



The gentle call of God

As I walk through Shortlands, I notice signs of new life everywhere: fresh shoots are pushing through the soil, buds are forming and blossom is appearing. After the stillness of winter, and the disturbing and unsettling news in global politics, there is something deeply hopeful about these quiet signs of growth. They remind me that life is always stirring, even when we cannot yet see the full picture.

At St Mary's we are celebrating Easter, the great festival of new life at the heart of the Christian faith. Easter reminds us that God's life is stronger than any darkness we may face. It proclaims that hope can rise even in the most difficult moments. The risen Christ meets us exactly where we are, lifts us into hope, and gathers us into a joyful community where God is continually growing something new within each of us.

In John's Gospel we encounter a deeply moving moment in the Easter story. Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' closest followers, comes to the tomb grieving his death. Through her tears, she does not recognise Jesus when he appears to her. It is only when he gently speaks her name, "Mary", that she suddenly understands who he is and her sorrow is transformed into astonishment and joy: Christ is alive.

There is something profoundly personal in this encounter. Easter is not only about the great, world-changing reality of resurrection for all creation. It is also about the deeply personal truth: God knows each of us by name. Just as Jesus called Mary, God continues to call each one of us into life, hope, and relationship.

Our world feels troubled and uncertain. Easter does not ignore this reality. Instead, the resurrection reminds us that darkness does not have the final word. We are invited to pray for our world and to do what we can, in small and practical ways, to bring life, peace, and kindness wherever we are.

My prayer this Easter is that you may hear that gentle call of God in your own life, that you may know you are seen, known, and loved by name. Wherever you are on your journey, please know that you are always warmly welcome at St Mary's.

Rev Dave Edmondson



Special services and events

30, 31 March & 1 April

8.00pm Compline

In the Chapel

2 April - Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Holy Communion

With washing of hands

3 April - Good Friday

2.00pm At the Cross

Reflections, Bible readings, hymns and anthems

4 April - Easter Saturday

6.00pm Soup Supper

Sign up in church or via the Parish Office

5 April - Easter Day

10.30am Family Communion

With an Easter Egg hunt



From the Registers



Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:
Florence Pattenden 15 Feb

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to
those who loved:
Ann Swatton 11 March

Remembering



Ann Swatton

Ann's early years were unsettled due to the Second World War and she spent time living in north east England with her aunts to avoid the Blitz. When the war ended Ann returned to Shortlands, living in Malmains Way.

Ann worked in catering and trained as a chef. It was when working in a canteen that she met John: they married in 1961 and they soon had four children (Lesley, Nicholas, Iain and Duncan). Soon after this she became a lecturer at the South East London College of Technology, working whilst a full-time mum and loving wife.

She spent the vast majority of her life within a three mile radius of St Mary's which was always a very important part of her life: she was married, her children were christened, some were married and John's funeral was held in the church.

Throughout her life, Ann was guided by her Christian faith and principles which she and John always tried to instil in their four children, helping them to focus on what they can contribute to the world around them. Ann believed strongly in service to others, including the communities around her. John was closely involved in Rotary for many years and Ann likewise was a member of Inner Wheel, part of the network of clubs for wives of Rotarians, dedicated to friendship and service.

She did so much for St Mary's – she served as churchwarden, taking over the role soon after John's death. She was a dedicated member of the small editorial team for SPAN for many years and contributed to floral arrangements. More recently, she was a regular attendee at Wednesday morning services and enjoyed companionship at the Community Café.

Life wasn't always easy, but Ann and John always made sure that the house was filled with love and happiness, working hard to do the best they could for their family. That family, including nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren, brought her great happiness.

Gospel Pairs

Gospel Pairs has been a simple and thoughtful way of reading the whole Gospel of Mark with one or two other people from St Mary's during Lent this year. The Gospel is divided into six sections and it was intended that we met once a week over the six weeks, at a time and place to be decided by each group.

I didn't know what to expect when I signed up with, I admit, some trepidation. I didn't ask to be with anyone, although you could do this if you wished. I was put into a group of three with someone I knew and someone who has not been coming to St Mary's for very long and who I had not met before.

