

Glimpses of great truths

Now we are in February all the activity and excitement of Christmas seems a long time ago. You may wonder what's next, what was it all for?

If so, I would encourage you to think further. The meaning of Christmas is far deeper than we often recognise. St John tells us: 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God'. At Christmas we celebrated how that same Word of God came into our world as a newborn baby. We are so used to hearing this, we may miss how amazing this is: God the all-powerful creator came into the world as a human child.

One of the names we use for Jesus is Emanuel, which means 'God with us'. That is exactly who Jesus is: God, living in the world with us, caring, loving, teaching and healing, like no other person who has lived in this world, before or since, but also suffering and being cruelly put to death by a world which refused to recognise him. His followers failed to stand by him and despaired; then Jesus came back to life, they met him, ate with him, touched and spent time with him. After he left them God sent his spirit to be with them, transforming them as they lived out his teaching, spreading the good news that Jesus is alive.

If you take the story of Jesus seriously and explore how you can respond, it will not make your problems disappear. My experience, and that of many others, is of a new dimension in life, and a growing knowledge of God with us, transforming and sustaining us as we go about our daily lives.

We all have a free choice as to whether to respond to Jesus; God's good news is for all. It doesn't matter how clever or talented you are or whether you are young or old; the good news of the Christian story is there for everyone. Christmas is just the beginning of an amazing story that millions of people have responded to across the centuries. It is simple enough for all to understand and yet so rich that most of us only have glimpses of the great truths that lie within it.

In the Christian calendar, next month marks the beginning of Lent. We often associate Lent with giving things up. The focus of Lent though is far more active: taking time to think about the spiritual aspects of life and deepen

our understanding of the Christian story. With this in mind, we are advertising various events in Lent (see page 3) which everyone will be very welcome to participate in, whether or not you normally come to services at St Mary's.

Catherine Bingham (Licensed Lay Minister)

Special Events and Services

Sunday 17 February

4.00pm Choral Evensong

Responses: Smith 5 part

Canticles: Walmsley

Anthem: Let all the world - Vaughan Williams

Sunday 3 March

6.30pm Songs of Praise

Wednesday 6 March - Ash Wednesday

10.00am Holy Communion services

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

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



Pause for thought

Ann Gimson, whose obituary we published last month, produced many pieces for SPAN in years gone by. Here's an example:

I think we sometimes forget that God is the God of the Little Things as well as the great. And so often it is the Little Things in life which can mean so much and which cheer and encourage us. Things of the mouth and ear and heart. A quiet word when we are down, or a listening ear that shares another's pain, or grief, or loneliness. Kind ears that take time to really listen and share our cares and help us to cope through the difficulty and lonely times. For a day can be beautiful when kindness touches it. Then there's a smile, which is God's sunshine, lighting up the drabness of a day and cheering us on our way. These little things, quite small within themselves, so often mean to us the most of all. The quiet ways of God, caring for us in our need.

Ann Gimson



From the Registers

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

20 Jan

Emily Soule

So what is a deanery?

On St. Mary's Parochial Church Council there are four Deanery Synod representatives. What, you may ask, is a deanery and how does it fit in to the wider church?

The governance of the Church of England is led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The Church is divided into forty-two dioceses, each headed by a bishop. Within a diocese there are further divisions into arch-deaconries.

Rochester diocese has three arch-deaconries. Although the Bromley and Bexley arch-deaconry, to which we belong, is the smallest in area, it has 40% of the population of the diocese living within it.

Bromley and Bexley archdeaconry is divided further into five deaneries. St. Mary's is in the Beckenham deanery which comprises eleven parishes and covers an area from Penge and Anerley through Beckenham to Eden Park and Shortlands.

The Deanery Synod consists of all the parish clergy and lay representatives (that is, people who aren't ordained for religious duties) from the churches in the deanery. At the minimum three meetings a year, they look at church policies and initiatives at grass roots level and ways to implement them through joint activities. The focus of the last meeting in November was the Mission and Growth at Rochester Cathedral. We engaged in a speed dating session to consider the role of the cathedral in the life of Deaneries and Parishes!

