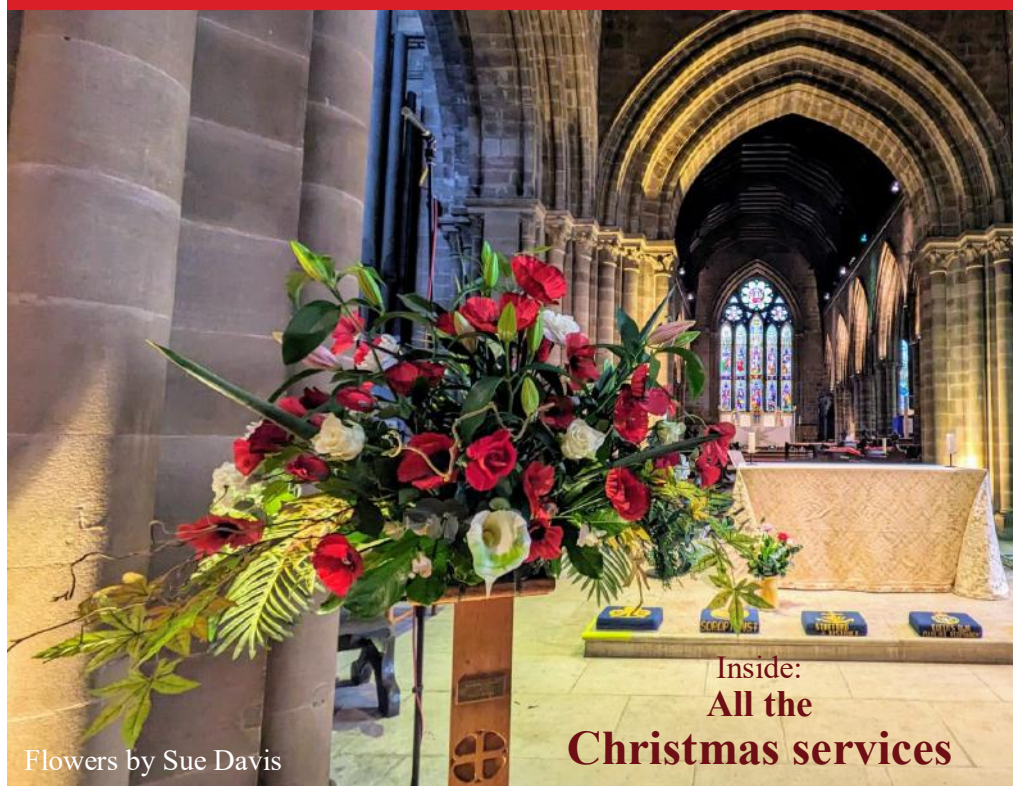


CENTREPIECE

December—January 2024

Free but donations are helpful



Flowers by Sue Davis

Inside:
**All the
Christmas services**

Lewis Chaddock
Nativity Plays—Truth or Myth?
Stafford Sings for the RBL
Appeal for Gaza and Jerusalem
Farewell to Dave
Coat of many colours



*The Collegiate
Church of*

*Saint ⊕ Mary
in Stafford*

StaffordChurches

Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard

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For Baptisms and Weddings: Please contact the Parish Administrator

Limited office opening hours,
Please contact by phone or email

SERVICES IN STAFFORD CHURCHES

Usual weekly services

The three Parishes Eucharist on Sundays

8.30am at Saint Chads

10.00am at Saint Mary's

Tuesdays at noon in St Mary's

Wednesdays at 11.00am in St Chad's

Fridays at noon in St Chad's

First Sunday of the month at 10.00: a service at Saint Leonard's, Marston

There is a weekly newssheet sent out by email. If you are not receiving this and would like to, please contact the Parish Office

From the Editors



As we write this the frost is still on the ground and it is very cold but on the plus side it is also looking very festive. We are looking forward to the Christmas Tree Festival next week—with longer hours this year and a few more days so even more people will have a chance to enjoy it. Our dining table is full of St Mary's Christmas cards and calendars at the moment—hopefully it will be clear after the festival.

