

From broken to beautiful

This year Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent was on 14th February - a day many of us associate with St Valentine and love. The theme of love seems an appropriate one to explore in the period leading up to Easter.

We are reminded of the love that we believe God has for each one of us when we think firstly of the sacrifice made for us by sending Jesus to die on the cross and then the surprise of the resurrection on Easter Day.

On Mothering Sunday (11th March) we think of the love we have for our mothers or those who mother us and the love they have for us. We remember our mother church and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Mothering Sunday can be a hard day for many; perhaps their mother or a child has died, they may have had a difficult relationship with their mother, or perhaps the desire to become a mother has not been fulfilled.

However much we love another person we still make mistakes and hurt them. This is true in our relationship with God too.

To help us visualise this, a couple of years ago on Good Friday everyone was given a wax crayon as they came into church and we used them during the confession. We broke our crayons as we thought about how taking something precious and breaking it deliberately is hard but we often do it by mistake or omission (or letting our crayon roll onto the floor). The broken pieces represent our mistakes and the things we have done wrong but God takes our lives full of brokenness and hurts and restores us.

We collected the pieces of crayon in a heart shaped dish which represented God's love. We remembered how God loves us just as we are but he also loves us enough not to leave us as broken people. We believe that when we come to God in our brokenness and pain God transforms us into something beautiful as we give ourselves to him.

I took the broken crayons home and baked them in the oven. This produced a kaleidoscopic heart, showing how God can truly transform our lives.

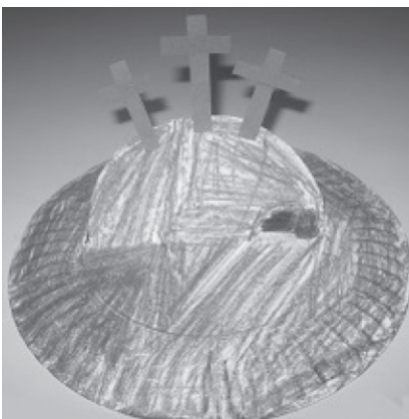
May you know the love, forgiveness and joy of the risen God this Easter.

Rev Morag Finch

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Come along to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in church on Sunday 18 March after the 10.30am service to find out more about what has happened at St. Mary's over the last year - and our plans for the next year.

Papers for the meeting will be published on the website at least a week in advance: www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk



Easter Fun!

On Saturday 31 March we will be holding a drop-in activity morning, in church, for children and their parents/carers. This will run from 10.00am - 12 noon and you are welcome to come for all or part of this time.

We will be making Easter gardens as well as some other Easter crafts. We do hope that you will be able to join us.

Special Events and Services

Sunday 11 March - Mothering Sunday

10.30am Family and Parade Service

Sunday 25 March - 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.

Monday 26 - Wednesday 28 March

8.00pm Compline with reflection

Thursday 29 March - Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Washing of feet and Eucharist of the Last Supper

Friday 30 March - Good Friday

10.30am Family Service

2.00pm An hour at the cross

3.00pm Half an hour for private prayer

Saturday 31 March - Holy Saturday

10am - 12noon Children's activity morning

Sunday 1 April - Easter Day

8.00am Easter Communion

10.30am Eucharist of the Resurrection

Including the renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt



From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Edna Purslove 19 Jan aged 93

Peggy Smith 19 Feb aged 102



Remembering

Peggy Smith

Peggy was born in Peckham in 1915 and said she remembered her father going to and returning from the Great War.

At school she had received careers advice that her options as a girl were: to be a detective, to be a chicken farmer, or to be a masseuse. As she enjoyed sports and games, she chose the latter, and trained at Guys as a physiotherapist.

She subsequently worked in a number of hospitals in Surrey and South East London, including 26 years at Bromley Hospital.

In 1941 the family was bombed out of their house in Peckham and moved to Tellend in Mays Hill Road, Shortlands. At Tellend Peggy and Halie (her sister) looked after their mother.

Peggy was part of a large family – her mother was one of fourteen. She took a great interest in what everyone was doing, particularly the younger generation.

In retirement, having inherited a love of the countryside from her mother, she enjoyed walking holidays and gardening, swimming, picnics and playing Scrabble.

