

St Mary's Church, Bromley
Parish Magazine

March 2024

61 College Road Bromley BR1 3QG



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Welcome to the March 2024 edition of the Parish Magazine.

Welcome to the March edition of our Church magazine – a bumper edition including all the usual features, a final (for now) message from Alan, as well an article by Olive Green describing her memorable journey home from Cyprus in 1964. What enterprising folk there are in the congregation! We have also included as many of the “best bits” from the Keeler’s retirement celebration on January 21st as we could squeeze in, to be enjoyed by those unable to attend as well as by those who would like a permanent reminder. Thanks especially to Brian Morris for his professional photography. Perhaps the catering team would like to share some recipes? Your contributions are always welcome – so please note that next month’s articles should be sent to Atlanta by 22nd March at the latest.

Jill Atkinson

Editor.

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Memorial Book



St. Mary’s Church has a memorial book in which may be inscribed names of people associated with the parish. If you would like to know more details please contact Alan or Jean Read on 020 8402 0886.

Disclaimer

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various participants in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editors.

Ransomed Healed Restored Forgiven



The hymn from which I take my title, is not one of my favourite hymns, but the phrase is one of the key descriptors of what a Christian is, and how God, in Jesus, deals with us and I love it.

Because of what God in Christ has done for us, we are set free, ransomed if you like from sin, and so forgiven, and ready for healing and restoration. The God who loves us unconditionally, and who in Jesus comes to be with us, and alongside us, comes bringing us such good things.

Making all things new is a continual strand of God's creative and restorative work running through both history and scripture. Ps.104 30 tells us "You send your Spirit and they are created; you renew the face of the earth"

God is a restorer. He always has been. God is always making all things new. This is good news for us all, living as we are, in such challenging times. As wars rage, children are killed in many places of war and conflict - without thought or care, and weaponised sexual violence is a weapon of choice, the cost of living rises, the climate changes, relentlessly battered by our demands on our planet, and our world seems to be getting darker, restoration is something we long for deep in our souls and in our bones. We are weary of shocking news.

It is a fundamental part our human nature to want things to be better. It starts very young, my granddaughter says confidently, when she hurts herself, 'Make it better, Mummy', and we, when we pray, say in effect, 'Lord God, make it better'. Whether it is on a global scale, or closer to home, we know things are not as they should be.

In the gospels we read the stories of Jesus, having compassion, setting people free in lots of different ways and restoring them to their God-given potential. There were so many people whose lives Jesus touched and changed, healed and restored.

People like Zacheus, like the woman taken in adultery, the other woman who touched his cloak, the lepers and all those he healed, the blind people, those possessed by demons.

He was always showing them, in their healing and restoration, not just the person they could become, but also a glimpse of God's kingdom, and his plan to renew all things. He met, mixed and celebrated happily with those people loosely described as 'tax collectors and sinners', not the holy well behaved or especially devout, because they didn't need him in the same way.

And think again of those whose sins Jesus declared to be forgiven, and then said, 'go and sin no more'.

Like the man Jesus healed by the Pool of Bethesda. Afterwards, Jesus found the man and told him, he could make better choices, and not waste the opportunity he had been given him to live fully again, healed, restored and forgiven.

Or like the woman taken in adultery when her accusers brought her before Jesus, they expected him to pronounce a harsh judgment, he did just that, but not as they expected. He told them, that the one who was without sin should throw the first stone. Strangely, one by one, the crowd left. Then Jesus told the woman, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more" She had been caught. She was guilty, but then so was the absent person who had been with her.

In this context it was not important, the religious leaders who had dragged her there had no concern for holiness. They were trying to trap Jesus into saying that the Law did not matter, because they were focused on the letter of the law and not the spirit of it.

The whole law can be summed up in these two commandments: Love God with everything or with all that you are, and love your neighbour as yourself. When Jesus failed to condemn the woman, he was not minimizing the importance of the law or of holiness. He was offering to her the same kind of healing, restoration and forgiveness that he offers each of us.

