

## A New Message

After the reflection of Advent and the joy and excitement of Christmas comes January and the start of a New Year.

The outlook seems uncertain and turbulent. Tensions, wars and famines are arising elsewhere. Climate change and extreme weather events are ever more real. We face the cost-of-living crisis and rising pressures across public services. The impact of social media on mental health and wellbeing is all too evident, especially for the young. Artificial Intelligence is seen as both an opportunity and a major existential threat.

And yet, the message of Christmas rings out as true in January as in December. All around there are signs of hope. The relevance of and the need for Christianity have never been stronger.

Studying the Bible gives us a true perspective on the battles we face today and addresses the problems of our age. Whilst the Bible is a closed book because no material has been added in 2,000 years, it is a very open-ended book, because the Christian story is still being written today.

St Mary Shortlands is writing our part of that story. We are looking forward to our new incumbent and making Jesus known in Shortlands. We want to deliver our Future Generations Project.

When riding a bike, momentum must be maintained. If you lose speed, then maintaining balance is more difficult and you fall off. The same is true when skiing.

This year I pray that we will keep our momentum and drive forward much faster. The world's problems look daunting and insoluble and yet there are small actions that each one of us can take locally. Each individual action can make a profound impact when aggregated.

I hope this is a message we take forward and share with those we meet this year. That we all strive to play our part and make a difference, remembering as Nelson Mandela said: 'everything is impossible until it is done'.

*Cllr Dr David Jefferys, Licensed Lay Minister*

### ***Special Services and Events***

**Sunday 5 January - Epiphany**

**5.00pm Come, Holy Spirit**

***A service of silence, readings and worship songs***

**Sunday 19 January**

**4.00pm Choral Evensong**



### Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's  
family:  
Willow Yapp 1 Dec

### Holy Matrimony

We congratulate:  
Katie McCaughin & Matthew  
Murphy 14 December



## MISSION OF THE MONTH

### The Leprosy Mission

Leprosy is widely believed to be the world's oldest disease, and has continued to affect men, women and children for over 2,000 years.

It is also known as Hansen's Disease, after a Norwegian physician, Gerhard Hansen, who discovered the specific bacterium that causes leprosy as long ago as 1873. The number of new cases diagnosed remains at a steady global figure of over 200,000 every year. Early diagnosis and treatment with multi-drug therapy, which is freely available, can provide a cure and stops the disease progressing, rendering the sufferer non-infectious within just a few days of treatment.

The Leprosy Mission (TLM) continues to work hard in reversing the injustice caused by this devastating disease that, if untreated, can cause extensive nerve damage leading to loss of sensation, ulcers, infections, weakness in the eyelids causing blindness, permanent disability, deformity and long periods of hospitalisation and surgery, which may involve amputation.

TLM is a worldwide Christian charity with a vision for a world without leprosy, focussing on ten countries in Africa and Asia. Its work includes treatment, health care, surgery, physiotherapy, health awareness training, and providing small business loans to enable those affected to escape poverty and become independent.

The church's Traidcraft stall includes items sourced from The Leprosy Mission Shop and the purchase of such goods will provide further support for this charity. For further information please see the display at the back of the church throughout January and at

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

### Valerie Redman

Valerie was born in Lewisham in 1935. The family later moved to Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells, where she became actively involved with St Thomas' church and the local cub scout pack. This is where she met Doug whom she married in 1957.

Their early years of marriage were spent in Aylesford and they attended Holy Trinity in Larkfield. Their involvement in the Youth Club was significant: many friendships were forged at this time which continued for over 60 years.

Valerie had worked in a furriers in Tunbridge Wells: she then joined the Reeds Paper Group in Aylesford where Doug worked as a surveyor. Andrew and Peter were born and then Valerie's life changed quite dramatically as Doug made the decision to become ordained.

Following ordination, Doug became curate at St Mary's Shortlands and Valerie's life as a clergy wife started in earnest. In all of the parishes where they served, Valerie was an integral part in the development of the local community. At St Edmund's West Kingsdown in the early 1970s and later at St John's Chatham, she worked tirelessly in pre-schools, with the Mothers Union, Young Wives Groups, Youth Clubs and all the unseen roles in support of Doug's ministry. Plus, of course, being a fulltime mother and wife.

In 1980 Valerie and Doug returned to St Mary's Shortlands and for 20 years she immersed herself in the life of the parish. Her involvement with the Mums and Toddlers Group was possibly her greatest love and she, in turn, was much loved by them.

In 2000 Valerie and Doug moved to Sissinghurst: whilst she enjoyed the increased opportunity for travel and relaxation, she was perhaps frustrated by her husband's 'retirement' being replaced with commitments across a significant part of Kent!

After Doug's death in 2016, Valerie suffered a number of extended periods of ill health which led to a move to a care home. She entered fully into that new life, welcoming new residents to their new surroundings, helping with the gardening, winning the weekly quiz, singing in the choir, flower arranging... She grasped the opportunities that her recovery had given her and, through her profound Christian faith, understood that she still had an important role to play in the life of those around her.

As she reached the final days of her life she was visited by members of staff, past and present, who wanted to say goodbye to someone who had touched their lives in a special way. She would not have said this of herself but, in her own way, she made a difference in this world.