In 1988, when the garden at Tellend became too much, the sisters went their separate ways and Peggy moved to Blenheim Court. She always said that it was beyond her wildest dreams to have found such a lovely flat and, added to that, there was Scrabble, cards and darts in the communal lounge.

Peggy was always the first to book up for the parish weekends in Eastbourne which were a feature of St Mary's life some years ago. She would be the first in the hotel swimming pool, and was also a 'demon' table-tennis player, triumphant always to the final stages, regardless of the youth and skill of the opposition. At this time she would already have been well into her 80s.

When interviewed on the occasion of her 100th birthday, she shared memories of a life which had seen many innovations - cars, radio, television, the National Health Service, decimalisation and the decline of ladies wearing hats in church, to name but a few. She said: 'I remember when we were children, electricity became available in our home for the first time: before that there were gas mantles. My sister and I used to take turns to switch the new light off and on again!'

After she had turned 100, Peggy was allowed by her fellow residents at Blenheim to stand a foot or so closer to the dartboard, for everyone's safety.

Peggy walked at least one way to or from church well into her 90s. As a physiotherapist she put great store on 'walking through the whole foot' in order to walk healthily and be able to do so into old age. Asked to what she ascribed her long life, she said: 'I have always liked the natural things: being outdoors, walking, playing tennis and badminton'.



Easter Lilies

If you would like to remember a departed loved one at the Great Festival of Easter, we invite you to make a donation to the Flower Fund as a memorial to that person.

A list of the names of all those to be remembered will be placed on the altar on Easter Day, to affirm our hope in the resurrection to eternal life and the Christian's eternal security in Christ.

Vive la différence!



St Mary's Shortlands has something very special which not many other churches have. It has a twin parish in France, St Francis of Assisi in Douai, a parish consisting of four Catholic churches, and a thriving friendship between the congregations. Every year we get together, one year in France and the following year in the UK. This year it is the turn of the 'Douaisiens' to come to Shortlands, and this will be happening on Saturday 5th - Sunday 6th May.

The programme for their visit is a trip to Lullingstone Castle and Visitors' Centre on Saturday afternoon, followed by "cluster" dinners in Shortlands where several French people and their English host families get together to share good food, wine and friendship. Home hospitality - just bed and breakfast - is offered by local families on the Saturday night. We are always warmly welcomed into French homes when we go to Douai, so it is lovely to be able to reciprocate.

On the Sunday morning there is a great ecumenical celebration at our 10.30am service, followed by luncheon in the church hall. Our French guests will then set off on their return journey by coach via the Shuttle.

New people are always welcome, so why not get involved and enjoy a great weekend with us? You don't need to be able to speak French, as a number of our group and theirs can get by in each other's language. We try and ensure there is always someone in any group who can help to keep the conversation flowing. Fluency also tends to improve after a glass of wine!

Sign-up sheets will be posted at the back of the church for different aspects of the weekend, so you can take your pick. For more information do contact Gill Dawson: telephone 020 8460 5884, text 07767 365318 or email gill@gill.dawson.name Come along and have a really great time!

Gill Dawson

Learning about other faiths Holi – 2 March (Hinduism)

A Hindu spring festival usually celebrated in March, Holi is particularly celebrated in northern India. Holi commemorates the legend of Prahalad and Holika.

Holika was a female demon, the sister of Hiranyakashyap the demon king, who considered himself ruler of the universe and higher than all the gods. Prahalad the king's son was hated by his father because he was a faithful devotee of the god Vishnu.

One day the king asked his son 'Who is the greater - Vishnu or I?' Prahalad replied that the god Vishnu was greater than a mere king. The king was furious and decided to murder his son. However, all the king's extreme attempts at murder failed.

The king asked his sister Holika to kill the boy. Holika seized Prahalad and sat in the middle of a fire with him on her lap. She had been given a magic power by the gods which made her immune to fire.

It's never wise to take god's gifts for granted. As Holika was using her gift to do something evil, her power vanished and she was burnt to ashes. Vishnu protected Prahalad who sat praying on the lap of his demon aunt.

The moral of the story is that good always wins over evil, and those who seek to torment the faithful will be destroyed.

