

Birthdays this month....

28th July – Danielle Hall

28th July – Meryl Poole

4th August – Jessie Morgan

19th August – Pauline Fox

24th August – Lizzie Braypoole

27th August – Sue Rowberry

Do let us know your birthday, so we can pray and thank God for the gift of you all on your nativity

This fortnight's ECO tip!

It's Plastic Free July! When out and about why not have a go at reducing plastic waste by refusing plastic cutlery and extra bags? Take a re-fillable bottle or flask with you rather than buying a container. At home, why not return to natural fibres for dishcloths, dusters and bed linen where you can, to avoid microfibre plastics getting into our waste and sewage systems? Have a look at the display at the back of church for more ideas!

THE PSALM RESPONSE

26th July :

Lord, your word gives light and understanding

2nd August:

You are faithful and loving, O Lord

9th August:

Show us your mercy, O Lord

Questions / Contact?

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S. Peter, Cradley

**26th July, 2nd August,
9th August 2026**

17th, 18th, 19th, Sunday in Ordinary



A cross made of oysters and pearls...

In This Week's Scripture...

"The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, ... yeast ... treasure hidden in a field... a merchant in search of fine pearls... a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind"

Matthew 13: 31, 33, 44, 45, 47

Our hearts are restless 'til we find our rest in you, says S. Augustine. Our hearts long for something, search for it. And sometimes we don't even know what it is really that we are searching for. Yet, something in our hearts recognises that it is the thing we need above all over, something deeper, more beautiful, more insistent, more powerful, more transformative than anything we can find in ordinary life. And yet something that somehow we can uncover all around us. Something that works through all our lives, like yeast, bringing life and hope. Something that shines in the darkness of pain, like a pearl bringing beauty and healing, something as small as a seed – yet that yields a plant that can blaze in flower across a whole landscape. Something that will draw all hearts and souls to itself.

SomeONE who invites us in: to find the Kingdom in his heart, and to seek every day to grow deeper into it, uncover it around us, and within; and to share it with those we meet along the way.

Welcome! Is there anything you need?

gluten free? If you need a gluten free wafer at communion, please let the welcomers know

T loop: Please set your hearing aid to T-Loop to use the sound system effectively

Toilet: at the back of the church to your left

Children: are most welcome! There is a children's area to the front right of the church, where children can play, supervised by their accompanying adult. Do keep them with you in the main seating area if you prefer. Please do not worry if they want to wander round the church, or if they cry! They may also wish to try out our Junior Church, which meets in the vestry most weeks. (parents are welcome to accompany their child, but leaders are fully compliant with safeguarding regulations)



Welcome to Danielle and Nicola

A huge welcome to Danielle and Nicola, who are coming for baptism in our Holy Communion today. Do pray for them as they continue their journey of faith, to confirmation on August 16th! Welcome to our new sisters in Christ!



Worship for the Coming Weeks

This Sunday 11.15am Holy Mass with hymns
5.15pm evening prayer on zoom (click link)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5589842329>

Tuesday 28th 7.30am Morning Prayer at S. Margaret's, followed by optional tea and toast breakfast

Wednesday 29th 7pm half hour said Night Prayer

Thursday Evening Prayer 3pm – speak to Susan Cresswell for more details and location!

Sunday 2nd August

11.15am Holy Mass with hymns

5.15pm evening prayer on zoom (same link)

6pm Voices in the Vestry

Tuesday 4th August 7.30am Morning Prayer at S. Margaret's followed by optional tea and toast breakfast

Wednesday 5th August 7pm half hour said Night Prayer

Thursday 6th August Evening Prayer 3pm – speak to Susan Cresswell for more details and location!

Sunday 9th August

11.15am Holy Mass with hymns

1pm Baptism of Everley from our messy Church family – please pray for her and her family.

5.15pm evening prayer on zoom (same link)

Monday 10th August

12 noon Jean Holloway's funeral in church

Tuesday 11th August

7.30am Holy Mass at S. Peter's followed by optional tea and toast breakfast

Wednesday 12th August

7pm Half hour said Holy Mass

9pm Online livestream Compline – click link below
Mthr. Victoria Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/victoria.barlow.750>

Thursday 13th August Evening Prayer 3pm – speak to Susan Cresswell for more details and location!

