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When I was young the build up to Christmas, with all of the advertising, didn't really begin until December. I think that is why I once, rather embarrassingly, got confused between the words advent and advert. But perhaps they are more similar than we think. During Advent, for four Sundays before Christmas, it is as if God is advertising the gift of love revealed through his Son Jesus, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas Day.

Sunday worship in Advent includes bible passages, written centuries before Jesus' birth, pointing to Jesus as their fulfilment. We see Jesus not just as the baby born that first Christmas, but as the one who will bring about justice, mercy, righteousness and forgiveness. The December adverts we see around us encourage us to spend more and more conforming to the world's values. Jesus challenges that approach. We hear of Mary, Jesus' mother, saying how God will scatter the proud and lift up the lowly; Jesus will be the one who fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty.

As we read and hear the news each day, we are aware that there is much darkness in the world. Jesus is a gift that will bring light to the world, and we celebrate that at our Christingle service. At our service of Nine Lessons and Carols we look at how the birth of Jesus ties in with God's big picture; his plans for the world. We welcome you at St Mary's to come along to our services during Advent and Christmas to find out more about the gift of Jesus; to appreciate how the baby Jesus grows into the person who will fulfil these promises.

But, of course, the big difference between Advent and Christmas adverts is that Jesus is a gift, freely given to us by God; a gift that comes not just with a lifetime guarantee, but with the offer of a guarantee for eternity. Why not join us this December at some of our Advent and Christmas services to find out more?

Stuart Buchanan

Special Events and Services

Sunday 2 December - Advent Sunday

6.30pm Advent Carol Service



Sunday 9 December

10.30am Toy Service

You are invited to bring a new, unwrapped toy or voucher suitable for children aged 8-13 years, to help those supported by Bromley Women's Aid. Please no soft toys. Wrapping paper also welcome.

Wednesday 12 December

2.30pm Dementia Friendly Carol Service

Sunday 16 December

4.00pm Christingle

Come and see the children's faces glowing in the candlelight.

Sunday 23 December

6.30pm The Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

to be followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Monday 24 December - Christmas Eve

3.30pm Crib Service with Nativity play

11.30pm Procession by Candlelight and Midnight Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord

Tuesday 25 December - Christmas Day

10.30pm Family Communion for Christmas Day

Update

Back in July, we started looking for a new Vicar. We haven't yet found the person that is the right 'fit' for St Mary's and the local community. We have re-advertised the opportunity and expect to hold interviews in early December. We'll keep you posted!

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
www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk





From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

James Vigers

24 October

Remembering



James Vigers

James was born in Bickley and grew up there in the family home.

Both James' parents came from a line of Victorian entrepreneurs. The Vigers founded the Vigers City Surveying Business in the 1840s and the Lazenbys built a substantial food business that was then bought eventually by Nestle. Some of those products are still sold around the world and bear the silhouette and signature of James' six-times great grandmother Elizabeth Lazenby as the trademark.

On leaving school he was commissioned and joined the Wessex Royal Artillery Regiment which took him to France as a 19 year old Commissioned Officer in the Second World War.

26 out of James' 39 fellow regimental officers were killed or wounded. This was due to their often leading the Forward Observation Unit for their artillery fire. The unit was sent precariously close to the enemy's line to radio back to the battery's guns to direct their fire on the enemies' positions: they quickly became the target for enemy fire and snipers.

James received the Military Cross for his actions, and in 2017 he received the Legion d'honneur, France's highest military award.

After retirement he became a qualified genealogist and he used those skills writing with two others a comprehensive history of their Regiment's travels, from preparation in Sussex in 1942 through Normandy, into Belgium, Holland and deep into Germany.

In 1951 James married Avis. Sadly they lost their first child, Mark, after 6 days. There was joy when Shaun was born, but more sadness when Avis died when Shaun was 11. Living nearby, James' brother Paul and his wife Eileen with their two daughters became James and Shaun's extended family. James never remarried and never moved from the small house that the parents had given them as a wedding present.

He was thrilled when Shaun married Maria: he was always there for them and their three children.

St Mary's Shortlands was host to many Vigers family weddings and funerals.