I found it a very good way of revisiting St Mark's gospel. I cannot honestly say I have ever read it from start to finish before although of course have read many passages in my lifetime.

We met at our new member's home, and it was a joy getting to know her and sharing the time together whilst reading the week's allocated passage and discussing the set questions relating to it. It certainly made me think and also helped us to focus on that week's chapters. We finished with prayer and I came away with a renewed enthusiasm for reading and discussing the Gospel of Mark.

Kay Coleman

Shortlands Residents' Association

Shortlands Residents' Association (SRA) is run on a voluntary basis for and by local residents with the aim of promoting and acting in their interests, reflecting views and concerns ranging from planning applications to potholes, and from crime to road safety.

We keep in touch with members through a network of street representatives (Liaison Officers) who deliver quarterly newsletters and collect some of our members' subscriptions.

We work closely with local councillors - looking to hold the local authority to account for its policies - and with local police through the Safer Neighbourhood Panel. We hold open meetings on local issues and guided walks around Shortlands, like the one through South Hill Wood on 9 May. Our next AGM is on 13 April at St Mary's Hall and will focus on scams and how to beat them. A local election hustings will be held at the Shortlands Golf Club on 29 April. Everyone is invited. For more information, and if you are not yet a member but care about Shortlands, please visit www.shortlandsra.org.uk or see leaflets at St Mary's. The more members we have, the stronger our voice.

Mike Ricketts

Get connected

St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held in church after the 10.30am service on Sunday 3 May. This is your opportunity to hear what St Mary's church has been doing for the last year, celebrate what's gone well and understand the challenges. It's a great way to feel more connected and involved in the life of the church - to find out more and play a part in St Mary's future. Reports to be considered at the APCM will appear on the church website a few weeks before the meeting.

At the APCM, members of the Parochial Church Council are voted into office by people who are listed on the electoral roll. Being on the electoral roll simply says, 'This is my church, I belong here'. It's a light-touch way to show commitment to the church family and to help shape the future of your local church.

This QR code will take you to the website for more information about who is eligible to join the electoral roll, and to complete an application form: applications to join the roll ahead of the APCM must be completed by end of 12 April.



Christian care

Over the course of three Saturdays this year, a group of twelve of us at St Mary's attended a Rochester Diocesan course called 'Caring Concerns' led by Rev Dave and Sue Harrison.



The aim of this course is to make us more aware of how best to support our community - both those who regularly attend church and others who may cross our path from time to time - across many different aspects of pastoral need. We had differing experience: some of us had offered pastoral care over many years and others were newer to this. What we mean when we talk about pastoral care is practical and spiritual support to help people grow in faith, navigate life's challenges and experience God's love through conversation, prayer, compassion and community. This might be a conversation over a cuppa, a home communion visit, a chance to pray with someone in church and much more.

In the first session we looked at Christian care and the difference between this and any other care. We looked at Jesus' teaching, reflecting on several passages from the Bible, the need for prayer and how best to apply these. Attentive listening formed part of the afternoon's work in the first session and we did some of this with role play. There were a few surprises!

Our second day was spent considering safeguarding and what this meant in our context followed by developing a deeper understanding of the stages of grief. In this we recognised that a grief reaction may not always be due to the loss of a loved one but other losses such as loss of livelihood or the end of a relationship.

Finally we brought this all together when considering how we might implement what we had learned and what it means in the context of St Mary's and Shortlands. We all came away from this study feeling enriched, with a new sense of purpose and knowing each other better. If you, or anyone you know, would benefit from some pastoral care, please contact the Parish Office or Rev Dave (contacts on back of SPAN).

Rev Jane Peters

Stations of the Cross

The church gardens will be displaying boards with the Stations of the Cross from March 21st until April 12th. The boards tell the story of Jesus' passion, and they are mainly designed to support children to understand the Christian story of Easter. There are 15 in total and each has a simple picture, narrative and short prayer. At Easter the large cross in the gardens which is part of the display is decorated with flowers to remember the joy of the resurrection.

