

Hope for the future

Almost 12 months to the day, we continue to live in lockdown. What a year it has been for us all: a year with a real mix of sadness and blessings. For each of us, the year will present a different story.

It is to Easter that we now look, an Easter, as it should be, with a real sense of hope.

Life at St. Mary's has certainly not stood still, despite the church not being open for communal worship at the time of writing. We continue to look to life as it is now and life in a post-pandemic world, as we start to re-focus our minds on what more we could be doing today and for our future generations.

As you may be aware, at St. Mary's we have been talking about various redevelopment projects for many years, including rebuilding the church hall facilities; installing underfloor heating in the church; removing pews and installing chairs in order to provide a more practical space for church and community use.

These are all developments that would respectfully ensure that the church always remains a place of worship, but also a church that will become the hub of the community: providing space for community events; space for groups to meet and for continued school concerts and events. This is the future to which we now look forward.

Already, I am delighted that we have used the time in lockdown to install kitchen facilities at the back of the church. We have also created a little extra seating space as we consider starting a community café (when it is safe and appropriate).

We will have audio-visual facilities installed by Easter to allow for live-streaming and recording of services and community events taking place in church. Each of these initiatives represents a real move forward towards St. Mary's becoming the hub of your community, something that so many have expressed a desire for.

As we journey towards Easter, let it be a time of hope for each of us. Hope that we continue to move forward and out of the pandemic; hope that we maintain and continue with the sense of community that has grown so strongly; hope that we can accept that out of adversity good things can happen.

Love and Blessings, Revd Gary Best

Special Events and Services

Sunday 14 March – Mothering Sunday

10.30am - Holy Communion

10.00am - 5.00pm - Posies available and church open for private prayer and reflection

Sunday 4 April—Easter Day

10.30am - Holy Communion

12noon - Activities for all the family in the church grounds

10.00am - 5.00pm - Church open for private prayer and reflection

Services will be streamed via Facebook, all activities may be subject to change based on government COVID restrictions. More details inside. Any updates will be shared through www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk and www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands.



St Mary's Craft and Chatter group have produced an array of Easter goodies – for sale via office@stmaryshortlands.church.

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Eilidh Ramsden 11 Jan age 56
Michael Ring 20 Jan age 87

Mothering Sunday 14 March



Mothering Sunday is a time to reflect on our own mothers, grandmothers, carers and those special people who provide a motherly figure in our lives. It is an opportunity to give thanks for the love and nurture of mothers, along with all those who play any kind of 'mothering' role in the lives of children and young people, or beyond.

St. Mary's will be open, offering a space for private prayer and reflection from 10am to 5pm.

As is the tradition at St. Mary's, flower posies will be available for you to take for yourself, as a way of remembering, or to give to your mother or someone who represents a mother figure to you or to others.

Barbara Skinner

Barbara was born in Ladywell in 1925. She had a tough childhood, with her father dying of TB when she was 3 and her mother also, just before the vaccine became available.

When the war came, she left school at 14, and was evacuated for a while before training as a secretary. She worked for a while at the Admiralty, sending orders to the fleets.

Barbara met Alfred when working for a printing union. She made sure she was just outside the building when he went to lunch, and six months later they were married! They moved to Bromley and their son Stephen was in the first cohort of children to start at Highfield when it opened in 1959. Two further children, Jeff and Hazel, also went there.

The family attended the Church and Sunday School sporadically and all three children were members of the Go-Club – Barbara felt you could not make a choice about faith if you did not know the facts. Alfred was involved in the St Mary's players and Barbara in the Young Wives.

Barbara worked for many years as a Lecturer in Business Studies at Bromley College of Technology, a job she loved. But the lure of Devon beckoned, and she and Alfred spent 16 happy years in their home by the sea in Teignmouth, where they raised funds for the local hospice: they also travelled widely and came back to London frequently to help with the grandchildren, attending their events and celebrations.

She returned to Bromley once Alfred died, where she joined Probus, U3A and Craft and Chatter at St Mary's, where she felt at home.

She always did things 'at the gallop'. She had a real enthusiasm, positive energy and a zest for life. She was a great conversationalist and a good listener. Barbara filled her garden, her wardrobe, and the lives of her family with colour.

Barbara was blessed with exceptional health. It was only in the past three years that she had to make the tough decision to move into care. The last year was difficult, as the pandemic curtailed care home visits. True to her motto, she left the party when it was no longer fun.

She is greatly missed by her children, their partners and her six grandchildren.



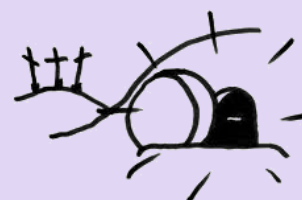
Holy Week at St Mary's

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, 28 March. During the week, look out for the Stations of the Cross within the church grounds. This family-friendly activity will lead you through the Easter story.

On Easter Day (Sunday 4 April), in addition to our 10.30am service of Holy Communion which will be streamed via Facebook, the church will be open from 10am to 5pm for private prayer and reflection.

From 12 noon there will be events for the whole family. The choir will be singing traditional Easter hymns in church between 12 noon and 1.30pm. In the church grounds, enjoy our Junior Church activities, exploring the Stations of the Cross, and a Traidcraft stall selling a variety of goods (including chocolate!)

St. Mary's church follows all COVID regulations and guidance issued by the Government and Church of England: all events are subject to change.