This is a bumper edition of the magazine, to include details of all the Christmas services and concerts in addition to news, we hope you enjoy it.

Finally we would like to wish you all a peaceful and happy Christmas.

Steve and Dee Turner

steveanddeeturner@yahoo.co.uk



The Rambling Rector

Angelic ramblings

"Peace on earth", the angels sang. Luke tells us that they sang out to shepherds, living in the fields, somewhere outside Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks. The shepherds were not very important people. They were necessary, there had to be shepherds or the flock would wander off or be attacked by wild animals. But like so many people who are essential for the running of a society, they were not at the top of the pile. Who would take any notice of a shepherd? If there was a job consultation scheme, or a proposal to improve working and living conditions, the shepherds would be the last to be told. And the shepherds would be the last people to be listened to.

Landowners, yes. They could make people sit up and listen. Kings and governors had some clout. They could order a census of the whole known world and expect their order to be carried out. If ordering a census inconvenienced a few little people, even skilled workers in Nazareth, or pregnant women, that was just too bad. The census was necessary. It had to happen, otherwise important people might lose out on some income, and that, as we all know, would never do.

But shepherds were not important people. They might have had so little that even the tax authorities were not interested in them. Not for them the need to go into town to register, they could be left safely steaming away on their hillside overlooking Bethlehem.

Saint Luke tells us about Caesar Augustus and his capricious decree about a census. He also tells us about the shepherds. It is Saint Luke to whom we are indebted for much of the Christmas story. It is Luke who tells us about the birth of John the Baptist. It is Luke who tells us about the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she was highly favoured by God. Luke doesn't tell us what Mary said when, shortly after giving birth, she was visited by a bunch of smelly shepherds. Our crib scenes and stained glass windows in our churches come with visual clues about shepherds (one of them carries a lamb). They leave us to imagine the pong of shepherd and sheep. Luke does tell us something very significant: that Mary "treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart".

It might be wise for us to pause for a moment, and ponder something very important in this detail of the Christmas story.

The message of the angel in the skies over Bethlehem was one of Good News. Their song was a song of praise to God and peace on earth. What is so very significant is that they did not go to Caesar Augustus, who was caught up in things he thought were very important. They did not go to Quirinius, the governor of Syria, who already had quite a full diary. They went to the shepherds, the dirt poor, very ordinary, unimportant shepherds who were doing a necessary, tough and ill rewarded job. Those people heard the song "peace on earth".

The fields about Bethlehem today have a wall running through them, to divide people. Walls have divided people throughout history, Hadrian's wall was a convenient dividing line with the people of the north built by a soldier emperor. The Berlin Wall built by paranoid leaders ensured that people could not mix and kept the Cold War stoked up. The wall in London Derry/Derry preserved communities in their mutual mistrust. Walls do not solve the problem, they do not bring peace.

There seems so little hope that the angel's song can become a reality. there are so many powerful interests in keeping wall up. But the angels did not sing to the powerful, they did not massage their vested interests. The angels sang to the shepherds.

This Christmas, as we hear the story afresh, may we have the courage to be ordinary, like the shepherds, and join in the song.

A Banksy, painted on the Bethlehem dividing wall



Advent **Stafford** *Churches* *and* *Christmas*

Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard

Advent Carol Service: from darkness to light

Sunday 3rd December 6.30pm at Saint Mary's

Carols by Candlelight: Nine lessons and Carols

Sunday 17th December 6.30pm at Saint Mary's

Come and sing carols:

At Saint Chad's:

Tuesday 19th December at 12.30

Thursday 21st December at 12.30

At Saint Mary's:

Monday 18th December at 12.30

Wednesday 20th December at 12.30

Friday 22nd December at 12.30

At Saint Leonard's, Marston:

Friday 22nd December at 6.00pm



For children and their families

Christingle: Saint Leonard's Sunday 3rd December at 10.00am

Christmas Cracker: Saint Mary's Saturday 16th December at 10.30am

Crib Service: Saint Chad's Saturday 23rd December, 2.00pm

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Christingle at Saint Mary's *for children and their families*

8.00pm First Mass of Christmas at Saint Chad's

11.30pm Midnight Mass at Saint Mary's

Christmas Day

10.00am Family Eucharist at Saint Mary's

Stafford Sings for the Royal British Legion

Paul Milgate-Scarrott has been celebrating 50 years of fundraising this year culminating in a special concert in St Mary's raising money for the Royal British Legion poppy appeal.

