

# A space to pray

A friend recently sent me a link to an article in The Guardian newspaper which showed that a recent poll had found that non-believers turn to prayer in a crisis.

This set me thinking: what is prayer and why do we pray?

Prayer is a two-way communication with God. We meet our friends and talk and listen to them, or communicate through writing (whether letters, text messages or emails) and it is through this contact that our relationships grow and blossom. We learn the things that are important in our friends' lives and we find out about what is happening to them. Without this contact our friendships would become dull and boring. This is true of our relationship with God too.

Many think that prayer has to be done in a specific way or place in order to be effective but the reality is there is no correct way to pray. In the same way as you may talk to friends in different ways at different times, the same is true when you talk to God.

When we pray we may want to say sorry to God for something we have done wrong, we may wish to thank God for something good that has happened or, as in the article, we may ask God for help in a situation, whether for ourselves or for someone else. Jesus encouraged us to go into a room and shut the door when we pray - but he also prayed outside on a mountain. So, the important thing seems to be to find a space to pray where it can just be us and God.

When we've 'dismissed the crowd' around us and outside us, we often need to dismiss the crowd 'inside'. We need to find ways to help us focus on God without our thoughts being filled with all the concerns and busyness of everyday life.

There is no one right way to pray. We can sit and chat; kneel, bow down, and worship him in reverent awe; write down prayers; light a candle as we pray to symbolise our hope for a situation or walk around, calling out loudly the cries of our heart!

Why do people pray even if they say they don't believe in God? At times of personal crisis or tragedy, many say they pray to gain comfort or feel less lonely. It seems, as Rachel Treweek, bishop of Gloucester said, this 'reflects human longing for the mystery and love of God amid experiences of daily life'.

If you would like to find out more about prayer please contact the parish office and a member of our ministry team will be in touch.

*Rev Morag Finch*

## **A CELEBRATION OF LOVE.**

At 6.30pm on Sunday 25th February, the St. Mary's Music Group will be leading another of our popular informal evening services.

With February being the month of St. Valentine's Day, this will be a celebration of God's love to us.

Everyone is made to feel welcome at these services, where we try to make it easy for people to participate in joyful Christian worship.



## **Special Events and Services**

### **Wednesday 14 February - Ash Wednesday**

**10.00am Holy Communion services**

**& 8.00pm** *With the Imposition of Ashes for those who wish it*

### **Sunday 18 February**

**4.00pm Choral Evensong**

*Responses: Sanders*

*Canticles: Wood in D*

*Anthem: How Lovely are thy dwellings  
- Brahms*

### **Sunday 25 February**

**6.30pm An informal service**

*Led by the Music Group*



## From the Registers

### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

George Thwaites 8 Jan aged 96



## Remembering

### Edna Purslove

Edna was born in Margate in 1923, and married Ken in 1946.

They had a café in East Street in Bromley – 'The Odd Spot' - and Edna, Ken and their daughter Janet lived above the café until they moved to Farnborough. They moved to Pickhurst Park where they lived for many years before moving to Netherfields about 15 years ago.

Edna and Ken used to enjoy playing golf at Langley Park club amongst others.

Janet has memories of family holidays to Italy, Majorca, St Lucia, Barbados as well as cruises including to Cairo and Israel.

Edna was a keen gardener and, along with Ken and Janet enjoyed cross stitch and embroidery. Many of her creations grace the walls of the flat at Netherfields.

When she was younger Janet remembers Edna making her dresses and showing her how to do so. This interest continued until recently: Edna would comment on clothes and made sure her hair was done regularly. Manners and etiquette were important to her; something she taught Janet well. Edna was very proud of her.

Edna enjoyed days out and visits to Polhill Garden Centre with Janet and friends, especially the farm shop where she would stock up on fruit cake and marzipan sweets. She also enjoyed the meals in the restaurant there. No pot of tea was ever big enough for Edna!

Edna was a very determined lady who knew her own mind and what she wanted. Edna was very grateful to Janet for her care, especially latterly when Edna needed more help before she went into residential care.

### HAVE YOU SEEN...

our website has been updated and redesigned. Take a look at [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)



**ON TOUR AGAIN:** St Mary's Choir led a Carol Concert at St George's church, Bloomsbury in December, in aid of Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability. For more information about this charity, for which Canon Claire Tillotson is a Trustee, see [www.abcdbethlehem.org](http://www.abcdbethlehem.org)

## Learning about other faiths

### Nirvana Day 8 February – Buddhism

Many would not consider Buddhism to be a religion as there is no worship of a supreme god or deity. However, Buddhism has around 376 million adherents throughout the world, with approximately 150,000 active Buddhists in the UK.

Buddhism started in India over 2,500 years ago. The essence of Buddhism is the attainment of enlightenment. It points to a way of life that avoids self-indulgence.

Buddha means 'enlightened'. Siddhattha Gotama, later to become the Buddha, lived in the 5th century BC and was a prince born into a rich family. He had an easy life, living in what is now Nepal. However, when he saw the suffering of old age, sickness and death, he decided to renounce his life in the palace and live among the holy men of the day in search of truth and enlightenment. His search took him six years, but he became enlightened whilst meditating under a Bodhi tree. Following this he dedicated his life to spreading the teaching. The Buddha is not considered a god by his followers.

