

*A Place of Peace
and Reconciliation*

**Christmas 2024
Issue 25**

To find all the latest information about Sunday services and mid-week activities at St Andrew's, visit our website or Facebook page. The address is at the bottom of page 24.

We welcome items for future editions. They should be sent to John Daymond at:
john.daymond1@btinternet.com

Deadline for the Easter Edition is Sunday, 23 March 2025

*Suggested
Contribution 75p*

*Nativity windows at the
Basilica van Onze
Lieve Vrouwe,
Maastricht, Holland*



God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

‘The Church is the People, And the Building’



*Rev'd Canon
Dr Edmund
Newey
writes:*

To say that makes an important point: when the New Testament writers refer to ‘the church’ it is very clear that they are not talking about bricks and mortar, but about human beings.

Some modern translations emphasise this by using the phrase ‘brothers and sisters’, where the Authorized King James Version says, ‘the church’.

To say ‘the church is the people, not the building’ is a good rhetorical point, but still I think it’s only half-true. Primarily, the church is the people, but secondarily the church is the building in which they meet, worship, pray and serve.

*Roots of the double truth
are in the words of Jesus*

The roots of this double truth are in Jesus’s words to Peter, the leader of the apostles: ‘You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church’. Of course, Jesus is speaking in metaphor, but the language he uses points to the literal truth that if the church is to grow it needs to be built of solid, durable stuff.

And a church building, such as ours at St Andrew’s, is not just a roof to keep the rain off and the cold out. By its size, shape and

beauty; by the way it welcomes us and shelters us; by the joys, woes, longings and prayers that it holds; and by the fact that it has done and will continue to do this for centuries, our church shapes us in our relationships with one another and with God.

Every day of the year, without fail, new people come in St Andrew's and find their lives re-shaped by their encounter with the building. The building's spaciousness, peace and beauty point them to the source of those qualities in God.

So I think we have to say that the church is *the people and the building* – and that they shape each other. We look after the building so that it may look after us.

This Advent and Christmas, as even larger numbers of people find themselves in St Andrew's – many for the first time – let us pray that, with them, we may be drawn back into the loving embrace of the One who, despite our forgetfulness, never forgets us.

Midsummer Music

As midwinter draws near, my mind has been drawn back to the long days of midsummer and to a wonderful concert performed by Richard Dunster-Sigtermans and masterminded by Ben Jennings.

It was an occasion when many of us felt especially blessed by our church building, bathed in the angled evening light of high summer, surrounded by the music of the organ, and led by the architecture into the presence of something far greater than the sum of those parts.

This poem (*overleaf*) attempts to suggest something of that experience. For it to make sense it's important to read the verses in the order of the numbers [i] to [iv] and to read the left-hand stanzas from top to bottom and the right-hand stanzas from bottom to top!

Midsummer Music — St Andrew's Rugby

For Richard and Ben

[i]

Notes	Cross
drop	the wordless
Light	lift
amid the layered stones	tiers
	stone

[ii]

[iii]

Light	Love
falls	and with such
still	in
	up
within and from so far	borne

[iv]

Join Us For Handbell Ringing



*Christine
Homer,
Bell Captain,
writes:*

Since my last notes, we have all been taking holidays, myself especially, and some of our ringing sessions have been thinly attended, not helped by some further illness within the band and their close family. One of my holidays was a ringing one (I joined a group of graduates from my old University for a few days visiting different towers in Nottinghamshire). Another included a bit of ringing after Chris and I left the pub we'd eaten at and heard a bell ringing: on investigating I was able to join ringers at Llanelli for the end of their practice — at the Church of St. Elli (in Welsh, Llan Elli).

We organised a practice for our two more recent recruits at Clifton one Friday in August — unfortunately one was unable to attend but I invited others from the district who were interested to come as well, so we had eight 'trainees' for the session, which was a bit of a surprise to me. Obviously, this is something we will want to repeat.

Two of our band represented the Rugby district in the 8-bell striking competition on 21 September, at Bulkington, where the bells have been recently rehung and are MUCH easier to ring than before. We came third out of five teams, ringing Plain Bob triples. This was obviously a popular choice of method: 4 of the 5 teams rang the same one.

A visiting band rang a peal of Rugby Surprise Major on the 22 September. I heard the start and it sounded good, but missed most of it as I'd been asked to ring a quarter-peal in Warwick as a late substitute for a friend who'd caught COVID!

We hosted the half-yearly meeting of the Coventry Guild at Rugby on October 12, with ringing in each tower, tea and cakes then the meeting which was chaired well by our president, Mike. Thanks to Alun for making Mike welcome in the church when he arrived early.

We are about to start practicing handbells again ready for Christmas: if anyone would like to join us, either with a view to participating in performances, or just to 'have a go' and see if you like it, please get in touch.