The Synod meetings are also a great way of finding out what's going on elsewhere in our deanery. For example, there's the life-changing Living Well programme in Penge and although this is a Holy Trinity initiative the deanery has supported the programme financially by giving a donation towards the £35-40,000 annual running costs. There are also opportunities for volunteers to help provide the wide range of services offered by the scheme. These include assistance with: the food and clothing banks, lunches, community gardens, advocacy advice and night shelters for example. There have also been Deanery home groups, worship music and prayer sessions. There are also social events, such as golf days, and flower-arranging, and trips such as the 2020 deanery holiday to Oberammergau led by our own Ann-Marie Jefferys.

As a Deanery Synod representative I have learnt much about the wide range of worship and attitudes to faith beyond the parish boundaries of St. Mary's. We do not exist in isolation but are part of the rich tapestry of Christian life and I feel that only by engaging more fully with it can we really begin to fulfil our mission to others.

At St Mary's we're proposing to dedicate a small section of the notice board to information about what's going on elsewhere in the deanery. So keep watch, there may be activities advertised that appeal to you!

Jan Boam (Deanery Synod representative)

Meet the 2WWs

The 2WWs group was established by Canon Doug Redman, a former vicar of St Mary's, as a way of bringing together widows and widowers who may be seeking some company.

These days the group has been opened up to 'senior singles' – that is, single retired people – and the aim remains the same, to provide an opportunity to come together in a social setting.

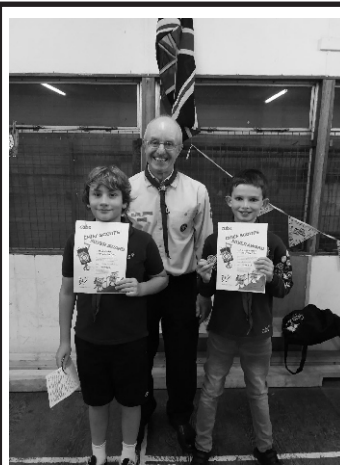
The group goes out for lunch together a couple of times a year – previous trips have been to Wakefield Place, Tatsfield and the Park Langley golf club. Lifts can be arranged for people who do not have their own transport.

If you'd like some company, do join us – contact the Parish Office to find out more.

Ann Swatton

SPAN THANKS

We record our thanks this month for gifts amounting to £1.00



Silver success!

Many congratulations to cubs from Kim and Mowgli packs who recently gained the Chief Scout Silver Award.

Mark Walker and Christopher Stone (Kim pack) and Alex Impey, Tom Ashford and Kieran Morse (Mowgli pack) received the award from Group Scout Leader Charles Wood.

The Chief Scout Silver Award is the highest award available to cubs and requires them to participate in a large number of activities. It's the culmination of up to three years of training, excitement, camping, service and learning.

The boys each completed seven different challenge badges, each with up to 13 requirements.

They had to learn new skills (for example first aid, cooking or fire safety), find out new things (e.g. learning about Diwali), try new activities (e.g. rock climbing or making a stop motion film) and visit new places (e.g. a synagogue).

Desert Island Discs

A series based on the Radio 4 programme featuring people who live or work in the parish with the eight tracks of music they would choose to have with them if marooned on a desert island, and why.

This month Gill Dawson (or 'Rusty' to the Guides) chooses her music:

1. Black velvet band (Dubliners) – I love Irish folk music, and this is one of the best.

2. Hey Jude (Beatles) – so reminiscent of my first term at university in Birmingham.

3. Piano Concerto No 1 (Tchaikovsky) – the first piece of classical music I really appreciated.

4. Without You (Nilsson) – most couples have an 'our song', and this is mine and Tim's.

5. Mull of Kintyre (Wings) – a real timeless classic, and Paul was always my favourite Beatle!

6. Ode to Joy (Beethoven's 9th Symphony) – our going out music at our wedding.

7. Me and the Elephant (Gene Cotton) – a poignant little love song with a catchy tune.

8. Where do you go to my lovely (Peter Sarstedt) – another classic, and we sailed around Juan les Pins last summer.

Unlike John last month, I haven't seen all these musicians live, but I have seen the Dubliners, the Beatles at Hammersmith Odeon in 1965, and Paul McCartney several times more recently.





