

## Light a candle

January has a sense of new hope and March heralds the beginning of Spring. In contrast, February tends to feel grim and dark. This year, with the ongoing pandemic and possible unpredictable extremes of climate and economic uncertainty, February might feel particularly grim and dark. However, the beginning of February is also when we might spot snowdrops growing.

Even as we experience the worst of winter weather, those snowdrops herald new growth. In some rural areas, snowdrops are known as Candlemas Bells.

Candlemas on 2 February is a Christian celebration that is often neglected. Situated 40 days after Christmas, at the midpoint between the shortest day and the Spring Equinox, it comes before Lent: the 40 day countdown to Easter. Candlemas marks the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple and the revelation that Jesus will be the Light of the World.

Traditionally, Candlemas was when the year's supply of church candles was blessed. Candlemas means the sending out of light and reminds us that as Jesus was sent to be the light of the world we, too, are sent to be witnesses and examples of that light.

The quotation 'Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness' has been associated with Confucius and, in the last century, with Eleanor Roosevelt, John Kennedy and the 1961 ceremony marking the founding of Human Rights Day. It is a reminder that we all have choices. We can complain and curse the darkness that we encounter, but that rarely changes anything. Alternatively, we can try to bring light and hope into people's lives. Globally what we achieve may be small, but it is better than nothing and might make a big difference in an individual's life.

This February, as we consider the darkness around us, we too have a choice. We can share our

frustration, complain and curse, or we can look at how we, with a word of encouragement or affirmation or a kindly action, can bring some love, hope and light into the darkness that others are facing. Let us choose light.

*Stuart Buchanan*



**A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to Stan Clark, a regular attender at St Mary's for around 65 years, who recently celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Stan's many roles at the church have included Deputy Warden, Sexton, Odd Job Man and Scout Group Treasurer. See page 2 inside for an opportunity to help the Scouts today.

### Special Events and Services

**Sunday 25 February**

**6.30pm Choral Evensong**

**Wednesday 2 March - Ash Wednesday**

**10.00am Holy Communion**

**& 8.00pm**

Services will take place in church and will be streamed via Facebook. All activities may be subject to change based on government COVID restrictions. Any updates will be shared through [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk) and [www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands](https://www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands).



## From the Registers

### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Annie 17 Jan Age 90  
Heyberd



### Annie Heyberd

Born in Forest Hill to Dorothy and Inkie, Annie had a normal childhood until the Munich Crisis of 1938 when it was decided she should go and live with her grandparents in Barnstaple where she remained until the end of the war.

Returning to London, she lived first in Dulwich and then with her parents in Ravensbourne Avenue. Next door, the family had a son called Bernard. It was to be the start of 40 years of love and happiness for them both.

On leaving school Annie started work in the Bank of England. From the time of the family's move to Shortlands she and her parents attended St Mary's Church, which at the time was run from a small hall at the end of Valley Road, the church having been bombed during the war.

On her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday Annie and Bernard became engaged and they were married two years later at St Nicholas, Chislehurst. They had three sons: Christopher and then the twins Mark and John.

Annie was always full of energy and drive. She taught her children to swim and played tennis, hockey and lacrosse. She always maintained her interest in sport and was fiercely competitive. Holidays were important: she enjoyed driving and camping abroad. Annie also enjoyed clothes and was known for her matching accessories.

At St Mary's she had several roles, including being an active member of Mothers Union and co-ordinator of the 2WWs, set up initially to support social contact for widowers and widows.

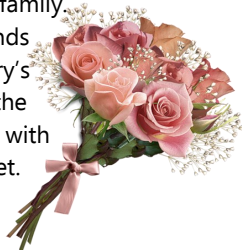
Bernard's death when she was only 57 was a huge blow. But Annie was a glass half full person, whose priority was her family. She joined the U3A, enjoyed rambling and was always happy to have a glass of wine with friends.

In 2014 she was diagnosed with Mixed Dementia but it was only in the last couple of years that it manifested itself. We will always remember Annie's smile and will miss her.

### MANY HAPPY RETURNS:

Avis Smith, a longstanding member of St Mary's congregation, also recently celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with her family.

Her friends at St Mary's marked the occasion with a bouquet.



**CAN YOU HELP?** 7th Bromley Scout Group is in urgent need of adult helpers for its various sections and in particular for its Monday Cub Pack, which is at risk of closing if help cannot be found to replace Tricia who is stepping down after 30 years! All offers would be welcome and particularly from someone willing to 'go into uniform' as a Leader - training would be given. This is an opportunity to become involved in one of our thriving Children and Youth groups.