A Man Of Quiet Faith

*Simon Grenville
writes:*

Some Years ago, when Cats first opened in the West End, I was asked by ILEA, the Inner London Education Authority, if I would like to teach drama for two hours a week at the New Horizon's Youth Centre, in Covent Garden, Central London. What could be easier I thought ? What a doddle.

I arrived one Monday afternoon expecting to meet Cliff Richard and Robert Morley playing table tennis and sipping coke cola from those neatly curved bottles. With luck there would be a few girls in taffeta skirts swirling to the twist or some other dance craze.

I had a rude awakening. The New Horizon youth centre was something of a misnomer. Homeless Shelter from the Storm would have been a better title.

Meeting the needs of the homeless

It specialized in meeting the needs and wants of homeless young men and women aged 18-25 who were arriving in increasing numbers by train from the North of England. Without jobs or homes. They were met often in the middle of the night not by the police or social workers but pimps hell bent on child prostitution, drug dealers in need of couriers and other criminal types.

The entire place smelt of the sort of sweat you only get when you haven't changed or washed your clothes in two or three weeks, the air thick with tobacco smoke and the worst instant coffee I have ever tasted in a large metal tin in the middle of the room. Amidst a swirl of noise and bodies and confusion.

Two to three hundred people a week would cramp together in damp succession of basement rooms while the youth team attempted to find accommodation.

There was a mood of latent aggression and despair. Fights often broke out. And as the years wore on discarded needles were crunched underfoot.

Throughout it all was the coordinator Vaughan. Small thick set a bit self effacing and always wearing a duffel coat. Oh and he had a beard. And the more that hair receded from his crown the longer his beard grew in proportion.

*Vaughan seemed
impervious
to stress*

No matter what the crisis Vaughan seemed impervious to stress and dealt with comers in a quiet voice and settled manner. Difficult to get to know. A bit shy. I was told that he liked Classical music. Especially Bach. Oh and amateur theatre.

The drama sessions went surprisingly well. Spend Spend Spend, the story of pools winner Vivian Nicholas and Bar Mitzvah Boy were especial favourites.

Then, one Monday I was told that Vaughan was leaving, to another job, no one was sure where. I suggested to the staff team that we ask him out for a drink. Great idea they said, you know where we'll be, The Brewers Arms, our usual place for a staff meeting.

Accordingly I approached Vaughan at about 4 o'clock. He had his back to me.

'Vaughan' I said. 'It's your last day

we thought you might like to join us all for a drink'.

He turned to me looking a little weary.

'I'm sorry' he said. 'I can't I have something on tonight'.

'But Vaughan, what could possibly be more important than sharing a drink with your work mates?'

'Well,' he said looking a little apologetic, 'I'm afraid that tonight I'm being ordained as a minister in the United Reformed Church'.

*I couldn't have
been more
surprised*

You could have blown me down with a feather, put me in a crate marked livestock and shipped me whole over Niagara Falls, I couldn't have been more surprised.

In the entire five years I'd known Vaughan he'd not once mentioned or alluded to religion or faith. The word God, Jesus or Christ had not been mentioned by him ever. Vaughan had been very much a man of quiet faith. No Fuss. He simply and quietly got on with the job.

In the years since I've often wondered how many of us can be said to be men and women of quiet faith.

Who simply get on with the job.

I Don't Find Christmas Easy



*Rev'd James
Sampson-Foster,
Assistant Curate,
writes:*

As Christmas approaches, the days grow shorter, the dark nights grow longer. The mornings are filled with frost, fog, and icy rain. Each day it feels a little harder to rise out of bed. A little harder to emerge into the morning darkness. A little harder to return home in the pale amber glow of streetlights.

And all the while, I find myself bombarded by this relentless enthusiasm. Christmas is coming. Proclaimed from billboards, adverts, shop windows – Christmas is coming! Empty your wallets now so you don't miss out! There's barely any time left to buy your presents – it's already October!

All society seems to insist on a cheerfulness that I can never seem to manufacture. The greetings cards instruct us to *'Be of good cheer!'* or to *'Have a merry Christmas!'*. The adverts perhaps do not insist on us being cheerful, but they do promise that, after purchasing whatever product is on offer, happiness is sure to follow.

During the times in my life when I have struggled to make ends meet, the shop windows have offered a promised land I could scarce afford to enter. The need to buy presents for loved ones whilst still paying the heating bill always felt like a pressure cooker – building day by day, week by week

Whether it's the cold, the weather, or the money – as December rolls on, I find myself wishing for some kind of rescue from the encroaching darkness.

And then I find him.

Light in my darkness.

I don't find Christmas easy. Maybe you don't either.

If you come to St Andrew's, you don't have to buy anything, you don't have to fake a smile you don't feel. You don't have to be happy

But maybe stay awhile and wait with me for the coming dawn.