Sunday 16th August – NO WORSHIP AT S. Margaret's – see separate notice about confirmation

1pm Baptism at S. Margaret's of Kayden & William, from our Messy Church family – please pray for them 😊

Confirmation and the Bishop!

Bishop Hugh will be visiting us here at Cradley at **9.30am August 16th**. **PLEASE PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW.** Please can everyone make sure to be here, to pray for our confirmands, Jessie, Sarah, Danielle and Nicola, and Neil Curley (Neil is from S. Margaret's church family). and to welcome our bishop. It would be wonderful to have celebratory cake and drinks after the service – I'll donate pink prosecco if you bring the cake, tea and coffee.... (Mthr V).

Money for Cardiff – and castle tour

Our trip to Cardiff is August 29th. 8.30am – 8.30pm departing from *S. Margaret's*

I will be collecting money for the coach on the last Sunday of July, (£20 per head). As the coach is quite popular, I will then be releasing tickets that aren't paid for by Sunday August 16th in order that people can come who would like to. I will give you a receipt for your seat 😊 The Castle tours are only for 8 people at a time – so if you would like to do that I suggest you arrange it separately as there would be no advantage and many disadvantages to booking it centrally. I will give you a list of suggested fun activities / places to eat before the trip for you to explore. If you would like to come and haven't yet signed up, do let me know.

New Altar

Sunday 9th August I shall be giving you a sneak preview of the New Altar following the worship. This altar was made for us for free by a craftsman in our area – Adrian - who heard of our need for one. We needed a new altar as we have been having to move the altar from the children's chapel every week, which leaves the restored chapel looking bereft, is a lot of hard work, is damaging the wooden plinth, and is pulling the altar apart.

The new altar was made to measure to be the correct size for a Nave Altar. So it is a lot larger than the side chapel altar – meaning we shall get a real sense of it being the Proper Altar, rather than a subsidiary altar, and it is big enough to symbolise a table around which we can all be gathered. It is, however, also designed to be fuss-free – the only ornamentation being a cross, and the simple design meaning you can see straight through the altar up to the chancel and the block of colour that is the High Altar Frontal. We shall still use the High Altar once a month as previously – 3rd Sunday, unless it is team worship when the week will move - unless people request otherwise.

If we had purchased an altar as simple as that at *S. Margaret's* it would have cost us around £6-7K. This one, had we bought it at church furnishing cost would have cost us probably around £11K. We are so very blessed in our community.

It will be blessed for use on August 16th by Bishop Hugh, and we shall have the joy of celebrating around it, and receiving from it on that day alongside our confirmands and our Diocesan Bishop.

Foodbank Donations

Don't forget we collect for the Foodbank *every week* at *S. Peter's*. Every little helps those in need.

RIP Jean Holloway

Jean's Funeral service will be at *S. Margaret's* Monday 10th August at 12 noon, going on to Stourbridge Crematorium, and followed by refreshments here in church. All are welcome. Do pray for Jean and her family at this time.

QUIZ!! S. Margaret's August 15th

Sign up at the back! 7pm with QuizMaster Tim! Teams of up to six people. Bring your own nibbles, tea and coffee provided. £5 entry per adult, children and students free.

Free talk... 5th September 2.30pm

At *S. Margaret's*. 40 years ago, Andrea trained as a nurse at the Corbett Hospital. When she retired from nursing, she started researching John Corbett and the history of the hospital. She shares her findings in this fascinating talk about such an important part of our local community.

Valuation Day: 18th August

T Baker are back at *S. Margaret's* with another valuation day on Tuesday 18th August 10.30am - 3.30pm . Why not pop in with your curiosities and treasures for a free valuation? (No obligation to sell, although there is the option) (This event is not a fundraiser for *S. Margaret's*, nor endorsed by the Church, T Baker are hiring our premises for one of their regular roadshow valuation days)

Voices in the Vestry: 2nd August

6pm at the back of *S. Margaret's* for an informal time of worship together, with prayer and chat and discussion, and of course a cuppa. All are welcome.