Even at his Crucifixion Jesus was offering forgiveness to those who nailed him to the Cross, 'Father' he said 'forgive them for they do not know what they are doing' thus setting them on the path of new life and transformation, once they come to realise who he is and what they have done.

Because we cannot genuinely experience the transforming power of forgiveness, without being changed for ever. Touched by God's grace and love our response must surely be to try and love God and our neighbour in return. Love is not passive, so we are not passive recipients of God's love. Rather love is a doing word, leading us into loving action as well as prayer or contemplation, and for Jesus, love was a fighting and a dying word, fighting evil and dying for us.

Zacheus, the woman taken in adultery and all those like them, were set on a new path, a journey of faith and change. They did not achieve perfection overnight, none of us do, they certainly sinned again we all do, but we can all repent and try again. God's desire for each of us, is for us to become holy as he is holy, following in the footsteps of Jesus, but we will not fully succeed in this life. Lent is our annual opportunity for a completely fresh start.

I attach some inspiring words from a prayer of St Anselm to keep us going as we travel:

“Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;
in your love and tenderness remake us.
In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us”

Anselm (1109)

And some equally lovely inspiring words but from somewhere else that I cannot now remember:

Like the sun in the morning sky,
the saviour of the world will dawn;
Like rain upon the meadows,
the Christ will come down upon us.

Alison Tyler

Many, many thanks

We want you all to know how grateful we are to St. Mary's who made the final service and lunch on the 21st of January so wonderful. We really enjoyed ourselves and it ended our time with you all in a very kind, touching, memorable and generous way.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the service. Worship is always about the whole congregation and it was so good to see everyone who came and celebrated with us. Alison did a wonderful job in putting the order of service together and sharing in leading the service. The choir had worked hard in preparation, the singing was a great joy. The flowers were so attractively arranged. People served in reading the Bible, leading intercessions, providing the Live Stream and refreshments at the end. It all made for a glorious time.

The meal was a great feast. The hall had been decorated in such a wonderful way. The food was all presented in a beautiful way. It was all a delight to eat and drink. Thanks to the team who arranged this and the people who supplied all of the goodies. Then Alan was invited forward by Eamon Andrews (aka Peter Yolland) to 'This is your life'. There had been so much research put into the presentation with Peter's walk through Alan's life. It was supported with pictures assembled by Brian Morris and sound by Simon Lewis.

There was a gift table at the back of the hall and we are grateful for so many kind presents. We have written to people to say thank you but there are a couple of extra things to say. From St. Mary's there was a National Gift Voucher and bottle of Chateau Neuf du Pape which will be greatly enjoyed. There were a couple of gifts where the name tag or card were separated and we could not personally say thank you. If this was you, we do appreciate your generosity.

We also had a splendid photo album with photos that covered a lot of Alan's life, churches, friends and special occasions. So many people were kind to rise to the challenge and provide photos. Brian Morris did a super job in making a source of great memories.

And... Alan was presented with a big cheque. It was physically big and the sum was huge too. Not only that the amount continued to grow to a truly significant figure. Many, many thanks to everyone who contributed to £1662 being deposited in our bank account. You may know that the number is the date of the Book of Common Prayer. Very traditional.

And then... on the next day we went to stay with our daughter Rachel in Berlin. She had surgery on her shoulder on that morning. We saw her in the evening, all had gone well and she was in good spirits. We then had a two weeks with her to help her out and have an enjoyable break.

The day after we arrived back home we put a list of things to do for our move. This covered six sheets of A4. We are ticking things off as the days go by and there is a gratifying amount of red ink now on those pages. We are downsizing the contents of the vicarage, notifying many people and services of our change of address and visiting Collingham to see how the refurbishment of our bungalow is progressing. It has been good to see how our vision for what had been a rather dilapidated property being transformed into what will be a delightful home for us. The 1662 is coming in very useful especially with a new fireplace.

So once again our thanks to you for your kindness, hard work and generosity. We had such a memorable day and are grateful for all that took place then and in the many years that we were part of St. Mary's Church. We look forward to seeing how your future works out and keeping in touch with you.

