

Sharing and caring

We recently celebrated Harvest in church and the children from local nursery schools visited to sing songs, present their gifts and hear a story. We thought about how there is plenty for everyone if we learn how to share. I told the story of Stone Soup and the children helped me act it out.

It begins like all good stories: Once upon a time....

A man was riding his horse which stumbled over a rock sticking out of the ground. He dug it out and put it in his pocket so no one else would get hurt.

He soon arrived in a village. People stared at him, watching out of their windows but no one spoke. He asked a woman if he could have some food as he was hungry. She replied that there had been a poor harvest and they didn't have enough. He asked others and each gave a similar reply.

He felt sorry for them; they were as hungry as he was. He told the villagers: 'Your worries are over. I have a special stone that will help take you through the long winter. With it you can make stone soup: it not only feeds hungry people but brings people together'.

He filled a pot with water and started a fire. He added the stone to the pot and asked for a carrot, then an onion, someone brought a potato and others a turnip and herbs. Soon there was a wonderful smell from the pot. The villagers brought tables and chairs out, bowls and spoons and everyone ate until they were full. Someone got their fiddle out and they sang and danced for the rest of the evening before going to bed feeling content and well fed.

The next morning as the traveller said goodbye he was reminded about his stone. He replied 'You need it more than me - as long as you have it you will never be hungry'.

The story of Stone Soup is a story about sharing and caring when blessings seem scarce. The stone brings people closer together, and feeds those who are hungry.

It reminds us that everyone, no matter how poor they may seem, has some gift or contribution they can make for the good of all. A gift for which we should give thanks. A gift which we, who may be rich as the world counts riches, should not ignore - no matter how small that gift may seem to some.

Rev Morag Finch

Special Events and Services

Sunday 5 November - All Saints' Sunday

4.00pm Memorial Service

Sunday 12 November - Remembrance Sunday

10.00am Family Communion and Parade Service

*Including Rededication, Act of Remembrance,
Two Minutes Silence and Laying of Wreaths*

*(Note the earlier start time - meet in church
at 10.00am, and by the War Memorial at
10.45am)*

Sunday 26 November

6.30pm An informal service led by the Music Group

Sunday 3 December - Advent Sunday

10.30am Family Toy Service

*You are invited to bring a new, unwrapped toy
or voucher suitable for children aged 8-13
years, which will become a gift for a local child
in need of support through Welcare in Bromley.
Please, no soft toys. Wrapping paper also
welcome.*

6.30pm Advent Carol Service

THE ST MARY'S CHURCH

CHRISTMAS FAIR

SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER

FROM 2-4PM

IN THE CHURCH HALL

COME AND SHARE IN THE FUN!

**PLEASE DONATE NEARLY NEW TOYS, BOTTLES,
BOOKS, RAFFLE PRIZES, OLD JEWELLERY, SOFT TOYS,
BRIC-A-BRAC, BOOKS, UNWANTED GIFTS
OR OTHER CLEAN SALEABLE GOODS**

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MONDAY TO FRIDAY FROM 9.30AM TO 12.30PM



From the Registers

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

24 September Lucca Rouget

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Mary Spong 19 Sep aged 87

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Ronald Osbourne 18 September



SPAN THANKS

We record our thanks this month for gifts amounting to £5.00



CONGRATULATIONS: to Keith and Valerie Mills, married recently at St Mary's

Looking forward to Christmas

With December fast approaching, the thoughts of the children and young people of St Mary's will soon be turning towards presents and parties, food and fun. They will also be looking forward to being involved in the Christmas services at St Mary's.

The first of these is the Toy Service on 3 December, at which our younger children will write and lead prayers, give the Bible readings and help receive the gifts that will be distributed to needy families in our local area this Christmas. We hope that many in our community will come to bring gifts and share in this service.

On 10 December many of our children and young people will enjoy the beautiful Christingle service. As the church is filled with candlelight and the sound of children singing, we will remember the work of the Children's Society, bringing love and hope into the lives of vulnerable children throughout the UK.

