in the USSR was terrible. I lost the use of my right arm and leg. The tumour continued to grow. But my parents did not give up. My Dad contacted Professor Shuks from the French hospital De la Timone in Marseille and I was accepted for treatment. It was a huge problem to persuade the Soviet government to let us leave. It took Dad numerous trips to Moscow, many days of persuasion and providing all kinds of evidence of my critical sickness.





Finally, Dad was allowed to obtain a French visa and permission to leave. And so, Dad, Mum and I travelled. My older sister, Sveta, aged 14, stayed at home to look after the house. We had to travel over 2,000 miles across the whole of Ukraine (Mariupol is in the far East of Ukraine), through Hungary, Austria, Italy and France. It would have been impossible to cover such a distance in our old

Moskvitch-412. At that time, my father was working at the motor depot of the international trade seaport of Mariupol. The port management agreed to provide a Toyota Hiace minivan. My father converted the interior so that my mother and I could live comfortably while we were travelling. My parents wrote 'Transportation of sick child' in red paint on all four sides of this minivan. In the autumn of 1991, we left the Soviet Union, which was already falling apart. The journey took about a week. In Marseille, I underwent successful surgery, and even partially restored the nerves and blood vessels that had been damaged during the first operation in Donetsk. My parents taught me how to walk again, and I walked! My father also received some treatment, as he had been exposed to quite high levels of radiation during his eight months of service in Chernobyl. He was a radiologist. After the Chernobyl tragedy in 1986, the Soviet leadership sent him there. He returned from Chernobyl in the spring of 1989. The Soviet government was supposed to have provided special care so that his radiation background would subside. But this was not done and I suspect that I was exposed to radiation from him, and may have caused the brain tumour. Instead of a decent Chernobyl pension, my father received a pittance. To feed his family, he had to find a job as a car mechanic at the port's motor depot. I have no reason whatsoever to feel nostalgic about the USSR. Those who say that everyone was happy in the USSR are simply mad.

I still have problems such as deafness in my left ear, strabismus (squint), facial asymmetry, and balance problems. Upon returning to an already independent Ukraine, I was given a "first-group disability" category (the most severe). But that didn't stop me from living, studying, and even doing some sport. Around the age of 12, I got into jogging and light sports, which really helped my condition, and by the time I was 18, I looked pretty much healthy. My "first-group disability" was replaced by a second, and then a third, which was a working disability. There was no question of military service, and my parents did everything they could to ensure that I was not drafted. After school, I enrolled in the construction academy in Dnipro. Next time I will continue my story after arriving in Berlin.





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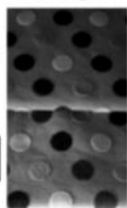
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Independent Family Funeral Directors

Craig is available 24 hours a day  
Please call for any assistance



**Unit 6, Kilbury Drive  
Worcester, WR5 2NE**

**Golden Charter**  
Funeral Plans 

**[WorcesterFuneralService.co.uk](http://WorcesterFuneralService.co.uk)**



# Community Hall Update

## WHAT'S ON - REGULAR CLASSES YOU CAN JOIN

Please contact the class organiser for more information, costs and to pre-book

### MONDAY.

10.30am - 11.30am. Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: [aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk)

5.30pm. The Star Project Children's Theatre (Term time only) with Jo Payne.

Contact: [director@thestarproject.info](mailto:director@thestarproject.info)

### TUESDAY.

4.00pm to 6.30pm. Dance (for 3 year olds and above) with Elizabeth Gibbs

Contact: [lizdance@icloud.com](mailto:lizdance@icloud.com)

6.30pm - 9.30pm Gong Bath + Sound Meditation with Angela Latham.

Contact: [evenstartbabe@msm.com](mailto:evenstartbabe@msm.com)

(varying monthly dates available)

### WEDNESDAY.

4.30pm to 5.30pm Yoga with Natalie Houlding.

Contact: [natalie@zafyoga.com](mailto:natalie@zafyoga.com)

6.30pm to 7.30pm. Pilates with Rebecca Hadlington.

Contact: [fitness-worcester.com](http://fitness-worcester.com)

### THURSDAY.

10.00am (for 10.15am start) to 11.00am Zumba with Denise Wrafter

11.00am to 12.00noon Yoga with Denise Wrafter.

Contact: [sdwrafter@btinternet.com](mailto:sdwrafter@btinternet.com)

7.15pm - 9.15pm T'ai Chi with Dr Marc.

