

A journey with God

As we journey from one year to the next I was thinking about the journeys we make in life. Some journeys we take are physical - in January we celebrate the Epiphany, the journey taken by the Magi to find the infant Jesus. We may go shopping, to visit friends or on holiday. Journeys can be alone or with others, short or long, with those we know or those we don't know.

Some journeys are much more personal and spiritual. Some people go on pilgrimage, mainly to sights of religious significance (as a group from St Mary's did in October). A pilgrimage is marked along the way by waymarkers.

For those who are Christians we are on a journey - our journey of faith in God is ongoing, it is lifelong, and it too has waymarkers. Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our life. As we continue on our journey we may be admitted to communion and later choose to confirm our faith. Two of our congregation members marked their journey and were confirmed in November by the Bishop of Rochester The Rt Rev James Langstaff and a photo from this occasion can be found inside this month's SPAN.

In our own individual journeys of faith we often forget how important our own experiences are. It often seems to us that 'other people' know far more than we do and are better Christians.

It can be too easy to hanker after somebody else's faith and to want to live their journey. We can be tempted to try to make their faith our faith and to try to live out their understanding. No two people see or understand their faith in identical ways.

We continue to explore our faith in a variety of ways including bible study notes and home groups: we would be delighted if you too wanted to meet with us to try and find answers to the questions you may have.

Rev Morag Finch

ALL WELCOME: The family of the late Canon Doug Redman look forward to celebrating Choral Evensong with the congregation at St Mary's at 6.30pm on Sunday 15 January.



Were you part of St Mary's Youth Club?

A reunion is being planned in 2017 for anyone who was part of the Youth Club at St Mary's during the 1970s.

Ian, Janie and Lance Nurdin were, in turn, chair of the committee, and John Perryman was the leader; after he left, John Oliver stepped into his role.

If you would like to be part of the reunion please email simonj.saunders@btinternet.com If you are in touch with anyone who was there and no longer has access to SPAN, please pass this on to them.

Special Events and Services

Sunday 8 January - Epiphany Service

10.30am Family Communion

Sunday 15 January

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Responses: Smith 5 part

Canticles: Stanford in Bb

Anthem: Evening Hymn - Balfour Gardner



A WARM WELCOME awaits you from our 'baristas' serving coffee after 10.30am services at St Mary's

Stay in touch!

The Parish Office email is now office@stmaryshortlands.church
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

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

11 Dec

Thomas Napier Schon Waters

Lily Rose Szekely Waters

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Rose Woodward 23 Nov aged 88

Wendy Grover 23 Nov aged 59

Jean Luckhurst 1 Dec aged 73

Remembering

Jean Luckhurst

Jean Luckhurst was born in 1943 in Loughborough where her family had been moved because of the war: the family returned to North London later, and this is where she grew up.

She was diligent and hardworking, which is reflected in her forty years of service for the Government.

Jean was very proud of her work but had many interests as well. She and Alison, her partner of 32 years, loved to travel, enjoyed opera, and her garden. Jean was also pretty passionate about worms and had several dustbin sized containers of them – not garden worms but very special ones you send away for.

There were other achievements: Jean played cricket for Middlesex Ladies (her cousin Brian Luckhurst opened for England).

Together Jean and Alison travelled all over the world: Cambodia was a favourite destination. They didn't travel alone: Snort and Voyage were their (stuffed animal) companions and were with Jean in hospital.

Jean joined Alison in coming regularly to St Mary's a while ago, and Jean will be missed by very many people.

I would have my heart

I would have my heart
Be still
The well of you;

I would have my mind
Be still
The thought of you;

I would have my voice
Be still
Except of you;

I would have my work
Be still
Honest to you;

I would have my home
Be still
The joy of you;

I would have my days
Be still
The road with you;

I would have my end
Be still
Alive with you.

Tim Aldred

Food for thought

Would you like to read the Bible more regularly but never seem to get around to it?

The Bible Reading Fellowship produces daily reading notes which are very helpful and give food for thought. The three-year cycle of readings that we hear in church cannot use all of the Bible and so the notes help to broaden our knowledge of the Bible by often using different passages. Different people write the notes in each four-month issue so there is variety.

There are several different series and I would be very happy to talk to you and answer any questions you may have – call me on 020 8650 0947.

Judy Rambridge



CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP: Members of the 2WWs enjoyed lunch together at the Park Langley Tennis Club in December, an occasion they like to arrange a couple of times a year. There was much friendship and plenty of conversation around the tables. The 2WWs are a group of people who are on their own and enjoy the company and fellowship of others.

Saint of the Month

St Paul – 25 January

Saint Paul is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in the history of the Western world.

His works are some of the earliest Christian documents that we have: 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament were written by him, and he's the hero of another, The Acts of the Apostles.

He travelled tens of thousands of miles around the Mediterranean visiting Israel, Syria, Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Malta, Italy and possibly Spain. During this time he founded many churches and enthusiastically encouraged the members of others.

The letters which he wrote to these churches in his three missionary journeys are considered extremely important since they contain what everyone agrees to be Paul's own statements about his life and thoughts. In Paul's writings, he provides the first written account of what it is to be a Christian and thus a description of Christian spirituality.

It was Paul who came up with the doctrine that would turn Christianity from a small sect of Judaism into a worldwide faith that was open to all.

Like St Peter, he started life with a different name – Saul. He was born in Tarsus in modern day Eastern Turkey. Though he was a Jew, he was also a Roman citizen. He took the name Paul after his conversion to Christianity on the road to Damascus, when he changed from persecuting Jesus to preaching that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God.