Morning Prayer

When the first lockdown began, so did the live streaming of Morning Prayer via Facebook each morning at 9am, excluding Sunday.

Morning Prayer is a daily discipline followed by all in ministry, so it seemed a natural progression to hold this service online to support our parishioners and wider community.

Little did we know that Morning Prayer would become such an important part of the lives of the regular group of participants and leaders, allowing us to bring the love of God into homes not just in Shortlands but around the world.

I have personally found leading and participating in these daily services a great way to start my day. It helps to give my day rhythm and focus, putting God at the centre, whilst giving me an

inner strength to face the challenges of the day.

Having different leaders with differing styles each day keeps the service fresh, and gives a variety of insights and reflections on the daily Bible readings.

The part I find most helpful is the time of prayer we spend together, bringing situations and individuals to God, giving thanks for the many blessings that we have, and asking God to hold our community here in Shortlands and our new friends from around the world.

If you would like to join us for Morning Prayer, please go to our website each morning just before 9am, and follow the link to Morning Prayer. We look forward to welcoming you!

Ann-Marie Jefferys

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Living Well Bromley

Living Well Bromley is a community hub based at Holy Trinity church in Penge, working with marginalised people and those struggling with the effects of poverty and social isolation. This is achieved through the provision of a variety of services including advocacy, counselling, food and clothes, community meals, art therapy, community choir, podiatry and community garden as well as prayer ministry.

Since lockdown in March 2020, Living Well has been through challenging times but has adapted its service provision to ensure social distancing and the safety of guests and volunteers. The food bank continues to be open 3 times a week but is now outside in a marquee. Funding has been gained to build an outdoor storage area to house extra supplies.

Living Well works with and supports other organisations following an approach from Fareshare who provide surplus supermarket products. The sit-down community lunch on a Friday has become a take-away hot meal. A home delivery service has been introduced for those self-isolating, and a counselling service, 'Listening Well', was launched offering telephone support, online group therapy and one to one counselling sessions.

The pandemic has increased isolation amongst those who are already struggling with mental illness, stress and anxiety. In recent months there has been an increase in the number of rough sleepers who present themselves at Living Well, the majority of whom have complex needs.

Living Well's long-term vision is to expand its services to include full-time counselling, drink and drug dependency support and work with other local support agencies.

To keep up to date with developments, or to donate, please follow Living Well on Social Media or on its website www.living.well.life.

WONDERFUL WALKS: can you recommend any good local routes? Do share any tips and a little about why you like them via the Parish Office for future editions of SPAN.



Stay in touch!



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

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



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Spring is just around the corner

As I write the temperature has dropped to almost zero and the garden has a covering of snow and resembles a Christmas card scene. However, it is not long until Spring, which is officially 20th March!

How many of us expectantly sow our packets of seeds and eagerly watch and wait for those first, few, green shoots peeking through the compost? Then how many of us realise how prolific that small packet of seeds can be! The dilemma then is between frantically trying to rehome those vigorous seedlings which are outgrowing their space in the seed tray or resigning ourselves to guiltily consigning them to the compost bin!

Here in the parish there are many keen gardeners who experience this dilemma. Swapping or giving to friends is probably commonplace but how about extending this to others in the community?

If you'd like to share your efforts with your neighbours, come along to the church grounds on our 'Plant swap Saturdays': 17th April and 15th May between 10am and 12 noon.

Do come even if you do not have any plants to swap as a small donation will secure plants of your choice.

Jan Boam

PS. Do talk to your friends about what to grow: 500 tomato plants may be difficult to re-home!



Community Support

At this time of heightened anxiety over the local and national COVID situation, St. Mary's Church is here to help in whatever way we can, offering pastoral, practical or spiritual support to anyone who might be in need.

We can arrange for regular telephone calls to be made to individuals, along with assistance with essential shopping. It may be that you would like the church to be praying for you or for friends and family: please let us know.

Whatever support can be provided, the team at St. Mary's will do our very best to help during these challenging times.

Please contact Revd Gary Best

07493 072 695 or 020 8460 0262

vicar@stmarysshortlands.church

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

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WORSHIP

Whilst in-person services are currently suspended,
you are very welcome to join online services:

Sunday 10.30am – Holy Communion

Monday to Saturday 9am – Morning Prayer

You can access these services at:

www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stmaryshortlands

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

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Revd Gary Best	8460 0262
(day off Monday)	Vicar@stmaryshortlands.church	
Curate	Revd Beverley Ejimofa	
(Tue, Wed, Sun)		0772 621 7571
Licensed Lay Ministers	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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	Mr S. Buchanan	8777 8008
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	Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
	Mrs. D. Speller	07941415082
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Churchwardens	Mr A. Williams	07914343495
	Mrs S. Leonard	07725313432
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	Mr. S. Clark	8464 0696
	Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
	Prof. M. Fox	8650 3252
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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Organist and Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Assistant Organist	Mr. D. Beach	8289 6510
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs. K. Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	Mrs. S. Maurel	01689 331793
Junior Church	Mrs. J. Eade	3624 0559
Stewardship	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884

PARISH OFFICE 020 8460 5682
office@stmaryshortlands.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)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
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	Ms. H. Last	8460 1705
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

Cllr. M. Cooke	07912 649058 (E: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)
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
Editorial Parish Office

Distribution Mr. M. Harrison 07821 691567

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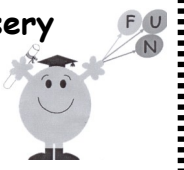
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