

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



JULY & AUGUST 26

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75p

St Philip and St James' Parish Church, Whittington



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Organist:

Hon Secretary: Miss Janet Pearson 01905 357485

Email: Janetpearson4@hotmail.com

Hon Treasurer: Mrs Brenda Giles 01905 25709

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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:

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London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED

Tel: 01905 358083

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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 16th instalment of Denys Bielov's account of his escape from Mariupol will be found on pages 13/14/15, again this month. Denys settles in to his new home in Worcester with his first host family.



July &
August 2026

Letter from the Vicarage

July & August 26

Hi Everyone,

I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying the weather!



At time of writing we are still experiencing the record breaking heatwave. The forecasts seem to suggest that it will have broken by the time the magazine is printed, which I guess will bring disappointment to any who are actually enjoying the heat; and some relief for the rest of us!

It's often unclear, with the British weather, but I think the heatwave tells us that Summer is actually here!!

It has certainly brought to mind the words of George Gershwin, and his aria written for the musical, *Porgy & Bess*; words which Chris and I used, for many years, throughout the year, not just in the summertime, as the last of our nighttime routines with James. James of course knew all the words perfectly, and woe betide Daddy, if I got them wrong!

"Summertime, and the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin' and the cotton is high
Oh, your daddy's rich and your ma is good lookin'
So hush, little baby, don't you cry."

We did as well adapt the words, adding my own denial to any suggestion that I was rich, and of course endorsing the suggestion that Chris is good lookin'!

I do generally enjoy the summertime and spend a certain amount of the winter looking forward to the change in the seasons.

I wonder, what have you been looking forward to? Is it just the long days and light evenings, the warmer weather and the fact that everything looks more joyful and enjoyable in the sunshine and the warmth?

Continued...

Or are you a sport's fan looking forward to the annual staples of Wimbledon and the Cricket; or the World Cups: Football (confession time: I haven't watched any of it!) and/or Women's T20 Cricket (I've probably inflicted too much of it on Chris already!). No doubt for the athletics fans (and anyone who just enjoys a festival of different sports) it will be the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, towards the end of July. And of course if there are any cycling fans out there, then its time to dust off the lycra and watch the Tour De France (if you can find out which of the terrestrial channels it's being broadcast on!)

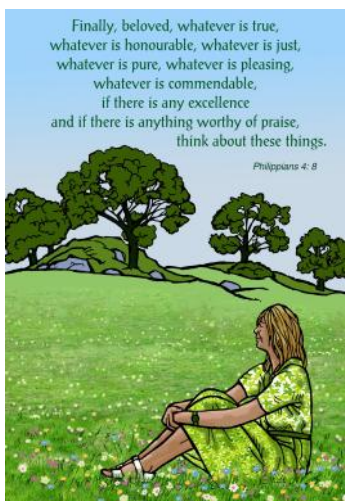
You may be looking forward to a special event: a wedding, or anniversary, a baptism, or maybe even a significant birthday.

Some of you will remember that at the beginning of June Chris and I were celebrating the 10th Anniversary of our move to Worcester; some of you will equally be aware that the beginning of July (2nd to be precise) will be the 20th Anniversary of my Ordination as a Deacon; as well as it being my sister's 60th Birthday! Yes I upstaged her 40th Birthday by being Ordained! She did though get a special mention and birthday greetings during the service!

Something else that I'm not so much looking forward to, as accepting that it needs to happen, is an operation that I am due to have on the 3rd July. Although it is only a Day Case, and will be keyhole surgery, I am being advised that it could take a couple of weeks for me to recover. Again I must confess, it's well over 50 years ago that I last had surgery and a General Anaesthetic and so I do not know quite what to expect nor how quickly I will recover. Please do hold me in your prayers.

Whatever the summer holds for you, I hope you enjoy it and are able to make the most of it.

Every blessing, Andy



A REMINDER that Easyfundraising is a way of supporting our church if you shop online, whether regularly or only occasionally.



Retailers donate a small fee at no extra cost to you.

The scheme is supported by our Diocese and many other churches use it successfully and safely.

Go to: **www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/st-philip-and-st-james-whittington/** for details.

Until 17th July this year you can unlock bonus donations for the church when you refer 5 or more new supporters to the site.