Staffordshire Poet Laureate, Dawn Jutton kicked off proceedings, Helen Morrey sang some of my personal favourites starting with the Eagles and then raised the tempo with Uptown Funk. Callum Carvalho performed some rap then we stopped to observe a minutes silence and listen to Nathan Pointon on the bugle. Jim Milgate-Scarrott and Stafford Grammar School flute ensemble played movie theme tunes then we moved on to some 1940s glamour from Sarah Eastwood. It was brought to a climax by an outstanding performance from Maria Kelly which earned a standing ovation. What a powerful voice for someone so young.

After the concert Paul said "What an amazing evening ! We raised £565, people were dancing, singing and at one point crying with joy as the stars sang for the RBL. Maria Kelly just blew everyone away with her voice, with calls to do the show again next year. Save the date in your St Mary's Church Calendar 8th November next year. "



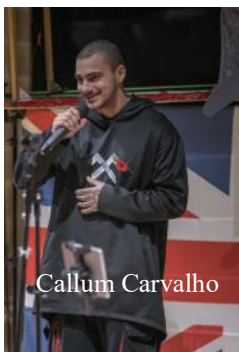
Helen Morrey

A selection of photos of the soloists plus a proud Paul Milgate-Scarrott with the Mayor of Stafford, Cllr Andy Cooper.

Photos from Stephen Dunn



Sarah Eastwood



Callum Carvalho



Maria Kelly

Goodbye and Good Luck to Dave

After many years at St Mary's, Dave Lea, church verger, has decided to move on to pastures new.

So at the end of November we said a fond farewell to him. Sue Savage, churchwarden, presented him with some gifts from us all and afterwards there was of course cake!



Dave has done so much for the church, we will certainly miss him. But we wish him health and happiness in his new venture.



Photos by Paul Milgate-Scarrott

Christmas Day

The Three Parishes Christmas Eucharist

Saint Mary's, Stafford
at 10.00am



Lewis Chaddock

Fr John Davis

This is the eulogy delivered by Fr John Davis at the funeral of Lewis Chaddock, reprinted with the kind permission of his family.

It's my privilege to give the eulogy for this Memorial Service for Lewis, on behalf of the family and this church and the congregation. Of course, we all come together here today to remember Lewis in our own way, because we all bring our own stories about our relationship with him. Some as father, grandfather, companion, relative, friend, members of this congregation, all aspects of Lewis' life, and indeed Betty's life also.

But we have to start at the beginning on 13th August 1934 in Biddulph, when he was born to Mary Hannah and Lewis Chaddock, the youngest child, with older brother Harold and sister Gwen. Lewis was always busy from an early age doing gardening but especially interested in anything mechanical, and these shaped his life. He worked in a nursery tending hundreds of plants before taking up an apprenticeship as an electrician for someone Lewis always referred to fondly as 'Mr John'. This really was excellent work experience for him, apart from the time he got electrocuted in a garage that is. Mr John and Lewis were in great demand in the Biddulph area, rewiring many houses and commercial businesses to the extent that when he, Betty and the girls returned on their frequent visits to Biddulph, he would utter the anticipated words, 'I wired that house'. Lewis worked very hard for 'Mr John' to the extent he worked most days without taking a break and long hours to the point it made him ill, and he had to be told to slow down.

Lewis met Betty when he was putting up the lights at the town hall in Biddulph to celebrate the Queen's Coronation in 1953. Betty was a secretary for the council and for some reason the wiring under Betty's desk always seemed to need to be checked on a regular basis by Lewis. Well you can never be too careful of electricity can you! They began courting and would go on very long walks together in the countryside around Biddulph, always doing more miles than they intended.