Hope explored

What's the best future you could ever imagine? You're invited to Hope Explored! Come along for relaxed conversations about life, faith, and the hope we all long for. No pressure. No judgment. Just space to explore. Over three sessions, Hope Explored introduces the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, showing how he offers hope, peace, and purpose in a welcoming space for anyone exploring faith, through a simple format of Bible study, a talk, and discussion.

Join us at St Mary's at 8pm on 22, 29 April and 6 May. For more information email Dave on vicar@stmaryshortlands.church or fill out the form at this QR code:



MISSION OF THE MONTH

Mines Advisory Group

Where there's war, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is there: clearing deadly munitions and aiding locals. Current conflicts mean that its brave deminers are desperately needed more than ever but this dangerous life saving work requires funding as well as volunteers.



Last year, Tricia Braithwaite, a member of St Mary's congregation and a supporter of MAG for over 15 years, visited the United Nations (U.N.) headquarters in Geneva, directly opposite which stands a monumental stark wooden sculpture of a broken chair for all to behold. On the flagstones below, an explanatory text is engraved: 'Giving a Voice to Victims of Explosive Weapons'.

'Broken Chair' is a reminder to the world's nations to protect and aid civilian victims. It invites each one of us to denounce that which is unacceptable, to stand up for the rights of individuals and communities and to call for their rightful compensation. It symbolises opposition to land mines and cluster bombs, and acts as a bold reminder to politicians and diplomats visiting the U.N. there.

This year we are again proud to promote this global charity at St Mary's. Do visit the display in the church or visit www.maginternational.org and lend them your support!

PLANT SALE

Saturday 16 May

11am-1pm in the church grounds

Refreshments from

St Mary's Community Cafe

Bowls Club Open Day

If you have ever thought about trying your hand at bowls, come along to South Hill Wood Bowling Club on 2 or 9 May between 10.00 and 11.30am. We are one of the most popular bowls clubs in Bromley and very local, with our green being in an attractive public park off Tootswood Road. Currently we have around almost 100 members - roughly equal numbers of ladies and men.

Through the summer the green is available for playing bowls every day and there is always a full programme of activities to suit those who simply want a casual game of bowls through to club competitions, friendly matches against other local clubs and more competitive matches.

While playing bowls is the club's core activity, there is a varied programme of social events too which takes place all year round - suppers, lunches and quiz evenings are always hugely enjoyed. We are a very friendly and welcoming club!

Anyone interested in bowls is welcome to come along and watch members play. At the open mornings, prospective members will have a chance to try their hand at bowling with one of our expert coaches. All we ask is that you wear flat-soled shoes to play on the green. Visit our website at www.southhillwoodbowlingclub.co.uk for more information or call 07504 090441.

Mark Dempsey

St. Mary's Shortlands

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WORSHIP

Sunday 10.30am - Holy Communion in the church and online at

www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands

Wednesday Worship 10.00am in the Chapel

For more information contact the Parish Office or visit

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Rev. Dave	07592136421
vicar@stmaryshortlands.church		
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Churchwarden	Mr R. Hogg	
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	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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secretary@stmaryshortlands.church		
Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368

PARISH OFFICE

Telephone: 020 8460 5682

Email: office@stmaryshortlands.church

Open 10.00am - 12.00pm weekdays.

Contact the office for Baptisms and Weddings

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	07790 304711
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)	Mr O. Swinfen	07758458077
Cubs (Tue)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954437658
Beavers	Mr. T. Nickalls	
thomasnickalls@gmail.com		

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

Guides (Tue)	Ms. E Thompson	07910340908
Guide (Fri)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Thu)	fourthbromleybrownies@outlook.com	
Rainbows	2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com	
Pre-school	Mrs. C. Hall	8290 6704 or 07960988552
Church Flowers	Mrs. C. Willatt	07511885941
Mission Chair	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Fair Trade	Mrs. C Willatt	07511885941

LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. G Turrell	Gemma.Turrell@bromley.gov.uk
Cllr. F. Bainbridge	Felicity.Bainbridge@bromley.gov.uk
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SPAN INFORMATION

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