

Faith in relationships

People sometimes talk of faith as if it were a possession - which some have and others don't. Something which can be won, found, or indeed lost or broken. Some may even see faith as a kind of comfort blanket, nice if you have it, but without any real significance in an uncertain world.

Reading in the Bible about how Jesus talked to his disciples paints a somewhat different picture. Christian faith is about relationship: relationship with God, as explained and demonstrated by Jesus, and about mirroring that relationship in how we deal with each other. We reflect the love of God, always remembering that each individual, whatever their race or background is, as stated in the book of Genesis, made in the image of God. Relationships can be rewarding, but they can also be difficult and messy and we can feel let down, or guilty where things have gone wrong.

Jesus understood this: take his relationship with the apostle Peter. Peter had acknowledged Jesus publicly as the Messiah and Jesus had identified him as the "rock" on which he would build his church. Yet when Jesus was on trial Peter, terrified, denied Jesus three times. Even after Peter knew that Jesus had returned from the dead, we read at the end of the gospel of John that Peter didn't initially recognise Jesus when he appeared on the shoreline of Lake Galilee. After sharing a meal, Jesus then gently but firmly questions Peter three times, not ignoring Peter's denial but giving him hope for the future. He heals his hurt and shame, rebuilding a loving relationship and charging Peter to care for Jesus' people.

Jesus gives us a model for how to treat each other. But far more than that, he shows us the human face of God and invites us to respond to his love in relationship with him and alongside others. He doesn't promise that these relationships will always be easy, and like Peter we all have major setbacks, but he does promise that he will be there alongside us in the uncertainties and difficulties of life, even when we forget that he is there.

Catherine Bingham (Licensed Lay Minister)



CONGRATULATIONS to Alice and Simon Hatcher, married at St Mary's in April

Special services and events

Sunday 14 June

4.00pm Tea Time Together

6.00pm Youth Club

Sunday 21 June

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 28 June

10.30am All age parade service

Followed by the Parish Picnic

Sunday 5 July

6.30pm A service of reflection

Led by the Music Group



From the Registers



Holy Matrimony

We congratulate: Alice Crampsie & Simon Hatcher 25th April

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Interment of Ashes: Ann Swatton 26th April

At Rest: David Linstead 27th April

Remembering

David Linstead

David Linstead was born in 1947 in Southend on Sea and remained there until he went to university. From an early age he had an enquiring mind. On holiday in Herne Bay, he was both fascinated and puzzled by the fact that the shells on the beach were quite different from those on his home side of the Thames estuary. His early interest in nature and science was to grow and flourish until his death. It's no surprise that he became a scientist – although he also loved literature, art and poetry.

His first degree at University College London was in Pharmacology, followed by a PhD in yeast genetics. He always wanted to go into research of some kind, his post-doctoral research at Cambridge being on parasitology. At university he became passionate about birding. In later years he also became fascinated by cacti and travelled widely in South America in particular to pursue that hobby.

In 1976 he married Jenny: they had two boys, Richard and Peter, and two grandchildren, Evie and Artie.

David was a man of many passions: nature, pond life, photography (for which he won many awards), micrography, video-microscopy and cacti, with a pathological hatred of unfairness in any form. He was most proud of his contribution to malaria research and the wonder drug Atovoquone.

Years of caring for Jenny were hard and lonely for him and after her death he was deeply sad.

Having conducted Jenny's funeral, Rev Jane Peters stayed in touch with David for an occasional coffee and chat, having discovered a mutual interest in bird watching. Offloading with each other some of their sadder and more challenging times, their friendship deepened and they went on to be married. It was in this period that David started writing articles for SPAN on flora and fauna to look for in each season, kindly sharing a little of his extensive knowledge and his beautiful photographs (an example of which is below).

Sadly, David and Jane's plans for the future were not to be when he became ill. Jane counts it a privilege to have known and loved David.



SAY IT WITH CAKE: We celebrated the one year anniversary of Rev Dave's ministry at St Mary's in the traditional way at the Community Café, which is open from 10.30am – 12.30pm every Wednesday.



Future Generations update

The Future Generations Project continues to explore how we can develop the St Mary's site to help us live out our mission: worshipping God, nurturing fellowship and discipleship, and serving our local community. Our buildings play a vital role in this, and our aim is to ensure they are welcoming, accessible, environmentally responsible and fit for future generations to come. It is encouraging to see that progress is being made across this project's many parts.

Our exploration of the potential for solar panels on the church roof reflects our Christian commitment to care for God's creation and supports the Church of England's goal of reaching net zero carbon by 2030. Alongside the environmental benefits, there is also a strong long-term financial case for renewable energy onsite. We are currently seeking permission from the Diocese and after this we will be seeking planning permission.

Improving accessibility remains a priority. We have plans for permanent ramps at the south door and within the church itself. These will replace the current temporary arrangements, improve safety and welcome, and allow wheelchair access into the choir stalls area for the first time. These changes will be both practical and sensitive to the character of the building.

Several improvements support increased use of the nave (central area of the church) for worship and community activities. New lightweight chairs will soon arrive, making it easier to reconfigure the space while reducing strain and storage difficulties. The existing pink chairs will continue to be used elsewhere on the site. Work has also been carried out to improve and protect the floor at the west end, with further exploration underway into replacing worn carpets.

Planning is also progressing for a fully enclosed Tea Station at the back of church, improved storage solutions, and upgrades to the audio system to improve clarity and consistency for both speech and music. Conversations also continue with architects about the longer-term vision for the church halls, recognising that this is a complex project that will take time.