FESTIVE FUN: St Mary's hall was packed with bargain hunters at the Christmas Fair.

Welcome to the parish!

Harris Primary Academy Shortlands settled into the parish in its permanent home on Kingswood Road in September 2016, having previously been in temporary accommodation on Westmoreland Road. There are currently 180 children on roll in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Miss Sam French is Executive Principal at the school: she leads both this school and Harris Primary Academy Kent House, in Penge, although she spends most of her week in Shortlands. She has been Principal at Kent House for three years, and before moving to work for Harris she was deputy head at Valley Primary School.

She told SPAN: 'I hope to be able to provide our children with the very best education I can because I believe that no child deserves any less. I want to ensure that children leave us well equipped to succeed in the next phase of their education, both academically and socially'.

The school has several connections with the parish of St Mary's: Miss French grew up in Shortlands and her parents still live in the parish. One of the school's Year 2 teachers is the granddaughter of Canon Doug Redman, previously vicar of the church, and another member of staff lives in the parish.

The school is looking forward to welcoming 60 more families to the growing school in September, and will be at capacity in September 2020 with 420 children aged 4-11.

Looking forwards together

Christmas celebrations are now coming to an end. The Christmas tree, turkey, crackers and presents have left you relaxed and satisfied – another Christmas come and gone.

You may have enjoyed the Christmas Carol Service, listened to children singing 'Away in a manger' at the Christingle service, been to the Crib service to see children dressed up as characters from the nativity, or enjoyed Midnight Mass to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Perhaps you saw in the New Year and made your resolutions – which you promise to keep faithfully this year (of course!)

If you have taken part in any of these things, you will know how uplifting are the celebrations, the renewed hope at the beginning of a new year, the planning and expectation for the year ahead.

We would like to remind you that a warm welcome awaits you at St. Mary's not only at Christmas, but throughout the year. After services during the Christmas season, people often say 'I should come more often, I really enjoyed that' or 'I must make time to come to church more'.

If you are one of those people, you really are very welcome to come back to join us – please don't leave it until next Christmas. Of course, if you do find another year gone and Christmas 2017 arrives, we will still be here and would love to see you again.

When we at St Mary's come to church, we are uplifted both in worship and friendship. We support each other through times of trouble and celebrate together when things are good. We live with the hope Jesus shared with us of eternal life, which helps and encourages us to look forward with excitement for another year.

We hope to see you soon.

Debbie Speller (Pastoral Assistant)

Mission of the month

The Leprosy Mission



Founded in 1874, The Leprosy Mission (TLM) is a leading Christian global charity working in numerous countries across Africa, South Africa, and East Asia providing and evaluating a range of medical and social projects that help transform the lives of leprosy affected people.

Untreated, leprosy can cause progressive and permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes, yet for more than 30 years the disease has been easily curable with multi drug therapy, a combination of antibiotics.

Early diagnosis and treatment are essential. Due to the lack of awareness and stigma that surround the disease, some people delay seeking help and are diagnosed too late to prevent life changing disabilities: fear and the stigma can lead to social exclusion which can be more damaging than leprosy's physical symptoms.

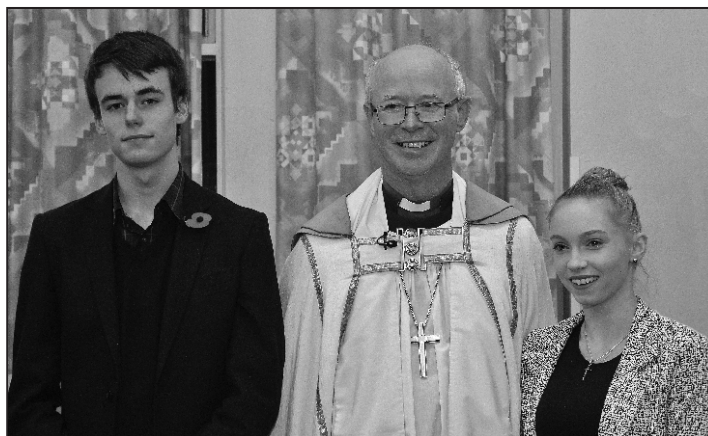
Research and trials continue in a search for a preventative vaccine but in the meantime more than 200,000 new cases are diagnosed annually with more than 3 million people living with irreversible disabilities, including blindness, as a result of late diagnosis and treatment.

TLM continues to work hard in reversing the injustices of leprosy: its work includes treatment, health care, surgery, physiotherapy, health awareness training and providing small business loans to enable those affected to escape poverty and become independent.

St Mary's has a long record of supporting this charity. Further information is available from the display at the back of the church throughout January and you can find out more at www.leprosymission.org.uk

Songs of Praise

Come along to Songs of Praise at 6.30pm on Sunday 26th February. This service will be led by the St. Mary's Music Group and will feature popular hymns, worship songs, Bible readings and prayers. The programme will be chosen from suggestions made by members of the congregation and SPAN readers. If you would like to put forward one of your favourites, please contact the Parish Office during January.



CONFIRMED: Lucy Hemsley and Oliver Wright-Jones were among 28 candidates recently confirmed at St John's Eden Park.

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- 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

- 17.30 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	
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PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682

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	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	Miss J. Rambridge	8650 0947

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Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Ms E. Hay	07932758801

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		8249 0984
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