

THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

Shortlands recently welcomed The Rt. Rev. Dr. Brian Castle, Bishop of Tonbridge, to a Confirmation Service, in which seven members of the Shortlands community were confirmed into the Christian faith. Photographed (left to right) with the Bishop are Angela Watson, Kevin Sloane, Elizabeth Bingham, Canon Paul Miller, Harriet Adam, James Watson and Carol and Philip Latchana.

During the service some of those to be confirmed shared something of their life story – one is told here in SPAN:

"My name is Kevin Sloane. I'm 45 years old, have been married for 9 years, and have one child, Freya, who's 4. I was born in Hampstead, moved to Chislehurst in 1963, was christened on my 6th birthday at Christ Church, Chislehurst and then moved to Beckenham in 1996. I have worked in the city for 29 years, mostly broking and software companies. My interests are music, art and reading.

Generally, people are christened when they are less than one year old, and confirmed as teenagers. Given that it took six years to get me christened, it's hardly surprising that Confirmation has taken a little longer than usual!

I regret now that I have not been a regular churchgoer since I was a teenager. When I was 16, my father died, quite suddenly. My mother and I were devastated. We were lost without him, and I'm afraid that at that point we both lost sight of our faith, and there followed a long period of darkness and despair. And despite all the intervening years, I'm afraid my



mother never really came to terms with losing her husband.

In May, 2004, my Mum passed away. This time, rather than staring into the darkness, I was enlightened by the knowledge that my parents were at last reunited, that God was looking after them both, and that they could now enjoy some time together. I was, and still am, greatly comforted by this belief; it really helped me cope.

It was at this time that I first met Canon Miller. He kindly agreed to officiate at Mum's funeral. It was a difficult time; I felt as if I was

orphaned. But the things that Canon Miller said, when I met him at the Vicarage before the funeral, and then at the service, gave me and my family comfort, and were thought-provoking, humane and sensitive.

Whilst it took a while to 'get my head around' what had happened, at that point, my spirituality was re-awakened, and my journey began again. After one or two different religious experiences, we decided to come to St. Mary's – a very good decision! And here we are.

For me, the process of Confirmation is about belonging.

Throughout my life, I've never been a great 'joiner', but for the first time in a long time, I have found something that is really good, and real, and whilst I don't understand it all, and I know there is so much to learn, I want to be part of this; I want to belong.

Canon Miller and his wife and all of the parishioners at St. Mary's have welcomed us so warmly. Confirmation is my formal commitment to becoming part of that, to belonging to this Christian community.

It's been a long time coming, but I am very, very glad to be here now."

Special Services for February and March

Sunday, 12th Feb at 6.30pm: Choral Evensong - Jane Peters
Responses: Martin Neary, Setting: Stanford in B flat, Anthem: to be confirmed, Organist: Neil Rollings, Music Directed by Daniel Beach

Sunday, 5th March at 10.30am: All Age Eucharist - Canon Paul Miller

Monday, 13th March at 7.30pm: The Licensing at the Eucharist of the Reverend Alison Newman as Associate Vicar - The Bishop of Tonbridge

Sunday, 26th March at 10.30am: Family and Parade Service for Mothering Sunday, with the Blessing and Distribution of Posies

Keep March 13th Free!

Monday, March 13th at 7.30pm is the occasion of the Service of Licensing for the Reverend Alison Newman, who is to become the Associate Vicar of Shortlands. The service will be led by the Bishop of Tonbridge, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Brian Castle.

All are welcome, and I hope as many people as possible from the

community of Shortlands will come to welcome Alison, her husband Mark, and their six children! We are indeed fortunate that Alison has felt called to come to share our life here; she comes with wide life experience, and the Church and community will benefit enormously from having two full time priests in post.

THE SAD PASSING OF COMMON SENSE

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No-one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, the fact that the early bird gets the worm, that life isn't always fair, and that maybe 'it was my fault'.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial guidelines (don't spend more than you earn) and reliable parenting strategies. (Adults, not children, are in charge.)

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job they themselves failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental

consent to administer Panadol, sun lotion or a sticking plaster to a student – but could not inform the parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments were eroded, churches became businesses, and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents (Truth, his father and Trust, his mother), his wife (Discretion), his daughter, (Responsibility) and his son (Reason). He is survived by three stepbrothers (I Know My Rights, Someone Else is to Blame and I'm a Victim).

Not many attended his funeral as so few realised he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

Pyramid Rock!



Group and encounter Joseph, who trusted God in spite of everything.

Joseph had a key role in God's BIG plan – discover how you too are part of God's plan. Come and join the trail!