Bags of Hope

Mthr V has been approached by the Bags of Hope school project for disadvantaged school children. They are looking for donations of back packs, refillable water bottles, pencil cases and stationery for children whose families are struggling to provide these. Can you help? Donations are needed by Sunday August 16th, and must be new, please.

School leaver's Bibles

We have had the great grace of giving all our Year Six leavers a beautiful bible once more – placing the Word of God into their hands. It is incredibly difficult to find suitable bibles for this age-group, and has been very expensive. If anyone would like to make a donation toward this, please put it in an envelope marked 'spreading the word' and give it to Christine Adshead. Thank you so much.

Why do we? ... the sign of the Cross

Currently we are exploring what we do around making the sign of the cross in church ...

Here are three week's worth of reflections!

We often make the sign of the Cross by joining two fingers and thumb together – the three representing the Trinity - and touching our head (the place where we make our rational choices), our stomach (the place where it was believed we made our emotional choices) and the two sides of our chest, and into the heart. Wrapping the Trinity around all we do, think, speak, feel and are. It is a prayer that wraps protection, love and grace around us, and a prayer we can make as an intercession for others, or a witness. It is a body-prayer, for when words fail. Why not try it out?

We already explored the making of the sign of the cross at the **gathering**, and the **absolution**...

Why do we make the sign of the Cross **at the reading of the Gospel**? First on the head, then on the lips, then on the heart. It is a prayer that we might receive and make our own the presence of Jesus in the Word he gives to us. You might like to join in the prayer that the priest always prays silently at this point ('Lord be in my heart and upon my lips, that I may worthily proclaim / receive thy holy Gospel')

Why do we make the sign of the Cross as we say *The resurrection of the dead in the Creed*? It is to remind us that just as Jesus shared our human deaths and pains through his incarnation, so we also share his resurrection life. His life is always at work within the deaths and losses of our life. We pledge ourselves here to be people of his resurrection, receiving it for ourselves in new beginnings and hope - and sharing life and love in the world.

Why do we make the sign of the Cross at the: **Benedictus** (when we sing 'blessed is he who comes...')? It is a way of remembering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and inviting him to enter into our hearts. It reminds us of the joy of those who welcomed him, and of the journey of love he was about to make for us. We pray that he will enter our hearts, but also that we may make his journey our own... that we too may be ones who are blessed as they come, sharing love into the world...

Why do we make the sign of the Cross **before receiving communion**? It is to pledge ourselves to receive the Jesus' body and love – broken for us on the Cross, and to be broken open, that we might

receive – and in receiving, to be equipped to share. And also, unworthy as we are, to ask the Lord to bring us to his grace as we receive his most Holy Presence.

Why do we make the sign of the Cross **at the blessing**? It is just simply to wrap that blessing around us, that we might go out – people of the Cross. Strengthened and protected by his grace, and filled with his self-giving love.

150th Anniversary of the MU

9th August sees the 150th Anniversary of the Mothers' Union. We shall be giving thanks for the work of the Mothers' Union in church on that Sunday. Please do pray for the work of our local and diocesan branches of the Mothers' Union in prayer, advocacy, fundraising, and practical love. If you are interested in joining the Mothers' Union please speak to Mthr V who can put you in touch with our Cradley Branch. The branch meet on Wednesdays, have termly lunches out, and special speakers, prayer, and study periods around Lent, and great fellowship and fun together. All are welcome. (Men and women, any age!)

You may wish to join with the Mothers' Union in praying the Mary Sumner prayer (Mary was the founder of the MU)

"All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do thou by thy Spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen."

(*quicken* in this context is an old English word meaning 'to bring life to'.)

DCC meeting

Our next DCC meeting is August 18th 7.30pm in Church. Please put this date in your diary if you are on DCC, and please pray for the DCC as they meet. If you have anything you would wish to raise, either in celebration or a suggestion, or query, please speak to Mthr V, or one of the wardens.

Our next Concert.. Sept 19th 2.30pm

Andy Quin is a virtuoso improvising concert pianist and organist. He has performed internationally and made numerous tv appearances and radio broadcasts. Andy will treat us to improvisations on well known film and TV themes, musicals, 'Great American songbook' and much more playing both the organ and piano. As ever, please do help with welcome and cakes 😊