With our love and best wishes

Alan and Gill





Thank you - Vicar's Farewell - Revd. Alan Keeler

21 January 2024

Genesis 1.26-31; 1 Corinthians 13.1-13; John 15.12-17

Knowing what to say

I imagine for most of us when we were children we would have heard a familiar hanging question from our parents.

Something had been given to us and mum or dad would have said 'and what do you say...?' You knew the phrase and maybe just out of duty you replied 'thank you'.

The same would have been true whether the person making the gift was present or not and the question would have been 'have you written your thank you cards yet?' Perhaps back then this seemed like a chore.

My birthday is in early in January and my trick was to wait until after my birthday and write the thank-yous for Christmas and birthday in one card. This halved the trouble.

As a child the notion that 'it's the thought that counts' looks like an excuse for not having chosen the present with enough care, or enough money.

I hope as life goes on we find just how much the matters of generosity and responding with gratitude are at the heart of life.

Genesis

I have chosen the readings for this service because they have been true guiding lights to me.

The book of Genesis is a work of genius. There are of course the issues of science to be related to and when Christians take Genesis in a too literal way they are missing the point. As long ago as the fourth century St. Augustine warned the readers of the Bible not to make it something which suited their own sense of tidiness. If accounts do not fit easily better look at what they are saying and don't try to rewrite it.

It is thought that the book of Genesis came to its present form after the nation had been in exile in the sixth century BC. This means that the writers had known their people's slavery in Egypt and conquest by the Assyrians and Babylonians. So when in our passage God is described as creating the human race from one couple and in his image there is a huge act of courage.

This is not just some high view of human rights but a reminder that our enemies are holy too. All that we claim for ourselves as human people is true for every person, even those rejected by others.

People from foreign lands are to be given respect. Indeed this respect must include your fellow citizens, even those you dislike or with whom you profoundly disagree, as well as those in distress and requiring your assistance.

To be a created being is to receive life as a gift. In the deepest sense we do not make our lives. The response is to be grateful. In this we do not claim rights but seek to share the gift we have received with the people around us both near and far.

You will be aware that the church in the West is in reduced circumstances. There is much talk of mission and seeking to grow in our life and influence. Sharing our faith has always been in the DNA of Christianity. I can remember as a new vicar back in 1994 wanting to seek to 'reach out', as we say.

It was not an audible voice but I was strongly impressed with the question 'are you going to love your congregation?' Now some of them could be demanding and not that respectful of me. But if you cannot love the people immediately around you what does 'reaching out mean?'

There is a quotation that comes from a variety of people that 'I love humanity, it is people I cannot stand.' When we talk of love this must not be something generally abstract. Each human encounter is where it must take place.

Faith can be inspirational but it is also practical and at times tough. It is wonderful and spiritual but also gritty and demanding. We are asked to be grateful by extending to others the love we have received from God.

Corinthians

I did not find my teenage years easy. I had a very loving family with caring parents and three boisterous brothers. Faith was not a big part of our lives. When I told people I was one of four boys the usual response was 'oh your poor mother.' But I had wonderful parents, plenty to share with my brothers and our home was secure and full of fun.

But the teenage years are a time of searching and we are looking for answers in new places. At the end of my teens I had a circle of friends many of whom were Christians. I had a love of science which was both very stimulating but also did not answer the human questions I had but could not easily articulate.

I began going out with one of the young women in our group who was a Christian. She gave me a book with attractive photographs and passages from the Bible. It was a gentle way to 'reach out'. One of these texts was in our reading from 1 Corinthians that we heard today. It included:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

I began to find that the Bible has a way to call out to us and these words struck me deeply. This was not the sopiness of the pop songs, the focus on romance or a euphemism for an ephemeral sexual experience. This was about people treating each other respectfully, seriously and being prepared to work faithfully at life. But also it was not pious, judgemental, life denying or even religious; what ever that means.

It was then that I made my fatal mistake. I did not understand how my contemporaries could adopt such an outdated way of life as to be a Christian. So I decide to read the copy of the New Testament that had been given to me as a school child. It had been a gift by what was then known as The Gideons. They are now called GOOD NEWS for Everyone!, which is a bit more explanatory.

