

We're here for you

Every Christmas we celebrate, we really do, the people who come regularly and faithfully once a year to mark with us life events and the great festivals of the Church calendar. Together we wonder at the journey of Mary and Joseph to the baby born in Bethlehem, our hearts are thrilled by the sublime tradition of Midnight Mass, and the child in us rejoices in the fun of Christmas morning.

There are other services throughout the year that touch other spots in the human spirit such as celebrating heroes on Remembrance Sunday and sitting quietly with loss and bereavement in the peaceful beauty of the Service for Departed Loved Ones. Many are deeply moved by Good Friday and elated by Resurrection Sunday.

The flame that is lit at one of these services, and the golden seeds of the love of God that are sown, are nurtured and rekindled every year. It is enough for now. One day and a thousand in the sight of the Lord are the same. Whether we come once a year or several times a week we are all on a journey. God asked us to love him with all our hearts and souls and minds and that is what we bring every time we come.

We are all seeking for meaning and purpose, yearning for truth. We hope you found during the Christmas season, and will find during the year ahead, a place where heaven touches earth, God's heart touches our heart, and our spirits are enlivened again.

We celebrate you annual seekers and are here for you whenever and however you need us in the months ahead.

Rev Jane Kustner



Congratulations to Louise and Michael Ellery on their wedding held at St Mary's on 2nd December. See page 3 inside.

Special Services and Events

Sunday 7 January - Epiphany

9.00am Holy Communion (Said)

10.30am Children's Service

Sunday 14 January

4.00pm Tea Time Together

6.00pm Youth Club

Sunday 21 January

4.00pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 28 January - Candlemas

4.00pm Come Holy Spirit

A service of silence, readings and worship songs

We wish you a blessed and happy new year!



Holy Matrimony

We congratulate:

Louise Crampsie and Michael Saxby Ellery

2 Dec

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR ADOLPH WILLIAMS

2pm, Saturday 13 January
St Mary's church, followed by refreshments
in the hall



MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Leprosy Mission

The Leprosy Mission ('TLM') is a global Christian charity that has been supported by St Mary's for many years.

This year TLM celebrates its 150th anniversary, having been founded by Wellesley Bailey, a young Irishman who travelled to India originally intending to join the police force. However, he felt God was calling him to missionary work and whilst teaching in a school in the Punjab area of North India he saw for the first time the devastating effects of leprosy.

After marrying his childhood girlfriend Alice in Bombay Cathedral they came back to Ireland in 1873 having decided to raise awareness of the problems including severe disability, extreme poverty and rejection. They returned to India in 1874 to start 'The Mission to Lepers', later to be renamed 'The Leprosy Mission' in 1965.

After working tirelessly in the following 43 years up to his retirement, by 1917 the Mission Bailey had created was running 87 projects in 12 countries.

Today, TLM works in 28 countries with its focus on ten countries in Africa and Asia, providing assistance to those currently affected and new cases totalling around 200,000 per year. TLM goes beyond extensive medical care for a holistic approach that includes early detection, education, rehabilitation, water and sanitation, community integration, counselling, and psychosocial support. Together with its partners TLM researches a diagnostic test and a long awaited vaccine for leprosy.

For further information please see the display at the back of the church throughout January and at leprosymission.org.uk

Wrestling With Difficult Questions (WWDQ)

A senior city banker studied the Bible verse 'I (Jesus) thank you Father that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children' (Matthew 11. 25-26). The banker then said 'I have thought more in the past hour than I have at my job all week. We do not have time to think, our jobs are becoming AI-driven and suffocated with compliance, our news diet is sanitised and packaged into digestible sound bites. George Bernard Shaw said "we must always think about things, and we must think about things as they are, not as they are said to be."

The WWDQ teenagers take time to think about the big questions of today. So far they have tackled Forgiveness, Repentance and what happens in the Afterlife; they are learning to discern, disrupt and disagree agreeably and, most importantly, change their minds. It is meaty stuff! If you would like to join the group discussions on 14th January contact Rev Jane Kustner vicar@stmaryshortlands.church or 07947 778 441.

Working together

We have been working with Christine Hall, St. Mary's Pre-School Leader, to consider how to further enhance the experiences we both offer our children.

In the spring term of 2023, small groups of Year 4 pupils began to visit St. Mary's Pre-School to share books and stories with the younger children. The positive reception this received was overwhelming. The children were enthralled as our students read confidently and engagingly.

Equally, our pupils relished the opportunity to play and learn alongside the Pre-School pupils: it was heart-warming to witness them step into a leadership role and act as role models for the St. Mary's pupils. We were particularly pleased to see pupils who have previously been a little shy or lacking in confidence really come out of their shells in this role.

Building on this initial positive experience, Christine suggested we brought a small group of pupils to talk to those soon to start primary school about their experiences of school and the transition from Pre-School to reception class.

