

Getting ready for Christmas

by Canon Paul Miller

The time leading up to Christmas is called Advent. This year it begins on 29 November. Essentially it is a time to prepare for Christmas with a sense of excitement and expectation. We certainly saw something of the sense of that in the faces of the children who visited Santa's Grotto at St. Mary's Christmas Fayre.

It is a time, amidst all the business and stresses that the festival brings, to remind ourselves of the reason for the season. Christmas celebrates that God sent his son Jesus Christ to bring us new life. Advent helps us to prepare for this moment.

Here is a prayer to help you:

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly.

Let me stop and listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told.

Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus. "Glory in the Highest!! The Messiah has been born!"

Among all the bright

sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honour and worship Jesus, my King, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counsellor, Son of God.

All your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger.

Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity!

As we recall the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, so we too remember the faces of those who live in Bethlehem today. The Palestinian children in the photo (below right) are just a few of the many who live under the torture of the Israeli security wall. They live under restraint but they have a spirit of peace and adventure even though it is masked by the effects of conflict and pain.

May all those who live in places of conflict know the peace of the Christ child this Christmastide. And may you and yours have a blessed Christmas wherever you will celebrate it.



Special Events and Services

Sunday, 29 November

6.30pm - Advent Carol Service
Including music by Kelly, Stainer, Shepherd, Goldschmidt, Archer and Guest, as well as popular congregational carols.

Sunday, 6 December

10.30am - Toy Service
You are invited to bring one new, unwrapped toy, which will become a gift for a local child in need of support through Bromley Welcare.

3.00pm - Christmas Concert by the XBY Concert Band

Friday, 11 December

10.00am - Highfield Infants' School Nativity Play

Sunday, 13 December

6.30pm - The Christingle Carol Service
Come and see the children's faces glowing in the light of the candles, and support the work of the Children's Society.

Tuesday, 15 December

9.45am - Highfield Junior School Carol Service
2.00pm - St. Christopher's School Carol Service

Thursday, 17 December

12 noon - St. Mary's Toddler Group Christmas Service

Friday, 18 December

11.00am - St. Mary's Pre-School Christmas Service

Sunday, 20 December

6.30pm - The Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas with music by Benjamin Britten, David Willcocks, Philip Ledger, Max Reger, Macpherson and John Rutter.

Christmas Eve: Thursday, 24 December

3.30pm - This is the Star - Nativity Play and Crib Service
led by Fiona Bratt, Junior Church Co-ordinator. All children and adults are welcome to take part, and if you wish, come dressed as angels, shepherds or wise men.

11.30pm - Procession by Candlelight, Midnight Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord and Carols for Christmas
The Choir will be singing carols from 11.15pm to welcome you.

Christmas Day: Friday, 25 December

9.00am - Holy Communion
10.30am - Family Communion for Christmas Day
You are invited to bring a newly opened present!

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS !



From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

11 Oct Bob Lawford, aged 93
19 Oct Gertrude Crafer, aged 99
26 Oct Victor Wilbourn, aged 84
31 Oct Les Green, aged 89

Interment of Ashes

18 Oct Patrick King



Remembering

Bob Lawford

Bob was born in 1916. He grew up with his brother and two sisters in Eltham, where their father had a wholesale market garden business in Covent Garden.

His main childhood hobby was building Meccano models and he went on to become an engineer. He married Ann in 1947 and they had two children, Diana and Anna.

He loved mountains and became an avid walker and climber. During their time in India he joined the Himalaya Club becoming its President. On returning to the UK he joined the Alpine Club where he was for many years the Honorary Historian. His knowledge of mountains and mountain histories was compendious.

He loved his garden and the challenge of making something.

A Service of Thanksgiving, conducted by Canon Paul Miller, took place at Beckenham Crematorium prior to cremation. Both his daughters gave readings and two of his grandchildren gave tributes.

Victor Wilbourn

Vic was born in Catford. He was one of five.

His work included being a milkman, a postman, a carpenter's mate, a painter and decorator, a floor layer and a telecoms engineer. He served in the Second World War in the Royal Marines. He loved gardening, was an ardent Arsenal fan and a philatelist and a reader.

He married Joan and they had two sons, Steven and Barry, and three grandchildren, Ian, Megan and Elena.

A Service of Thanksgiving, prior to cremation, was conducted by Canon Paul Miller at Beckenham Crematorium, attended by family, friends and residents of Blenheim Court to where he had moved from Christ Church in Dorset. Five members of the family gave personal tributes.

Remembering the Fallen in Shortlands



The Annual Service of Remembrance took place on Sunday, 8 November at St. Mary's Shortlands and was attended by 435 people. The service began and ended in church, with the Service of Remembrance taking place at 11.00am by the War Memorial.

Canon Miller in his Remembrance Day sermon said 'I feel the nation took very seriously this opportunity to remember the fallen. Here in Shortlands we remember the sixty six men and women who died in the First and Second World Wars whose names are recorded on the War Memorial. We must remember they were just young men and women like the seven during this past week have been killed in action in Afghanistan.'

The Service was attended by all eleven of Shortlands uniformed organisations, Jacqui Lait, Member of Parliament for Beckenham, George Taylor, Local Councillor, Ann Golding, Head Teacher of Highfield Infants' School, Karen Henderson, Chair of Governors at Highfield Junior School, Mark Dempsey, Chair of the Shortlands Residents' Association and PC Kay Leslie representing the police.