The long and the short of this was that I discovered the person of Jesus and he was not the sort person I was expecting. I have continued to learn of Jesus and the task is inexhaustible. As I did this I had many occasions where I again had that experience I spoke of earlier. The Bible called out. It was not an experience to be just given information. It was an experience of being challenged, invited, embraced.

So on the one hand my invitation to people is to read about Jesus for yourself. The other is to lay down the challenge; 'when you discover Jesus do you think of God like this?' Yes it is quite a leap to say Jesus is God and there is a lot to be said about that. But if we have the usual human expectations about a God who is remote, judgemental or irrelevant: they will be broken and wonderfully replaced.

It is said that 'for God so loved the world that he did not send a committee'. He sent this person, he sent Jesus and our response is to be grateful. Not only have we been given life but in the person of Jesus we have been shown how to be fully alive.

John's Gospel

One of the things said about Jesus was that 'he taught with authority not like the other religious teachers'. This does mean our presumptions will be broken. It may take time to see the heart of what he is offering. But it meant he was sought out by people, sometimes to trip him up but also to find the truth. On numerous occasions he is asked 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' This would mean the life of God, how to flourish, how to endure, what can you trust that will last? No doubt the prospect of heaven is part of that but it is also immediate 'please can it start now because we have trouble here.'

Jesus spoke of love. Love for God with all that we are. Love for our neighbour in the way we love ourselves. Love for enemies because they are made in God's image too.

Jesus took this one stage further with the passage we heard from John's Gospel. He said: This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Now you cannot know what this means unless you have had that encounter that I spoke of earlier. So it is going to be about the person of Jesus and seeing how he shared people's lives, being wise, caring, courageous, vulnerable, forgiving; and so much more. This the disciples would have known and seen it as a very high bar to reach.

But Jesus then added:

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

In this he speaks of love that is sacrificial. Jesus will be taken to the cross and die. The New Testament uses several words for love which include friendship and romantic passion. These are usually about an exchange. But there is a further one that means sacrificial love, giving without calculation. We might think of parents particularly in their children's early years. We might think of a soldier serving their country and paying the highest cost.

This love can only be responded to with gratitude.

The key is to see who we are in God's sight. Jesus says: to lay down one's life for one's friends

He emphasizes this by saying:

You are my friends

Jesus serves God whom he knows as a loving heavenly parent. He is not forced in his ministry or in his death. Jesus calls us to serve a true friend out of a relationship of love. We live out of gratitude for the life we have been given and the value we know God gives his people.

Jesus dies and Jesus rises again. On the one hand we are shown that God's power is greater than death but also that love is not defeated. Eternal life is the life of God now and the friendship that we find through Jesus will find a faithfulness and fulfilment as it is graciously given to us.

Gratitude

Having spoken of gratitude I am very grateful.

To each person who is present here today. And also those who have not been able to make it.

For members of St. Mary's and my previous churches of St. James Blendon and St. Andrew's Paddock Wood.

For people I have known through the local area including Parish Primary School and representatives of the community including Councillor Keith Onslow the Deputy Mayor.

Members of my family including my Dad, and my brothers (Brian and David), daughter Laura, son-in-law Dave and grandson Arlo. Rachel was due to be here. But due to her having surgery first thing tomorrow morning and having to fly back to Berlin tonight, the high winds have made this too risky.

There is also in our hearts those we have loved and already committed to God. Our daughter Josie remains in our hearts each day and know how much her presence blessed us all.

Thanks for this service for all who have made preparations especially Alison and the Church Warden team, the decorations with flowers, candles, helping with this large congregation, for the contribution of the choir in song and Paddy for making it available through live streaming.

Many thanks for all who have prepared the lunch that will follow this service to which everyone is warmly invited to.

But I have saved the greatest gratitude for last. I spoke of a then young women who gave me a book with words from 1 Corinthians. She was Gill and we have been married for forty two years. She has been my greatest companion the heart and soul of our family and an indispensable contribution to my ministry which often only I know about.

She has been patient and kind and so much more.

And I know I am not the only one to say to her 'thank you.'

