

Will Christmas happen?

For me, there is no question or debate. Christmas will happen. Christmas will bring hope and joy to us all. Christmas is going nowhere.

Christmas is a time of celebration as we remember the birth of Jesus Christ, the baby who was to bring hope, light and joy to the world. A baby born to a couple who were afraid, had nowhere to go and were all alone. But they weren't alone.

Mary, Joseph and the new-born Jesus were joined by shepherds, angels and wise men. People joined together in offering gifts to the newborn. No matter how simple or grand the gift, the birth was celebrated, Christmas was born. For people of faith, this is a story we should never forget or allow to be forgotten.

As each of us reflects on arguably the worst year possible we will have different stories of 2020, some good, some very sad, memories we want to forget, others never to forget.

For me, it has been a tough year on a personal level, but what has kept me going has been the community which I now call home. The witness of people serving each other, people known and unknown in our community, is something that will live with me forever, and I hope and pray is something to witness for some time.

Individual talents and gifts have come to the fore in how we serve others, providing us the opportunity to be ready to serve even more when we are living post-virus. People now turn their talents to Christmas, ensuring that as a community and here at St. Mary's, your parish church, we will not allow Christmas to be ignored

Special Events and Services

At St. Mary's, we are working to provide as many of the traditional services as is possible and practical during December, at all times following local and national guidelines to keep everyone as safe and as comfortable as possible.

Sunday 6 December

6.30pm - Advent Carol Service

Live-streamed only via Facebook

Sunday 13 December

10.30am - All-Age Service

including a Christingle talk

Sunday 20 December

6.30pm - Nine Lessons and Carols

Thursday 24 December - Christmas Eve

11.30pm - Midnight Mass

Friday 25 December - Christmas Day

10.30am - Holy Communion

Services will be held in church unless otherwise stated above, but all may be subject to change based on government coronavirus restrictions. Any updates will be shared through www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk and www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands

Whilst services may not be as in previous years, St. Mary's will be open and looks forward to welcoming you. Perhaps a visit to our Nativity Installation, in the church grounds from 5th December; visiting our giant Christmas Prayer Tree; visiting the church, decorated for Christmas; or just finding some space in amongst the busyness of life. The church will be open each day during the week leading up to Christmas.

Your parish church is alive, is open, and welcomes you all. Christmas is alive and will be celebrated for generations to come.

May each of you have a blessed Christmas and may you, your friends and your families stay well.

Love and Blessings, Revd Gary

Christmas Nativity

Explore the church and grounds to prepare for the joy of Christmas



Saturday 5 December 3-5pm

St Mary's Choir will be performing during the afternoon

Saturday 12 December 3-5pm

St Mary's Music Group will be performing during the afternoon

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Colin Walklin 11 November

Colin Walklin

Colin was born and lived all his life in the Bromley area. He went to Beckenham Grammar School and did his National Service in post-war Germany.

He met Carol at Beckenham Arts School and they both attended the Royal College of Art in the 1950s where they studied Graphic Design - Colin designing 'The Cruel Sea' poster for Ealing Studios when still a student.

Colin and Carol were married for over 70 years and collaborated on printmaking and teaching at West Dean College, as well as their own creative art work. Colin was a skilled teacher of printmaking and, after leaving Lintas as an Art Director in the late '60s, he headed the Art and Careers Departments at Forest Hill School for many years.

Colin was a keen hockey player and a senior member of club management at Orpington Hockey Club. He enjoyed growing his own vegetables at Beckenham Allotments - working up to three plots before scaling back his efforts in his 80s.

Colin's love of choral music spanned his whole life. He participated in many Beckenham Chorale performances and was a dedicated member of St Mary's Choir for over 50 years. At his prime he was one of an impressive team of five basses, infamous for wry (and extremely funny) comments from 'the back row'. His encouragement and beautiful rich, deep voice were inspirational to many.

The church community was an integral part of his life: most recently, at the Friends' fundraiser, *Here, There and Everywhere*, Colin reprised a favourite - Edelweiss - not a dry eye in the church! He will be very fondly remembered by all his fellow singers and sadly missed by his three children Nick, Janey and Sarah.



Ralph Lampard

Ralph was born in Bristol in 1933, followed by his brother Phillip and then sister Patricia.

