

Seize the day and the year

'The year is over, a new year begins' are the opening words of the service for January 1st. Some will recall that Janus, the Roman God after whom January is named, has two faces, others will think of the song lyrics: 'the year is over - let it go'.

How will we respond as individuals and as a community to the New Year? Do we look back and reflect or press forward? I suggest both.

God wants us, his people, to discern lessons from the past - from both the lows and highs of 2021, which I suspect for most was a very challenging year. What did we learn about ourselves and our relationships during the extended lock down? About isolation and loneliness, about the importance of friendship and community?

Some have come to appreciate more the environment and nature, seeing the world differently. Some have lost faith and hope, whilst others have found more spiritual awareness and a sense of what matters. The feedback from our daily streamed services and the new community café in church has revealed much to St Mary's Ministry Team.

What of 2022? We can see many challenges; the pandemic is far from over, we have major threats to our climate and environment, widespread global unrest. Yet if we look, we see hope all around. The last two years have been a profound wake up call. With God's help we can build back better. Improvement is incremental, enthusiasm and positivity are infectious, whilst cynicism and negativity are destructive.



St Mary's enjoyed all the fun of the Christmas Fair both inside and outside the church building

Let us seize every opportunity to make 2022 a great year, through an encouraging word, a small act of kindness, of friendship.

If you are feeling lonely, isolated or perhaps experiencing an emptiness and you want something deeper from life, why not drop in for a coffee and chat on a Wednesday morning or join one of our services? You can do this online if it would be easier. Maybe St Mary's can provide you with a new opportunity in 2022.

Let us seize each day and God knows what the consequences might be!

David Jefferys (Licensed Lay Minister)

Special Events and Services

**Sunday 9 January
4.00pm Tea Time Together**

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 and www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands.



Stay in touch!

To keep up with the latest news from St Mary's, you can 'like' our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter - search for **'St Mary's Shortlands'**.



If you're not sure how to do it, ask in the office and they'll put you in touch with someone who can give you an introduction to 'social media'.

Questions, questions!

In November, St Mary's hosted a group of about 40 year 6 students from Harris Primary Academy Shortlands. They came primarily to ask questions about Mary, the mother of Jesus, that had come from discussions in their Religious Education classes.

What an amazing group! These are a few of the questions they asked: Was Mary black or white? Is the Bible diverse? Why isn't Joseph as important as Mary? Who was Elizabeth? There were many questions about original sin and its relationship to Mary. What are the qualities of Mary? Did Mary go to be with God when she died?

All of the students were quiet, attentive and respectful of others' questions: their questions were clearly and confidently presented.

After all their questions had been addressed, we had a short time to speak about St Mary's Shortlands, including the bombing of the church in World War Two and its rebuilding in the 1950s. We looked at the baptismal font, and the silver used in the Eucharist.

Before they returned to the school, they saw the stone carving of Mary and Jesus on a donkey, high over the East window. This carving is a reminder of the original church building which had three stained glass windows, one of which showed the Flight to Egypt.

We enjoyed hosting them and hope they return again.

Glo Sherman

New Year hopes



My hopes are that we can continue to foster a spirit of neighbourliness and mutual support that became such a feature of the local community during lockdown ... one positive benefit of a difficult time, and one that we may come to rely on again in the future.

Mark Dempsey, Chairman Shortlands Residents Association

I hope to continue to coordinate the work of the many volunteers who contribute to life at St Mary's – and I hope that office technology will help me to do this!

***Nicola Blake,
St Mary's Parish Administrator***

My hopes for the New Year are that we will be able to socialise together more, enjoy life to the full again and maybe even go abroad!

***Rachel Tillotson,
Junior Church Coordinator***



I hope for a healthy, safe New Year in which we continue to build on our work to welcome local people into our church building – and that SPAN will bring some of our life at St Mary's into people's homes!

Heather Wills, SPAN Committee

**St Mary's Junior Church
invites you to**

**Tea Time
Together**

**Sunday 9 January
4 – 5.30pm**

**Music, story and arts and crafts,
on the theme of Joy, for families of all ages**

**Free refreshments will be provided for adults at the
Community Cafe whilst the children have fun!**

Please contact Rachel Tillotson – 07503 680 612

Return to Durham House

December saw a long-awaited return by St Mary's to Durham House, as visits had been curtailed due to Covid restrictions. A small group from the Durham House team and St Mary's music group entertained the residents with Christmas carols and songs before sharing tea and mince pies with old friends and new acquaintances. We look forward to services resuming in the New Year.