Contact: [marc@obelison.com](mailto:marc@obelison.com)

### FRIDAY.

9.45am to 10.45am Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: [aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk)

6.00pm to 7.00pm. Duke Yoga with Fiona

Contact: [fib42@hotmail.com](mailto:fib42@hotmail.com)



**Community Hall Management Committee**

**[info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk](mailto:info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk)**

*Responsible for managing, maintaining, developing and running the  
Community hall.*

# **Whittington Parish Council**

*From the Chairman: Adam Hooper*

2026 is now well and truly underway! I hope you had a peaceful time over Christmas and New Year with loved ones and had the opportunity for some downtime. It'll be here again before we know it!

A short column this month; a lot of the Parish Council's time is being taken up with the new Wychavon Town development. A number of very large planning applications have been submitted in December and January; thousands of pages of detail that need to be read and understood. We were joined by residents of Pershore Road at our most recent Parish Council meeting, who will be impacted by a large warehousing development and significant increases in traffic for years to come.

The Parish Council's role is to ensure that we represent the views of the residents of Whittington and make sure that Whittington receives the best outcome possible from the phases of development. I'd encourage everyone to take some time to look online at the information about the developments and to engage in the public consultations to make sure your views are heard.

The A4440 continues to be a concern for residents and parish councillors. I've lost count of how many accidents and incidents there have been in recent years. I know that other Parish Councils in Warndon Villages, St. Peter's and Norton Juxta Kempsey are equally concerned. We will be joining together to take a joined-up approach in speaking to Worcestershire County Council about the issues along this road. We are hoping four voices will be louder than one and that our concerns will be heard and addressed.

Huge congratulations again to the team at Whittington Community Hall. A wonderful night of music from international slide guitarist Martin Harley was just the cure to shake off the winter blues. It was a superb night. A great opportunity to show off the community hall to residents and visitors from further afield.

The next Live and Local event at the community hall is 'Helios' on Saturday, 21st February. More details can be found on their website <https://whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk/whats-on/>

The Elizabeth Stephens and Fanny Clifton charity, based in Whittington, for the benefit of Whittington residents, is holding a charity Big Breakfast on Saturday, 28th February.

*Continued...*



# Helping the people of Ukraine on the front line



UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE FREEDOM COMPANY (WEST MIDLANDS)

[Ukrainefreedomcompany.org](http://Ukrainefreedomcompany.org)

Patron: Maj Gen Arthur Denaro CBE, DL

## COMFORT BOXES

Contributions are required to provide individual 'comfort' boxes for the men and women fighting at the front. These may contain some or all of the following items:

First Aid kit items: Bandages: Antiseptic cream: Lip sol: Wet wipes: Soap: Tissues

Female sanitary products: Toilet rolls: Toothpaste/brush: Small towels

Candles (including tea lights)

Sewing kits

Tea: Coffee: Sweets/chocolate

Thermal underwear: socks:

Tinned food (ideally with ring-pull top) - e.g. sardines: baked beans: soups: fruit:  
or packets of dried foods - e.g. pasta: noodles: soups: 'instant' oats

Cooking utensils - army mess tins: enamel plates/mugs: cutlery: small pots/pans:

DO NOT INCLUDE ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR CIGARETTES AS THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE CONFISCATED BY CUSTOMS.

## MEDICAL SUPPLIES

\*\*\*\*\* There is a desperate ongoing need for medical supplies and first aid kits – priority items required being tourniquets, wound dressings, bandages of all types, etc.

While many medical items in the UK are required to have a 'use-by' date, and often consequently get destroyed, UFC can often divert these for use in the Ukraine – please consider approaching contacts at local hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries, paramedics, etc. requesting that they give consideration to donating such supplies. In addition, there are many mobility aids retained by ex-patients who find it difficult to return them - we are happy to accept such items including wheelchairs, walking frames, crutches, walking sticks, limb splints etc.

\*\*\*\*\*We are now able to accept financial donations via our dedicated bank account – please consider a 'one off' donation, or a monthly standing order, details as follows:

Metro Bank Account: Ukraine Freedom Co (West Midlands)

Account No: 56781099 – Sort Code: 23 - 05 - 80

If able to assist, please contact your local UFC representative, who can also arrange collection throughout the area: Brian Watkins email: [lovelacewatkins@uwclub.net](mailto:lovelacewatkins@uwclub.net) mobile: 07771694000

## More on Ukraine from Denys

I'd like to share with you the photograph of the flag that I received by post (!!) from my friend, a military volunteer, in Kyiv.