Lewis did his National Service at Catterick Army Camp, where the army soon made use of his electrical engineering knowledge and put him in charge of training telegraph communications. All that hard work for 'Mr John' was needed by the British Army.

Lewis and Betty married in 1958 at Brown Lees Chapel, Knypersley and settled in Stafford as Lewis then worked for GEC, living in their first home

in Marlborough Avenue. Lewis worked as an electrical engineer on many very big contracts GEC won from across the world, we perhaps forget that GEC employed over 12000 employees in those days and were shipping large generators through Stafford up to the docks for onward transmission to Africa, India and many other countries. As well as engineers going out to complete the contract installations. When Lewis retired in 1997, he was the Chief Overseas Contracts Engineer.

Lewis always remembers going to the dentist shortly after they arrived in Stafford, where the dentist took out his top row of teeth. He couldn't drive because of the anaesthetic and so could the bus home to find he had left his keys so had to walk to Dorman's Diesel's on Tixall Road where Betty worked as a secretary to get her keys. The moral to this story is Lewis never visited the dentist again.

Tragedy struck when David their first child died just before his 5th birthday, but Glynnis and Jennnifer remember they enjoyed a wonderful childhood.

Lewis and Betty started worshipping here at St Mary's when they arrived in Stafford in 1958 and quickly became a significant part of the congregation, Lewis running the church minibus, together introducing the envelope giving scheme, organising sidesmen rotas, and singing in the choir. Bob Perkin says Lewis became the father of the congregation over the years as others died, a position he finds himself in now. Keep going Bob, we do need you.

In 1973 the family moved to Weeping Cross and they started attending Berkswich Methodist Church, which was undergoing a large extension, and Lewis was roped in to carry out the wiring, what else. It was around this time I first met Lewis, you probably wouldn't believe it now to look at me, but I was a badminton player and Lewis ran a badminton club at Walton Village Hall, so I played badminton against him.

But they returned to mother and took up their old roles in St Mary's and a few others as well. We enjoyed the Sunday lunches out at the Farm in Abbots Bromley Betty organised, so well attended. Lewis always in the choir and organising the stewards for important civic services.

Lewis really loved cars, I suppose it was the engineer in him, a black Morris Minor, green Austin A40, custard coloured Austin marina, and his favourite the bright red Austin Princess, and after a couple of Rovers, he bought the green VW Passatt, clocking up thousands of miles with Betty map reading, visiting Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Llandudno, Sidmouth and their favourite place Grasmere where some of Betty's ashes are scattered.

Sadly, Betty died in 2015 and Lewis was really lost, yes he still came to St Mary's and did what he always did, but he missed Betty so much, we were all very concerned for him. It was as if his light had gone out. But with the support of his daughters and friends he recovered somewhat and started to enjoy trips to Winchester, the Cotswolds, and to see 42nd Street in London.

Then, just before lockdown he struck up a friendship with Fern, who the two families had known a long time, and Lewis realised he was enjoying life again. Lewis and Fern got on so well and understood one another, he wasn't lonely anymore. His light had come on again. And those of us who know them, realised their love grew and Lewis was really bowled over because he never thought he would feel like this again. Fern had been very unwell and came to live at Widdecombe Avenue and they looked after each other during lockdown, during which Lewis developed bowel cancer and had to have a stoma operation, but Fern was Lewis' rock throughout the last phase of his life, and the whole family had to pull together as they watched him deteriorate but then try so hard to carry on, cracking terrible jokes and being very cheeky, never wanting to give up hope. But those last months really were very difficult, and Lewis must have been in terrible pain. He wanted to go home from Katharine House and see his garden again.

The girls say Lewis always wanted to make the most of every day, and would often laugh and say, 'It's been another different day'. It seemed to be a way of drawing a line so that the next day's adventure could begin.

Father Richard and I were able to visit Lewis at home as he approached the end, and I am sure that was a comfort for him, well I hope so. He died as he had lived a devout Christian.