The family left Bristol when Ralph was about 12 and moved to Beckenham where they opened a family bakery - Lampards - which traded for 65 years.

Ralph did his National Service in Egypt, working as a baker feeding the troops. When he returned home, he joined the family business where he worked with his brother Phil until retirement.

Ralph married Betty in 1972 and in doing so got himself a ready-made family with Alan in the package, soon followed by John in 1973. They moved into their new home in Durham Road where they brought up the family: four grandchildren followed. Sadly, Betty died in 2009, leaving a big hole in the family.

In time, Ralph was introduced to Barbara and a friendship grew: for the last ten years they found happiness together.

Ralph had joined St Mary's 2WWs group: he and Barbara went on to enjoy attending their events together, as well as sharing a love of travel and jazz.

Ralph was a keen sportsman, playing football and cricket for local teams. He played squash in the early days but snooker was his passion: he regularly played for the Conservative Club until he couldn't see the balls properly!

Ralph was a member of the Master Baker's Association for over 40 years. He was also a member of the Rotary Club for over 40 years and served as Chairman. He always did a lot for good causes, meeting with fellow Rotary Clubs in Holland and making close friends along the way,

Ralph was a people person: he will be greatly missed by so many. While current restrictions limited the number of people who could attend his funeral, his Rotary Club formed a Guard of Honour as his coffin was taken into the Chapel at the Crematorium.

June Barnett

June was born in 1946. At six weeks old, she contracted polio from a nurse. As her family already numbered five children, June was sent away to school to Sunshine House, Gosport, a children's home equipped with facilities for the disabled, only returning home in the holidays.

Her early years were blighted by many hospital stays and operations to try to alleviate her pain

June studied telephony at a residential course in Leatherhead. She worked in London, galloping along on both sticks to Elmers End Station and managing to get on and off the train independently. She also travelled abroad and particularly loved Italy.

June worked at the Masters car showroom at Elmers End, propelling herself there in an electric pavement buggy - an erratic driver at the best of times! She then graduated to an electric wheelchair. Later in life, confidence ebbing, she almost wrapped herself and her chair around a tree - time to give up!

As a young woman, June sang in the choir, at St James's. She had a beautiful voice and was a member of St Mary's choir for some time.

June continued to practise her religion throughout her life, attending Wednesday morning services and enjoying singing hymns, while bedridden, as a resident of Durham House.

June spent her last year at the Park View Nursing Home, Upper Norwood, where she passed away peacefully in September.

Despite the chronic pain and discomfort she suffered all her life, June took comfort in her singing and her music. She will be remembered with love and compassion.

Remembering

This year, Remembrance Sunday was very different for us all. With no services being allowed to be held in church and with very limited numbers being allowed to gather at memorials, we decided at St. Mary's to pre-record a service, which was shown via Facebook on 8 November.

This was followed up with a very simple laying of wreaths at the Shortlands Memorial on Armistice Day, 11 November, where I was joined by Charles Wood from the 7th Bromley Scout Group and Gill Dawson from the 2nd Shortlands Guides.

Whilst pre-recording does allow the use of graphics, images, video and audio, it does not replace the gathering of people as a community in one place, remembering those who have given so much for our freedom and liberty. Let us hope and pray that next year we will be gathered together for this important service to so many.



Revd Gary Best

MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Children's Society

Nearly 5 million children live in abject poverty in the UK today, unable to have the barest minimum. No child should go hungry in our society yet sadly over 10,000 children in our borough alone go hungry during school holidays.

The Children's Society supports children like these and needs our help to be able to continue to do so.



At St Mary's we dedicate our Christingle service each year to raise funds for this purpose. This year Christingle will form part of our All-Age Service on 13 December. We invite everyone in the parish to join in and support our fundraising.

We have a special Christingle kit available for families to use at home which can be obtained from the back of the church from 5 December.

Whatever contribution you can make will have a huge impact on improving a child's life. You can donate via St Mary's Lloyds Bank account, sort code 30-84-51, account number 47608468, reference Christingle.

Please join us for our 10.30am service on Sunday 13th December when we will talk about Christingles and what they mean to us.

You can see more information about the work of the Children's Society at www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Sound and vision

Long-standing readers of SPAN will remember that we have been thinking about potential redevelopment of the halls and other buildings at St Mary's through our 'Future Generations Project'.