He discovered that the answer lay in what have become known as the Four Noble Truths. Craving and desire keep people on the wheel that is the cycle of birth and rebirth, and it is possible to escape this cycle by following the Four Noble Truths.

Nirvana is believed to be the end of the cycle of death and rebirth. Buddhism teaches that Nirvana is reached when all want and suffering is gone.

The death of the Buddha at the age of 80, when he reached Nirvana, is now commemorated by the festival called Nirvana Day.

Buddhists may celebrate Nirvana Day by meditating or by going to Buddhist temples or monasteries. As with other Buddhist festivals, celebrations vary throughout the world. In monasteries Nirvana Day is treated as a social occasion. Food is prepared and some people bring presents such as money, household goods or clothes.

On Nirvana Day, Buddhists think about their lives and how they can work towards gaining the perfect peace of Nirvana. They remember friends or relations who have recently died and reflect on the fact that death is a part of life for everyone.

The idea that nothing stays the same is central to Buddhism. Buddhists believe that loss and change are things to be accepted rather than causes of sadness.



**A NIGHT OUT:** the Friends of St Mary's enjoyed a dinner dance at Langley Park golf club in January.



# Lent 2018



Lent is an opportunity before the great Festival of Easter to take time out and reflect on our journey through life. There are a number of ways to help you to get the most out of Lent

## 1. Home Groups

The weeks during Lent are a time when we reflect on our faith, and prepare for the joy of Easter to come. Lent home groups are a wonderful way of exploring our faith in more depth and of getting to know each other better.

This year we will be following a five-week course produced by United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) entitled "All things are possible." This course looks at how Anglican churches around the world are supporting global development. It has a focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is growing understanding among governments, the UN and other bodies that faith-based organisations have a key role to play in global development. According to UN Development Programme Administrator Helen Clark: "Faith-based organisations "have an important role to play in reminding us to focus on what really matters to us as human beings in search of well-being."" The Lent course aims to help us make links between our faith and global development.

During the course we will look at PROSPERITY: What does it mean to prosper? PEOPLE: What does it mean to fulfil our potential? PLANET: What does it mean to care for the environment? PEACE: What does it mean to love our neighbour? and PARTNERSHIP: What does it mean to live in partnership with God?

Details of these groups are available from the Parish Office (8460 5682) and on the notice board at the back of church. Lent home groups offer the opportunity of asking questions in a safe environment and are led by experienced leaders. If you have not joined a group before, do consider it!

## 2. Lent Lunches

A simple lunch for up to 10 people, providing an opportunity to meet together, enjoy hospitality and support a charity. Dates and locations are on lists at the back of the church where you can sign up to attend, or please ring the Parish Office on 8460 5682 for more information.

## Mission of the month

### The Orpheus Centre

The Orpheus Centre is an independent specialist college in Surrey. Orpheus focus on developing independence skills through performing and visual arts and make dramatic improvements to young disabled adults' lives.

They believe that every young disabled person should have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers and they offer a personalised study programme focusing on building independence, communication and social interaction skills through the arts, supported housing and a personal care service. Their students are between the ages of 18 and 25 and have learning and/or physical disabilities. They stay at Orpheus for up to three years. Everything at Orpheus is focussed on maximising lasting independence for their students.

They have an entrepreneurial spirit, taking a lead in finding new and effective ways of working in the arts, learning and social care sectors. Their impact and ethos has so engaged and inspired visitors to the college that they benefit from a steady stream of help from arts professionals, tutors, support staff and volunteers. Their students have performed at the House of Lords, the Royal Albert Hall and venues across the UK and worked with schools, prisons, community groups and businesses to break down barriers and challenge stereotypes.

For more information see the board at the back of church or [www.orpheus.org.uk](http://www.orpheus.org.uk)

## 3. Holy Week and Easter

Join with us as we prepare for the Easter celebrations

**March 25th - Palm Sunday** 10.30am Procession of Palms and Eucharist for Palm Sunday; 6.30pm A Passiontide Service of Readings, Anthems and Hymns for Holy Week

**March 26th, 27th and 28th** 8.00pm Compline with reflection

**March 29th - Maundy Thursday** 8.00pm Washing of Feet and Eucharist of the Last Supper

**March 30th - Good Friday** 10.30am Family Service; 2.00pm An Hour at the Cross; 3.00pm Half an hour for private prayer

**March 31st - Holy Saturday** Children's activity morning

**April 1st - Easter Day** 8.00am Easter Communion; 10.30am Eucharist of the Resurrection including the renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt

## 4. Daily prayer

Leaflets containing a simple form of daily prayer, including readings and a reflection, will be available in church to take home.

## Stay in touch!

The Parish Office email is [office@stmaryshortlands.church](mailto: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](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)



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**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
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	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
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	Mr. S. Buchanan	8777 8008
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Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978
Stewardship	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178

**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](http://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. H. Last	8460 1705
Pre-School	Mrs. P. Chase	8290 6704
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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
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Mobility Class	Mrs. Jan Boam	8460 7101

**LOCAL CONTACTS**

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

**SPAN INFORMATION**

Website [www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk)  
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