Monday 21st – Friday 25th August, 2006, 10.00am – 3.00pm in St. Mary's

Church Hall. The cost will be £5 a day per child or £23 for the whole week.

More details to follow in SPAN and on the Church Notice Board.

Are you of primary school age? Would you like to travel up the Nile? Listen to Red Hot News?

Open the Scrolls in a Pyramid

The Prayer Tree

Sharing a need for a person or a situation can often help. The Prayer Tree, just inside the church at St. Mary's, Shortlands, welcomes your requests for prayer.

The prayers are included in the prayers of the church at every service, and in this way embraces your hopes and desires for the need that you have.

The requests are written on a card, and tied to the tree. They stay there for a month, after which a new request can be written.

Why a tree and why a prayer?

A prayer tree provides an

opportunity to make a prayer request. It was round a tree in the Garden of Eden that we first became separated from God. And it was around another tree on the Hill of Calvary that God was, in man, reconciling himself to us. To hang a request on a Tree is to keep company with God – which is what prayer is!

St. Mary's Church in Shortlands is here to help you in your praying, and to pray for your requests. Please feel free to pop into the church, to write your prayer, and to tie it to the tree. We want to support you as best we can.

Readers' Recipes

Apple and Lemon Pie

(serves four)

- 12oz/350g Bramley apples
- 1 large lemon
- 1 large egg
- 3oz/75g caster sugar
- ½oz/15g butter
- Short pastry made with 5oz/125g flour and 2½oz/70g fat

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F/190 degrees C/Gas mark 5.

Peel, core and coarsely chop the apples. Add the juice and grated zest of the lemon, the beaten egg and the sugar. Mix thoroughly.

Line an 8 inch/20cm flan case with the pastry. Fill with the mixture, dot with butter and bake for about 35 minutes until the filling is just beginning to caramelise. Serve hot or cold with cream.

The proportions of ingredients are not critical. If you forget them an alternative formula is one large apple, one large lemon, 1 large egg, 1 or 2 tablespoons of sugar and a generous knob of butter, but if you like a really tart tart, which is how it is meant to be, be generous with the lemon and mean with the sugar.



Dear SPAN

Dear Span, I wanted to write and congratulate you on 25 years of the SPAN magazine, and all that you have achieved over the past quarter of a century.

It is always a pleasure to receive the SPAN and read about events, and I am grateful to you for continuing to send it to me.

As always, if there is anything that I can help you or your parishioners with at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

With very best wishes for the year ahead.

Jacqui Lait MP
The House of Commons

Dear Span, As an octogenarian agnostic who has lived here for the past 30 years I have greatly appreciated receiving SPAN for most of that time, and though I have made occasional donations to your expenses in the past I feel that your latest issue celebrating 25 years of publication merits special recognition. I am pleased to enclose a cheque accordingly.

Cookery has been for me a lifelong hobby and source of enjoyment, and I would therefore like to contribute to your 'Readers' Recipes' an offering which has now been a family favourite for four generations.

More power to your elbow.

Yours sincerely,
Geoff Lawrance

(Please see left for the recipe.)

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LENT 2006



Remembering

Amidst the tragedies of last year, many were asking 'Where is God?' During the 40 days of Lent, which begins this year on 1st March, we have made available a study course over five sessions exploring not 'Where is God?' but 'Where God is'.

The five sessions will be:

Where God is:

- in seeking happiness.
- in facing suffering.

- in making decisions.
- in contemplating death.
- in making sense of life.

These study groups, or Home Groups as they are sometimes called, are open to all. They last just five weeks (one session of about 1½ hours each week), and explore really important areas of our life.

Where they will be held and when they will take place can be discovered

by visiting the church porch and looking at the venues, dates and times. Find a group that is suitable for you, and then sign up.

There are eight groups available to choose from. You will be most welcome – we will value your presence and you might make a few discoveries!

For further information please call the Parish Office on 8460 5682.

Gladys Sharpe

Gladys, or 'Glad', as she was known, was born and brought up in London. During the war she worked as a telephonist on the London Trunk Exchange and as a voluntary Red Cross Nurse at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, as well as patrolling deep level underground stations where people had taken refuge to escape the bombing.

After the war she worked for Unilever. For 57 years she was married to David, and for 45 years of their marriage they lived in Winchester Park, Shortlands.

Gladys loved the outdoors, and particularly enjoyed swimming, walking and cycling.

Family and friends joined David for a Service of Thanksgiving at Beckenham Crematorium, followed by cremation.

Jean Martin

Born near Wrexham in Wales, Jean was proud of her direct descent from Elizabeth Woodville, the wife of King Edward IV. Clever and intelligent, Jean was to see wartime service in the W.R.N.S., working as a cipher clerk, monitoring the Navy's Midget submarines; a demanding and highly secret posting.