At the top is written: 81 Separate Airmobile Slobozhansk brigade and at the bottom: 3 Airmobile Battalion.

It was sent by the soldiers on the frontline in Ukraine. There are many soldiers' signatures on the flag: and saying, "Together for victory", "Thank you for your support", "everything will be Ukraine". I have hung it in my bedroom. It inspires me every day to victory. Denys Bielov



## The Winter Olympics returns to Europe

If you like snow-sports, you are in for a great month. From 6<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Italy will be hosting the 2026 Winter Olympics, officially known as Milano Cortina 2026. The opening ceremony is at football's famous San Siro stadium. The Paralympic Winter Games follows, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March. For the first time the Winter Games will have two host cities, Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, with events spread across 15 venues in northern Italy, using existing infrastructure to reduce costs. (Thus, Milan will host indoor events like hockey and figure skating, while Cortina hosts alpine skiing and snowboarding.)

Around 3,500 athletes from more than 90 countries are expected to compete for 195 medals across 16 Olympic disciplines. New this year is ski-mountaineering. Snow gets an occasional mention in the Bible. Job tells how God "Says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth' ... He stops all people from their labour. At His direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever He commands them." *Let's hope that the snow does a good deep swirl around Italy this month.*

## Reflections on 11 years of General Synod

Archdeacon Nikki reflects on 11 years as one of our General Synod reps in this article for February editions of parish magazines.



February is a short month, and for me it involves a week in London at General Synod, and a week on holiday in Italy. I could regale you with my holiday plans, which include running the Naples Half Marathon and visiting Pompei and Vesuvius, but it's perhaps more appropriate to use this opportunity to reflect on eleven years representing the Diocese on the governing body of the Church of England. I have decided two terms are enough, and it's time to give someone else the opportunity, so I have just two sessions remaining – London this month and York in July.

Being a 'proctor in convocation' as it is formally known, has been demanding, enriching, provided huge learning opportunities, driven me at times to despair and also to rejoice, presented unique opportunities, unparalleled insights and has been an immense privilege overall.

Some of you reading this will have watched occasional debates on the synod live stream, others will glean information from the Church Times summaries, many will only know what appears in national press and TV coverage – usually sensationalised soundbites bearing little relationship to reality! None of these capture the whole experience of being a synod rep.

So much happens outside of the debating chamber – conversations over coffee, small group work, membership of various committees, fringe meetings and chance encounters. In York especially you find yourself sitting next to dressed down bishops at breakfast, or people from other dioceses you have never met, and it is a wonderful place of networking and relationship building across different traditions and contexts. I have found myself reconnecting with friends from the past – someone I led a children's Explorers group with forty years ago – and starting new friendships which will continue long after my time as part of this weird and wonderful institution.

The importance of the synod as a legislative body preparing governing measures for the nation is underlined by the opening of each group of sessions by the monarch. What an honour to have been present when Queen Elizabeth II fulfilled this task for her final time. I chaired a revision committee which led to some new laws being made, so have made a direct contribution.

*Continued....*

Every member of synod plays a part, contributing to debates and deciding on often closely contested issues, where every vote is significant.

The Living in Love and Faith process to bring about radical Christian inclusion for our LGBTQI+ sisters and brothers has dominated much of the last two quinquennia. Having played a part and given some much-quoted speeches in the debates about this, I am sad that I will be stepping down before change has come about, but am acutely aware that the Church of England moves slowly. It took many, many sessions of synod to approve the ordination of women as priests, then bishops, but we got there in the end, and I hold on to hope that this will be the case for same sex marriage in church too – eventually, and that we manage to hold together in our diversity on this and many other issues.

There have also been monumental debates about safeguarding, and detailed work to build a safer church for the future. These have at times been heartbreaking and harrowing, as we have heard from victims and survivors of abuse. We have heard moving addresses from Anglican Communion visitors about the impact of war and natural disasters, and made bold statements on matters of significance to the nation. We also engage with small changes which make a difference in local churches, and impact congregations and communities for good.

I will miss it, and am thankful for the opportunity to have served on synod and represented the Diocese of Worcester nationally. Please pray for us as we meet these final two times, and for whoever is elected in the future. Synod really matters.

