

Faithful stewards

As we enter the months of August and September, it may feel like summer is finally here. You may be seeing more schoolchildren around in the day as they enjoy their summer holidays. You might be a parent or grandparent delighting in their presence - while also racking your brains for ways to entertain them!

The tradition of school summer holidays in August comes from a time when children were needed to help with the harvest. Today, with modern farming methods and increased reliance on imported food, the focus on the harvest season has shifted.

Still, many of us may have felt the impact of the weather in recent months. We've experienced consistently high temperatures this summer, while our neighbours in Europe have faced even more extreme heat. I can't help but worry about the state of our planet - how temperatures seem to be rising and global weather patterns becoming increasingly volatile. I often find myself wondering what kind of world my children will inherit when they are adults. It's a real challenge, and something I frequently bring to God in prayer: how can I show the best care for this planet?

In mid-September, at St Mary's, we will begin a short series in which we'll reflect on how we - as individuals and as a church - can be faithful stewards of this world, of our time, our prayers, and our resources. We'll also be celebrating Harvest on Sunday 5th October, and you are warmly invited to join us for the service and the shared lunch afterwards.

At St Mary's, we believe all things come from God - they are not ours, but God's. We are simply custodians of this world and all we've been given. Because of this, we are called to approach everything with gratitude. One of my favourite quotes, from the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, says: 'The day brings us many blessings; but they are not meant to be hoarded. They are to be shared with others.'

This summer, I will be reflecting on the many blessings I see in the world and in my life and asking where I can share them with others. I pray that you may do the same.

Rev Dave Edmondson



Pictured: JUMPING FOR JOY: Rev Dave and Rachel and Claire Tillotson (respectively Junior Church Coordinator and Director of Music) enjoyed the bouncy castle at the Parish Picnic in June.

Special Services and Events

Sunday 7 September – Back to School Sunday

10.30am Holy Communion

Bring your schoolbag or workbag for a blessing

Sunday 14 September

4.00 – 5.30pm Tea Time Together

6.00 – 7.30pm Youth Club

Sunday 21 September

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 5 October – Harvest Festival

10.30am Parade Service *followed by lunch (see page 3)*



Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:
Alexander Quinn 6 July

Holy Matrimony

We congratulate:

Jodi-Ann Ricketts &
Michael Heslop 2 August

Remembering

Helen Crowe

Helen was born in 1939, originally living in Blackheath. As a student at Oxford she read history and made lifelong friends, including David. David made regular proposals of marriage which Helen always refused until finally, in December 1962 when a blizzard swept across the country, she accepted. They loved each other deeply and constantly until Helen's death.

After Oxford until Sarah was born in 1967, Helen was employed by Shell as an Administration Assistant in international oil supply: one of the first female graduates ever employed by Shell.

In 1965 David and Helen bought a flat in Beckenham and in 1970 they moved to Manor Way where Helen lived for the rest of her life. In 1971, Lucy was born. Helen was a gifted pianist, needlewoman and cook and a wonderful and fulfilled 'housewife'.

Helen's life included a huge commitment to the community and its wellbeing. She was invited to join the management committee of what was then called Bromley Marriage Guidance, now Relate Bromley. She was heavily involved for the next 29 years, including ten as chairman of the board. During that period the organization transitioned from taking voluntary contributions from clients to a paid-for service and paying counsellors, changing its name to Relate and moving its premises.

Helen served for ten years on the Community Health Council, representing the interests of the public in the planning, provision and delivery of local NHS services. She was a non-executive director of Bromley Community House, which provides office space to local charities, and supported David as Mayoress when he was Mayor of Bromley.

David and Helen became active members of St Mary's after Lucy's wedding: during her last years of ill-health she valued receiving communion at home.

Helen was a generous friend to so many, putting the wellbeing and interests of others above her own and enjoying whatever she did. Even in the last years of her life, she said that she regarded herself as one of the lucky ones.

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust Home Treatment Team - August

Oxleas offers a wide range of health and social care services to people living in south London and parts of Kent. This includes community health care such as district nursing and physiotherapy care for people with learning disabilities plus mental health care such as psychiatry, nursing and therapies. In addition, its offender healthcare services within secure environments and prisons continue to grow.

As the name suggests, the Home Treatment Team can visit people's homes during someone's mental health crisis. When a person is in a very distressed mental state, it can be very disturbing and frightening for both the individual and their family and friends. Expert advice and input are urgently required, but how to access them? GPs can only do so much.

The Home Treatment Team is comprised of caring, non-judgemental people with a combined knowledge and experience to help resolve the crisis and move forward. They work with other services and ensure someone has a treatment plan. To someone staring into the abyss of a mental health breakdown, the ring on the doorbell that signals the team's arrival each day (for up to a week) is the most welcome sound in the world.

For more information on Oxleas please visit

www.oxleas.nhs.uk or see the display in church during August.

The Oxleas Mental Health crisis line is 0800 330 8590, open 24 hours a day.

Future Generations project update

I'm writing to share an update on the Future Generations Project, a long-standing initiative at St Mary's to redevelop our site for now and the future. The project seeks to help St Mary's pursue its core mission 'To share the love of God' by developing our site to serve as a space for worship, fellowship, discipleship, and as a community hub. Our goal is to create buildings that are welcoming, accessible, environmentally friendly and future-proof.

