

St. Mary's Church August and September Newsletter 2015

Dear All

On Saturday July 11th St. Mary's hosted the marriage of Cerri Munslow to Richard Williams.



Sunshine filled the skies as the couple married in the main church which was followed by a special blessing and prayers in the old ruin church whilst family and friends looked on.

Hymns included Give me Joy in my Heart and One More Step Along The World I Go.

Our best wishes to them and their family for their future happiness together.

Liz Lane has confirmed that she has received faculty approval for the installation of the new stained glass windows in the porch. Jim Budd who has designed the windows has advised Liz that installation of the new windows should be by the end of the year. Thank you Liz for your patience and time in pulling this faculty together.

We have also been given faculty approval for the installation of the hand rail up to the pulpit. This will be hand crafted and installed by Alan Colebatch and should be completed by end of November.

We send our congratulations to Brenda Allan PCC Secretary for being awarded for the first time ever, the Order of St Ethelbert. The award goes to those who have given valuable service to the Church of England in the Diocese of Hereford. Bishop Richard Frith, The Bishop of Hereford and Michael Tavinor, the Dean of Hereford Cathedral, have been considering how best to honour those who have given long and distinguished service to the diocese and, after consulting colleagues, they have created the St Ethelbert award. Ethelbert, who is the patron saint of the cathedral and his story is one of courage, self-giving and perseverance – qualities which lie at the heart of so much that is given to church life throughout the diocese, year by year.

Ethelbert Patron Saint of Hereford Cathedral should not be confused with Canterbury's Ethelbert of Kent who was the first Christian Anglo-Saxon king. Hereford's Ethelbert was born in East Anglia in the late 8th century. He journeyed to Mercia to seek the hand of Aelfrytha, the daughter of King Offa of Mercia. For political reasons, Offa had the young

King Ethelbert murdered (traditionally on May 20th in 794) at Marden, five miles north of Hereford.

To this bare outline must be added more elaborate stories or legends of his life. These weave together traditions associated with Ethelbert's life and death: a spring rose at the site of his beheading; the body was taken by ox-cart to what is now Hereford and, on the journey, the head fell from the cart and was rescued by a blind man, who received his sight. Certainly, Ethelbert's body was buried at Hereford Cathedral and became the centre of a thriving pilgrimage cult until the 14th century, when it was eclipsed by the newer cult of St Thomas Cantilupe. Little is heard of Ethelbert's relics until after the 12 century but it is known that his head was a focus of devotion at Westminster Abbey until the Dissolution. Representations of Ethelbert may be found in several places in Hereford Cathedral: a defaced 14th century statue is placed near at the high altar, there are images of him in several glass windows, and there is a 19th-century marble representation of Ethelbert's beheading in the pavement in the chancel. In addition, Ethelbert is commemorated on the cathedral seal and by an ancient stone structure near the cathedral, known as 'St Ethelbert's Well'. The saint is also remembered at Marden, where he died, and where, within the church itself, is St Ethelbert's Well.

Our August service held on Sunday 16th and was very well conducted by members of the parish lay team as David was away on holiday. Taking the lead Sylvia Bland guided us through the Evening Prayer service with John Bland doing the Intercessions and Brenda Allan delivering a thought provoking sermon. Brenda posed a question at the start of her sermon and somewhat caught us congregation out as it would seem we hadn't been paying enough attention to the readings beforehand to answer the question! Thank you team.

This month sees September 20th being named as Back to Church Sunday. Everyone is invited to bring a friend or neighbour (or more than one!) to church with them.

Finally a pause for thought – Never drive faster than your guardian angel can fly!

Best Regards

Helen Read – Churchwarden