What's on at Whittington July & August 2026

Saturday 4th July

10.30-12noon Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room

Sunday 5th July Trinity 5

11.00am Parish Communion

Sunday 12th July Trinity 6

11.00am Family Service

Tuesday 14th July

6.30pm PCC meeting in Elizabethan Room

Saturday 18th June

10.30 – 12noon Yew Brew in Elizabethan Room

Sunday 19th July Trinity 7

11.00am Parish Communion

6.30pm Memorial Service

Sunday 26th July Trinity 8

11.00am Family Communion

Continued....

Saturday 1 st August	
10.30 – 12noon	Yew Brew in Elizabethan Room
Sunday 2nd August	Trinity 9
11.00am	Parish Communion
Sunday 9th August	Trinity 10
11.00am	Family Service
Saturday 16 th August	
10.30 – 12noon	Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room
Sunday 16th August	Trinity 11
11.00am	Parish Communion
Sunday 23rd August	Trinity 12
11.00am	Family Communion
Sunday 30th August	Trinity 13
11.00am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday 1 st September	
6.30pm	PCC meeting in Elizabethan Room
Saturday 5 th September	
10.30 – 12noon	Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room
Sunday 6th September	Trinity 14
11.00am	Parish Communion
3.30pm	Forest Church

Andy and Chris at the 10th Anniversary celebrations of Andy's installation as Team Vicar on June 7th. About to cut the cake!



ST PHILIP AND ST JAMES WHITTINGTON

SUNDAY 19th JULY 2026

MEMORIAL SERVICE

6.30 p.m.

**A THANKSGIVING TO COMMEMORATE
ALL THOSE WHOM WE HAVE LOVED
AND ARE AT PEACE IN THE CHURCHYARD
OR ELSEWHERE**

Everyone welcome



HAPPY GARDENING

I was very pleased to welcome those that were able to my new garden last month. Sales of refreshments and plants then together with orders from several other gardeners meant we made £745 in total. My grateful thanks to all who supported me in any way. The remaining few spare plants that I had left have been used in the churchyard so not wasted. Health permitting, I hope to see you again next year with plants to brighten up your gardens.

Brenda Giles



FOREST CHURCH

Skenfrith Castle Day Trip

Saturday 4 JULY 11am – 3pm

No Forest Church on Sunday 5 July or in August

The castle (entry free) is a hidden gem with the beautiful River Monnow flowing alongside, marking the border between England and Wales.

See: <https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/places-to-visit/skenfrith-castle>

Families will **self-drive** (44miles / 50mins). Several cars are going so there may be spaces for parents/families who can't drive themselves. Let us know if you plan to join us, and whether you need a lift.



**Bring water shoes, picnics and sun screen
and have fun exploring!**

Contact: revrichwood@gmail.com
Revd Richard Wood 07572 178775

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See next page for events at Whittington

Local Exhibition in the Elizabethan Room of work by Richard Holroyd and Rachel Wickes

64a Richard Holroyd PAINTER AND ICONOGRAPHER



My abstract paintings explore texture and colour. I am also acquiring skills in iconography using the traditional materials of egg tempera and pigments. The exhibition space is in the beautiful churchyard at Whittington.

07867 807420

St. Philip and St. James Church, Church Lane, Whittington, Worcester WR5 2RQ

Enter Whittington by The Swan, turning left onto Church Lane. Parking opposite church.

///note.dome.limit

S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10-4			12-4					10-4	



64b Rachel Wickes PAINTER



After suffering a life-limiting brain injury five years ago, painting has been a God-send. My bright acrylic landscapes celebrate the therapeutic power of nature. My condition may prevent me from being present when you visit.

07867 807420

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22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10-4			12-4					10-4	



Children's Stories and Crafts

Whittington
Church

Thurs
10am-11am

July
23 & 30
Aug
6 & 13

For ages
4-11

From the Dean of Worcester, Stephen Edwards



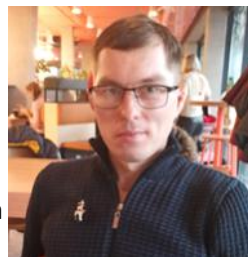
I was asked recently a simple question, ‘what do you do as Dean?’ It is deceptively simple but the answer – which admittedly I struggled to give in a simple and concise way – ended up being a rather rambling list of activities, appointments and encounters from the past few days. In one sense it was quite ordinary; in another it was fascinating in its diversity and breadth. The person who’d asked the question was quite taken aback by the variety and then wondered if I like the variability. I do. The cliché that there is never a dull day really describes life in the Cathedral, and I would also say that my experience in parishes has been exactly the same. Of course the variety and breadth of ministry is sustained by stability; at the Cathedral the rhythm of daily worship provides a foundation from which other things find their strength. Without it I would struggle to know who I am. Our Christian calling is, ultimately, to be ourselves – alive, fully true to ourselves knowing that God calls us for who we are and delights in us. This assured love and wholeness from God enables us to fulfil his purposes and respond to this call on our lives. That call, our vocation, manifests itself in numerous ways, often developing as we journey through life and we encounter the Holy Spirit’s call to offer our gifts in new ways.