We selected a group of Year 1 pupils who, at just 5 - 6 years old, spoke clearly and enthusiastically about starting school and responded to questions. It was clear that the younger pupils were reassured by this visit and it went a long way towards easing nerves about the start of school. They also had some familiar faces to look out for on the playground on their first day!

In September 2023 a substantial number of St. Mary's pupils joined our reception cohort: it is clear that the link we have built with the Pre-School has really supported them in making the transition run smoothly. They have settled in brilliantly and brought so much to our school community already!

We are looking forward to further developing our relationship with St. Mary's over the coming year - the positive impact on all pupils is clear to see.

*Deborah Hasim-Hayes, Vice Principal at
Harris Primary Academy, Shortlands*

Christening service at St Mary's



A wonderful christening service was recently conducted by Rev Jane Peters for Samuel Braithwaite, whose parents were both christened at St Mary's as children following a long family tradition of marriages at the church.



Baby and Toddler sessions

9.30 - 11.30am
12.30 - 2.00pm
Thursday in term time

Ministry beyond St Mary's

What do you, as Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), do beyond St Mary's? The answer to this frequently posed question is: 'Quite a lot'.

Ann-Marie and David regularly lead the Sunday morning service at St George's Memorial Chapel at Biggin Hill (pictured) and support the congregation, working with our former curate Alison Newman. Last year David took the Remembrance Day service, a moving experience with veterans from the Battle of Britain and Ambassadors whose citizens are commemorated in the Chapel. David has been asked to preach at local churches and lead Ministry of the Word Services during clergy holidays.



David also gives support to dementia outreach in Bromley, combining his ministry with health and well-being responsibilities as a Councillor, and is currently exploring ministry opportunities with a City of London church.

Ann-Marie serves as a Day Chaplain at Rochester Cathedral once or twice per month and will describe this ministry in a later edition of SPAN. She will be preaching at the morning service in St Paul's Cathedral in February.

We are both experts at saying Grace, a task often asked of LLMs at very short notice. Ann-Marie has said Grace at a Guildhall Banquet and other City functions. In May David used a traditional Grace in German for the Bromley – Neuwig Twinning dinner.

We may be more involved back in St Mary's parish from Spring onwards.

David and Ann-Marie Jefferys

St Mary's Christmas Fair



St Mary's welcomed the community to a Christmas Fair in the church and grounds on 25th November for music, mulled wine and roasted chestnuts. Thank you for your donations for the raffle/saleable goods, which raised money for the church's work.



Guide Leader marries at St Mary's

Wow factor abounded as Louise Crampsie was walked down the aisle by her mum Shirley and given away to Michael Ellery. Among all the friends and family were members of Friday Guides, who were very excited to see their leader get married!

Louise has been a Guide Leader at St Mary's for 10 years, having been a Brownie and Guide herself in Beckenham. This summer she completed her "Going Away With" Licence by running a brilliant summer camp for Shortlands Guides, the two St Mary's Guide units. Her dedication to Guiding activities is demonstrated by the fact she planned the date of her wedding so she would not miss the Christmas Fair and helping the Guides run their Sweet Tombola stall!

Louise and Michael met online in 2018, and in his bridegroom's speech Michael recalled their first date when they had arranged to meet at All Bar One in London. He saw a beautiful lady standing outside the bar and desperately hoped it was his date. It was, and they have never looked back! As Louise posted on her Facebook page after the wedding: "Today I married the love of my life and couldn't be happier!"

Volunteering on Iona



During the summer I volunteered with the Iona community, an ecumenical Christian movement working for justice and peace, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship, on the Isle of Iona in the Outer Hebrides. Iona is a place of pilgrimage where saints and kings are buried. The island is hauntingly beautiful, incredibly remote and buzzing with life. A thin place, where one may feel a little closer to God.

I lived in a shared house of eight people and formed firm and lasting friendships; walking and talking, swimming, laughing and playing games and looking after each other generally. I worked hard, five days a week with the housekeeping team. A typical day starts at 7.30am, with a few hours off in the middle of the day, and finishes at 8pm.

Housekeeping duties include setting up and clearing away three meals a day for up to 44 guests and 30 staff. Changeover day means taking down and preparing rooms for the guests including all the laundry. The team welcomes guests on their arrival and is on hand during their stay to help them out with any questions.

Services are twice a day in the Abbey church and I was encouraged to try leading a service as was everyone else. I did this and the words of the liturgy seemed so powerful when said alone in front of others.

This experience has given me a greater sense of self, restored my faith in humanity and God, and offered such warmth, love and light for me to share on my onward journey.

Jo Adam

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 - Holy Communion

You can access Sunday services online at:

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands

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

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PARISH OFFICE

Telephone: 020 8460 5682

Email: office@stmarysshortlands.church

Open 10.00am - 12.00pm weekdays.

Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

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)	Mr O. Swinfen	07758458077
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. 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
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LOCAL CONTACTS

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Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

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