

Changed by an encounter

January the sixth, Epiphany, is the day when churches celebrate the kings, sometimes referred to as wise men or magi, visiting the infant Jesus in Bethlehem. It also marks the end of Christmas: the time to take down the cards, lights and decorations and return the crib, holy family, shepherds, sheep, angels and those kings to the box; putting them away for another year. As you put away the kings, or any Christmas cards that feature them, do you ever wonder what happened to them or how the visit might have changed them?

The brief account of their visit in Matthew's gospel says that 'having been warned in a dream not to return to King Herod they returned by another road'. Clearly they avoided Jerusalem on their return journey, but it is telling us something deeper as well.

The kings were star-gazers. Whether you interpret the future by looking at the stars in the wide clear skies of the Middle East, or reading your horoscope in the newspaper, you have a view of a world where the future has already been determined and there is nothing that you can do about it.

The kings clearly believed this and had invested a lot of time making a difficult journey to Bethlehem on this basis. But something in their encounter with the infant Jesus changed this view. They now understood that they had choices; choices that could change future events. If they returned via Jerusalem, Herod would kill Jesus. If they returned by a different road Jesus would survive. The rest of the gospels are full of stories of people being changed by encounters with Jesus; realising that they have choices and that these choices will make a difference.

As you pack away the kings, you may wish to remember how they were changed by their meeting with Jesus. As you pack away Jesus, or pictures of him on Christmas cards, you may ask yourself if you encountered him in any new way at Christmas and whether you should find out more about how he changes other lives. As you look towards the New Year, and prepare to face the opportunities and challenges that it will bring, what choices will you face and how might they change things for other people?

Stuart Buchanan

Special Events and Services

Sunday 10 January - Epiphany Sunday
10.30am Family Communion

Sunday 17 January
6.30pm Choral Evensong
Responses: Reading
Canticles: Dyson in F
Anthem: There shall be a Star - Mendelssohn

Sunday 31 January - Stewardship Sunday
10.30am Family Communion

Sunday 7 February
6.30pm An Evening Service to Celebrate
Candlemas



DISCOVERING THE PAST:

As part of the 60th anniversary of St Mary's church building, children learned about life during World War Two. More detail inside.

Pictured (left to right) Theo McClure, Millie Hollingdale, Fabian Bailey

Stay in touch!

To keep up with news from St. Mary's in between editions of SPAN, you can like our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter – search for 'St Mary's Shortlands'.

Don't forget our website
www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk





From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Jean Woolgar 17 Dec aged 89

Dinner date reminder!

Our Annual Dinner will be held at
The Langley Park Golf Club on
Saturday 30th January 2016.
Tickets are £39 each, include
after dinner entertainment,
and can be purchased from the
Parish Office.

A conversation between God and people

Choral Evensong is a particularly English style of evening prayer which is celebrated by Anglicans around the world. In England it dates from Thomas Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer in 1549, when he joined the Latin offices of Vespers (evening prayer) and Compline (night prayer) to produce English Evensong as the regular prayer at the end of the day.

Choral Evensong consists of Prayers, Collects, Canticles (the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis), Psalms, Responses and an Anthem. It is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in history and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its secondary purpose is to evoke from the worshipper a response of praise, penitence, prayer and obedience.

A service sheet from Coventry cathedral has described it as '...a very tiny fragment of something else. When you come to Evensong it is as if you were dropping in on a conversation already in progress. A conversation between God and people which began long before you were born and will go on long after you are dead'.

At St Mary's we generally have Choral Evensong on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Do come and support this wonderful tradition of church music on Sunday 17th January at 6.30pm to hear our wonderful choir. We will be singing the Canticles by Dyson in F, Responses by Reading and the Anthem will be 'There shall be a Star' by Mendelssohn.