### A good turn

Guides from both St Mary's units enjoyed their Christmas celebrations. After a cinema trip and a sleepover in the church hall, they did a double good turn for the church. Bright and early, they worked on the Saturday morning clearing dead leaves from church gardens. Then - revived by hot chocolate and biscuits - they made 240 Christingles for the Christingle service.



## St Barnabas

St. Barnabas sits in an almost hideaway position at the junction of two no-through roads, Perth Road and Oakhill Road. However, its associated hall, strangely called St. Peter's Hall, is some distance away in Park Langley!

The church was designed by the architects Stenning and Hall and drawings of both the proposed interior and exterior appeared in the Building News in January 1879, but it was not completed as per the designs. It was built in 1878/84 replacing the original iron church, one of many 'tin tabernacles', and the parish was created from that of St. George's Beckenham, the 'mother church'. Although it is a solid and imposing brick building, it lacks either a tower or the originally designed small spire to help locate it.



The church interior has an unusual mix of stone and bare brickwork with tall, narrow, rounded arched windows both in the chancel and high above either side of the nave. Its style is said to be of 'Early English as opposed to Decorated architecture' giving it a very different feel to St. George's. However, this appears to contrast with the pointed brick arches surmounting the stone columns between the nave and side aisles.

Most of the stained glass was destroyed in World War II; however, two windows designed by Karl Parsons (1912) survived, one depicting Mary and Joseph, the other Elizabeth and Zachariah. Parsons was associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, a South London boy who attended Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham boys' school in New Cross. The rest of the glass is mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and was designed by Leonard Evetts, one of the most prolific stained glass artists at that time.

Other notable ornaments include the altar carvings depicting Christ's Passion and the later additions of the rood screen and figures either side of the chancel.

In 2022 St. Barnabas was merged back with St. George's to become a combined benefice.



**ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR:** St Mary's Christmas Fair was jam-packed with Christmas bargains and fun.

### Fun for children at St Mary's

At St Mary's we love welcoming young people and families into church and we have a number of groups specifically for this.

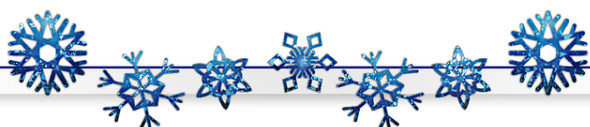
**Junior Church** – this takes place every Sunday during term time and is what some people might know as Sunday School. Our young people aged from under two up to 18 are invited to go up to the church hall during the 10.30am service, where they are taught all about God's work by an amazing group of volunteers. These sessions usually follow a structure of games, bible reading and then an arts and crafts activity to consolidate the learning, so they have something to show those at home and the congregation what they have been up to. There is quite often food involved too!

**Tea Time Together** – from 4-5.30pm on the second Sunday of each month in term time. This group is for families with children aged two up to year 5, to come and learn about God. There is always a song, a story, arts and crafts and games around a religious theme. The Community Cafe also kindly provide refreshments of tea/coffee, squash and cake for all who attend.

**Shortlands Youth Group** - also on the second Sunday of each month from 6-7.30pm in term time. This is a social group for those in Year 6 to Year 13 to come and spend time socially with other people their age. There is air hockey, table tennis, video games, board games, arts and crafts, outdoor games in the summer months and lots of free snacks!

We would love to welcome you and your young people to any of these groups in this new year!

*Rachel Tillotson*



**The Parish Church of St. Mary, Shortlands**



Link Parish  
St Francis of Assisi, Douai, France

**WORSHIP**

Sunday 10.30am - Holy Communion (in church)

Wednesday 10.00am - Morning Prayer. Holy Communion will take place once a month

You can access Sunday services online at:

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

[www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands](http://www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands)

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

**PARISH DIRECTORY**

Vicar		8460 5682
office@stmaryshortlands.church		
Licensed Lay	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
Ministers	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
	Mrs. D. Speller	07941415082

Parish Administrator	Mrs. E. Woollven	8460 5682
Church wardens	Mrs. G. Sherman	07500751265
	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Treasurer	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
PCC Secretary	Mrs J. Sharma	07900971867

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Safeguarding	Mrs P. Lambourne	8658 0470
Electoral Roll	Mrs J. Sharma	07900971867
Junior Church	Miss. R Tillotson	07503680612
Stewardship	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884

**PARISH OFFICE**

Telephone: 020 8460 5682

Email: [office@stmaryshortlands.church](mailto: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](mailto:7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com)

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mr O. Swinfen	07758458077
Cubs (Tue)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954437658
Beavers	<a href="mailto:thomas.nickalls@gmail.com">thomas.nickalls@gmail.com</a>	

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies or Guides please go to [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://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)	<a href="mailto:fourtbromleybrownies@outlook.com">fourtbromleybrownies@outlook.com</a>	
Rainbows	<a href="mailto:2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com">2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com</a>	
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 8
Fair Trade	Mrs. C Willatt	07511885941

**LOCAL CONTACTS**

Cllr. G Turrell	<a href="mailto:gemma.turrell@bromley.gov.uk">gemma.turrell@bromley.gov.uk</a>
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Cllr. A. Grant	<a href="mailto:adam.grant@bromley.gov.uk">adam.grant@bromley.gov.uk</a>
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Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

**SPAN INFORMATION**

Website [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)

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