Lighten our darkness we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Advent/Christmas Services

Sunday 1 December

08.00 BCP Communion
10.30 Choral Eucharist
18.00 Advent Carol Service



Saturday 7 December 19.00 The Manchester Carols

Sunday 8 December 08.00 BCP Communion
10.30 Choral Eucharist
18.00 Sung Evensong

Tuesday 10 December 19.00 Rotary Tree of Light Service

Thursday 12 December 10.15 Carol Singing in Care Home Carols

Friday 13 December 19.00 Air Ambulance Christmas Concert

Saturday 14 December: 10.00 Second Saturday Songs
17.00 Lantern Parade

Sunday 15 December

08.00 BCP Communion
10.30 Choral Eucharist
18.00 Celtic Evening Prayer



Monday 16 December 10.30 and 15.00 Carol Singing in Care Homes

Sunday 22 December

08.00 BCP Communion
10.30 Choral Eucharist
18.00 Christmas Carol Service -
Traditional Service of Readings, Anthems and Carols

Monday 23 December

09.00 Morning Prayer
16.00 Christingle I

Tuesday 24 December

09.00 Morning Prayer
16.00 Christingle II
23.30 Midnight Mass



Wednesday 25 December 10.30 Festal Eucharist

God, are you there in the midst of us



*Rev'd Sharon
Crofts, Associate
Minister & UHCW
NHS Trust
Chaplain for
Compassionate
Communities,
writes:*

I think by now some of you might already know that the journey through Advent towards and into Christmas is one of my favourite times of the year. We wait and we watch during the journey of preparation for the extraordinary gift of Jesus coming as the Christ Child amongst humanity.

As I write this, I myself, am awaiting the birth of my fifth grandchild, who by the time you read this will have been born. For my daughter, this time of awaiting the birth of their third child has been particularly difficult. Not least because she has experienced 'hyperemesis gravidarum' for each pregnancy which gets worse on every subsequent pregnancy and in her case lasts the whole nine months until her baby is born.

Having to deal with incredibly debilitating and permanent sickness alongside having two other children who are three and not yet two years old and a partner that travels away around much of England for his working week has proved a very long, arduous and isolating nine months – a journey for which I know she'll be hugely glad to conclude with the joy of a beautiful healthy baby.

When that baby is born, my daughter will begin to feel instantly well and she has already said that she feels like she will be able to begin to live again. I'm not writing this so that everyone will think 'oh dear, poor her', but in respect of my compassion and understanding of the difficulties she has had to endure and thanking God that we are to expect a beautiful and positive end to this time.

As a healthcare chaplain in Compassionate Communities my role is in supporting people who are facing arduous life struggles through declining health and bereavement. In these instances, 'never mind, it will all be over or better soon' are platitudes that cannot be said because it is not true. Loss of self – of who we have known ourselves to have once been with good health and



wellbeing, or loss of our loved ones having died, can often see our wellbeing deteriorate and our ability to navigate the world we are so familiar with, become incredibly difficult – whether we have faith or not.

On reflecting on her own sudden bereavement of her husband, a priest friend of mine writes, ‘those who have never thought about whether God exists can begin to wonder if God does, and those who have previously rejected God’s existence can begin to feel angry or let down by a God they thought they didn’t believe in ... for those who have faith, God can start to feel distant. This can be particularly troubling because they expect God to be a source of comfort when going through difficult times’.

I recall the year of 2020 and the lead up to Christmas as a particularly difficult time for the whole world to navigate. During that year a book was released – written by Kathy Escobar called ‘*A Weary World. Reflections for a Blue Christmas*’ and as an enthusiastic curate and given the worldwide experience of the pandemic I felt it an apt book to utilise for running an online parish advent course. Kathy Escobar opens the book by writing, ‘This past Christmas was the very first Christmas I had ever dreaded’. She continues to explain that her beloved son had died the previous year and that she, her husband and their other ‘four young adult children crawled our way through the holidays with bleeding hearts and broken souls ...

It was hard to breath. Everything just felt wrong, harsh and raw’.

Kathy Escobar then goes on to write that a priest friend of hers says that ‘the Advent season is a magnifier for everyone, but in different ways. For some it magnifies the good, the happy, the joy. For others it can magnify the hard, the pain, the darkness’.

If you are feeling that the season of Advent and Christmas this year is going to be an arduous journey for you then please, can I encourage you to come and talk to me or someone you trust and feel safe to talk with about your honest feelings openly.

I cannot express how important it is for all of us to be aware of just how difficult this season can be for many. The best gift we can give to someone during this time of year is a gift of our presence, kind understanding and compassion. Simply being with someone in their difficulty without judgement or solutions and answers cannot be underestimated. Being alongside someone who is hurting is powerful and meaningful for the recipient and it can make such a difference in having the assurance of another’s care.