Green Flag for South Hill Wood

The Friends of South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen have achieved another Green Flag, for South Hill Wood – the second year in succession. Again, this is one of only seven awarded within the Borough of Bromley.

The Green Flag is the quality mark for parks and signifies particularly: a high level of managed maintenance; a welcoming and safe experience; environmentally and biodiversity friendly; community involvement; and of heritage value.

Peter White

MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Leprosy Mission

Leprosy is widely believed to be the world's oldest disease, a chronic bacterial infection which is only mildly infectious, causing nerve damage and muscle weakness that can lead to deformities, crippling, blindness and isolation.

The Leprosy Mission is a global Christian organisation, founded in 1874, now working in 28 countries, with its focus on 10 countries in Africa and Asia, providing and evaluating a range of medical and social projects that help transform the lives of those affected by leprosy.

Over 200,000 new cases of leprosy were recorded by the World Health Organisation in 2019 and there are around 3 million people suffering from irreversible disabilities caused by the disease.

There is currently no vaccine generally available to specifically prevent leprosy but a multidrug therapy - MDT - consisting of a combination of specific antibiotics has been freely available since 1982, providing a cure which will, within a short time after commencement of treatment, render the patient non-infectious and stop the disease progressing. However, the cure will not reverse any disability or permanent damage previously caused by the disease and symptoms can take a long time to develop - around five years on average - and early diagnosis and treatment is therefore essential wherever possible

Leprosy patients are in the high-risk category for Covid-19, meaning that the virus brings new life-threatening challenges to their doors, and the task of caring for leprosy patients has never been more challenging than at the present time.

Further information is available from the display at the back of the church throughout January and at www.leprosymission.org.uk.



THANK YOU: to the Guides who raked leaves off the church lawns and made over 150 Christingles for St Mary's service following a sleepover back in December.

Shelter from the flood

Back in early November, Harris Primary Academy Shortlands experienced a serious flood within the school which caused a temporary closure of the school building.

After some early morning discussions, St Mary's was able to welcome the school into its meeting rooms and the recently created space at the back of church, so that classes and education for key workers could continue through the week.

The Future Generations Project is designed to increase the flexibility of space within the church building to enable both community activities and worship throughout the week.

Tim Dawson, Chairman of the Future Generations Project Steering Group, said: 'We were delighted to be able to support the school at this challenging time and look forward to sharing our space even more with the community once we have raised funds for heating, flooring and seating which will enable this.'

PICTURED: some of the thank you cards sent by children from the Harris school.



FELLOWSHIP: 26 senior singles enjoyed a lovely lunch at Langley Park Golf Club in November. Attendees of the 2Ws lunch are looking forward to the next outing to be arranged in the Spring.

A winning afternoon

On Wednesday 3rd November an afternoon of playing Bridge was held in the church. There were 15 full tables, that is 60 bridge players present! The players were playing the Chicago format, with Joan Cook being the overall winner and Pat Hunt the runner up.

The afternoon, which included a raffle and refreshments, raised just over £500 for the church and the Future Generations Project.

Thanks to Tricia Braithwaite, Pauline Boatwright and her friends and the St Mary's Community Cafe Team for making the afternoon such a success.

Job opportunity

St Mary's Church building is being used more and more for both church and community activities. This involves moving chairs and tables and occasionally other items to prepare for events and services.

We are now looking to employ someone to move these chairs and tables for us. This could suit anyone who is physically fit and flexible. The times you would be needed are flexible and are currently up to 4 hours a week.

If you, or someone you know, might be interested please email office@stmaryshortlands.church with your contact details and we will be in touch.

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WORSHIP

Sunday 10.30am - Holy Communion (in church)

Monday to Saturday 9am - Morning Prayer

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

You can access these services online at:

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands

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

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Revd Gary Best	8460 0262
(day off Friday)	Vicar@stmarysshortlands.church	
Licensed Lay	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
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	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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	Prof. M. Fox	8650 3252
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Treasurer	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
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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@stmarysshortlands.church
Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8402 6599
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
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
Church Flowers	Mrs. C. Willatt	8313 0246
Mission Chair	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Fair Trade	Mrs. C. Willatt	8313 0246

LOCAL CONTACTS

Clr. M. Cooke	07912 649058
(E: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Clr. A. Cuthbert	(E: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)
Residents Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

SPAN INFORMATION

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Editorial	Parish Office
Distribution	Mr. M. Harrison 07821 691567

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