Lewis' legacy to this church is immeasurable, because he and of course Betty, did so much for us, and he will be remembered for a very long time in this place. But today is another different day for Lewis, a day when he is reunited with his Lord and Saviour and with his beloved Betty, I just hope those pearly gates aren't electrically controlled otherwise Lewis is going to be very busy. Amen

If any of you have something interesting to share with us at Centrepiece please get in touch. It's always nice to have a variety of contributions.

Email steveanddeeturner@yahoo.co.uk

Nativity plays- truth or myth

A swaying sensation, a crash and the kindly arms of a teacher picking me up. The year was 1978, and a 6 year old me, giddy with the excitement of being an angel, and forced to stand in my sparkly outfit for what seemed like hours (but was probably minutes), had fainted.

How much of this memory is truth and what has been added over the years I am not sure. Fast forward 30 years, and I am directing a nativity play. The ingredients are still the same: tinsel halos, a doll in a manger, Joseph, Mary, a donkey, innkeepers. Nativity plays have been a staple of my life forever, whether as actor, director, or spectator.

But like my memories of my ill-fated angel role as a child, what of the modern nativity play is truth and what is myth? There is no written record of the events of 1978 when a child fell off a stage, but the facts around Christ's birth were recorded, by the gospel writers. Luke tells us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth and the shepherds, while Matthew tells of magi from the east. While most people know that aliens and lobsters are modern additions, many are more fuzzy on the other details. I almost caused a riot in a classroom once when I challenged the children to find the donkey in the Biblical account (look it up- he's not there!). There is also no mention of a stable, innkeepers, kings or animals.

So yes, there are parts of the story that are myth, but what is true? I love nativity plays, not because of the cuteness factor, or the tradition, but because in the midst of the tinsel and tutus, lies the most profound, earth-shattering truth. God took on flesh, to save his people from their sins, and that changed everything.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the most profound truth, around which the history of our world pivots. The nativity play is a glorious celebration of this truth, one that I pray will reignite our hearts this year, refilling us with the profound joy of God's love for his world, and giving us a truly happy Christmas.

Charmian Gamble is one of three Christian Distinctiveness Adviser supporting teachers and leaders in church schools across Lichfield Diocese.

charmian.gamble@lichfield.anglican.org /
<https://www.ldbe.co.uk>



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Coat of many colours

Ruth Duffy

I was delighted to be asked if a textile piece could be included in St Mary's Festival which will take place in June 2024. The theme of the event is the Old Testament story of Joseph. When I heard this I immediately thought that the obvious way to proceed was to make a colourful coat.

At the moment most of this coat is still in my imagination..... we will see how it turns out.

I have decided that a 'Kimono' style garment would work well. This has now been made up in calico, dyed yellow and has a dark blue trim. I am now looking to get as many people as possible involved in making it look very colourful. We are going to be producing patches which will then be sewn onto the coat. There are lots of pieces of coloured fabric available in church onto which I would like participants to sew a felt circle and button or other decoration of their choosing. Everyone is welcome to join in this activity. The children have also been sorting some wonderful handmade buttons made and donated by my sister which will be stitched down the front.

A later part of the work will be to include stitched images representing the story of Joseph. This means that the coat can be used for storytelling or as reminders of the messages within the story of Joseph. I would love to hear from you if you would like to be involved in that part of the work or indeed if you have any ideas of anything which could be included It is a work in progress.

Do please keep an eye out in the north aisle to see the progress.



Singing for their supper

From Philip Taylor

The nights were definitely ‘drawing in’ on October 14th when a group of faithful harvesters gathered by candlelight in the darkened nave of St Mary’s for the annual Harvest Supper.

As has become the custom over the years, a delightful three course supper was produced with aplomb from the South Transept kitchen by Claire and Ian Miller.

As we polished off our dessert and cheese, preparations were being made for the customary entertainment to aid our digestion provided by our impresario John Savage.

To begin, Chris Bown gave a rendition of one of Stanley Holloway’s monologues about ‘young Albert’, which was well received by the appreciative audience.