Taken from Escobar’s book, here are some do’s and don’ts:

Do:

Ask ‘how can I be a good friend to you right now?’

Ask ‘what will help or bring a little

relief?'

Ask 'what hurts you?'

Sitting with the other person's feelings, without seeking to fix, advise, minimize or cajole is difficult and takes practice, but we can all do this. Just say, 'I know this is hard or a difficult time for you' and 'I'm here for you'.

Don't

Offer platitudes, spiritual or not.

These are unhelpful and says a lot about how you want the other to feel and heal. This does not acknowledge their painful experience.

Seek to make people feel better or to do what you think they should do, in order to feel better. Those who are suffering are probably already feeling burdened, don't add to that.

Judge. We have our individual experiences, standards and measures but ours is not theirs.

Withdraw. We often find ourselves scared of saying or doing the wrong thing when someone is hurting, so for our fear we seek 'to give them space.' Don't, unless someone specifically requests some space and even then be sure they are safe and honour that but check in too. Human nature is to be with other humans. Allowing people to become even more socially isolated or distanced during a difficult time is generally not helpful but don't force someone to go or do something they don't want to go or do either. Just let them know you are there for them whenever they need you and keep gently checking in.

Humans need compassion and love and we learn that from the

compassion and love that God gifts us in God's Son, Jesus Christ – who is Emmanuel, God with us.

Kathy Escobar writes this:

'God accompanying us. God alongside us. God amid us. God among us. God beside us. God including us. God near us. God plus us. God upon us. God as companion to us. God side by side us. God in the thick of us ... in the thick of our humanity, our pain, our blue, our beautiful, our hard, our messy, our ugly, our struggles, our joys. God in the middle of this weary world with us'.

I believe there is nothing more beautiful that we can gift to another, especially someone in need, than what God gifts to us. God teaches us to accompany, be alongside and among, be beside, be inclusive, be near, be with, be a companion to, be side by side and be in the thick of our humanity together. It's not hard. It's the fundamentals of our human nature and thus of our Christian faith, as Jesus teaches us. It just takes courage and a willingness to practice.

Can you be there for someone who needs you or do you yourself need the courage to ask for support? Please don't suffer alone.

This Advent and Christmas, I pray that we will each know the love and compassion and companionship of others, especially if we are experiencing this as a difficult and lonely time to navigate. This is the time when the King of Kings is born. May we live in his light and share his love with one another.

From The Crib To The Cross



*Rev'd Canon
Sue Hardwick
writes:*

The very famous and highly eccentric artist, Salvador Dali – well known for such pictures as fried eggs sliding off plates – was actually an extremely gifted artist. One of his best known paintings is called, somewhat confusingly, 'Christ of St John of the Cross'. But that is Dali for you: pulling us up and making us wonder. He is, in fact, referring to the writings of the medieval mystic, St John of the Cross.

In this wonderfully imagined painting, the head of the inhabited Cross is in the heavens and the foot disappears into the distance, through clouds and mist, on its way down to Earth. Such must be the view of it from Space, giving one the sense that this was an event which not only rocked Earth, but rocked the very Universe. That not only the curtain in the Temple ripped in two at the death of Jesus on the Cross, but the whole Universe, the whole of Creation, as well.

By now, you may be wondering whether I have confused the Christmas edition of this magazine with that of Easter.

But we are told that God's Time is so *very* different from ours – and when I look at the painting described above, it seems to me one can feel, can picture vividly, time going in reverse and God's Love pouring down the length of the Cross to find its realization in a tiny Babe – and then moving forward, in human time, on its 33 year journey to find its destiny on the Cross. And then back again, to the tiny Babe, lying in a manger. A tiny Babe, born in a stable, in an ordinary town in an insignificant country.

I gather it was not exactly considered a career-enhancing move, at the time, to be posted there by the ruling authorities. And every Christmas I marvel anew at God's choice. *Such* wisdom – indeed, though, how could it be anything else!

The Crib to the Cross. The Infant Child to the Man he would become. Intricately woven together into a complex and wondrous tapestry.

May you have a very happy, wondering and wonder-filled Christmas!

Looking For That Special Present?



*John Howes,
Lay Worship
Leader,
writes:*

If you are looking for that special present and you are stuck for ideas, you need look no further.

The Rugby Cafe Writers, who meet in St Andrew's Church, have published a new anthology of poetry called *Dive into a Poem*.

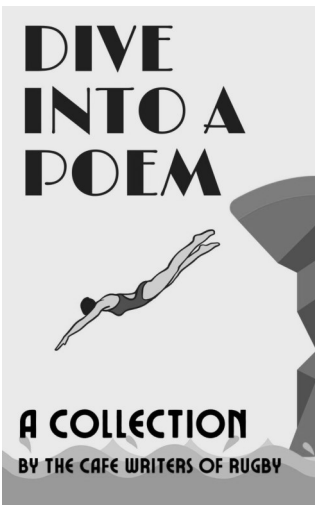
The book features the work of 33 poets from the Rugby area, including some who are having their work published for the very first time. The group comprises new and experienced writers who meet every fortnight in the cafe at St Andrew's Church.