Lent 2019



Lent is an opportunity to think about the spiritual aspects of life and deepen our understanding of the Christian story. Here's a number of ways to help you to get the most out of Lent:

1. Churches Together in Beckenham Lent Courses

This year we are planning to come together with other churches in our area for a programme of 5 sessions on Tuesday evenings at St John's Eden Park from 7.30 to 9.15pm. There is a choice of 5 different courses:

- 1) Come and Sing Stainer's Crucifixion – led by David Storey. No auditions, just turn up and enjoy singing Stainer's popular work on the Passion of Christ with a performance at the final session.
- 2) Lent Art – led by Chris McShane, using art as a way of exploring the story of Christ's temptations in the desert. You do not need to be an experienced artist and materials will be provided.
- 3) Praying the Way of the Cross – led by Leon Carberry. Bible based reflection on the events that led Jesus to the cross. Including traditional and contemporary artistic portrayal of the events, scripture and contemplation.

4) The Bible in 4 Weeks – led by Jef Foulger. An overview of the bible from Genesis to Revelation, finding out about the mission of God in the world and following themes that run through the Bible.

5) Talking Jesus – led by Andrew Jones. Lent is a good time to consider how we could be more effective in how we share our experience of Jesus. Talking Jesus is an excellent course that will help us do so with integrity.

Further details of these groups and leaflets are available from the Parish Office (8460 5682) and at the back of church. The deadline for booking places is 28th February.

2. The Bible in a morning/afternoon For those who are unable to make the Lent Courses, you may like to know that there will be a session one Saturday during Lent, led by St Mary's Reader Stuart Buchanan, giving an overview of the Bible. This is a wonderful way to get a feel for how the whole Bible fits together and is invaluable in helping put different parts of the Bible in context. Details will be advertised nearer the time and this is open to anyone who is interested, whether or not you normally come to church: contact the Parish Office if you'd like to be informed when the date is fixed.

3. 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.

4. Lent for Lent

In order to encourage and help each other in our individual reading we will have a bookstall at the back of the church where you can put books you find helpful for others to borrow for Lent. People will be encouraged to write a short note as to why they found the book they are lending helpful and there will be a sign out sheet for those who would like to borrow books. There will also be information sheets on bible reading notes, prayer apps and other resources to use for Lent and throughout the year.

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

6. Holy Week and Easter

Join with us as we prepare for the Easter celebrations:

April 14th - 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

April, 15th, 16th, 17th 8.00pm Compline with reflection

April 18th - Maundy Thursday 8.00pm Washing of Feet and Eucharist of the Last Supper

April 19th - Good Friday 10.30am Family Service; 2.00pm An Hour at the Cross; 3.00pm Half an hour for private prayer

April 21st - Easter Day 8.00am Easter Communion; 10.30am Eucharist of the Resurrection including the renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt.



Mission of the month

WaterAid

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit organisation founded in 1981. Its vision for the world is that 'Everyone, everywhere has clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene in order to protect health, and to change lives for good'.

WaterAid works with partners in the poorest and hardest-to-reach communities, helping them to build low-cost, long-term solutions suited to people's needs.

We often take abundant clean water, and good sanitation for granted, but it is estimated that 844 million people in the world, or 1 in 9 of the population, don't have clean water close to home, and 2.3 billion people, or 1 in 3, don't have a decent toilet at home. One child dies every two minutes from preventable diseases caused by dirty water and poor toilets.

Water Aid works to transform millions of lives every year working in 28 countries across Africa, Asia, Central America and the Pacific. Since 1981, Water Aid has provided 25.8 million people with clean water and 25.1 million with decent toilets, enabling more children to go to school, more mothers to survive childbirth and more families to live more dignified and healthier lives, so that they can break free from poverty and change their lives for good. Children grow up healthy and strong, women and men get to earn a living and whole communities start to thrive, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals deadline of 2030.

Please support this worthy charity during February. For more information and details of specific projects round the world where Water Aid is making a difference and changing lives, look at the display at the back of the Church or access their website at www.wateraid.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	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
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Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg 8290 0613
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Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
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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

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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 E. Hay	07932758801

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

Guides (Tues.)	Ms. N. Blake	07773986337
Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Wed.)	Ms. E. Bingham	07947347068
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms. H. Last	8460 1705
Pre-School	Mrs. C. Hall	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)

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Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood 8721 2614

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