James had a successful career as a Chartered Surveyor, becoming a senior partner in 1974, and retired early in 1983. The Vigers family had been involved in the establishment of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. In turn, James was involved in setting up the Worshipful Company of Chartered Surveyors. He was presented to the Queen in relation to his support for Lionheart, the Benevolent Fund for those in the profession who had fallen on hard times.

James supported the principles of Freemasonry with the same energy he applied to his profession. He managed many charitable events with hard work and a practical input into the workings of the lodges.

James was a very kind, modest and generous man: he very rarely talked about himself and was a listener and observer. Yet he achieved more than most right up to the very end.

Queen's Chaplain retires

Canon Paul Miller, who was Vicar of Shortlands from 2001 to 2012, is to retire as a Chaplain to the Queen in February 2019.

Paul was appointed in 2005 whilst he was Vicar of Shortlands. Prior to his retirement he will preach at the Chapel Royal in St James' Palace on Sunday January 13th 2019 at 11.15 a.m. at Choral Matins. This Service is open to the public and Paul would be delighted to see any former parishioners there to support him.

Hanukkah 3 - 10 December - Judaism

Hanukkah is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime 'festival of lights', celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods.

The Hebrew word Hanukkah means 'dedication', so named because it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple.

The festival reminds Jews of a time over 2,500 years ago when Antiochus, a Syrian king, tried to make the Jewish people worship Greek gods. A statue of Antiochus was erected in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and the Jews were ordered to bow down before him. The Ten Commandments forbid Jews to worship statues or idols and so they refused.

A small group of Jews called Maccabees rebelled, and after a three-year war they recaptured Jerusalem from the Syrians, but the temple was all but destroyed.

The Jews had to clean and repair the Temple, and when they were finished they rededicated it to God. They did this by lighting the lamp (Menorah) - which was a symbol of God's presence. Only one small jar of oil was found, enough for one day, but miraculously the lamp stayed alight for eight days.

Hanukkah is celebrated by lighting one candle on the Hanukiah (an eight-stemmed candelabrum) each day. The Hanukiah symbolises how God looked after the Jewish people at this difficult time.

Games are often played at Hanukkah. The most common game uses a dreidel (a four-sided spinning top) and is a popular way of helping children to remember the great miracle. The exchange of gifts or gelt is another old and cherished Hanukkah custom that dates back to at least the Middle Ages, possibly earlier. Gelt is the Yiddish term for money. Modern day gelt includes saving bonds, cheques and chocolate coins wrapped in gold foil.

The dates of Hanukkah and Christmas might well be associated: 25 Kislev (the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar) was when the Temple was rededicated and the early Christian church chose December 25th because they took over the birthday of Greek god Zeus/ Roman god Jupiter.

New Year, New Headteacher.

The Highfield Schools are delighted to be welcoming Mrs Allison Morris as their new headteacher, starting in January. An experienced Headteacher currently leading a school in Croydon, she has excellent knowledge of education in the local area. During the past few weeks Allison has been getting to know the schools and the Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST) Multi Academy Trust which the schools are part of. Allison believes that the children should be at the heart of all decision making in school, that children should feel able to take risks and that learning opportunities should be fun and interesting. The schools are excited to see what her leadership brings to our two high achieving schools and look forward to introducing her to the children, staff and families that make up the Highfield Community.



Want to get involved?

Governance of the Highfield Schools is carried out by the Local Committee who work within the NEST Multi Academy Trust to carry forward the visions of the Trust, ensure standards are maintained, set strategic goals for the schools, and support school leaders. The schools are currently looking for a new member from the local community to complement and strengthen the committee. Although a professional background in property, IT or law would be beneficial it is not essential, nor are any previous links with the school. Local Committee members are expected to attend an evening meeting every half term and to visit the school during the day once or twice a term. If you feel you have the time to commit, the passion for education and would like to find out more please contact the Chair, Jo Addison by email: jo.addison@highfield-inf.bromley.sch.uk

Mission of the month

The Children's Society

In the late nineteenth century, Edward Rudolf, a young Sunday school teacher and civil servant in South London went to look for two young boys who failed to turn up to his Sunday school and was shocked to find them begging for food on the streets. Their father had died, leaving their mother struggling to bring up seven children under the age of 11. Rudolf was moved to act.