If anyone would like to join the choir please call Canon Claire Tillotson, Director of Music on 020 8460 7368



Father Christmas made a special appearance at the St Mary's Christmas Fair



The Guides helped a band of volunteers to tidy the church gardens in December. Help with the garden is always welcome: enquire at the Parish Office for more information

ST. MARY'S PRE-SCHOOL - STAFF VACANCY

A qualified person (level 2 or higher) is required to work 3 or 4 mornings a week during term time. Consideration may be given to someone unqualified who is willing to undertake training.

The successful candidate will be required to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure. Hours 8.45 - 12.45.

Please contact Pat Chase Tel: 07941 695183

Churches Together

Each year churches observe the week of prayer for Christian Unity which runs from 18th - 25th January. We are encouraged to attend services in different churches during this period.

The theme for this week in 2016 is "Salt of the Earth" and has been prepared for worldwide use by the Christians of Latvia. It is based around the verses 1 Peter 2:9-10. Peter's first letter is an encouragement to the newly baptised to live holy lives and to answer the calling shared by all the baptised to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord.

Churches Together in Beckenham have identified the following midweek services at which people from other churches are particularly welcome. Tues 19th 7.30pm St George's, Wed 20th 10am St Mary's, Shortlands, Fri 22nd 12 noon at Elmers End Free Church and Sat 23rd St George's at 9.30am.



Mission of the month

The Leprosy Mission

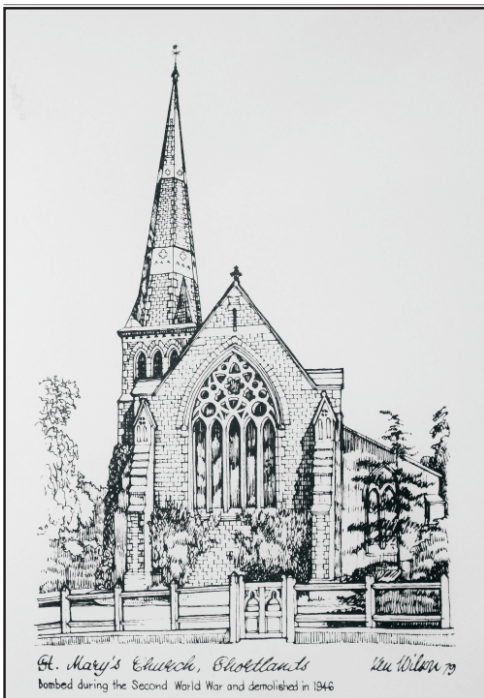
Leprosy is widely believed to be the world's oldest disease, and it is certainly one of the most stigmatised.

The disease destroys nerve tissue and, because of the loss of sensation, a person may put their hand into boiling water or step on a sharp object and feel nothing. The injury causes no pain and the patient, often living in poverty, ignores their treatment. Left unchecked, the infection consumes bone mass: the result is that the finger or toe, foot or hand look as if they have been gnawed off. Sufferers are excluded from society and are often unable to access healthcare.

Since 1982, leprosy has been curable with multidrug therapy and research to produce a vaccine to prevent the spread of leprosy continues. Early diagnosis and treatment are essential to prevent sufferers from consequential and permanent injury and disability.

The Leprosy Mission (TLM) is a Christian organisation working in over thirty countries worldwide, principally in Africa and Asia, transforming the lives of those affected. TLM has a vision for a world without leprosy. Sadly there are currently more than three million people living with irreversible disabilities, and World Health Organisation records show that someone is diagnosed with leprosy every two minutes.

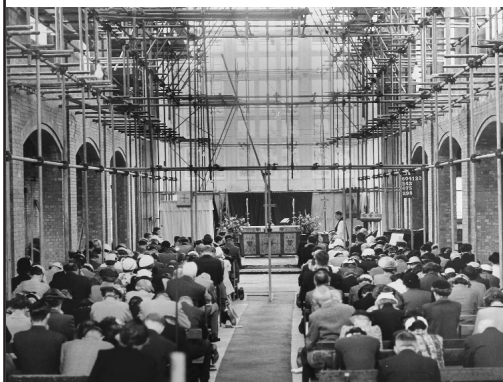
St Mary's has for many years supported TLM and further information is available on the display at the back of church throughout the month or at www.leprosymission.org.uk.