We have just celebrated the call of those ordained as deacons and priests in the Cathedral, and across the Diocese we celebrate ministries, lay and ordained, new and old, traditional and pioneering – each releasing God-given gifts in the service of the Kingdom.

This month we focus our thanks on those, paid and voluntary, who work with children, young people and families. We #RECOGNISE their gifts of time and skill, their care and learning, their faith and commitment. As we grow as Kingdom People, we must ensure children and young people are given all they need to flourish as disciples of Christ and become active members of the church in this Diocese. Please join in celebrating and giving thanks for the ministry of those working with children, young people and families, as together we #RECOGNISE the Holy Spirit’s call to each one of us to be ministers of the gospel in a church which gives us a foretaste of the Kingdom.

Escape from Mariupol

by Denys Bielov - 16



Settling in

In the June episode (No. 15) I described my arrival in England. It was now **my first morning in Worcester**. When I woke up, I started thinking about what to say to the host family when I came out of my room: Right, I'll say "*good morning*"... and then what? I need to Google more phrases. I scrolled through my 'phone looking for things to say, thinking, 'Get used to it, Denys. For the next three years, there'll be a mini-test like this every morning.' Actually, the morning went very well. Joe and Ella must have noticed I was a bit anxious, and they were always very friendly and welcoming, doing everything they could to make me feel comfortable. I relaxed and felt more confident. They took the children to school and went to work themselves. After a trip to a shop and breakfast, I reported to my friends that I'd arrived safely and was settling in. When Joe and Ella returned, I asked how to use the kitchen, what I could use, and if I could help with anything — in the garden, for example. I really enjoy gardening: my Mum and I had about 350 square metres of land around the house. I loved planting everything and watching plants bloom and harvesting the crops. They didn't restrict me in any way and kindly showed me how things worked. After dinner, Joe, the children and I went for a walk to the playground. The evening was quiet. I marvelled at everything around me: the neat houses with their beautifully decorated façades, the small gardens in front of them, and almost everywhere lush green hedges, and neatly trimmed lawns.

On our walk, we met some of Joe's friends. Everyone smiled and said "Hello" or "Hey! Are you OK?". I was struck by their friendliness. I recalled my childhood when I was about six years old. My Mum and I were walking to a store. As always, I greeted everyone I saw. My Mum said, "Denys, you don't need to greet everyone you see. Only say hello to those you know". This was probably a relic of Soviet upbringing that all parents had gone through. Here in England, I felt as though I'd partly dived back into my childhood. On the one hand, it was as if I'd stepped into another world, where many things happen differently. On the other hand, there is something in this place so simple and clear that it feels almost like home. I used to imagine the English as serious. But it turned out not to be like that. Everyone was so lovely and friendly, sensitive, and kind. *Continued...*

I used to think that the English lived in large, elegant houses surrounded by luxurious gardens. However, although their houses are often large this is not so much in width as in height, whilst occupying a relatively small area of land. For me, this was a completely different approach to designing living space compared with what I was used to in Ukraine. The English call a single storey house a 'bungalow'. In the Ukrainian private sector, most houses were 'bungalows', particularly in the early 90s, but the people living there were far from wealthy, though usually with a large plot of land. English gardens seemed to me very luxurious and well-maintained, but sometimes they are very small, and sometimes there are none at all. I think this is because land in England is much more expensive than in Ukraine. The English tend to use every scrap of their land with love and that's brilliant! I wanted to take this experience with me, so that one day I could put it into practice in my own country.

I received a message telling me that I needed to collect my Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) from Birmingham. This gave me the right to work in England. At first, I wanted to find out how to get there on my own by bus or train. But Ella offered to take me in her car. Such kindness and thoughtfulness really impressed me!