Philip Taylor, Sue Savage, Chris Bown

To follow, Sue Savage treated us to a couple of high brow and challenging Benjamin Britten songs in which she accompanied herself on the piano.

The piano stool was then passed to Richard Grigson, who stood in at the last minute to accompany Chris Bown and Philip Taylor who took over from Hermione Gingold and Maurice

Chevalier in the duet ‘I remember it well’ from Gigi by Lerner and Loewe, about an ageing couple bickering gently about assignments past!

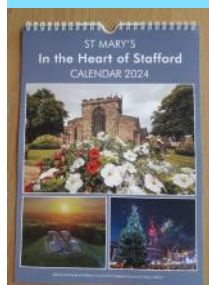
Philip Taylor then delivered the Noel Coward monologue ‘I went to a marvellous party’- echoes of the decadent 1930s south of France.

To round off a convivial evening, the Rector returned to the piano and we all



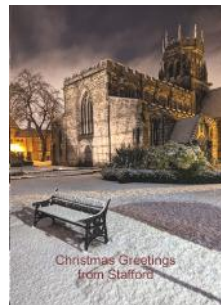
loudly sang the ‘Hippopotamus Song’ by Flanders and Swann.

A delightful evening with lots of nostalgia.



Stafford Calendar

Once again we have produced a Stafford calendar filled with some fabulous photos of Stafford taken by local photographers. Four different sizes are available.



Two new Christmas cards

feature St Mary's Church (by Ian Tyson) and the Shire Hall with Christmas tree, (by Paul Milgate-Scarrott). Designs from previous years are available too.

Support from local businesses

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the local businesses for supporting St Mary's by selling our Stafford calendars, Stafford Christmas cards and concert tickets. Mews Music, Snapdragon Cards and Gifts and Magic by Candlelight, situated in the square just across from the church are all selling our goods. A selection of cards is on sale at the back of the church—but if you don't find what you wanted, or if the church is closed please pop into the local shops and purchase there.

Festival Night Concert

Our concert by St Mary's Singers in the magical setting of the Christmas Tree Festival has become an annual event. This year it is on Thursday 7th December starting at 7pm. Tickets £6. You can pay on the door—but it would save time on the evening if you pick up your tickets from Mews Music or the Parish Office in advance.

Lady Chapel window appeal

The Lady Chapel window featuring scenes from the nativity is in need of repair. More about this after Christmas, but to begin with we have printed some Christmas cards featuring it which are being sold in support of the Lady Chapel window appeal.

Please support it.



Original photo by Ian Miller.

A Report from St. Mary's One World Group



Every child counts – changing the lives of children living with life limiting illness

Hospice Care Kenya has recently announced an exciting new project which aims to reach many more children and families with life-changing palliative care and psychosocial support.

In Kenya, 95% of children living with a life-limiting or life-threatening illness cannot access the palliative care that could drastically improve their quality of life. HCK believes that no child should ever have to suffer from avoidable pain and emotional distress. Using funds raised in the UK, the charity will work with three trusted partners in Kenya to change this.



Children attending a supportive care workshop in Meru

Working in Siaya, Meru and Kajiado counties, HCK will train paediatric and oncology doctors to manage child pain correctly. They will train community health promoters to meet the every-day needs of children and support families with the emotional challenges of living with life-limiting illness. There will be workshops for children and their families for psychosocial and peer support. Home visits from hospice nurses will provide quality child palliative care, pain relief and support the whole family to make the most of every moment with their child.

Many children living with palliative care needs experience stigma and exclusion, but HCK intends to change this. They will reach teachers, school children and community leaders with positive messages around children with life-limiting illness and disability, creating a more supportive and inclusive environment in which these children can thrive.

To see this project through and bring this vital work to even more areas of Kenya, funds are urgently needed.

Please donate today and help us make every child count.