Demobbed, and always close to her mother, they set up a small library business, but it didn't prosper, and Jean went to work for Boots. Here, with her flair and organisational ability, Jean was asked to take on the stationery department in the Regent Street Branch, where she met her husband-to-be, Derek.

Theirs was a true love match, and they married in St. Mary's in 1970, remaining faithful church members – renewing their marriage vows on their Silver Wedding Anniversary.

Jean loved travel, reading, music and theatre, as well as her garden, and had the ability to make people feel important. With Jean's imagination and Derek's skills, year by year they made Christmas crackers and other items for a stall at the St. Mary's Christmas Fayre, all the proceeds from which went to charity, particularly St. Christopher's Hospice.

Cremation at Beckenham Crematorium followed a Service of Thanksgiving for Jean's life. The service took place at St. Mary's, Shortlands, and was attended by Derek and his family and a congregation of neighbours and friends.

OXFORD BOUND

Kieran O'Donnell, who lives in Hengist Way, has been offered a place to read Classics at The Queen's College, Oxford. He will begin his four year course in September of this year.

Kieran, who is a server at St. Mary's, is a former pupil of Highfield Infants' School, and more recently of Dulwich College, where he achieved 4 A levels at A grade.

He is currently enjoying a gap year before starting at Oxford, during which he is going ski-ing, one of the many sports he enjoys (at Dulwich he played football and rugby and was a keen athlete, particularly in the 100 metre event); he is also learning to drive and to play the guitar. (Any tuition would be very welcome!)



In February he is to start a six month stint with a city law firm, and thereafter intends to do some further travelling before commencing his studies.

We offer him our warmest congratulations and wish him well.

The Women's World Day of Prayer

is on Friday, March 3rd.

One of the local services is at St. Mary's, Shortlands at 7.30pm. The service will be led by Marion Westropp, and a warm invitation is extended to all.



From the Registers

Confirming their Christian faith:

- 15th Jan Harriet Adam
- Elizabeth Bingham
- Carol Latchana
- Philip Latchana
- Kevin Sloane
- Angela Watson
- James Watson

At Rest:

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

- 28th Dec Gladys Sharpe, aged 84
- 4th Jan Jean Martin, aged 81
- 12th Jan Vera Cooper, aged 82

The Future of Evening Services

The Parochial Church Council has recently held discussions about the future of Sunday evening services at St. Mary's, Shortlands. These discussions took into account the results of a questionnaire which was widely circulated at the end of 2005.

Following these discussions, a new schedule has been agreed. Firstly, there was overwhelming support for the future of evening services. Secondly, there was much support for variety. Thirdly, it was recognised that the Choir should be involved in some evening services, but not all. The Choir, under the leadership of our Organist and Choirmaster, Ian Brentnall, has always played a major and valued role in our Sunday worship, but it was recognised that what has, to date, been expected of them in terms of commitment of time may be unrealistic, given the many other interests and responsibilities which people have.

The result of the discussion is a revised pattern of evening worship, which will take effect from May, and will be as follows:

- 1st Sunday: Evening Communion or Evening Service (Common Worship)
- 2nd Sunday: Evening Prayer in the Chapel
- 3rd Sunday: Choral Evensong
- 4th Sunday: A Service of Healing/Taize Service/Youth Service (alternating on a quarterly basis)
- 5th Sunday: Songs of Praise.

During the month of August all evening services will be said, and will take place in the Millennium Memorial Chapel.

The Friends of St. Mary's

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will take place at 4.30pm on Sunday, April 23rd in the Church Hall.

After the meeting a light tea will be served, to which **all the congregation** is warmly invited. If you are not already a Friend why not come along to talk to us, find out what we do, and, hopefully, become a Friend yourself.

The Friends' Evening Service will follow at 6.30pm in the church, which this year will be a 'Songs of Praise'. Wine will be served after the service.

The Friends work hard to support the Church, and need your help! Please be with us on the 23rd April to find out what we have done, and what we intend to do in the future.

In the meantime, if you want any information about the Friends, (a Registered Charity), please contact Bill Shepherd on 8460 3838.

SPAN thanks

We record our thanks this month for donations totalling £40.43

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of St. Mary,
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WORSHIP

Every Sunday

- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except the first Sunday in the month in term time. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 4-14.
- 10.30 All Age Eucharist or Parade Service (1st Sunday in the month, term time).
- 18.30 Evening Service

Every Monday

- 17.00 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Every Friday

- 20.00 Night Prayers

*For information on any service,
please contact the Parish Office.*

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Open 9.00 am - 12.30 weekdays. Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

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SPAN

Website	www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk
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