John Howes, who helped to edit the book, said: 'We all have a poetic voice within us and the aim of our group is to help people discover that voice. If you are writing a poem, there are no rules. You can make it rhyme if you want to, but you don't have to.

'You can work to a specific structure of so many syllables per line, or so many lines per verse, but you don't have to. You can use conventional punctuation and spelling if you like, but you don't have to.

'Some of the most enjoyable poems in this collection break all the rules — and why shouldn't they? Others stick to a strict rhyming pattern and you can admire the skill of the poet'.

To buy the book, visit www.rugbycafewriters.com or come and visit the Rugby Cafe Writers' stall at the monthly Saturday Songs event on the second Saturday of each month from 10.30am at St Andrew's Church.



New Bishop of Coventry



It was announced on 4 November 2024 that The King has approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Sophie Jelley, Suffragan Bishop of Doncaster, to be appointed as The Bishop of Coventry, becoming the first female Bishop of Coventry, and the 10th Bishop of Coventry since the Diocese was created in 1918.

Bishop Sophie was educated at the Universities of Leeds and Oxford and trained for her ordination at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. She served her title at St Peter's Shipley in the former Diocese of Bradford (now in the Diocese of Leeds) and was ordained priest in 1998.

She took up the role of Mission Partner with the Church Mission Society in 2000, serving at the Uganda Christian University, Mukono, before returning to the UK in 2003 to take up the role of Resident Minister of St John the Evangelist, Church with Rushmoor in the Diocese of Guildford. In 2010 Sophie was appointed as Vicar of St Andrew's Burgess Hill, in the Diocese of Chichester, and from 2013 was additionally Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands. In 2015, Sophie was appointed as Canon Missioner of Durham Cathedral and Diocesan Director of Music, Discipleship and Ministry in the Diocese of Durham.

We pray for Sophie and wish her well in her new appointment and look forward to getting to know her and welcoming her to Rugby and St Andrew's in the future.

A Beacon of Hope



Serving the surviving in Myanmar

Rev Pam Gould writes: Are you intrigued by the concept of Mothers' Union, an organization which many consider must be a relic of bygone days? Nothing can be further from the reality, as these excerpts from the latest edition of the MU magazine illustrates.

As Myanmar grapples with a devastating civil war and economic collapse, Mothers' Union and its 10,000 members worldwide stand as a lifeline for communities in crisis. The UN paints a grim picture; 75% of the country's 55 million people live near or below subsistence levels, with poverty surging from 25% to 50% in just a few years.

'Many of our members are displaced, some fleeing to neighbouring countries', says MU's provincial community development co-ordinator, 'yet we are finding ways to meet and support each other wherever possible'.

The statistics are staggering: 13.3 million people face acute food insecurity. In response, MU groups are organizing community kitchens and food distribution efforts. They've supported internally displaced person camps across the country with basic necessities. After training, members received awareness and knowledge in respective areas, reports a key MU leader. 'They were released from stress and trauma after wellbeing and counselling sessions'.

With child poverty skyrocketing, Mothers' Union has established reading clubs and library support, providing crucial

education where formal schooling has collapsed. Their work around gender-based violence is more critical than ever, as women and children bear the brunt of the crisis.

Despite external aid to Myanmar plummeting by over 40% since 2020, Mothers' Union is continuing to reach more people, using the grassroots network to identify and assist the most vulnerable, offering a glimmer of hope where little exists.

Through self-help groups and a number of activities, members now have opportunities for income generation, a MU member explains. 'We're seeing mindset changes in families, moving towards happier, more equitable households'.

Mothers' Union resilience and faith-driven service shine as a beacon of hope. They embody the spirit of Christ's love in action, even in the darkest of times. So, when each month, our small MU group meet together in loving friendship, to celebrate Communion together, we pray the Mothers' Union Prayer, uniting our members worldwide, whatever the challenges of their situation.

*Loving Lord,
we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.*

*We pray for families around the world.
Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.
Empowered by your Spirit,
may we be united in prayer and worship,
and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world, in Jesus' name.
Amen*

Uncle Wilf and D-Day Memories

*Christine Homer,
St Andrew's Bell Captain,
shares some family
memories:*

When we rang St Andrew's bells for the 80th anniversary of D-Day this year, I was reminded that I had a family member who landed on the beach in 1944.

Bear in mind the information here is based on what I was told as a child and may be somewhat 'sanitized'.

