

A rule of life

Jesus said: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

As I write this editorial we have just started a number of groups in which we meet together during Lent to discuss the Bible and other readings. We are following a course entitled 'Shapes for Living'. This is not, as suggested by one of the group members, a slimming course - but rather a course about how we might shape our lives.

The introduction to the course says that Christians are called to 'work for the flourishing of all people and the flourishing of the whole of creation'. It goes on to state that 'if we are to live that calling we need to find a sustainable, nurturing shape for our own lives, so easily over-busy with the stressful and overwhelming demands of modern living'.

I expect that many people, whether or not they are Christians, can identify with the need to find a sustainable shape for our lives. It can be difficult though to achieve this, particularly when we have experienced so much change and disruption over the past couple of years.

The course draws on the teaching of a sixth century monk - Benedict - who wrote a rule of life which has provided inspiration over the centuries for those seeking to find a framework for their own lives. Much of contemporary advice and guidance on how to find a balance and make space in our lives, and how to cope with all the stresses of modern life, echoes the wisdom of Benedict's rule of life written nearly 1,500 years ago.

This rule draws on the example and teachings of Jesus, whose own life was shaped to be faithful to his nature and calling as the Son of God, both human and divine. At this time of year, Christians remember the life-giving sacrifice of Jesus, fully human and yet God come among us to give life and hope, as we look towards the resurrection and celebrate Easter with the promise of life in all its fullness.

As we continue through the season of Lent and come to celebrate Easter this month, I would encourage us all to try and find the space to think about the shape and priorities of our own lives. If it helps, do please take advantage of the quiet space at St Mary's which is open for reflection and prayer every morning of the week.

Catherine Bingham, Licensed Lay Minister

Special Events and Services

Sunday 10 April – Palm Sunday
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Thursday 14 April – Maundy Thursday
8.00pm Eucharist of the Last Supper

Friday 15 April – Good Friday
10.30am – Family Service
2.00pm – An Hour at the Cross

Sunday 17 April- Easter Day
10.30am – Family Communion

Followed by an Easter Egg hunt

Services will take place in church and will be streamed via Facebook. Any updates will be shared through www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk and www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands.

PLANT SWAP / SALE

In the church grounds

11am – 2pm
Saturday 7 May

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From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Jean Glenville 7 Mar Age 80

Mary Cooke

Mary was an active and engaged member of the Shortlands community since moving to Tootswood Road from Orpington almost 8 years ago. Easily recognisable in her white Smart car, she was regularly seen driving around the area that she served as a dedicated Councillor since 2014.



Born Mary Ceeney in 1948, she was brought up in central London and was the first member of her family to go to University. Mary read Mathematics and Computer Science at Reading University, one of the first ever cohort to study Computer Science as a degree subject.

After completing Teacher Training College in 1969, Mary taught Mathematics and Computer Science at two London comprehensive schools. She is remembered fondly by her students to this day. In 1980 Mary moved to work for the Association of British Travel Agents, as Head of Council and Committee Services.

In the 1970s Mary met and married her first husband Bob. They were happily married for over 7 years until Bob suddenly died in 1988. Mary found happiness again when meeting Brian in 1989, although their paths had crossed in a professional capacity almost a decade before. Mary and Brian married in 1995 and shared 27 years of marriage until her untimely death.

Mary worked for Transport for London where she oversaw international sales to foreign travel companies and ran their customer service centres, before making her final career move to Emdoc - the GP out of hours service in Bromley.

Mary embraced her role as Councillor for Shortlands wholeheartedly. Her particular focus was Adult Social Care and protecting the unique character of Shortlands, particularly green spaces. As a keen allotment holder for over 25 years this was especially close to Mary's heart.

Mary was a wife, a sister, an auntie, a grandmother and a dear friend. She will be remembered as a total inspiration, a shining star who brought sunshine and joy into the lives of so many.

Revd Gary Best

Many in the community of Shortlands will have read articles in SPAN written by our Vicar, Revd Gary Best, and joined in some of the activities that he has organised. Gary came to St Mary's in 2019: COVID brought a baptism of fire not long after he joined us!

Gary has led the church with great vision and courage through what has been a difficult two years for everybody, including the church. He has been a superb vicar for St Mary's and the local community.

It is therefore with great sadness that we have to announce that, for personal reasons, Gary will be leaving us in May. We wish him the very best for his future ministry and we shall all miss him very much.

Farewell and thanks

St Mary's has benefited from the support of Venerable Paul Wright for many years: we are pleased to publish this note from Paul to mark his retirement.



My first memory of St Mary's was attending a clergy chapter meeting in about 1980 when I was a young curate.

Little did I know that several decades later I would be 'returning' in my capacity as Archdeacon. St Mary's Church is one of about 60 churches within my Archdeaconry of Bromley & Bexley. Over the years I have led and/or attended worship, enjoying the musical tradition which really suits me, and on a number of social occasions as well.

Although the role of archdeacon has been around for a long time – the most famous one being The Venerable Bede – it has been a mystery to many people what the role actually entails. Traditionally, some have described it as 'looking after the drains and making sure the guttering is in good order!' Archdeacons certainly have a role for the maintenance and care of buildings, not least through the Faculty Jurisdiction.

Helping parishes to re-order, giving permission for some initiative works to be carried out such as a sound system, are bread and butter to an archdeacon. As a member of the Bishop's Leadership Team, I have been involved in policy and planning alongside the Bishop and the other members of his Team.