To find out more, please call Tony Chase (020 8464 6188) or Graham Smedley (020 8650 9677)



The Community Café offered a warm welcome to 'Betwixt' on the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year

### St Mary's Pre-School update

We closed pre-school as instructed by the Government in March 2020 and re-opened in June, when permitted to do so. We operated in bubbles of 6, until the end of the summer term. From September, we were able to operate in one bubble of 30.

All resources only came out once a week and were cleaned before use. All new starters had been met one at a time outside, socially distanced, in the Summer to complete all necessary paperwork and answer any questions.

By December, local primary schools were beginning to close whole year groups as the Kent variant took hold. Little did we know, the virus had reached the Pre-school during the last 3 days of term so the festive period was spent in isolation.

From January 2021, the government had decided to keep all schools closed in Bromley but keep early years settings open. Over the course of the pandemic the amount of registration forms coming through was a lot lower than normal.

Understandably, it is difficult for parents to choose a pre-school when they are not able to come and see it in action; however, from September 2021 new parents were once again able to be shown around. The new children who joined us had had little or no socialisation with other children due to the pandemic. Many were unsettled to start with but this was to be expected.

Many pre-schools have been forced to close due to financial struggles during the pandemic and, although we now have additional cleaning costs to manage, we are thankful to still be open and thriving as pre-school education is so important for young children.

**Christine Hall**  
St Mary's Pre-School Leader

# MISSION OF THE MONTH

## XLP

February's Mission of the Month is the youth charity, XLP. XLP stands for 'The eXcel Project'.

It was formed in 1996, in response to a stabbing in a school playground. The school's headmaster asked the local church-based youth worker to come into the school, work with their students and teachers and help with difficult behavioural issues.

XLP now operates across nine inner-city boroughs around London, working with 3,000 young people each year and transforming their lives through education, mentoring, sport and the arts. It has converted buses which visit estates and which act as a safe space where young people can relax and have safe conversations.

The charity thinks of the journey of a young person through its projects in terms of four distinct stages: TRUST - BELIEVE - CHANGE - CONTRIBUTE.

Its mission statement is: 'To engage in long-term relationships that empower young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete their education, avoid anti-social behaviour and ultimately become independent and confident contributors within their communities.'

There are many examples of lives transformed by the charity on its website: [www.xlp.org.uk](http://www.xlp.org.uk).



## Master of The Guild

Having retired from a very rewarding and fulfilling teaching career, I have spent the first 21 months of my retirement as the Master of The Guild of Freeman of the City of London which was set up in 1908 and has 2,000 members.

The beginning of my term of office coincided with the first lockdown in March 2020. I put virtual events in place including walks, talks, quizzes, and tastings of every kind. We held all our committee meetings online so that the business of the Guild could continue. The highlights were having afternoon tea with the Lord Mayor of London in our respective gardens, conferring an honorary membership on Captain Sir Tom Moore and supporting the Livery Kitchen Initiative where meals were provided for NHS staff at London's hospitals.

Once in-person events were possible we held lunches and dinners, went Swan Upping on the River Thames, held a City Walk and even managed a long weekend in Malta. The highlights were the dinner at Trinity House, home of the charity running our lighthouses, with guest speaker Commodore Toby Williamson, and our glittering Annual Banquet at Guildhall with Charlie Ross, of 'Bargain Hunt' fame, as our guest speaker.

Masters also get invited to other City events and the last few months have been no exception. The highlights included being 'Jailed and Bailed', a charity event in support of the British Red Cross. I was 'sentenced' in Court 1 at the Old Bailey for walking too much, sent to the Tower of London on a vintage London bus and 'jailed' in the Tower until I paid a 'bail'. We raised over £48,000 for a very worthy cause. Another highlight was being part of The Annual Lord Mayor's Show where I rode in a carriage from the Royal Mews, witnessed the swearing in of the new Lord Mayor in the Royal Courts of Justice and enjoyed waving to all the crowds.

But it's not all about having a good time. The Master runs The Guild for their term of office, including ensuring we are financially sound and that our governance is fit for purpose, making appointments and employing staff, and representing The Guild at City, other Livery and national Guilds events.

It has been a privilege, honour and humbling to serve as the Master, an experience that I will never forget!

*Ann Marie Jefferys*

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**CONGRATULATIONS!** Alison McWilliams was delighted to win the raffle having visited the Craft and Chatter stall at St Mary's Christmas Fair.



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**Monday to Saturday 9am - Morning Prayer**

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

You can access these services online at:

[www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk)

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

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**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](http://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
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
Church Flowers	Mrs. C. Willatt	8313 0246
Mission Chair	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
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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](http://www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk)  
Editorial Parish Office

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