My Mum had two much older sisters, and my Auntie Winnie, her second sister, married Wilf Calvert in 1942, both at a relatively young age, as there was a war going on.

They had their first child in 1943, my cousin Julia, and Uncle Wilf volunteered for the army, this being considered better than being conscripted (I think he had some choice of regiment) which was likely to happen soon if he hadn't volunteered.

He joined the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and was trained up in time for the D-Day landings. He landed in Normandy, I'm not sure whether that was on D-Day itself or the following day, but the beach was being heavily shelled and one landed close to him — his back was badly damaged and he was evacuated by helicopter (he was told later) and spent the next six months or thereabouts in hospital in Birmingham, much of it lying face-down in a cast, unsure whether he would be able walk again.

Auntie Winnie stayed nearby with baby

Julia and she still remembered some of the roads nearly 40 years later when Chris and I held our wedding in the area.

Uncle Wilf did make a good recovery, although I am told it took him several years to develop a gait without an obvious limp (that had happened before I remember him).

The family lived in a post-war pre-fab home for several years (again before I remember) and they had a son, my cousin Paul. He had a job in the stores at Fowlers Engineering, which I believe he enjoyed very much, until the firm closed in the early 1970s.

I was told that large firms had to take a quota of disabled war veterans post-war and as he had recovered well, he did not have too many problems finding a job. He and my Aunt moved in with my Grandma after she had a stroke and needed someone to help her, so we saw more of them than my other aunts and uncles — as a 'disabled person' he had not been able to get a mortgage after the war to buy their own house, and they were the only ones of the family without their own children still living with them.

He was very reluctant to speak about his war experience, but he did say he had no interest in travelling abroad (he used to say, 'I went to France and never even met a French girl, and I had a ride in a helicopter but I don't remember anything about it!') When he needed a heart operation many years later, he joked about having matching scars front and back, but said they had taken the vein from his 'bad' leg and his limp had returned! I did see the scars on his back a couple of times — they looked rather awful!

Children and Families' Ministry: Six Month Report



*Helen Bryant,
Children's and
Families' Lead,
writes:*

As it comes to Christmas, and one of our busiest times for Children and Families at St Andrew's, I thought it would be a good time to reflect on what has been happening within the life of our children and young people here.

It has been a real joy to be involved in this developing aspect of life at St. Andrew's. I hope fully you will have noticed the involvement of our Young People and Young Choristers in leading and being involved in our Sunday services. After speaking to them, look out for other parts of the service at other times in the month where they will be helping to lead elements of our worship.

There are now a number of activities which happen alongside Godly Play, to bring the Good News to children at all ages and stages of their faith journey. The children's area in church is used often by children on a Sunday morning, but it also forms a key part of our 'Church Mice' Group which meets every Monday at 11am.

Booklets for families to help understand worship

Time has also been spent creating various booklets to help families understand and be involved in our worship, Pew Packs are at the back of church and contain activities for those children who wish to stay with their parents and carers during the service.

If you have ever wondered about the Angels in our windows, or how many lions we have here at St Andrew's, then you might want to grab a 'Seek and Find' Guide. These aren't a distraction from the sermon, but they may well enhance your experience here.

Work has also begun with developing links with schools in the Parish and across the Deanery, and Hannah and Ali are doing great things at May Blossom Farm. Pam continues to be essential to our baptism ministry and we look forward to welcoming three families for services in the New Year.

A group of key people and volunteers will be meeting more regularly to make sure we continue

to build on developing this vital ministry, as well as building the gifts and talents of our congregation and wider church family.

If you would like to be involved in Sunday activities or other elements of our mission to children and young people, please don't hesitate to get in contact.

Thank you all for your support and prayers.



The Thirteen Bells Café

**Now open and welcoming
six days a week**

Monday to Friday,
10am to 2pm

Saturday 10am to 12 noon

*Looking for something to
warm up a winter day?*

*Try our Soup and Sandwich
or a delicious Toastie*

Fairtrade Tea, Coffee and Hot Chocolate

Toasted Tea Cakes, Snacks and Cakes

***Nourishment for the Soul whilst
enjoying nourishment for the Body***

Hospital Volunteering

Two St Andrew's parishioners, who volunteer at the Hospital of St Cross, have urged others to get involved, *writes John Howes.*

Retired heating engineer Mike Taylor said: 'For me to know that I may be making a difference to someone's life, even only in a small way, makes it all worthwhile'.

Mike started his volunteering journey in the early nineties, helping with Christmas lunches for OAPs. He then moved on to the Samaritans for ten years, followed by two Christmases at night shelters for the homeless. He said this was probably the most difficult thing he'd done. As a heating engineer, he continued to work through Covid. Then, after retirement, he moved to Rugby and came to St Andrew's Church.