- **Just £5 buys crayons, paper or books for play therapy**
- **£10 buys medicines and supplies needed for a home visit to a child**
- **£20 trains a doctor to manage pain correctly in children**

*Donation envelopes are available in St. Mary's and can be left in the wooden donation box or on the collection plate on a Sunday. Cheques payable to **St. Mary's Church Stafford***

A card reader is available in St. Mary's

To pay direct to St. Mary's bank use these details:

*Account name: **The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Stafford St. Mary***

*Ref: **HCK***

*No: **00032434***

*Sort Code: **40 52 40***

All donations will be forwarded to the charity

Christian Food Help and House of Bread

Christian Food Help supports households in Stafford struggling with food insecurity. In the last six weeks the number of households applying for food support has increased by almost one third. Sadly, a majority of those new households are families with children. Donation boxes will remain at St. Chad's and St. Mary's. All non-perishable foods are appreciated at this critical time, when rising fuel bills impact households already struggling to buy food. **Tinned meals, long life milk and puddings** are particularly needed. As the Christmas period rapidly approaches, please consider donating items that could be included in a Christmas box such as **packaged chocolate, sweets or festive treats**. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Donations of **toiletries** will be welcomed by **House of Bread**, as well as any **little extras for Christmas**. A donation box for items is at the back of St. Mary's.

Stafford Bereavement Cafe



Grieving the loss of a loved one?
Finding the long-term effects of loss difficult?
Talking can help.

We meet on the **third Tuesday**
of every month
in the **coffee shop at ASDA**.

Drop in between 9.30 and 11.00 am

Supported by Saint Mary's Church, Holy Trinity Berkswich and Katharine House Hospice



May peace, hope and joy be with
you this Christmas and in the year
ahead.

Greetings from Sheila Young

Quiet Mondays at Shallowford house

10.00 am to 3.30 pm

**Next dates:
12th December**

**Cost: £22, includes lunch
and refreshments**

**To book call 01785
760233**

An appeal from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for Gaza and Jerusalem

In this time of profound suffering in the Holy Land, we stand in prayerful solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem across Gaza, Palestine and Israel include healthcare, education, youthwork and work towards reconciliation. They need our support to continue their vital work during this devastating war and beyond.

If you are able, please give to support our Palestinian Anglican Christian sisters and brothers in the Holy Land to continue reaching out to all in need:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/24666>

Remembrance Sunday



What a wet day it was!

But that didn't deter the crowds of people who braved the rain to pay their respects, lay wreaths and remember those who gave their lives for us.



Photos by Paul Milgate-Scarrott





A Christmas Cracker!

**Crafts, songs and stories
telling the Christmas Story
for children of all ages**

**10.30am Saturday 16th December
St Mary's Church, Stafford town centre**

Refreshments available

All welcome

**Children must be accompanied by an adult*

Christingle 2023 at Saint Mary's, Stafford

Sunday 24th December at 4.00pm



**The
Children's
Society**



**Christmas
Eve**

**First Mass of Christmas
8.00pm at Saint Chad's**

**Midnight Mass
11.30pm at Saint Mary's**

*Follow The Star
Join the Song*

R N Clarke

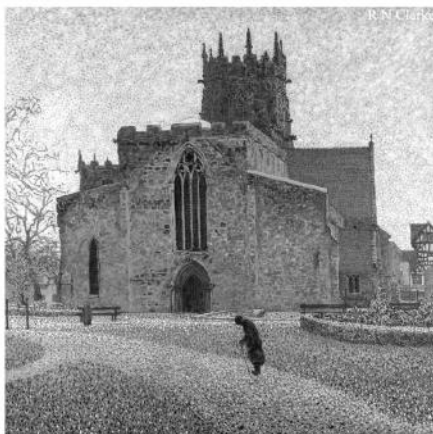
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richard.n.clarke@outlook.com

The Gallery also holds occasional
Open Days



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Macmillan's Coffee Morning

It was a hard task, but someone had to do it! And in fact lots of us rose to the challenge of eating cake!



John Savage, Sue Savage and Sarah Haszard

St Mary's supported the Macmillan's Coffee Morning on three occasions. We gave the proceeds of the Sunday coffee and cake on 24th September, a coffee morning on Friday 29th September and the Coffee Concert on 30th September.