*Nikki Groarke, Archdeacon of Dudley*

### ***Three in four car thefts unsolved***

Keep a close eye on your car this year, because sadly, no one else seems to be able to do so. Recent figures have revealed that more than 121,000 car theft offences were not solved in 2024-25. The British Transport Police, South Yorkshire, City of London, Sussex and Warwickshire police forces reported that more than 80 per cent of car thefts were unsolved. 35 of the 44 police forces in England and Wales had a total rate of 60 per cent of all cases going unsolved. Some critics even say that the dismal figures show that car theft has been decriminalised in the UK.

Of course, theft has been around for a long time. For this very reason, Jesus warned us not to over-value the things that we own. Sadly, no data exists from the 1<sup>st</sup> century, to tell us how many stolen camels and donkeys were never recovered.





# St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Diocese of Worcester



## News & Views from St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

### Church News

You may have seen news on the TV of Mark Stevens from Ludlow, a gentleman who is collecting unwanted candles to reuse them for people in Ukraine who are still being affected by the war that is constantly interrupting utility supplies. Those in St Marks have been sorted out and, by the time that you read this, they will have been delivered to the local co-ordinator. The last time I gathered together the old candle stubs, I put them on Freecycle and was delighted that the offer was taken up by a bride to be who wanted to melt them down to use the wax in jam jars to light the way to her wedding reception.

**'Ding Dong Merrily'** a pre-Christmas event arranged by Opera Worcester was superb. Members of the Community Choir, who regularly use the church to rehearse, sang their hearts out and the audience were invited to join in with some of the songs. Refreshments that included homemade cakes were served afterwards, raising £50 for St Marks, and the afternoon was followed by a quiz in the church hall that raised funds for Opera Worcester. Opera Worcester and the Community Choir are always looking for extra voices and information can be obtained by calling 01905 455191 (Caroline) or 01905 820464 (Jan). St Marks extends their thanks to everyone who took part and we look forward to the next concert.

**Christingle**, the service that takes place annually on the third Sunday in January, is in aid of The Children's Society. It was lovely to watch the children putting together their orange worlds before being joined for the service that began at 4pm. Brownies were invited to choose an instrument to form an instant band and were joined by members of the congregation to shake, rattle and roll, all very enjoyable. I always like to see everyone's faces when the time comes to lighting the candles in their oranges but, because the photos are in B&W, I don't think that my camera skills quite capture the atmosphere. The Children's Society collection boxes are available all year round in the church for the odd small change that can make such a difference to the young people's lives. Alternatively, I can always drop one off to your home and you could return it to St Marks at the next Christingle on 17 January 2027; it really is an uplifting occasion. *Cont...* 30

Thanks are extended to Rachel, Community Champion at St Peter's Tesco who sponsored the service by supplying the oranges.



*Below:  
Brownie Band*



St Marks has been successful with an application for a small grant and has received £250 from **The Co-op Community Fund** to help pay for a complete overhaul of the heating boiler. Several weeks' ago, I had a conversation with Emma, the manager of our local Co-op, and she always asks how things are going. I mentioned that the boiler seemed to have a mind of its own, having hissy fits and coming on and going off when it pleased but that the cost of having it dealt with was likely to be in the region of £500. She encouraged me to apply for the small grant available to aid community groups and I thrilled to be successful. The funds will help to pay for the thorough service and the replacement of the programmer that could be causing the problems.

### **The Recent Installation of the 114 Bishop of Worcester, The Right Reverend Hugh Nelson**

Many of you may have read or heard that the new Bishop was installed in a special service on Saturday, 17 January, in Worcester Cathedral and I was in the congregation to witness a very memorable occasion. *Continued...*

As I walked towards the main Cathedral entrance, I was aware of a gentleman, who I took to be a verger, talking to people whom I wrongly assumed were waiting for others to arrive before entering the building. The service began with many clergy and dignitaries processing to their seats, followed by The Dean of Worcester welcoming all and then we were asked to stand and face the West door in expected silence for the new Bishop to knock three times with his pastoral staff (Crozier) to request admission. The doors were pulled back and I was amazed to see the gentleman who had been chatting outside earlier. He was greeted by children and other young people and the formalities began. Children figured several times and I was seated with some very well behaved younger ones wearing Tshirts with the logo 'iSingPOP' who played their part by excitedly running down the aisle to the quire to sing and dance and there, at the back of the group, was Bishop Hugh joining in with the movements wearing all the finery that is afforded to bishops; it was all splendid and very uplifting. During his sermon, the Bishop shared that he is very keen, as are many of the clergy, to engage with more children in lots of ways. At the end of the service, the West doors were opened again and brilliant sunshine greeted the Bishop and clergy as they stepped out onto the garden steps to have their photographs taken. When he stepped back into the building, he stopped to chat to the people standing at the back and I was fortunate to be one of them.