From all I have said earlier you will know that the greatest praise goes to God from whom all these great gifts and treasures are given.

So to end. Just be careful what you ask for. You will be given an answer. Maybe not what you had in mind but probably something even more wonderful.



To The Reverend Alan Keeler

The **A – Z** of **Alan**

A *Absolutely Amazing*

B *Brilliant, Splendid Baptisms*

C *Caring, Compassionate, Informative Courses*

D *Devoted, a reverent Distribution of Holy Communion from ciborium and chalice*

E *Excellent, a shining Example*

F *Fantastic*

G *Gill – your lovely wife & companion in ministry*

H *Hard working*

I *Ingenious, Innovative, great Ideas for Family Services*

J *Joyful!*

K *Kind*

L *Loving to all, exemplary Leadership*

M *A Marvellous and Excellent Ministry*

N *Nourishing us with Biblical food for thought, especially at the top of every Newsletter*

O *Outstanding*
P *Patient, lovely Prayers and Pastoral care*
Q *The Quintessential English gentleman*
R *Radiant, a brilliant all-Rounder*
S *Supreme Sermons and all Services, Splendid parish magazine articles*
T *Tender-hearted, Terrific, Talented*
U *Unequivocally the best*
V *Vicar - the absolute epitome of*
W *Wonderful, Wise*
X *Xceptional, Xenial*
Y *You will be greatly missed*
Z *The perpetual Zenith - and at St Mary's*

Plus many more distinguished attributes

Thank you, Alan and Gill, so much for your time with us at St Mary's - for all you have both done for us, in good times and in bad. You have been a blessing to us all.

Enjoy your retirement, God bless you both and good luck for the future!

Devised and compiled by Barbara Buckingham

Choir and Music

The church choir are so fortunate with the people who play for services. Without a regular (every week) organist, it is harder for the choir to forge a relationship with their accompanist. But all the organists who play at St Mary's are sensitive to the requirements of our singers. They are prepared to modify the speed of pieces of music: to alter its dynamics (loudness); to introduce pauses; to change the keyboard introduction; to practise sections interminably. In short, they are helpful, sensitive and flexible.

The choir doesn't make it easier for the organist by expecting them to play a new (to them) piece at sight on occasions. – Though, to be fair, every effort is made to provide music to the organist of the anthem planned for the organist's next visit to St Mary's. However, as both choir members and organists find, the written notes do not always tell the whole story.

Choirs have a habit of inserting idiosyncrasies into pieces of music that are not apparent from the printed text. Gaps are inserted, to allow the choir members to breathe, where the composer had not thought it necessary. Sections are sung more slowly – to allow the words more clarity, or because it is hard to sing fast, or because "we have always done it this way". Some repeats may be omitted, or others inserted, because one of the singers prefers it like that. Some unaccompanied sections may need to be accompanied, because the singers go out of tune

Balance is always a tricky one. The choir often thinks the organ is too loud, while the organist is simply responding to the instructions on the music. This also works in reverse, when the choir complains that they can't hear the organ when the "other" manual is in use. And the organist's response is often that they can't hear the choir entries, because they are uncertain when to come in!

You may wonder how it is possible to achieve a choir/organ balance that preserves the intention of the composer, allows the words to come through, and achieves a satisfactory blending of words and music. For that, St Mary's Church Choir are indebted to their marvellous organists, who, week after week, keep returning to provide a high standard of music in support of the morning service. We thank and salute Ben, David, Richard, Andrew, Alfie, Ann.

Peter Fall

A view from the pew



Parents get used to going to places because of their children.

- The clinic, to be weighed and measured, when they are babies.
- The school, for an embarrassing chat with the teacher, when they are kiddies.
- The youth club, to walk them home in the dark.
- The Police, when they have had an accident as a new driver.

But did you appreciate that this close involvement with children can continue for the grandparents?

The good news is that this is largely a celebration of their (more-or-less) successful activity. So that granny can say “Hasn’t she done well!” And grandad follows up with “I told you, she takes after me!”

But sometimes it involves more commitment to be present when the grandchild is making their way in the world.

