

Living in the moment

Eckhart Tolle states: "It is not uncommon for people to spend their whole life waiting to start living." The corollary to that is wasting our precious lives fretting over the "what ifs" of our past. Jesus told us not to be anxious: it was not a suggestion but an instruction, do not worry, live in the current moment and trust in the present as a gift from God meant for your good and not for harm.

When God calls Moses to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt, Moses asks God for his name. The answer is "I am what I am". God is the eternal present, the everlasting now where everything happens. Nothing happens in the past and nothing happens in the future, it only happens now.

Facing a big transition in life, this is crucially important advice. It is easy to get hung up on what might have been if we had made different choices, and to be concerned about what the future holds without the security of role and probably lower income.

Some people suffer severe anxiety about who they will be when they are not a vicar, engineer, nurse or accountant. Actually they were never those things; those roles were like clothing, easily discarded like laundry, if we are living in the eternal space of now.

After my last service at St Mary's on Resurrection Sunday (Easter Day) I will be shedding the role of priest in charge and moving to Dartford. I will be presented with new possibilities for life and ministry and will make new choices.

As the people of St Mary's and I go our separate ways, we all begin a new season and reflect that joyful retirement and fruitful church ministry both emerge from the wisdom and courage to live fully and faithfully now, in the eternal moment, the place of prayer, and leave the outcomes to God.

Rev Jane Kustner

**The Easter service on
Sunday 31 March is Rev Jane
Kustner's last service at St Mary's.
All are invited to the service (10.30am) and/or
the farewell event (from 11.45am to 2pm).**



Special Services and Events

Sunday 10 March - Mothering Sunday

10.30am Family and Parade Service

With the distribution of posies

Sunday 24 March - Palm Sunday

6.30pm The Crucifixion (Stainer)

Sung by St Mary's choir

**Monday 25, Tuesday 26, Thursday 28
March**

9.00am Morning Prayer

**11.00am A service of the Stations of the
Cross**

Thursday 28 March – Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Holy Communion

Friday 29 March – Good Friday

12.00-2.00pm Meditation

2.00pm An hour at the Cross

Sunday 31 March – Easter Day

7.00am Easter Vigil and New Fire

10.30am Family Communion

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to
those who loved:

Jean Osborne 13 Feb

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

Hannah Grover 4 Feb

Elizabeth Oates 25 Feb



Remembering

Mary Shaddick

Mary was born in 1920 on the corner of Uplands Road, Dulwich to Charles and Flo Burman, the first of their three children. She had a happy childhood with many long summers spent at her grandparents' home in Walderslade where she developed her love of the countryside and botany in particular.

After her primary education she went to Mary Datchelor's School for Girls and, at the time of her death, was the oldest old girl they had.

On leaving school she went to work at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, in the Almoner's Department where she also did a basic nursing course. Her 'hospital corners' remained legendary – no duvets for her, ever!

After serving in the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the war, where she attained the rank of Sergeant, she worked at the Tax Office. In 1946 she married Charles, a very happy marriage, and they had daughters Jane and then Sarah.

Mary was a real homemaker, a good cook, dressmaker and mother. Jane and Sarah left home, married, produced six grandchildren and they, in turn, produced 16 great grandchildren. Mary simply loved little babies.

She had worshipped at St Mary's for over 35 years and all of her grandchildren and some of her great grandchildren were baptised in the church.

Together Mary and Charles travelled extensively and made many friends on their travels. Sadly Charles died in 2002. Mary showed great resilience and coped admirably, adapting and showing real stoicism and independence right up to her fall last October which was the beginning of the end.

Michael Sullivan

Michael was a well-known character in Bromley who died suddenly and unexpectedly on 5 December while on holiday in South Africa, and received a direct cremation there. He left a large extended family and will be mourned by his wife Ann. The memorial service on 20 February was attended by many people, including great grandchildren, and was well-received by the congregation who felt welcomed and loved by St Mary's and experienced some sense of closure.

Spring is just around the corner

Please sow extra seed.....! Officially Spring begins on the vernal equinox, March 20th this year, although according to the meteorological calendar Spring begins on March 1st! Whichever calendar you follow it's still seed sowing time. Please sow extra seed, divide perennials and take cuttings for the community centred St. Mary's Plant Sale on Saturday 11th May between 11am - 2pm. Refreshments will be available at the St. Mary's Café.



A helping hand

As part of my training for ministry in the Church of England, I recently did a placement at another local church, Holy Trinity with St Johns (HTSJ), in Penge. It was really interesting to experience the life of another church, learning about what can be done differently as, and the many things we share as, Christians.

HTSJ is known in Penge for the Living Well project, and it was good to see this important part of the work of the church. It was originally founded in response to growing social needs, and still operates from church premises, though it is now set up as an independent charity. There is a foodbank which provides help to hundreds of people every week, and a variety of other support. I had the chance to volunteer at Living Well and was surprised to find many people coming who had stable employment but were struggling to make ends meet, alongside others who were struggling for other reasons.