The Order of Service was very informative and included lots of photographs from around the Diocese with a description of how the parishes are encouraging youngsters of all ages to join them. It was also full of interesting historical facts about Worcester Cathedral that has been on the site since the year 680. St Wulfstan began the present building in 1084 and when the monastery that surrounded it was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1540, some of the last monks became the first Dean and Chapter. Listed were the names of the previous 113 bishops and you would recognise many of them because they are commemorated in street names or buildings in and around the city, i.e. Bishop John Perowne 1891 followed in 1931 by a second member of the family, Bishop Arthur Perowne. It also listed Bishop Giulio de'Medici 1521 who later became Pope Clement VII. Please contact me if you would like to read all about the service and I will arrange for you to borrow one of the copies that I have put in St Marks.

**Celebrations** Finally, just before Christmas, a party was held in the church hall to celebrate a centenary birthday. Around 60 guests, some literally from all walks of life, joined together to wish John Keen all the very best and toast his good health.

*Continued...*



John moved to St Peters around 10 years' ago and became a much loved member of St Mark's congregation. More recently, he relocated from his bungalow to a local residential home because, I understand, his memory was failing and, although he loved walking with local groups, he had become a little unsteady on his feet. He is missed very much, especially because he kept the church memorial book up to date, writing in a wonderful italic script.

If you look at the list of hall hirers on the back page of this magazine and see a group that you might like to attend, **please contact the organiser** for further details.

### **The List of Dates for your Diary, Mobile and/or Calendar:**

**Chat & Cuppa Club** Everyone is really friendly so please consider adding this **FREE** event to your calendar **First Tuesday of EVERY month from 2**

**– 3pmish** and the next one is on **3 February**. You will receive a warm welcome, a free cuppa and we rarely leave before 3.30pm! No transport, no problem, because you can reach us on the No 32 bus and there are stops both ways very nearby; just ask for St Marks Church.

**Mothering Sunday** is on 15 March and, hopefully, I will have produced the annual 'living' gift that is handed out to members of the congregation during the church service.

**Opera Worcester** Bizet's Spanish influenced opera, '**Carmen**' at **The Norbury Theatre, Droitwich, from 25 – 28 March** contact [info@operaworcester.uk](mailto:info@operaworcester.uk) for more information.

The next **Quiz Night** will be on **Saturday, 11 April, 7pm for 7.30 start**. Please save the date and spread the word because it is lots of fun with banter to and from the teams;

**Jan** 01905 351392 / [janvale810@gmail.com](mailto:janvale810@gmail.com)

# Mary Shelley and Frankenstein

It was 175 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1851, that the novelist Mary Shelley died. She is best known for her Gothic novel *Frankenstein*. Her parents were the influential philosophers William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, a strong advocate of women's rights who died 11 days after Mary's birth from complications. The future Mary Shelley was herself fascinated by books and philosophy but spent two long, enjoyable spells "for her health" with the Baxters, a dissenting family who lived near Dundee.

She started on the novel *Frankenstein* – not the name of the eight-foot, lovelorn 'Christian' monster but of the scientist who created him – at the age of 18 after a conversation about ghosts with her husband, the atheist Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and others. After her book was published anonymously, many suspected that her husband had written it or was co-author, but this was not the case: he may have done some light editing.

Mary, a baptised Anglican who came to despair and doubt, wrote several other books, but her life was tragic on many levels. Her husband had affairs, and they mixed in circles where that was encouraged. A four-year period in Italy with Byron and others, initially welcomed by Mary, became especially hard for her to endure. According to him, she had described Naples as "a paradise inhabited by devils". Three of her four children died at a very young age; only the fourth, Percy Florence, reached adulthood. And her husband died, aged only 29, in a mysterious sailing accident in 1822 in The Gulf of Spezia near Genoa.

Her last book, however, was a travel narrative about rambles in Germany and Italy which she had undertaken with her son Percy in the early 1840s. She died aged 53, perhaps of a brain tumour or a stroke. She was buried at St Peter's Church in Bournemouth.



# St Martin's Pancake Party

Shrove Tuesday 17 February



St Martin's Church  
4pm to 5.30pm

Pancakes with a choice of many toppings, tea, coffee, and juice for all

Adults £3, Children £2

Sign up on Sunday after the 10am service  
or visit the Team Office to book your place

***Come and have some fun!***



# Whittington Parish Magazine

## February 26 Edition