That same day, Olena rang me and said that two ladies from the City Council would be coming to see me. It was a formal welfare visit to check that I was safe and that my hosts were happy. Yulia and Oksana were both Ukrainian. I was delighted that my circle of Ukrainian-speaking friends was gradually growing. I was given £200 as initial financial support. Arrangements were made to help me open a bank account. I was incredibly grateful for this support.

From the first day, my host family surrounded me with family warmth and care. Over the last few years, I'd got used to being without that. They encouraged me to try new things. When I needed to register for the NHS, Ella helped me fill in the form, showed me which clinic to go to and drove me to my first appointment. She registered me at the library, in 'The Hive'. At first, it was difficult to get my bearings. But I remembered Tanya's words: '...don't overuse their hospitality and kindness!'. In fact, whilst I was in Berlin, she wrote me a guide on how to behave in Britain. So, if I felt I could get to a place on my own, I expressed my thanks and politely declined ... though I didn't always manage it.

Often my friends, Dylan and Nina, popped round and invite me to the family meal.

Nina would bring me something she had made: smoothies, ice cream or other treats. Or she'd help me decorate my room for the holidays. It was so lovely! Emotionally, I felt very, very comfortable.



More about Denys and his life over here

Denys Bielov has regularly attended an English language course at the Heart of Worcestershire College. On Wednesday, 17th June, an awards event took place at the Worcestershire County Cricket Club. He was presented with the Student of the Year award for the course.

But that was not all! At the end of the evening, the Principal, Michelle Dowse, announced that Denys was the overall College Student of the Year. What an

achievement competing against over 3,000 students! We celebrated this after the Eucharist Service on Sunday 21st. June.

Well done Denys, we are all very proud of you.

Denys with his Sponsors David Tibbutt and Eileen Warner. The two awards can be seen on the table





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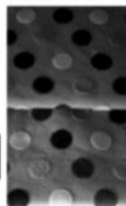
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The Air Tattoo is cancelled because of Iran war

The Royal International Air Tattoo, one of the world's largest defence shows, has been cancelled due to military operations linked to the Iran war.

RIAT 2026 had been scheduled for July 17-19 at RAF Fairford, an active Royal Air Force base used by the U.S. Air Force, in southwest England. But at present the U.S. forces for the Iran war are using the base, and it is not clear when they will be leaving. In March, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said Britain would allow limited use of its bases, but that he would not join offensive strikes on Iran.

The airshow attracts more than 150,000 visitors every year. The next show will be RIAT 2027.

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

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

with Jo Payne. Contact: director@thestarproject.info

TUESDAY.

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

Contact: lizdance@icloud.com

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

Contact: evenstartbabe@msm.com

(varying monthly dates available)

WEDNESDAY.

2.00pm to 3.00pm **Moveitorloseit**. Exercise class for the more mature individual to build strength and balance. *Note*: from 02/09/2026

Contact: Liz Hoare: liz.hoare@moveitorloseit.co.uk.

4.30pm to 5.30pm Yoga with Natalie Houlding.

Contact: natalie@zafyoga.com

6.30pm to 7.30pm. Pilates with Rebecca Hadlington.

Contact: 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: denisewrafter@outlook.com

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

Contact: marc@obelison.com

FRIDAY.

9.45am to 10.45am Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk

6.00pm to 7.00pm. Duke Yoga with Fiona

Contact: fib42@hotmail.com



Community Hall Management Committee
info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk



WSO

Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra
Conductor: KEITH SLADE

Mendelssohn

*Symphony No 4
"Italian"*

Mozart

*Horn Concerto No 2
with soloist Jim Moffat*

Barber

*Violin Concerto
with soloist Sarah Vernon*

Saturday 11th July 2026

7.30pm

St Martin's Church, London Road, Worcester



Tickets £15, under-18s free
Available via ticketsource.co.uk
or on the door



Sea Sunday - 12th July

Sea Sunday is the day each year when churches worldwide come together to pray for seafarers, and to support Mission to Seafarers' frontline ministry to them.



Seafarers are essential to everyday life, yet many work unseen, facing long periods away from home, isolation, and often dangerous conditions. Sea Sunday offers an opportunity to pause, and give thanks for the men and women who keep our world moving.

The Mission to Seafarers works in ports across the world. In 2025 alone, it made over 48,000 ship visits, provided shore leave transport for more than 150,000 seafarers, and ran programmes on family support and suicide prevention.