Once Macmillan claim the Gift Aid back our total donation will be just over £425.

Thank you to all those who helped both by making cake and by eating it and donating.

Saturday Morning Coffee Concerts at St Mary's



No coffee concerts during December

The programme begins again on January 13th with the return of the Manchester Reed Trio

All begin at 11:00am Doors open 10:30
All are welcome Admission free

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Stafford Deanery Synod

At its September meeting, the first of the new 3-year cycle, Philip Taylor, your licensed Reader at Stafford Churches, was elected to the post of Lay Chair, to serve alongside the new Rural Dean, Revd Cath Brumfitt, Rector of Bradley, Church Eaton and Derrington. Revd Graham Adamson, Vicar of Berkswich, Brocton and Walton-on-the-Hill is Assistant Rural Dean and Stuart Hodson, from the Mid-Trent Benefice is the Assistant Lay Chair.

What on earth, you may well wonder, is a Deanery Synod?

Well - the Deanery is the second level of the slightly tortuous system of Synodical Government by which the Church of England is administered.

The first level is the Parochial Church Council (PCC) which consists of members elected by members of the parish who are entered on the electoral roll of the parish.

Next above the PCC is the Deanery Synod which meets to discuss matters raised from the parishes. Officially the deanery synod's task is to 'generally promote in the deanery the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'. It can consider and express an opinion on any matters of religious or public interest. It deals with matters specifically referred to it by the Diocesan Synod and, in the process, may sound out parochial opinion on the issues before it. It can send resolutions for debate in the Diocesan Synod. The Deanery Synod has a house of Clergy and a House of Laity.

The next tier is the Diocesan Synod:-

It considers matters concerning the Church of England and makes provision for such matters in relation to the Diocese.

It is a forum for the expression of Christian opinion on any matter of religious or public interest. It advises the bishop of the diocese on any matters on which he may consult the Synod. It deals with matters specifically referred to it by General Synod and can also refer matters up to General Synod. It makes provision for financing the diocese.

The General Synod is the legislative body of the church, covering the life, work, finance and administration, It is a liturgical body as well as a financial body and acts as a forum for discussing and settling church business. It can formulate measures which, after scrutiny by the House of Lords and the House of Commons can be passed to the Sovereign for Royal Assent.

There isn't the space here to go into every aspect of the General Synod's work, but it is the ultimate democratic process within the church. Its members are elected by members of the deanery synods and so has connections with all members of the church.

The key is that although it is rather a convoluted system, it is certainly democratic.

We congratulate Philip on his election to this role.

The Soup Kitchen



This beautiful 16th Century eating house offers the ideal place to meet your friends and is described in The Times as "Stafford's hidden gem". Visitors from all over the world regularly return and comment 'there is nowhere else that compares in atmosphere, traditional old-fashioned service and genuine warm welcome which is unique to Stafford's Soup Kitchen.

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We are always interested in buying; from single items to house clearance.

Please note we have moved

32 Mill Street

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Tel: 01785 223366

CHURCH CONTACTS

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Bellringers Selwyn Jones..... 242116

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St Mary's Website: www.stmarysstafford.org.uk

St. Chad's Website: www.stchadsstafford.co.uk

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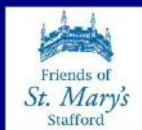
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The Friends of St Mary's present...

Christmas Tree Festival Night

Traditional Christmas Music from

St Mary's Singers

in the magical setting of the Christmas Tree Festival



St Mary's Church, Stafford

Thursday 7th December 2023

Doors open 6:30 pm Concert starts 7:00pm and will have interval
Tickets £6 from Mews Music 01785 212626, cash please
or at the door

friendsofstmary@gmail.com

All proceeds go to St Mary's Church via the Friends of St Mary's

Contributions to Centrepiece:

If you would like to advertise an event, comment on one you have attended or just share something interesting with us– then please do so.

Email us at: steveanddeeturner@yahoo.co.uk

Deadline is about 10 days before the first Sunday of the month.