We know that these buildings are well-used and much loved by both the church and local community and we remain committed to enhancing the quality of local community life through this project.

Experience during the pandemic has shown us that, as well as valuing the opportunity to come together in our buildings, people also very much value the chance to be with us 'virtually' through the services we have been streaming. It's been wonderful to welcome to our congregation those who are self-isolating, those who are unwell and others from further afield.

Even once COVID is, we hope, a distant memory, we want our services to be accessible to people who cannot physically be with us in church for whatever reason. In addition to our regular services it will be wonderful to enable attendance at funerals, weddings, baptisms and so on

We want the experience of attending St Mary's services remotely to be as good as possible. We've been investigating how, by investing in camera and audio-visual equipment, we could improve the visual quality of what people watching at home see and the sound quality of what they hear.

The great news is that we've already raised enough funds through our Future Generations Project to be able to afford the equipment and we're now looking at different options to find the right solution for St Mary's.

We will keep you updated on progress.

Revd Gary Best

Hope in the darkness

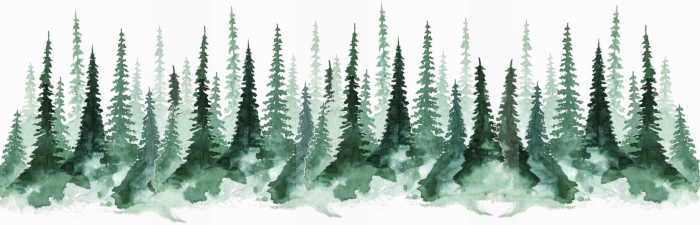
"The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." (Matthew 4:16, Isaiah 9:2).

St Mary's service for the departed is held during the Christian festival of All Souls: this year it was on Sunday 1 November. The service aimed to offer hope for people mourning loved ones that the darkness and the heaviness of the loss will be lightened by the love and compassion promised by Jesus to those who mourn.

As a visual representation of this, during the service the lights were extinguished as names of those who have departed from this life were read. Once the lights in the church had been turned off, candles were lit from the Paschal Candle. The Paschal Candle is an ongoing reminder to the Church, throughout the year, that Jesus continues to lighten the darkness in our lives.

It was heart-warming to see the darkness and gloom in the church replaced with the beautiful light of candles throughout the space. It is hoped that this, a visual reminder that God remains with us, will also offer ongoing hope that the darkness of grief lightens eventually.

Revd Beverley Ejimofa



Award winners!

Congratulations to the Friends of South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen – South Hill Wood has again been awarded a Green Flag Award, this time for 2020-21.

A Green Flag is 'the mark of a quality park or green space, given in recognition of achieving the international standard for parks and green spaces'.

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08.00 Holy communion
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During Term time there are separate groups for children aged 0-18
18.30 Choral Evensong, except when notified.
(3rd Sunday in the month)

Every Tuesday

17.30 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

10.30 Holy Communion

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

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Revd Gary Best	8460 0262
(day off Friday)	Vicar@stmaryshortlands.church	
Curate	Revd Beverley Ejimofa	
(Tue, Wed, Sun)		0772 621 7571
Licensed Lay	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
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	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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	Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
	Mrs. D. Speller	07941415082
Parish Administrator	Ms. N. Blake	8460 5682
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	Mrs S. Leonard	07725313432
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	Mr. S. Clark	8464 0696
	Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
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Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Organist and Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Assistant Organist	Mr. D. Beach	8289 6510
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs. K. Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	Mrs. S. Maurel	01689 331793
Junior Church	Mrs. J. Eade	3624 0559
Stewardship	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884

PARISH OFFICE 020 8460 5682
office@stmaryshortlands.church
Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8402 6599
Craft and Chatter	Mrs. J. Boam	8460 7101
Friends of St Mary's	Mr. T. Chase	8464 6188

For admission to Beavers, Cubs and Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tue)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954437658
Beavers	Ms. E. Hay	07932758801

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies or Guides please go to www.girlguiding.org.uk

Guides (Tue)	Ms. N. Critten	07767242920
Guide (Fri)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Thu)	Mrs S. Tight	8460 8122
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Mission Chair	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
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LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. M. Cooke	07912 649058 (E: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)
Cllr. A. Cuthbert	(E: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)
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Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

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