'I met Rev Sharon Crofts and became involved with Compassionate Communities, to help in the community and with Bereavement Point, along with one-to-one contact aiding bereaved and palliative people. I then had training and DBS checks for working in the NHS.

'I am now a hospital Befriender, which often involves different levels of emotions from the patients, often challenging but always rewarding. I added another seminar to train for aiding patients with their lunches, together with being a chaplaincy lay visitor. I feel much closer to the teachings of the Bible. I would certainly recommend volunteering'.

Lizzy Howes retired two years ago from her job as a maths teacher and decided to take up volunteering.

'I wanted to do some small thing with purpose. I felt I'd never really had the time or made the time to do something like fundraising or sponsored events before. I looked for volunteer places in other areas such as the library and foodbank. I thought that working in the hospital would be a good way of repaying some of the kindnesses

*Parishioners
Mike Taylor
and Lizzy Howes
volunteer at the
Hospital of St Cross.*



given to me in my treatment some years back’.

Lizzy looked up the Friends of St Cross online, sent an email and got several forms to fill in. She also had to check her immunisations were up to date which is necessary if you are having face-to-face contact with patients, or are going to be in a ward setting.

‘As this progressed, I had a training afternoon and a short chat with the Friends organiser. That was really nice, friendly and informative. I was quite nervous about it. They try to place you where you express a preference’.

There were roles such as meeting and greeting patients, visiting patients on wards, mealtime companions, bingo in the dialysis unit, driving patients to and from appointments, working in the bookstore, holding hands in theatre, unloading supplies and booking deliveries, working in the tea bar in outpatients, or with the newspaper and snacks trolley.

‘I chose to help at the Maple Unit which is for patients having chemotherapy, because the chemo unit at Coventry was somewhere I’d spent a lot of time. I knew what a difference it made to the experience if there was someone with a little more time to chat and offer a friendly word at what can be a difficult time.

‘At first, the co-ordinator phoned me. We arranged to work the first shift together. This helped sort my nerves out and confirmed that I wanted to be part of this group. Then I had my first shift on my own. We make hot drinks for patients and those accompanying them. We prepare and serve their lunches. Throughout this, we are chatting to people and trying to put them at their

ease. We also do odd bits of minor cleaning and filling out patient surveys.

‘Patients are always pleased to see us. One of the nicest things from the beginning was going in the second time and seeing the recognition in people’s faces. Some people you get to know really well.

‘At first I felt I was getting in the way but very often the staff will wait until I’ve given someone their lunch. They are glad to have us there, are very supportive, and have made me feel a part of the team, a part of that unit. It feels like I belong there now. They are a lovely lot, really friendly’.

Lizzy is now volunteer co-ordinator for the Maple Unit. This means she organises the rota involving nine or ten volunteers to ensure every day is covered. She also attends quarterly co-ordinators’ meetings and trains new volunteers for the unit.

She added: ‘From the outside, people might look at volunteering as working for no money but I’ve never felt like it is “going to work”. It’s a completely different thing. It is definitely a privilege to be there. Somehow not getting paid makes it more worthwhile. The reward is if you have made someone smile or made someone’s day a little bit better than it was going to be, or if you’ve just found someone the last lemon drizzle cake! It’s about really small things but it is also those moments of recognition. That is a form of appreciation, though I don’t need to be appreciated. It is just a nice feeling, and enriches my day too’.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Hospital of St Cross, Rugby, download an application form from <https://www.fsx.org.uk/volunteering-with-us> or call 01788 663736 for more information.

2024: Is This The Year Of The Woman?

*John Daymond,
Editor, writes:*

With some women being granted the right to vote in Acts of Parliament in 1918 and in 1928 some equality was achieved, yet only on 12 March 1994 was it that the first 32 females were ordained as Church of England Priests.

With the service taking place at Bristol Cathedral and officiated by Bishop Barry Rogerson, the ordinations took place alphabetically so Angela Berners-Wilson became the first woman to be ordained.

The Thirtieth Anniversary of female ordination was marked here at St Andrew's on Sunday, 21 April by Rev'd Sharon Crofts and Rev'd Alison Baxter acknowledging the service of our own trail blazers and pioneers, Rev'd Pam Gould and Rev'd Canon Sue Hardwick.

Some 23 St Andrew's Mothers' Union members and guests joined together on 14 August 2024 to celebrate the anniversary and learn more about the founder of the Mothers' Union Mary Elizabeth Sumner, nee Heywood'.

She was born on 31 December 1828 in Swinton near Salford, the third of four children to Thomas Heywood, a banker and keen antiquarian and her mother a woman of personal piety. Mary died on 11 August 1921 and is buried, with her husband who died



Mary Elizabeth Sumner

twelve years earlier, in the grounds of Winchester Cathedral. In 1832 the family moved to Colwall near Ledbury, Herefordshire where Mary's mother held mothers' meetings.