I am looking forward to my retirement, though it will seem strange not to be so involved with the local parishes.

God bless,

Paul Wright

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to collections in church which raised £925 for the DEC Ukraine appeal.



Recitals at St Mary's

On Saturday March 12th we were entertained in church by a recital by the Anatis flute trio. The trio were Maisy, Josephine and Georgia and are all studying in their 2nd year at The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. They performed works by Beethoven, Feld, Kuhlau and Floe. £350 was raised for church funds. They were fantastic and I am hoping to extend our recital series. We already have an interest from a barber shop choir and an organist. Please keep an eye out on the website and Facebook page for future information.

Claire Tillotson, Director of Music

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Bromley Multiple Sclerosis Society

Bromley is one of only three Multiple Sclerosis Society branches in the country with its own permanent centre providing help and support to MS sufferers and their families to live well with MS.

The Northlands Centre in Freelands Road receives no external funding from the national organisation, the local authority or central government and is solely reliant on donations and fund-raising events. It has no paid staff and is run exclusively by a small, dedicated group of volunteers with vehicles driven by volunteer drivers which transport up to 15 people a day to the centre. The majority of users are unable to use public transport or dial-a-ride and rely on this transport to access the Centre.

Before COVID the Centre was open three days a week throughout the year. It was forced to close for seven months but is now back open two days a week. The Centre offers phone lines with a volunteer welfare adviser providing important advice and support. It serves hot lunches offering a chance for a fun and friendly get-together, arranges trips out and visits which are greatly appreciated, and has various exercise equipment and employs a physiotherapist and hairdresser who offer discounted services to members. Another huge benefit is the monthly meetings held in a local hostelry called Mates for those who are more active and their families, offering a wonderful opportunity to chat and support each other.

Northlands urgently needs financial and pro bono support just to keep this very special centre and the basic services running, providing vital help to those who are more challenged and their carers who desperately need periods of respite from their caring role just to undertake very basic things like going to the bank or the hairdressers – things we all take for granted.

For more information, see the board at the back of church, or visit

www.mssociety.org.uk/care-and-support/local-support/local-groups/bromley-district-group

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This year, the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held on Sunday 8 May, after the 10.30am service. Papers for the meeting will be published on the website (www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk) at least a week in advance.

At the APCM we have an opportunity to review the previous year at St. Mary's including a review of finances, as well as electing our Churchwardens, Deanery Synod representatives and Parochial Church Council members.

The APCM is also a time when we look forward to how the life and presence of St. Mary's might look in the future.

All are welcome to attend the meeting and, if you are named on the church's electoral roll, you also have the right to vote. St. Mary's is your church so, if you are able to attend, it would be great to see you at this important meeting.

If you have any questions, or require clarification on any point, please contact stephanie.howarthmaurel@yahoo.co.uk.

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Wartime memories

I was born in Shortlands in 1929 and recall sitting with my mother, father and sister in Bromley's Hayes Lane Strict Baptist Chapel at 11 o'clock on Sunday 3rd September 1939. Mr Neville Chamberlain's announcement of the declaration of war was relayed to us in a stunned silence.

We sang 'Give Peace Again' and hurried home, pausing only to stop awhile at a friend's 'Refuge Room'. This, like many others, had recently been prepared, complete with electric torches, food supplies and brown-paper sticky tape criss-crossing the windows to prevent injury from flying glass. Gas masks were at the ready and carried everywhere, awaiting imminent and expected enemy action.

Phony the war appeared to be at first, and our cardboard gas-mask boxes surrendered their sodden selves to rainproof steel canisters, which in turn cut the leather straps! Crawling through the blackout – enforced rigorously – with shaded torches was no joke, but we found things to laugh about, even if it was only apologising to a lamp-post.

As children we witnessed the endless trainloads of wounded as they roared past along the line between Bromley South and Shortlands stations and waved to as many soldiers as possible.

To be continued...

David Alston

Save the Date

To celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the Queen we will be hosting our Annual Parish Picnic on Sunday 5 June from midday. So come along and join the fun and bring your whole family - BBQ, drinks, bouncy castle, competitions and games.



Urgently seeking help

7th Bromley Scout Group urgently needs more adult helpers for its various sections, which are at risk of closing if help cannot be found. This is an opportunity to become involved in one of our thriving Children and Youth groups. If you think you can help in any way, even if in administration, please get in touch.

All offers would be welcome and particularly from someone willing to 'go into uniform' as a Leader - training would be given. To find out more, please call Tony Chase (020 8464 6188) or Graham Smedley (020 8650 9677).



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**Wednesday 10.00am - Holy Communion
8.30pm - Compline**

You can access these services online at:

www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stmaryshortlands

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

PARISH DIRECTORY

Licensed Lay Ministers	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
Readers	Mr. P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
	Mr S. Buchanan	8777 8008
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
	Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
	Mrs. D. Speller	07941415082
Parish Administrator	Ms. N. Blake	8460 5682
Churchwardens	Mrs S. Leonard	07725313432
	Mrs K. Buchanan	07811528181
Deputies	Mrs. P. Chase	8460 6188
	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
Organist and Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs. K. Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	Mrs. S. Maurel	01689 331793
Junior Church	Miss. R. Tillotson	07503 680612
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

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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)	VACANT	
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
Rainbows	2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com	
Pre-school	Mrs. C. Hall	8290 6704 or 07960988552
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LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. A. Cuthbert	(E: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)
Residents Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614
SPAN INFORMATION	
Website	www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk
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