

## Unconditional love

This month sees the beginning of Lent, a penitential season in the church, where Christians traditionally prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus in quiet contemplation, meditation and prayer. For many, it is also a time for giving up pleasures and helping others.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known as Mothering Sunday. In medieval times this was intended for people to visit the church where they had been baptised – your 'Mother' church. Later it became the day when those in service were given the day off to visit their mothers. Today we celebrate and give thanks for our mothers, and all who mother us, for all that they do. Flowers and chocolates are the order of the day as well as attending church.

Mothering Sunday is a reminder of all female role models and, in this Platinum Jubilee year, Her Majesty the Queen is a wonderful example, a 'mother' to the nation and Commonwealth. The Archbishop of Canterbury called her a 'symbol of stability and hope' and said that the Queen should be praised for 'her dedication to us all, and her faithful witness to Jesus Christ', words that might be applicable to our mothers. They are always there for us, help and serve us through our lives. These are not just qualities of mothers but of fathers and all who parent too!

God is often called 'Father', as we say in the Lord's Prayer. God is a parent to us all. He loved us so much that He sent his only Son, Jesus, as a baby, to live an earthly life, to die an horrific death, but to rise from the dead so that we might be forgiven our sins and have eternal life. Like all parents, His love for us is unconditional, and He is always there for us.

During Lent, and especially on Mothering Sunday, it would be a real joy to welcome you to St. Mary's – for a service, a coffee and chat at the Community Café, a Lent Group or one of our other activities – to hear God's story.

### Special Events and Services

**Wednesday 2 March - Ash Wednesday**

**10.00am Holy Communion**

**& 8.00pm** *With the Imposition of Ashes for those who wish it*

**Sunday 13 March**

**6.30pm What is God like?**

*Informal Service led by the Music Group*

**Sunday 20 March**

**6.30pm Choral Evensong**

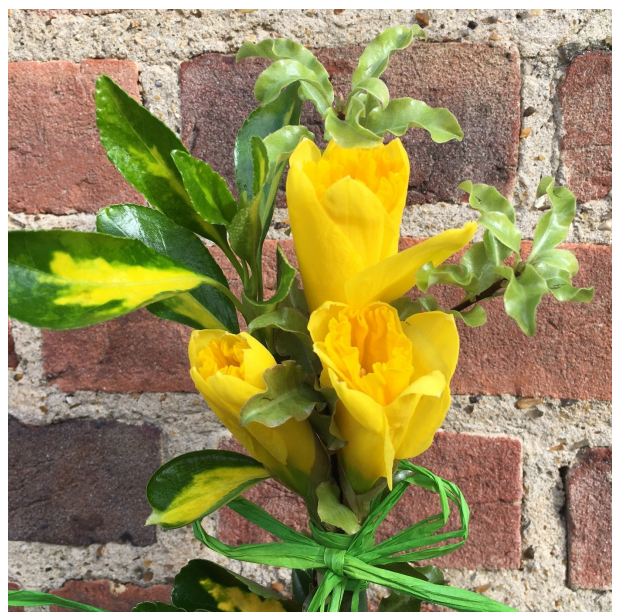
**Sunday 27 March - Mothering Sunday**

**10.30am Family and Parade Service**

*Including the blessing and distribution of posies*

Services will take place in church and will be streamed via Facebook. Any updates will be shared through [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk) and [www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands](http://www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands).

**Ann-Marie Jefferys**



DO JOIN US on Mothering Sunday: posies will be given to all ladies in the congregation as a mark of respect for all they contribute to our lives and to society at large.

### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Mary Cooke 2 Feb Age 73



### Preparing to lead

My name is Tim Aldred, and I've been a member of St Mary's for some years now. Last September I began training as a Church of England minister. It is something that I've thought and prayed about for a long time. I decided to explore it seriously a few years ago, before attending a selection panel this time last year.

I'm training part time, at St Augustine's College of Theology, which is based in the very lovely setting of West Malling Abbey in Kent. It is strange to find myself writing essays and sitting exams for the first time in a quarter of a century! I am enjoying the study and getting a lot out of it. I work for a charity in London, and they have kindly agreed to a 4 day week, which helps a lot.

Many people I talk to are interested in the spiritual side of life but find church doesn't connect to them very well. At the same time there's such a depth to Christian spirituality, with wisdom, contemplation, inspiration and much more, which many have never explored. It feels like there's an opportunity to connect these things to a wider community, and I'm interested in what can be done differently to help this happen.

As part of my 'homework' I will be helping to lead some services at St Mary's, so don't be surprised if you see me up at the front from time to time.



PICTURED: St Augustine's College of Theology, West Malling

### A moveable feast

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is on 2 March this year. But why do the dates of both Ash Wednesday and Easter change each year?

Jesus' death and resurrection took place at the same time as the Jewish Passover which is celebrated on the first full moon following the Spring equinox.

During the early days of the church Christians celebrated Easter on different dates: some on the day of the Passover and some on the following Sunday. In the year 325 AD the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the Spring equinox. Easter can therefore take place at any point between 22 March and 25 April.

This year, the March equinox occurs on Sunday, 20 March. The first full moon to occur after that date is April's full moon, which rises on Saturday 16 April. Therefore, Easter will be observed on the first Sunday after that date: Sunday, 17 April.