In recent months, the focus has been on plans for rebuilding our church hall. Working alongside Thomas Ford Architects, the Future Generations and Technical Working Groups recently presented plans to the Parochial Church Council (PCC). The proposed halls will connect directly to the church building while retaining the Church House façade. The plans also include building houses to help fund the project and meet local housing needs.

Following positive PCC discussions, we are seeking costings from a Quantity Surveyor and, if costings look feasible, we will then consult with the Diocese and Bromley Council. We are not yet ready to share plans more widely because of the likelihood of changes after consultation with the Diocese and Bromley Council. Once we have more clarity, we aim to share the plans more widely for consultation and hope to then be able to move to fundraising.

The project also involves improving the church building itself. We are currently looking at designs for a permanent servery where we serve teas and coffees at the back of church, and we also want to make the building more welcoming and accessible. These are early-stage ideas, and we'll share more when ready.

Thank you to the many individuals, past and present, who have worked so hard. Please continue to pray for the team as we move forward.

Rev Dave Edmondson



Pictured: St Mary's Parochial Church Council, including newly elected members Suzie Evans (front row, far left), Julie Fox (back row, second left) and Toks Taylor (back row, far right).

Fiona takes the lead

Recently, Jay Sharma stepped down as Coordinator of St Mary's Community Café – many thanks to Jay for all her hard work!

We're taking the opportunity to find out more about Fiona Bratt who has taken over the role from Jay. Fiona became a member of St Mary's congregation in the late 1990s, after attending the Mother and Toddler Group with her daughter Rachael. In 2000 her son, Matthew was christened at St Mary's.



Fiona has been part of the Junior Church team from around 2005 and was Junior Church coordinator for a couple of years. She continues to enjoy the Sunday morning sessions, learning with our children and young people. Having started baking for the Café in 2023, she began serving when she retired in 2024.

Fiona says: 'We have a fantastic team of very capable bakers and servers. My role is to coordinate our activities, trying to ensure that people are baking/serving on an approximately monthly basis. I hope that the Café can provide a place of company and friendship for all of our community, whether they are young or old, church members or local residents. Please be assured of a friendly welcome at St Mary's Community Café, we are always pleased to meet new people. If anyone would like to join our fantastic team of volunteers, either baking or serving on a Wednesday morning, we would be delighted'.

Wartime memories- continued

After being evacuated and moving several times, Stan moved to an aunt's house in Thornton Heath.

I can remember looking out of an upstairs window, the sky was all red from the fires in London. Then there was a lull in the bombing so we went home to our flat in Balham. Most of the windows had broken glass which had to be replaced, carpets had been nailed to the window frames to keep the worst of the weather out. The upstairs flat was empty, water pipes had burst due to cold weather making damage. My mother was disabled so was entitled to a Morrison indoor shelter which was erected in the front room. We slept in this every night.

Then the V-1 Doodlebugs arrived. At first it was thought it was one of our planes on fire until it dropped like a bomb. They tried to shoot them down but they were going too fast. Then there were the V-2 rockets, you did not hear them coming. However, the Army and RAF soon found the launch sites and the V-1 & 2s stopped.

Not long after VE Day arrived. Scouts and Guides had meetings again. A church parade was called to give thanks to God for Peace. People brought out all their blackout screens, curtains etc and burnt them in the street.

Food supply was still a problem. All things were still rationed and took a long time to come off, for example when I did my National Service in 1950 I was given food coupons for my two weeks embarkation leave (I went to Egypt for nearly two years). On returning to the UK in 1952 things were nearly normal.

Stan Clark

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Friends of Griffins - September

Friends of Griffins is a small charity, run by volunteers and established to enhance and advance the life skills and education of children and young people from the London Borough of Bromley who are born with, or are affected by, visual and/or hearing impairment.

The charity raises funds to provide the children with equipment and life-skills opportunities that will assist their teachers with their work. It has purchased equipment such as Spectrum Light Columns and an LED Carpet for the specialist room at the Sensory Support Centre in Orpington. These items are used by the teachers to stimulate and educate babies and children who are born with visual impairment.

Alongside the provision of equipment, the charity funds events and outings designed to promote children's understanding of the world. So far this year, among many other things, the Friends have funded a cookery session for visually impaired children (including some with additional needs), a trip to Littleville Role Play for deaf pre-schoolers, a music day, a trip to a pottery where the children made items, and have purchased a set of puppets to be used for the deaf children in the Early Years group to learn vocabulary and use imagination to create stories.

The charity provides this and much more: there will be information in the church throughout the month for anyone interested to know more.

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St. Mary's Parish Picnic was enjoyed by our local uniformed organisations and members of the congregation and community alike.

**BRING AND SHARE
HARVEST LUNCH**
Sunday 5th October
After 10.30am All Age Parade Service

Bring a dish to share.
Please sign up at the Parish Office
or via the QR Code

All are welcome: there will be donation bar,
activities and more.

Suggested donation of £5 to the Diocese of Rochester
Poverty and Hope Appeal



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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

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Email: office@stmarysshortlands.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	thomas.nickalls@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 (Mon)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Thu)	fourthbromleybrownies@outlook.com	
Rainbows	2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com	
Pre-school	Mrs. C. Hall	8290 6704 or 07960988552
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
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

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