

NOVEMBER NEWS FROM ST. MARY'S

Thursday, 4th.

This is a difficult time of year for many people: darker evenings, thoughts of winter and the approach of Christmas. The Festive Season is portrayed as one of happiness and celebration, but, for the bereaved, it can be a very painful time.

Recognising this, All Souls Day is set aside on the Church calendar as a special time to remember those who have died, and to offer hope and support to their loved ones. So it was at St. Mary's.

On the evening of 4th. November, families for whom the St. Mary's clergy team had taken a funeral in the past year were personally invited to join the congregation, as we gave thanks for their lives and shared our grief. Each year, the number attending this service has increased, and 2010 was no exception. The names of the departed were read by Andy Todd and Jill Richardson as we each reflected on our personal memories of them. Starting at the point of the reality of separation, quietly and with solemnity, the mood gradually changed to one of hope and peace. This was reflected by the choice of hymns and the readings, in a service led by the Rector, Revd. Canon Kevan McCormack, who spoke movingly about the loss of his own parents, and the role of his faith in coping from day to day.

Coffee and cake, shared together afterwards, gave people the opportunity to chat with each other about their experiences and thoughts.

Sunday, 14th.

Recognised nationally as Remembrance Sunday, here in Woodbridge the familiar pattern of events was shared by the people of the town, as wreaths were laid at the War Memorial on Market Hill and the two minutes silence was observed. Clergy, dignitaries and representatives of many local organisations, led by The Royal British Legion, then moved to the Market Square for an interdenominational service. Woodbridge was honoured this year to welcome The Right Revd. Nigel Stock, Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, who gave the address, in which he spoke of his own act of remembrance for an uncle lost in battle, as well as awareness of those who were known locally. This year's ceremony was particularly poignant as we remembered by name, Acting Corporal David Barnsdale and Spr. William Blanchard, who were killed recently in action in Afghanistan. Our thoughts also turned to others from Rock Barracks who have been injured. Present on this day were some of our young soldiers from 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault), who received the loudest cheer as they marched on parade.

For many folk today, the First and Second World Wars hold little significance, but the deployment of young people in Afghanistan has brought home to us all the horror and anguish of war. It was totally relevant, therefore, that the focus of this Remembrance Sunday was as much on the present and the future as on the past, for we all share in our strivings to make the world a more peaceful place for all people.

"We will remember them."

Monday, 17th.

A coach of forty plus members of the congregation left Woodbridge in the afternoon to travel to London, for the licensing of our former Assistant Curate, Revd. Paul G.

Hambling, as Team Vicar , Merton Priory Team. We wish him every happiness and success in his new ministry. St. Mary's is already missing him very much, but our loss is Merton's gain!

Still Christmas Shopping?

Have you discovered the little shop in St. Mary's Church Centre on Market Hill? There you will find a selection of quality goods at realistic prices: Christmas cards, including a new St. Mary's card with a most glorious photograph of the church in the snow, as well as those supporting charity; Advent calendars; 2011 calendars, including a parish calendar with wonderful pictures of the Parish Church and scenes around Woodbridge; books for all ages, with a lovely selection for children; fair trade goods; stocking fillers; candles and many other gift ideas. The shop is open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 1000 to 1600, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1000 to 1300. Do pop in and have a look. Why not shop locally and support your Parish Church at the same time?

Dates for your Diary.

Monday, 6th. December. The Monday Talks continue with a visit from Russell and Febe Pipe, Majors of the Salvation Army in Woodbridge, talking about 'A Salvation Army Journey Through Italy'. The talk takes place in St. Mary's Church Centre, Market Hill, at 1930. Admission is free with a retiring collection to help cover costs.

Christmas 2010.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
"CHRISTMAS BEGINS WITH CHRIST"
Sunday, 19 th . December
1830 Carol Service with choir
Friday, 24 th . Christmas Eve
1730 Crib Service
2330 Midnight Mass of Christmas
Saturday, 25 th . Christmas Day
0800 Holy Communion
1000 Parish Eucharist
Sunday, 26 th . Boxing Day
1000 Holy Communion with Carols

We hope you can join us this Christmas. It would be lovely to see you at St. Mary's, where you can be assured of a very warm welcome.

The clergy and congregation of St. Mary's Parish Church wish you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas season.