This was the start of The Children's Society as we know it today. Sadly, this scenario is still prevalent in 2018 even in our own communities. Today, around four million children live in poverty in the UK.

The Children's Society tries to help all children have a better chance in life. It supports children and young people to cope with the trauma of sexual exploitation, fights child poverty and neglect, and helps children access the mental health support they need. Teenagers especially are turning to self-harm or suicide in increasing numbers. Others are trafficked and subjected to criminal exploitation. Many kids are young carers: they need support too.

St Mary's Church supports The Children's Society in the Christingle service. Each element of a Christingle has a special meaning and helps to tell the Christian story: the orange represents the world; the red ribbon symbolises the love and blood of Christ; the sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations; the lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness.

Through Christingle, you can help give a child a Christmas free from sadness, fear and hunger! This year is the 50th Anniversary of Christingle: come and join us at St. Mary's for a celebration on 16th December at 4pm and do stay for a cup of tea and cakes after. Whatever small contribution you make will have a huge impact on a child's life.

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



Walking and remembering

It was a great privilege and a humbling experience to walk 100km in October commemorating the fallen of Shortlands who are named on our war memorial, and to support ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

The sun shone as we walked around the frontline of the Battles of the Somme and Passchendaele, visiting memorials and cemeteries on the way, and being told some of the heroic stories of those who gave their all. We saw trenches and tunnels, and understood how the war was eventually won.

The most evocative part of the walk was seeing The Shrouds installation at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing. One life size shroud represented each day of the war with a wooden cross stating the number who fell that day. Five Shortlands men are amongst the 72,000 names on the memorial.

Tyne Cot Military Cemetery, the largest British and Commonwealth war cemetery in the world, where over 12,000 servicemen rest but only 3,500 are named, including Pte. Walter Hill, brought home the enormity of the war and the loss. At Orvillers Military Cemetery it was an honour to lay a cross and say a prayer over the body of 2nd Lt. John Hughes, as we did for each grave and memorial of the Shortlands fallen that we visited.

A very poignant way to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

Ann-Marie Jefferys

Halls for hire

Being in the centre of Shortlands, St Mary's is the ideal place to hold your meetings, children's parties or other functions. We have the following facilities for hire:

- The Main Hall is approximately 24m by 9m and has a fully equipped commercial kitchen, toilets and cloakroom.
- The Friends Meeting Room is approximately 8m by 5m and can seat around 30 people.
- The Choir Vestry is approximately 4m by 4m and can seat around 20.

If you would like to hire any of these facilities please contact Emma in the Church Office on 020 8460 5682

The new pots which can be seen either side of the steps to the south porch of church have been planted by Mowgli Cub pack. Thank you Cubs!



Hallo to the new team!

St Mary's Pre-school Shortlands will have a new leadership team from 1st January. Pictured left is Christine Hall, the new Leader, and on the right is Erin Hayes, the new Deputy Leader. The pre-school has been open since 1992 and Christine is only the third leader during this time.



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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	8460 5682
office@stmaryshortlands.church	
Licensed Lay Ministers	
Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
Readers	
Mr. P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
Mr. S. Buchanan	8777 8008
Pastoral Assistants	
Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
Parish Administrator	
Ms. N. Blake	8460 5682
Assistant	
Mrs. E. Parker	8460 5682
Churchwardens	
Mr. A. Williams	07914343495
Mrs S. Leonard	07725313432
Deputies	
Mrs. P. Chase	8464 6188
Mr. S. Clark	8464 0696
Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
Prof. M. Fox	8650 3252
Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
PCC Secretary	
Mrs S. Maurel	01689 331793
Treasurer	
Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	
Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Organist and Director of Music	
Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Assistant Organist	
Mr Daniel Beach	8289 6510
Safeguarding Officer	
Mrs Kay Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	
Mrs S. Maurel	01689 331793
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

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8650 4553
Mothers' Union Fellowship Group		
	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	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 F. Hav	07932758801

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901 or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Guides (Tues.)	Ms. M. Bowman	07885604457
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. Tigh	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

LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. M. Cooke	020 3665 0357
(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Cllr A. Cuthbert	
(Email: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)	
Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

SPAN INFORMATION

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