A year after their arrival her six-week old brother died. Her mother's faith, her women's meetings and her brothers infant death may have all inspired Mary decades later to begin the Mothers' Union.

Mary was educated at home and learned to speak three foreign languages and to sing well. To complete her musical education she travelled with her parents and elder sister to Rome. Whilst there she met her future husband, George Henry Sumner, the son of Charles Richard Sumner, the Bishop of Winchester and a relative of William Wilberforce.

The couple were married at Colwall on 26 July 1848, eighteen months after George's ordination as an Anglican cleric. They had three children, Margaret, Louise and George, the latter became a well

known artist. In 1851 Rev'd George Sumner received the living of Old Alresford in Hampshire in his father's diocese and Mary dedicated herself to raising her children and helping her husband in his ministry by providing music and Bible classes.

Founded in 1876, initially the Mothers' Union was limited to Mary Sumner's parish. However in 1885 she was in the audience of a meeting in Portsmouth Church Congress where the first Bishop of Newcastle, Ernest Wilberforce, was to address the women churchgoers. He felt he had very little to say to women and invited Mary to speak instead. Although nervous Mary gave a passionate address about national morality and the importance of women's vocation as mothers to change the nation for the better.

A number of the women present went back to their parishes to found mothers' meetings based on Mary Sumner's pattern. The Bishop of Winchester, Edward Browne made the Mothers' Union a diocesan organisation.

The Mothers' Union concept grew rapidly to the Dioceses of Ely, Exeter, Hereford, Lichfield and Newcastle and then throughout the United Kingdom. By 1892, 60,000 members lived in 28 dioceses and by the turn of the century the Mothers' Union had grown to 169,000 members. Annual General Meetings began in 1893, and the Mothers' Union Central Council was formed three years later. Mary Sumner was unanimously elected president, a post she held into her nineties.

In 1897 during her Diamond Jubilee, Queen Victoria became Patron of the Mothers' Union, giving it an unprecedented stamp of approval. The Mothers' Union set up branches throughout the British Empire, beginning in New Zealand, then Canada and India.

Mary lived to lead the Mothers' Union to act in rebuilding the heart of Britain after the First World War and saw the first Mothers' Union Conference of Overseas Workers in 1920. Mary is remembered with a Lesser Festival on 9 August. The Church in Wales and other provinces remember Mary Sumner on 9 August which the Mothers' Union incorrectly listed as her date of death.

Moreover the 11 August was already the liturgical feast day of another notable Christian woman, St Clare of Assisi, and it may be considered appropriate that these two women be honoured on the same day. Mary's vision of a fellowship of women supporting each other and strengthening their communities has grown with the community emphasis, as members tackle some of the most challenging issues that they and their neighbours face. Today The Mothers' Union has over four million active members in 83 countries.

We learned about the remarkable Mary Elizabeth Sumner and the organisation which lives on as her lasting legacy, we shared in a service of Holy Communion followed by tea, cake and companionship.

Who's Who at St Andrew's

Rector: The Rev'd Canon Dr Edmund Newey
01788 574313 mobile: 07414 904931
rector@rugbychurch.org.uk *Note: Day off Saturday*

Associate Minister (Compassionate Communities):
The Rev'd Sharon Crofts, sharon.crofts@uhcw.nhs.uk

Associate Minister (Mission Hub): The Rev'd Alison Baxter,
missionhub@rugbychurch.org.uk

Retired Clergy: The Rev'd Pam Gould, The Rev'd Canon Graham Hardwick,
The Rev'd Peter Privett, The Rev'd Peter Beresford

Assistant Curate: The Rev'd James Sampson-Foster,
james.sampsonfoster@rugbychurch.org.uk

Lay Ministers: Sue Goddard, Gwyneth Hickman, Sue Minton

Children's and Families' Ministry Lead:
Helen Bryant, childrenandfamily@rugbychurch.org.uk

Youth Ministry Lead: Magz Parmenter, sayf@rugbychurch.org.uk

Music Team:

Director of Music: William Uglow, directorofmusic@rugbychurch.org.uk

Young Choristers' Trainer: Rachel Cliffe, youngchoristers@rugbychurch.org.uk

St Andrew's Community Singers:

Conductor: Amie Boyd amiemusic01@gmail.com

Membership Enquiries: John Howes shoparound1983@gmail.com

Parish Administrator: Kate Foster, 01788 565609, office@rugbychurch.org.uk

Community Engagement Lead: Ben Jennings, ben.jennings@rugbychurch.org.uk

Wardens: Joyce Woodings, warden1@rugbychurch.org.uk
Hash Mistry, warden2@rugbychurch.org.uk

Assistant Warden: Ian Sheppard, asstwarden1@rugbychurch.org.uk

Bell Tower Captain: Christine Homer

St Andrew's Church Website: www.standrewrugby.org.uk