If you feel able, you may wish to consider a donation to the Future Generations Project. One-off gifts, alongside regular giving, help move these plans forward and reduce pressure on longer-term funds. While we are thankful for funds already set aside for Future Generations work, this pot is not large enough to cover everything, particularly the much bigger ambitions around the halls. Alongside applying for grants, which often look favourably on projects with local support, we continue to rely on the generosity of those who feel able to contribute. Every contribution, whatever its size, is deeply appreciated and helps us take the next faithful step forward. To find out more please email vicar@stmaryshortlands.church or visit www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk/giving/ways-to-give-to-st-marys.

Please continue to pray for these projects and for those guiding them. We are grateful for the generosity already shown and for the many ways people support the life of St Mary's.

Rev Dave Edmondson

Learning through fun



In tandem with St Mary's biannual support for Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 7th Bromley Cubs recently enjoyed a fun-filled presentation by a bomb disposal expert. The cubs participated in simulations of finding and defusing improvised explosive devices (IEDs). They learned of the perils of children and their families living in war-torn countries, whilst hearing about the vital work done by MAG in order to "do whatever it takes to get to a landmine before another child does".

For more information about the work of MAG, visit www.maginternational.org.

Tricia Braithwaite

SAVE THE DATE: Future Generations Project fundraising dinner Saturday 18th July with the Governor of the Bank England as guest speaker. More information to follow.

PARISH PICNIC
Sunday 28th June
ALL AGE CHURCH SERVICE
Starts at 10.30am
Picnic starts straight after

Bouncy Castle, Ice Creams,
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enter!

UPDATE: Last month we announced plans for a summer trip to Eltham Palace, led by the Friends of St Mary's. We regret that it has not been possible to confirm the booking for this event due to time and cost pressures.

MISSION OF THE MONTH

RAMP (Accessibility in Beckenham)

This month, for a change, we are highlighting a local community group. R.A.M.P. (Real Access Makes Progress) is a Beckenham-based community group championing better accessibility across local high streets.

The group encourages businesses to improve access through simple but impactful solutions such as level entrances, fixed ramps or ramps available on request.

To recognise inclusive spaces, R.A.M.P. awards shopfront window stickers based on accessibility features, including three-star ratings for step-free access with toilet or changing facilities, and two-star ratings for step-free access.

The group is keen to share its experience and support other areas looking to become more accessible for everyone.

For more information email Sharon at sharonrampbeckenham@gmail.com



THANK YOU to the many people who bought plants and enjoyed tea and cake at our Plant Sale in May. Over £1,600 was raised for church funds.

APCM report

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), held on 3rd May, was chaired by Rev Dave Edmondson. Dave has now been our vicar for a full year.

In his report Dave thanked the community for the welcome he and his family have received. He believes that God is at work in our church and spoke of growth with purpose, which in turn leads to change. Dave thanked everyone for their hard work during the year in whatever capacity they serve, whether large or small. He reflected on our life together during the year: baptisms, weddings, funerals, parade services. He said that it has been a privilege to get to know the members of the congregation and to walk alongside one another through times of loss, grief and remembrance as well as those of celebration.

The current churchwardens, Glo Sherman and Robin Hogg, were reappointed for the next year, with thanks for all their work in the previous year. Helen Bird continues in her role as Secretary to the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

Thanks were also given to the outgoing members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC), and three new members were elected: Debbie Speller, Bob Friday and David Jefferys.

Tim Dawson, the Treasurer, once again emphasised the need to increase income, as a loss on unrestricted income was recorded last year. Meanwhile, we have received bequests and a lottery grant towards specific projects.

St. Mary's Shortlands You are welcome

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WORSHIP

8 am Sunday Holy Communion in the chapel - the 4th Sunday of every month.
Sunday 10.30am - Holy Communion in the church and online at

www.facebook.com/stmaryshortlands

Wednesday Worship 10.00am in the chapel
For more information contact the Parish Office or visit

www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Rev. Dave	07592136421
vicar@stmaryshortlands.church		
Churchwarden	Mrs G. Sherman	07500751265
Churchwarden	Mr R. Hogg	
robinwarden@stmaryshortlands.church		

Licensed Lay Ministers	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
	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
Safeguarding	Mrs P. Lambourne	8658 0470

Treasurer	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Junior Church	Miss. R Tillotson	07503680612

PCC Secretary	Ms. H. Bird	
secretary@stmaryshortlands.church		

Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
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PARISH OFFICE

Telephone: 020 8460 5682

Email: 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

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mr O. Swinfen	07758458077
Cubs (Tue)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954437658
Beavers	Mr. T. Nickalls	
thomasnickalls@gmail.com		

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies or Guides please go to www.girlguiding.org.uk

Guides (Tue)	Ms. E Thompson	07910340908
Guides (Fri)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Thu)	fourthbromleybrownies@outlook.com	
Rainbows	2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com	
Pre-school	Mrs. C. Hall	8290 6704 or 07960988552
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

LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. G Turrell	Gemma.Turrell@bromley.gov.uk	
Cllr. A. Grant	Adam.Grant@bromley.gov.uk	
Cllr. S. Gupta	serena.gupta@bromley.gov.uk	
Residents Association	8460 0395	
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614	

SPAN INFORMATION

Website www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk

Editorial Parish Office

Distribution Mr. M. Harrison 07821 691567

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If you live in Bromley, Beckenham or Penge, join us for this film screening on 12 June: the facts about the climate and nature crisis, and what it means for us all. There will be a discussion afterwards.



**Beckenham Methodist Church
Bromley Road, Beckenham, BR3 5JE
Friday 12th June 2026 at 7.00 pm**



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