The period of Lent, in which we reflect and prepare for Christ's death and resurrection, lasts for 40 days; and so Ash Wednesday takes place six and a half weeks before Easter.

### Babies and toddlers together again

The challenges of COVID have been hard on parents and carers with young children. The guidance to Baby and Toddler groups allowed us to set up outside again in May 2021 so an intrepid group of volunteers started running the group again under a marquee in the afternoon. They endured some very interesting weather conditions but happily carried on despite heavy rain and wind.

After the summer half term we were able to move inside, operating outside and inside the church on Thursday morning and afternoon. It was lovely to see parents talking to each other and empathising about the problems of bringing home newborns and lack of sleep. Conversations about birth experiences, weaning and potty training ensued. The children were able to see and play alongside each other. It was all so important for mental health and wellbeing, a joy to behold the support that communicating with others brings!

We continue to run both groups on a Thursday in term time: the morning session is 9.30am to 11.30am and the afternoon 12.30 to 2.00pm. We use the whole of the back of the church with its café facilities now in place. It is an airy open but inclusive space with a section for babies and plenty of room for toddlers to play in the home corner, do crafts, play with playdough or play with a variety of other toys.

Each session has a singing and/or story time followed by refreshments. The crafts tend to reflect the church year and we always hold an informal end of term service, often with a puppet story. In the summer we have a picnic party.

So far, the group has run on a 'just turn up' basis. Our aim is to be open to all as life with young children can be quite chaotic and difficult to plan.

For more information contact the church office (020 8460 3978) or Julie Runicles (020 8402 6599).

### Lent 2022

This Lent, why not join one of St Mary's Lent courses?

This is a great way to pause and reflect on the meaning of Lent as we look forwards to the great festival of Easter. It's a friendly space to read the Bible and discuss what it means in the context of the world today.

The course will be run on different days, both daytime and evening. The course will start week beginning 7 March through to Palm Sunday (10 April), running on different days, both daytime and evening, and will meet either in church rooms or homes.

You're very welcome to join us: please e-mail [office@stmaryshortlands.church](mailto:office@stmaryshortlands.church) or call 020 8460 5682 to receive the confirmed timings and resources or to ask for more details.



# MISSION OF THE MONTH

## Friends of Griffins

Friends of Griffins is a small charity, run by volunteers. It was established to enhance and advance the life skills and education of children from the London Borough of Bromley who are born with or are affected by visual and/or hearing impairment.

The charity raises funds to provide equipment that will assist teachers of deaf and/or visually impaired children with their work. It has purchased equipment such as Spectrum Light Columns and an LED carpet for the specialist Sensory Room at the Griffins Sensory Support Centre in Orpington. These items are used by the teachers to stimulate and educate babies and children who are born with visual impairment.

It also purchased a small library of children's story books containing characters with cochlear implants: these books allow the children to relate and to understand that they can be a hero too! Laptops for children at the Griffins Centre were donated by Beckenham Rotary and the charity often liaises with other local charities and institutions and are grateful for their input.

Many activities for the children are funded by the charity, such as an annual trip to the Christmas Pantomime at the Churchill Theatre (captioned for deaf people). The charity also provides transport for the children to participate in outings, sporting occasions and outdoor educational activities.

The charity provides all this and much more: see the board in church during March for more information.

## St Mary's Junior Church invites you to Tea Time Together



**Sunday  
6 March  
4 – 5.30pm**

**Music, story and  
arts and crafts**

**on the theme of Patience  
for families of all ages**

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

**Please contact  
Rachel Tillotson  
07503 680 612**

**What is God like?**  
On Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup> we'll be holding an Evening Praise service at 6:30pm. As part of the service we'll be thinking about the question "What is God like?"  
This is very much an informal, relaxed service and we'll be singing modern songs led by our music group. We'd love to see you there.



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## The Anatis Trio Lunch time concert at St Mary's Church



**Saturday 12 March at 1.00pm**  
**£5 entry - Refreshments provided**

**Proceeds to St Mary's**

The Anatis Flute Trio are all studying at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

**Plant Ahead**  
After last year's resounding success, we are planning another plant sale/swap. However, it will be just on one Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup> May, so make sure you put that in the diary!  
Seedlings are already decorating/invading my windowsills. Experiments with an electric heated propagator have produced distinctly variable results, some good others disastrous, but it's all part of the learning curve, no professional gardeners here!  
So please do sow some extra seeds, divide those perennials and take some cuttings in order that this year's St. Mary's Plant Sale is another triumph. Refreshments will be available, so come along and meet the neighbours and exchange horticultural experiences and support everyone's green-fingered efforts!

*Jan Boam*

### Used stamps wanted

- Please bring any used postage stamps, cut out leaving a 1cm border, to the marked box in the south porch at St Mary's.
- These will be used to raise funds for The Leprosy Mission.



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**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.stmaryshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/stmaryshortlands](http://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 Friday)	Vicar@stmaryshortlands.church	
Licensed Lay	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
Ministers	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
Readers	Mr. P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
	Mr S. Buchanan	8777 8008
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
	Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
	Mrs. D. Speller	07941415082
Parish Administrator	Ms. N. Blake	8460 5682
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	Mrs K. Buchanan	07811528181
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	Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
	Prof. M. Fox	8650 3252
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Organist and Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
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@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)	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](http://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**

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](http://www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk)

Editorial Parish Office

Distribution Mr. M. Harrison 07821 691567

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