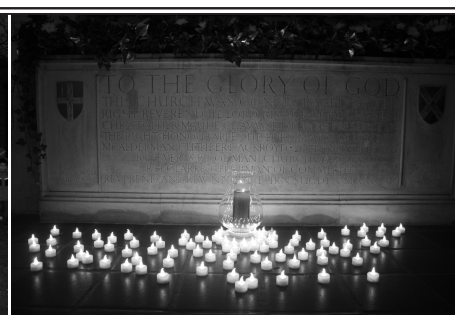
The original Victorian church



The church in ruins



Worshipping on a construction site



A moment of reflection close to the war memorial

A diamond day

On 22nd November St Mary's celebrated the 60th anniversary of the day when the church, rebuilt after the war, was dedicated or 'consecrated'.

Bob Stewart MP popped in to see the displays, which told the story of how the original church, which dated from 1868, was reduced to rubble by a V1 flying bomb in July 1944. The church's spire fell in one piece, flat on the ground: local children joked that they could walk up the spire without needing a steeplejack's harness!

The displays included a piece of shrapnel, believed to be from one of the bombs and recovered from near the west window. There was also a piece of carved window masonry from the old church, which has had a home in a garden rockery in St Mary's Avenue for many years.

While the church congregation raised the funds to build the new church they worshipped in a parish room in Shortlands village, and, on the anniversary of the bombing, in a tent on the site. Once they started building the new church, services were held in and around the building site! The church was consecrated on 20 November 1955.

As part of the commemorative events, a workshop was held for children during which they learned about life during World War Two.

A short reflection was held close to the War Memorial during which those from Shortlands who died in the service of their country were remembered, and we thought about some of the events of the War which affected our community during that time.

A Songs of Praise service included hymns that were sung during the service of consecration 60 years ago, and Rev Richard Finch reminded us that the church is its people. We took stones from a cairn away with us to remind us that we take the love of God out into our daily lives.



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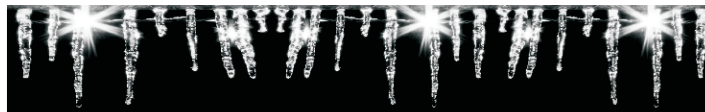
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WORSHIP

Every Sunday

- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except when notified. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
- 18.30 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

Every Monday

- 17.00 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Rev. M. Finch	8464 8065
(Sat - Thu)	revfinch@btinternet.com	
Associate Vicar	Rev. R. Finch	8464 8065
Associate Vicar	Rev. J. Peters	07531 617302/
(Sun, Mon, Wed)		8460 5682
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	Mr. S. Buchanan	8777 8008
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	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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	Mrs. P. Chase	8464 6188
	Miss A. Parks	8464 1157
	Mr. S. Clark	8464 0696
	Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
	Mr. B. Waring	07957 186027
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Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0031
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Assistant Organist	Mr Daniel Beach	8289 6510
Electoral Roll	Mr. N. Stoffel	8460 0063
Stewardship	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178
Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978

PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.plus.com
Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Mothers & Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8650 4553
Mothers' Union Fellowship Group		
	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	Miss J. Rambridge	8650 0947

For admissions to Beavers, Cubs & Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Mrs H. Ashford	07979 504079

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901, or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Guides (Tues.)	Ms. N. Keast	07516 650940
Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Wed.)	Mrs. R. Kateswaran	
		8249 0984
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms. W. Keeping	8466 1599
	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Pre-School	Mrs. P. Chase	8290 6704
		or 07960 988552
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Heayberd	8460 9537
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LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. M. Cooke	020 3665 0357
(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Cllr D. Jefferys	020 8460 6030
(Email: david.jefferys@bromley.gov.uk)	
Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

SPAN INFORMATION

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