For many, both young and old, Christmas would be incomplete without the Christmas Eve Crib Service when the children and young people of St Mary's dramatise the story of the first Christmas. This will be interwoven with carols for everyone and the chance to reflect and celebrate amidst the busyness of last minute Christmas preparations. Once again we invite children from the community to come to this service dressed as angels, shepherds or kings to help us in the re-telling of these long-ago events that still speak to us today.

For the twelve children and young people who are members of the church choir, this is a very busy time of year. In addition to the regular Sunday morning services, they will be singing in most of the special services during Advent and Christmas. We are very proud of all that they achieve and grateful for their commitment to the choir.

Of course, children and young people play an important part in the life of St Mary's not only at Christmas, but all year round. They meet most Sunday mornings in their Junior Church groups, beginning and finishing with the adults in the 10.30am service. Numbering around 45 in total, some come often, some occasionally; each one is a special part of our church family.

If you think your children might like to join us, they are welcome to come and try any Sunday when groups are running. For dates and further details, see www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk/children-young-people/junior-church or my contact details are on the back of SPAN.

We look forward to celebrating Christmas with you and your children this year.

Sally Aldred

UPDATE: regular readers will remember that we have appointed an architect to help us consider what we need from our church hall and meeting rooms in future, and whether any replacement buildings are needed.

This work has been delayed by a few weeks as we discovered that we did not have detailed plans of the current building and site so we have commissioned a new set for the architect to use.

We expect to receive the architect's thoughts on options for the site towards the end of this calendar year – we'll keep you posted.

Rev Morag Finch

Social isolation

November has been designated as Social Awareness Month.

Social isolation can affect older people, people with physical disabilities, those with learning disabilities or mental illness, young people and care givers without local support. Social isolation can affect an individual's physical and mental well-being and place them at risk of abuse.

Bromley Council has developed a comprehensive action plan to raise awareness of the problem and to offer support and assistance. During this time we will be reaching out to those who are socially isolated to offer practical assistance, working with local community groups, churches, charities and health services. For more information see bromley.mylifeportal.co.uk/connectingbromley

Please look at this especially if you are feeling isolated or lonely or if you know of a friend or neighbour who might be helped by this programme. We all have a part to play in this initiative which is a response to the concerns of residents and seeks to harness the sense of community and volunteering we have across our Borough.

Cllr David Jefferys

My day job

Many of you know me as the large, loud, bearded bass singer. This is a little about what I do when I'm not in church.

I originally studied Psychology, involving visits to large Victorian-built mental health institutions, but graduated during the major recession of the late 70's/ early '80s. Having run a fruit and veg stall whilst at University proved more useful than my degree, in that I ended up on a management training scheme with Sainsbury's.

After a number of years working in the stores they moved me into training and paid for me to gain my Personnel qualifications. I ended up as Head of Retail Recruitment.

I then worked for three consultancy firms providing Human Resources (HR) advice to a wide range of organisations and supporting a development initiative – 'Investors in People'.

Over the last 16 years I have held a number of senior HR and general management posts including being Chief Executive of two small mental health charities in north London.

I now work four days a week for an Arm's Length Body of the Home Office. My day to day work involves interpreting the policies that apply to a large government department and applying them to a relatively small organisation of 200-220 staff. For me it is about how I ensure that managers treat staff fairly (and legally) whilst ensuring tax-payers get value for money.

My fifth day is used as a trustee of Community Options, a charity which inspires and enables people with mental health needs to lead valued and meaningful lives in the community.

My main hobby is singing, of which the choir at St Mary's forms a major part.

Robin Hogg



Mission of the month

Toilet Twinning

The fact that one in three people across the world do not have somewhere safe to go to the toilet in 2017 is appalling. Bad sanitation is one of the world's biggest killers: it affects women, children, the old and the sick the hardest. Every minute a child under the age of five dies because of dirty water and poor sanitation and around half the people in the world have an illness caused by bad sanitation.

Not only is there the risk of disease but many women and girls are vulnerable to being attacked as they walk to the edge of their community to go to the toilet in the open or late at night. Many girls drop out of school because the school either does not have a toilet, or does not have a separate toilet for boys and girls.

There is something we can do about it. Toilet twinning is a scheme run by the charity Tear Fund: a donation of £60 can build a toilet where it is needed. Local people are involved by donating materials and building it; they are also trained in hygiene and how to look after the toilets.