These moments of care — a visit on board, practical help ashore, or someone to listen — can make a profound difference to seafarers far from home.

For Sea Sunday 2026, the theme is 'Harbours of Hope: The Church Alongside Seafarer', inspired by Matthew 25. This theme celebrates the local church as a place of welcome, refuge, and hope — a community offering both spiritual and practical safety to those who work at sea. It invites congregations to reflect on how they can stand alongside seafarers through prayer, hospitality, generosity, and justice.

There is a wide range of free downloadable resources on Sea Sunday, which can be found at: <https://www.missiontoseafarers.org>



The 16th century Bible that may have saved the Welsh language

The Spanish Armada may have indirectly helped save the Welsh language. For at the time when the Spanish were threatening England, Queen Elizabeth 1 decided to commission a Welsh Bible, to help to secure the Church of England's diocese in Wales.

She chose to ask William Morgan, Bishop of Llandaff in 1595 and then of St Asaph in 1601. He spent ten years at the task, and in the end one thousand copies were printed, and then distributed to every church in Wales.

Nowadays Bishop William Morgan's 16th-century Welsh-language Bible, *Y Beibl Cyssegr-lan*, can be found in a farmhouse at Ty Mawr Wybrnant, near Penmachno, in north Wales. The copy at Ty Mawr attracts hundreds of pilgrims and visitors every year, and has now been featured in a BBC series *Hidden Treasures of the National Trust*.

Fflur Medi Owen, programming and partnership officer for the National Trust, says that the translation of the Welsh Bible was pivotal for the preservation of the Welsh language. Not only that, but the timing of the translation was significant, because the language had become "very dialect-heavy".

"I do think we would have been able to understand each other, but things were falling out of shape," says Ms Owen. "The green light to commission the Bible into Welsh by William Morgan came at a time that meant the language could be given a form and structure."

She goes on: "Welsh is an old, old Brittonic language — it's like an umbilical cord. Had it not been for William Morgan, our Welsh language would have gone like Manx and Cornish."

Remembering Dolly – the cloned sheep

Thirty years ago, on 5th July 1996, Dolly the sheep was born at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh. She was the first cloned mammal.

Dolly had three mothers: one provided the egg, another the DNA, and a third carried the cloned embryo to term. Her existence was announced the following February, resulting in much media attention and no little controversy. There was a special report in *Time* magazine, and TV showed a commercial featuring Scottish scientists playing with sheep.

Dolly was widely featured as the scientific breakthrough of the year. Even though she was not the first animal cloned, she was the first cloned from an adult cell. The process was extremely inefficient, with Dolly the only lamb surviving to adulthood from 277 attempts in 1996.

Several animals had been cloned before Dolly, including frogs in 1952 and 1958. Even mammals had been cloned – sheep in 1984 and cows in 1987 – but the key difference with Dolly was that she was cloned from a reprogrammed adult somatic cell, instead of embryonic cells.

Dolly lived for six and a half years. She was euthanised in 2003 after developing a progressive lung disease not uncommon in sheep, particularly those spending their lives indoors, like Dolly. Sheep of a similar breed usually live for ten to twelve years, but scientists did not think her life was shortened because she was a clone.

Her body was preserved and is on display at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Cloning, particularly cloning of mammals, has led to concerns among some Christians that the bounds of the natural order are being overstepped. If the process were extended to humans (monkeys were cloned in 2018 and 2024 in China for medical research), there have been fears that this would be too much like “playing God”.

Looking back on 20 years with Twitter....

Twenty years ago, on 15th July 2006, Twitter, the online micro-blogging service, was launched.

It had been developed earlier that year by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Evan Williams and Noah Glass at the podcasting company Odeo. Originally named "twtr", it was thought of as an SMS-based, short messaging service, at first with a 140-character limit. It became Twitter within six months of its launch.

Originally a side project, the free application let users share short status updates with friends by sending one text message to a single number ("40404"). Within a few years, it exploded in popularity until it became one of the world's top social networking platforms.

Its name was obviously inspired by bird sounds, after some other suggestions – including FriendStalker – had been rejected. The first ever tweet was sent by Dorsey on the prototype platform on March 21 – "just setting up my twtr".