To celebrate the story, at Holi large bonfires are built to purify the air of evil spirits and dummies of Holika are burnt on them. Holi is a very exuberant festival with dancing and singing. During Holi celebrations in India, you can behave pretty extraordinarily. You can throw paint at strangers, soak your friends with coloured water while saying 'don't be offended, it's Holi', and unless you are very unlucky, no one will be upset... But don't try this outside India!

My Mexican adventure

Last year I was lucky enough to be selected for an international trip to represent my Guiding Region on a trip to Mexico to one of the Guiding World Centres, Our Cabaña. I spent two weeks in Mexico: one week in Cuernavaca at the World Centre and then another week in the busy Mexico City.

Whilst out there we did many activities with the Cabaña including waterfall jumping, market visits, swimming, fiestas, Mariachi bands and many more exciting things. One of the things we did out there was the Cabaña's annual friendship event. This involved meeting people from all around the world, coming together and celebrating the 60th birthday of Our Cabaña. A highlight was when children came to the Cabaña from the local orphanage and we ran activities with them, provided them with lunch and spent time with them, dancing, playing games and much more. Personally, that was the best bit of the trip, seeing these children smiling and laughing made the trip even better than it already was.

After emotional goodbyes from the friendships and memories we had made in the Cabaña, it was time to move onto the next adventure, Mexico City. Here we climbed some pyramids, climbed up a volcano, tried strange looking food, learnt a lot about the Mexican culture, met new people and had many laughs. We stayed in a hostel right in the heart



of the city which meant we could explore the city by foot. We had ups and downs, however the ups far outweighed the downs and the memories will forever stay in my heart.

I would like to say a massive thank you to those who came to the Mothering Sunday cake sale and the Parish Picnic barbeque to support me. Without you I wouldn't have had this trip of a lifetime.

Aleks Nowacka (Young Leader)

News from Iceland

Last summer I had the joy of attending the 15th World Scout Moot in the amazing location of Vestmannaeyjar, a beautiful island off the south coast of Iceland. There were around 4,000 participants between the ages of 18 and 22 from almost every country in the world. Although it was a Scout Moot (the name for a smaller Jamboree), there were participants from both Scouting and Girlguiding - I was there as a Girlguiding member.

We did a wide variety of activities, including trekking across the windiest mountains and coastline, planting trees on a volcano, sailing alongside ferries (trying to avoid collisions!), and playing hide and seek with a puffin!

It was an unforgettable experience, and I give my greatest thanks to everyone who supported me at my fundraising events. I made friends from across the globe who I really hope to keep in touch with and see again.

Eleanor Higgs (Adult Leader)

CAKE SALE

Mothering Sunday- 11 March

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In aid of Oliver Wright-Jones' World Challenge
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Mission of the month

International Needs

International Needs are a worldwide Christian mission and development agency, a partnership that operates in more than 26 countries around the globe. They help people from all over the world as they struggle against persecution, poverty and disease whatever their colour, race or creed.

Their work is focused on community development, human rights and Christian outreach. Through all that they do, they seek to serve God and bring people the good news of Jesus.

International Needs do not want to just give 'hand-outs' or go into a situation with quick-fix answers but rather they work alongside local leaders and help them work out solutions that best suit their environment, helping them create strong sustainable developments within their communities.

Through their Educational Programmes they help to build, maintain and run schools and vocational training centres. Supported by their sponsorship programmes, International Needs help children and young people have access to good quality education. Currently they are working with the UNESCO Chairs Programme to use sport as a tool to enable conversations and change mindsets about disability in Ugandan schools.

As well as their education programmes for children and adults, they also support other community development projects, including medical centres, clean water provision and releasing slaves, most notably in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Nepal.

For more information, visit www.ineeds.org.uk or see the board at the back of church.

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St Mary's Church Hall

Saturday 12 May, 7 for 7.30pm

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If you're interested in performing, contact
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Stay in touch!

The Parish Office email is 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
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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
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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

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
		or 07960 988552
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
Church Flowers	Mrs. M. Parr	8249 7127
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Douai Link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Fair Trade	Mrs. C Willatt	8313 0246
Mobility Class	Mrs. Jan Boam	8460 7101

LOCAL COOKS

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Clr D. Jefferys	020 8460 6030
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Residents' Association	8460 4060
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SPAN INFORMATION

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