Here at St Mary's we have seven toilets: some have already been twinned with donations given to build toilets in Africa and Asia. Our aim is that we will twin all of our toilets and hopefully more beyond,

As we are coming up to Christmas you could give twinning a toilet as a gift to someone who already has one.

For more information see the board at the back of the church or www.toilettwinning.org.



On Saturday 30th September, 22 past and present staff of St Mary's Pre-School Shortlands got together in the church hall to celebrate the pre-school's 25th anniversary.

Cubs Come Clean!

A part of the Energy Conservation badge, Mowgli Pack has worked very hard to tidy and litter-pick in certain areas of Shortlands Station.

Armed with fork and trowel, broom and brush, the Cubs swept and weeded; the enthusiasm shown by the boys was heartening as they all did their bit.

One commuter remarked that it had never looked so good! I wonder if they do this at home? Well done boys!

Thanks also must go to the Council for the loan of equipment and to Denise & Bob (station staff) for their support.

Chil aka Tricia Braithwaite

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From Conflict towards Peace

In November the music group will be leading an informal worship evening service. The mood of the evening will move from darkness to light – acknowledging people's fears and anxieties due to conflict in our lives, be it personal or global. We will explore the hope that through our roots in faith and support from God – through scripture and one another – we can find the light.

This year has seen many attacks – in London, Manchester, and across the world. Those who wish to bring evil and chaos into the world seek to fill people with fear and uncertainty. In contrast to this are the countless acts of kindness and grace that take place every day, which reflect God's love being released into the world through ordinary people.

We will be asking the questions "What does conflict mean to us?" and "What does peace mean to us?". We will be encouraged to offer up our burdens, and those of the world, to God.

All are welcome to join the Music group at 6.30 pm on Sunday 26 November for some reflections, music and prayers for peace.

Restored!

Last month we were delighted to see work to replace the war memorial in its position at the top of Church Road. We look forward to rededicating it on Remembrance Sunday

Allhallowtide

The first week in November has always been a time for celebrations marking the end of Harvest and the beginning of winter. It is also a time for remembering those who have died.

Allhallowtide starts on the evening of 31 October with All Hallows Eve or Halloween as we know it better today. Then comes All Saints Day on 1 November, and All Souls Day on 2 November.

Halloween has its origins in pagan festivals held around the end of October in Great Britain. People believed that, at this time of year, the spirits of dead people could come 'alive' and walk among the living. They thought that it was important to dress up in costumes when venturing outside, to avoid being harmed by these spirits, thus possibly giving rise to the Halloween costumes worn these days.

A popular game at Halloween is apple bobbing, perhaps a reminder of the time when women accused of witchcraft in the Middle Ages were tried, using ducking stools. Others think that apple bobbing is a way for young people to predict who they will marry or whether their partner is faithful!

Some aspects of the modern Halloween celebrations, such as carving lanterns out of vegetables, originated long ago. The custom of trick or treating goes back to at least the 16th century but has only recently become such a commercial and overt practice.

All Saints Day is an opportunity for believers to remember all saints and martyrs, known and unknown, throughout Christian history. It has been a Christian tradition since the 4th century to remember all martyrs, but it was Pope Gregory IV in the year 835 who established the day to remember all saints.

The next day is All Souls Day. It purposely follows All Saints Day to shift the emphasis from the saints and martyrs who are in heaven to all those who have died.

There will be a memorial service at St Mary's at 4.00pm on Sunday 5th November to remember our loved ones who have died.



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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

- 17.30 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	
Associate Vicar	Rev. R. Finch	8464 8065
Associate Vicar	Rev. J. Peters	07531 617302/
(Sun, Mon, Wed)		8460 5682
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Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978
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PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.church
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		
Friends of St. Mary's	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
	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	Ms E. Hay	07932758801

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	

Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms. H. Last	8460 1705
Pre-School	Mrs. P. Chase	8290 6704
		or 07960 988552

The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
Church Flowers	Mrs. M. Parr	8249 7127
Mission Chairman	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai Link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Fair Trade	Mrs. C. Willatt	8313 0246
Mobility Class	Mrs. Jan Boam	8460 7101

LOCAL CONTACTS

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

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