The company became more prominent with the election of President Donald Trump in 2016. He used Twitter throughout his campaign and made announcements on it during his administration. Banned in 2021 for allegedly using it to incite violence, he was later reinstated under new owner Elon Musk, who acted as CEO until July 2023, when he was succeeded by Linda Yaccarino. She resigned in July last year. Meanwhile, Twitter had become X, with Musk intending it to expand to become a "digital market place".

Like other social media companies, Twitter/X has faced strong pressure to police content more closely, in order to deter hate speech, misinformation and pornography, among other things. But it is used by many Christians to discuss key issues of faith and culture, and for sharing devotional content, prayer requests and #happysunday messages.



The US Declaration of Independence – 4th July 1776

It was 250 years ago, on 4th July 1776, that the US Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Second Continental Congress.

The original signed parchment still exists, behind bullet-proof glass at the National Archives in Washington, but copies were quickly printed and distributed on the day – not all of them totally accurate. Its creation followed considerable conflict between the colonies and the British Parliament, reaching a head in late 1775 when Parliament prohibited trade with the colonies. This followed other measures, including what was regarded by some as unfair taxation without representation.

An original draft of the Declaration was made by Thomas Jefferson, but it was amended by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, who omitted passages likely to offend the more conservative colonists, such as the suggestion that King George III was to blame for transatlantic slave trade, or anything that accused the British people rather than their government.

The most important effect of the Declaration from a diplomatic point of view was to make possible relationships between the colonists and friendly foreign governments. But it had a substantial effect elsewhere. Anglican clergy felt conflicted because they had sworn an oath to the King as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and supporting independence would mean breaking that oath. Many colonies made public prayers for the King acts of treason, and this in part led Anglicans to recreate themselves as the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The Declaration itself could be described as a Christian document, reflecting Judeo-Christian values, as Abraham Lincoln made clear in his Gettysburg Address in 1863, quoting its second sentence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."



St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Diocese of Worcester



News & Views from St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

This July & August edition is very much a mixed bag.

To begin with, on Sunday, 14 June, the congregation was delighted to welcome and make the acquaintance of Robbie Porter who arrived feeling exceptionally warm to lead the family service. He told me that it had taken him 17 minutes to walk to St Marks from his home that is by the former porcelain factory which made us think about how he was planning to reach his next port of call, St Philip & St James Church for their service. His response was that he had booked a taxi however Chris Cole stepped in to drive him to Whittington and the taxi was cancelled.

Robbie is churchwarden and licensed Lay Minister (Reader) at St Martin in the Cornmarket, a delightful small church in the centre of Worcester that benefits from a diverse congregation which, in addition to members who have worshipped there for many years, also includes several families from Angola and Portugal. Additionally, since February 2025, he has been acting Chaplain at Laslett's Almshouses in Union Street, off The City Walls Road. He obviously enjoys keeping very busy because he is a member of the executive committee of The Battle of Worcester Society and frequently gives local history talks across the county; it is a pity that Ladies Club closed several years' ago because we were constantly looking for speakers!

Robbie stayed for a cuppa after the service and we all agreed that we look forward to welcoming him back to St Marks when the need arises.

This was the second year that I have volunteered to help at **The Royal Three Counties Show in the Church tent**, a super facility offering a variety of Paninis, sandwiches, wonderful homemade cakes and hot or cold drinks. On Friday, 12 June, we were all treated to some lovely singing from junior school children from around the three counties who are part of **iSingPOP**, a charity that supplies songs, events and resources for collective worship in schools and churches.

The lovely lady who has been overseeing the three day event is Sue MacAskill but she recently announced that she is stepping back because she has many other strings to her bow; the following tells you a little about her very, very busy life.

Continued...

Sue lives and grew up in Kidderminster, worshiping at St Mary's, the big civic church in the town, throughout her life. She has been an altar assistant, in the choir, on the DCC and PCC and eventually Churchwarden. In 2018, Sue felt a calling to become a Lay Reader, did 2 years training during Covid and was licensed in September 2021. That license allows her to lead and preach across all the churches in the team, of which there are 6, as well as carry out pastoral and administration work and be on the Staff team who meet weekly for planning. Within the team, Sue was given responsibility for a small rural church, Holy Trinity in Trimpley which she really enjoys and where she chairs meetings and supports the community. If you would like a day out, park up in Trimpley and walk down to the reservoir to join a foot-path that parallels the Severn Valley railway line and you can enjoy a lovely, gentle stroll to Arley and back with the occasional view of the River Severn in the distance; take care when you need to go over the railway crossings.