The team at Living Well also have a busy and growing advocacy service. This involves specialist volunteers who help deal with underlying problems such as housing, employment or benefits. This is really important as, if such problems can be addressed, it removes or reduces the need for emergency help.

Many volunteers come from HTSJ and other local churches, and there are also many who aren't churchgoers. Some volunteers have had help from Living Well in the past and now want to help others. It certainly felt like the community was working together, doing everything from sorting out food packages to fundraising, serving tea and coffee, or providing expert advocacy support.

The placement certainly brought home how hard life is at the moment for many in our local community. Solutions aren't easy, but it was really encouraging to see the dedication and care of the volunteers and staff as they work to make things better, and good to see how the church can help too.

Tim Aldred

Seeking a new vicar

As we explained in last month's SPAN, Rev Jane Kustner will be leaving us after Easter. Work is underway to plan for the period of the vacancy, and for the recruitment process for a new vicar.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has a meeting planned with Archdeacon Allie Kerr on 11th March to discuss the details of the recruitment process after Rev Jane Kustner leaves us. As the senior member of the clergy for the area of Bromley and Bexley, Archdeacon Allie will be actively involved in the recruitment process.

In the meantime the PCC has been working on the draft parish profile, which is the document that will be provided to potential applicants to give them an overview of St Mary's and the type of person that we are looking for. We have had very helpful input from our congregation on the draft, over the course of a consultation process in the last two weeks of January. We are on target to have the final version ready in plenty of time and, once finalised, it will be published on our website.

Planning for the vacancy is well in hand, with the overall approach being 'business as usual', combined with flexibility as needed. The normal pattern of services and activities will continue. The main services will be led by Rev Jane Peters and our three licensed lay ministers, Ann-Marie Jefferys, David Jefferys and Catherine Bingham, supplemented by visiting clergy including Archdeacon Allie.

We will continue to provide updates in SPAN as further information becomes available.

Catherine Bingham

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Welcare

Welcare is a charity working with families and children up to the age of 13, in South London and East Surrey. St Mary's church fundraises specifically for Welcare's work in Bromley.

Welcare works directly with families as well as with schools and provides services which are tailored to the real needs of the communities in which it works. It provides practical help and support to families, empowering them to rebuild their lives and access opportunities to ensure their children have a happy, confident childhood and future.

The Caring Dads group programme was piloted in 2022 and will be repeated, offering support to fathers in improving their relationship with their children and developing parenting skills.

A new film brings to life the charity's work through the words of its staff and the families they help: visit

www.welcare.org/supportervideos.

The charity says: 'we are proud of our Christian heritage and identity and derive our values from our Anglican origins'. For more information, see the board at the back of the church during the month or visit www.welcare.org.



WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY: Hannah Grover was recently baptised at St Mary's (pictured with her parents Lynsey and Darren and Rev Jane Peters).



CONGRATULATIONS to Heather Donovan who recently celebrated her 98th birthday at St Mary's Community Café.

St. George's Beckenham



We are beginning an occasional series on churches of the Beckenham Deanery with St. George's, regarded as the mother church of Beckenham and occupying a commanding position at the junction of Beckenham High Street and Bromley Road.

Although records show there has been a church on this site from 1070, it is believed that a church existed there in Saxon times. A new church was built around 1370, a tower added prior to 1560, the church was enlarged in 1620 and a devastating thunderstorm in 1790 destroyed a large part of the church and its steeple.

The rapid rise in the population in the 19th century meant the church could no longer accommodate the rising number of worshippers. One of the patrons who funded the church's enlargement was Albemarle Cator, whose name lives on in various parts of Beckenham. These building works were finally completed in 1903.

History oozes from every part of the building and site, from the very old and impressive lychgate which leads into the tranquil graveyard. The tower houses ten bells which have rung for over 350 years. The tower clock, along with the 3rd and 4th bells, was gifted by Mr C E Atkinson in memory of Cecil Rhodes. Within the church are many monuments to the great and the good of Beckenham, no longer in their original positions but preserved with detailed explanations. The glories of the stained glass would need a separate article to do them justice!

Mrs Joan Conway, secretary of the Beckenham Deanery Synod, conducts group tours of the church for the modest donation of £5 per person. Details can be found at www.stgeorgesbeckenham.co.uk/history/tours or email office@stgeorgesbeckenham.co.uk

Today, St. George's is a thriving parish church with its roots in a very long history but focussed on today and the future. Along with the usual church-based activities, it is known for its excellent choir, lunchtime recitals and the annual Arts Festival.

So next time you're in Beckenham perhaps take time to visit the church, open every morning.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

To help deliver St Mary's Parish News (SPAN) to every house in the parish of Shortlands.

Contact office@stmaryshortlands.church

SAVE THE DATE

Wine tasting quiz
St Mary's Church
7.30pm Saturday 20 April



The Parish Church of St. Mary, Shortlands

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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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Email: office@stmarysshortlands.church

Open 10.00am - 12.00pm weekdays.

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ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

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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	
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