Pictured at the War Memorial, after laying a wreath on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, is Jacqui Lait, flanked by Churchwadens, David Jefferys and Ann Parks and the Rev. Jane Peters.

The Wave... is coming to London on 5 December

On Saturday, 5 December, the UK's biggest ever demonstration in support of action on climate change is planned to flood the streets of central London, ahead of the crucial UN climate talks in Copenhagen.

The Wave, a carnival-style street procession beginning at 12.00pm from Grosvenor Square in London, is being organised by the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition. A finale will take place at 3.00pm as The Wave

encircles the Houses of Parliament.

The Stop Climate Chaos Coalition represents 11 million members across 100 UK organisations, from the Women's Institute and RSPB to Christian Aid and Unison.

For further information on The Wave, including the procession route and importantly how to get to the event from across the UK, visit www.stopclimatechaos.org.

The little round button

At a clearance sale, the wife of a senior judge found the perfect green tie to match one of her husband's sport jackets. Soon after, while the couple was relaxing at a resort to get his mind off a complicated cocaine-conspiracy case, he noticed a small, round disc sewn into the tie. The judge showed it to the police, who were equally suspicious that it might be a 'bug', planted by the conspiracy defendants.

The police took the tie away for some serious analysis. Two weeks later, the judge phoned Scotland Yard to find out the results of their tests. "Well, we're not really sure where the disc came from," the police told him. "But we did discover that if you press it, it plays Jingle Bells."

Accessible Toilet Update

Fund-raising is progressing well, with only a few thousand to go. Amongst the remaining fund-raising activities is a **100 Club**. For a one off donation of £24 entrants enter a monthly draw where there is a first prize of £50 and a second prize of £25. This means that entrants will have a 1 in 4 chance of winning more back than they have paid in. Anyone interested in joining the 100 Club should contact the Parish Office (8460 5682).



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Children baptised at St. Mary's



Twenty six people have so far been baptised at St. Mary's this year.

The latest to be welcomed are Lucy and Daniel Schofield of St. Mary's Avenue. They were accompanied by their mother, Sue, and family and friends, some who had travelled down from Yorkshire. The service was followed by a party in their house.



Visitors to Shortlands

On All Saints Day, Sunday, 1 November, the Bishop of Tonbridge, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Brian Castle (pictured right) came to preside and preach at St. Mary's at the main morning service.

Coincidentally another visitor, from a little further afield, was present. Ron Graham (pictured centre), the President of the Australian Rugby Football Union was visiting the UK ahead of Australia's rugby match with England at Twickenham the following Saturday. Also pictured with them is church member Alex Hemming, who is a past President of the Kent Rugby Football Union.

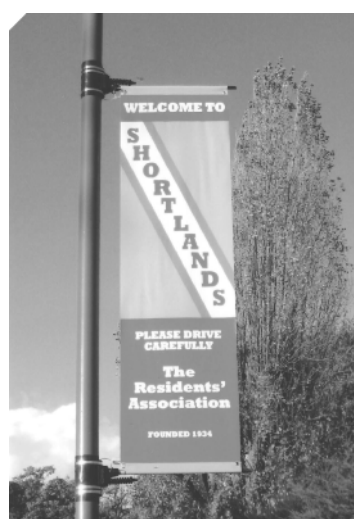


Residents' Association - Gift to Shortlands

How often when explaining where we live, to someone not familiar with the area, do we resort to saying 'it's between Beckenham and Bromley'?

In an attempt to right such shortcomings the Residents' Association has had installed pairs of street banners at the principle entry points into Shortlands – Bromley Road where it drops down the hill towards the railway station, Scotts Lane/Hayes Lane to cover Shortlands Road and on Beckenham Lane by Valley Primary School on the way down from Bromley.

The idea is to give Shortlands some recognisable gateways, define its geographical independence from surrounding districts and in general seek to put our community firmly on the map – for far too long, in the minds of many, has our patch been subsumed as being merely part of



one or other of its larger neighbours.

The banners are part of the Associations' events to mark the 75th anniversary of its founding in 1934.

The face of Traidcraft

Every month since August 2005, Cecilia Willatt has hosted a Traidcraft stall at St. Mary's after the Sunday morning service.

Traidcraft was started by a small group of people who wanted to express, in a particular way, the Christian call to love our neighbours and seek justice for the poor. Although their Christian perspective was at the heart of their activity, they work with people of all faiths and those of none who share their mission of fighting poverty through trade. St. Mary's became a Fairtrade church in 2005.

'I still find it exciting that we are all directly helping some of the world's poorest people, not with charity, but by purchasing fairtrade goods which enables them to lead dignified lives' commented Cecilia Willatt.

Since coordinating the monthly stall in 2005, Cecilia has taken approximately £4,000 - a brilliant response.

The Parish Church of St. Mary, Shortlands

Link Parish

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Assisi, Douai, France



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 2½-14.
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
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Every Wednesday

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

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Honorary Curate	Rev. J. Peters	07531 6173 02
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e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.plus.com
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ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Mothers & Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8650 4553
Mothers' Union	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
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Cubs (Tues.)	Mr. D. Hope	8466 5545
Beavers &		
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Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
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Brownies (Wed.)	Ms. H. Preston	07754 444453
Brownies (Thurs.)	Ms. D. Allen	8650 1720
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Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	07920 233848

SPAN

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