In the spring of 2022, Sue saw a plea for a secretary for the Church Tent Committee, so she volunteered; at the time, her workload was not too big and the role was chiefly taking the Minutes and helping at the show. Someone else organised the food and a third person recruited the volunteers. Over the next couple of years, both of those people stepped down for different reasons and Sue took on their roles which meant that in 2024 Sue was coordinating the food and the volunteers which was a huge responsibility and involved an incredible amount of work.

During the rest of the year, Sue also started to officiate at funerals, a ministry that she very much enjoys because it is the greatest privilege to be able to walk along side families as they grieve and say farewell to their loved ones; this ministry has now grown and takes up quite a bit of time. There have also been changes within the parish structures and teams in Kidderminster and, as part of the Staff, she has taken on the roles of PCC secretary for two PCCs and also supports the team clergy with communication and on line presence. All of the foregoing, except the funerals for which Sue takes a fee, is voluntary and takes up her whole week.

Organising the Café in the church tent for the Royal Three Counties Show is really rewarding and Sue has thoroughly enjoyed doing it for the last 4 years however her wider ministry has grown and she feels that the time has come to step down; **could you help?**

Sue also recently became a grandma for the second time and the plan is that she will be caring for her grandson one day a week from September.

Continued....

Whoever takes on the roles of Secretary, Café Coordinator and Volunteers coordinator will find them all very rewarding positions as is being part of the Church tent team and Sue will happily support and train anyone who takes it on..... it could well be done as a team effort. From my own experience, everyone is very welcoming and friendly plus you are given the time to walk around the show.

Sue has been a great hands on leader and her email address is suemacLLM@outlook.com **if you, or anyone you know, might be able to help and would like to find out more about any of the roles.**

As mentioned before, I have had one or two health problems over the past twelve months and my get up and go has somewhat gone!! This has meant that I have done very little to the back and front gardens this year. There is not likely to be any veg and the tomato and cucumber plants, are, as I write, still in their pots. However, there have been bonuses because the front garden has been looking glorious with some beautiful roses that I did not cut back last year, a stunning everlasting sweet pea winding itself along the rope fence and, since the garden has been left to its own devices, the ground cover has thickened so we seem to have less sycamore seedlings that can be a dreadful nuisance. There are weeds but, if left to grow, they are generally easier to pull up. According to the Chelsea Flower Show, I seem to be in vogue by leaving the garden to rewild. We now have lots of 'wild' raspberries amongst the shrubs in the back, we had a good crop of redcurrants and the large boysenberries should be ripe in a few weeks so all is not lost, I just need to do little and often and not spend hours outside in one go.

One last thing, I took the following photo whilst visiting Reggio Calabria which is down the bottom of Italy and from where you can see Sicily across a narrow strait. There were several sculptures along the promenade and it wasn't until we were home and I was sorting out photographs that I saw this one.

I was so busy looking at the man on a plinth that I hadn't realised that it seemed to be sitting on the car roof!!

Continued.....



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

Chat & Cuppa Club in the Church Hall Everyone is really friendly so please consider adding this **FREE** event to your calendar **First Tuesday of EVERY month from 2 – 3pmish**, the next one is on **7 July followed by 6 August 2026**. You will receive a warm welcome, a free cuppa and sometimes homemade cake(s) 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.

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.

Jan 07565585726 / ianvale810@gmail.com



For the last time! - Which member of the Junior Choir put bubble mixture in the organ-blower?!

Helping the people of Ukraine on the front line



UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE FREEDOM COMPANY (WEST MIDLANDS)

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 mobile: 07771694000



Have you noticed the seagulls lately?

Or rather – the lack of them? A recent survey published by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), found that the total number of gulls wintering in the UK has fallen from 3.9 million to just under 2.5 million over the past two decades.

It is thought that the reason for the decline of gulls is due to improvements in waste management, both on our streets and in landfill. Avian flu, agricultural practices and climate change may have also played a part.

The survey targeted the black-headed gull, common gull, lesser black-headed gull, herring gull, and black-backed gulls. It found all species, apart from herring gulls, had declined.

Emma Caulfield, a BTO research ecologist and survey co-ordinator, said: "These figures are pretty alarming. Despite these smart and adaptable birds figuring out how to live alongside us, the ever-changing world appears to be moving too fast for them to keep up."

Whittington Parish Magazine

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