So it was that we arrived at the Soho Place Theatre the other evening with tickets to see the musical, “The Little Big Things”.

We were there to see a grandson of ours perform live in the theatre. Being oldies, we had tickets for a matinee (afternoon) performance. We made a day of it, and came up to Town in the morning, grabbed a light sandwich lunch and had a stroll in one of the few small patches of green in the West End.

Then on to the theatre, near Tottenham Court Road tube station, and looking out the door that was nearest to where our seats were situated. As soon as we entered, we encountered a polite usher to help us find our seats. That usher was our William!

So **this** was his “work in the theatre”!

Of course, we had known all along, but it was still quite intriguing to see our grandson confidently in action, welcoming members of the audience, and directing them to their seats.

The full house enjoyed an uplifting true story about Henry Fraser, in the aftermath of a diving accident which left him a tetraplegic.

An avid sportsman – especially rugby – he was now confined to a wheelchair. The play charts him successfully prospering against devastating odds to become an artist (using his mouth to hold the brush), an inspirational speaker and a best-selling author. The show was a life-affirming musical, reminding us of the value of the family and how sometimes it is the little things that matter the most.

The acting was great: the singing was superb: the staging was staggering – wheelchairs careered across stage, with the audience “in the round” on every side. No wonder many in the audience were in tears at various points in the story. We were so pleased that we had gone to see the show. And all because our grandson had taken the job of an usher to earn some money, before travelling around the world after graduation.

We were proud grandparents that afternoon.

And satisfied theatre-goers!

Peter Fall



Careplus aims to provide free local volunteer support for older people locally. Their needs are met for befriending, social support and practical assistance. This is undertaken by volunteers who give support in the form of befriending, shopping and transport.

Please consider helping Careplus. It will also be wonderful if there could be a representative of St. Mary's Church to be on the organizing committee which meets three times a year. To know more please speak visit <http://www.careplusbromley.org.uk>

CYPRUS TO PETTS WOOD 1964

This article contains a brief summary of an interview between Grandpa (James Green) and his 8-year-old grand-daughter Shirley, following an 11-day journey from Nicosia in Cyprus to Petts Wood.

In 1963/4 Don was supervising the construction of a dam in the northwest corner of the island, and lived on the site during the week. Olive and Shirley, Carol (aged 6) and baby Wendy lived in Nicosia so that the two older girls could go to the International School.

Tension between Greek and Turkish Cypriots had been mounting for some time and on Christmas Eve 1963, civil war broke out with gunfire heard in the central part of Nicosia. As there was a possibility of an invasion by Turkey, we were advised to leave the island.

We found that there was a cruise ship sailing from Limassol and by booking 1st class, we could take the car free. It was decided that as Don had to remain on the island, Olive and the three children would leave by boat taking their possessions and the car with them.

24th February 1964

So, we got on a week's cruise to Marseilles. At Limassol the car lifted by crane into the air and into the hold. Everybody else – cruise of a lifetime especially to visit the Holy Land. 150 in 1st class, mostly French, 2 British couples. We refugees stuck out like a sore thumb. Cruise totally unsuitable for us! The four of us shared a cabin. Washed nappies were festooned wherever. The girls were let loose to roam. Never knew what they did. With baby just couldn't monitor them. No complaints from anyone. People were kind. "Mummy's French helped quite a lot".

25th February 1964

Haifa. Walked around with Wendy in pram. Not on Jerusalem tour.

26th February 1964

Nazareth. Outing. Saw cave said to be home of Jesus (not now on view), with church over. Girls looked around collective farm while I gave Wendy her dinner. Kind person took charge of them.

28th February 1964

Piraeus. Coach to Athens. Walked to Acropolis and Carol complained about it being up a tiring hill. The waiters on board “poked us in the tummy and on cheeks playfully.”

2nd March 1964:

Genoa. Outing to Portofino. We looked around Genoa on our own. Less hassle.

3rd March 1964:

Port of Marseilles. Frantic packing up while Shirley sat on a suitcase and gave Wendy her bottle outside the cabin. Packed car, pram wheels on top. Sun shone.

Avignon. Wanted train to Paris but none till next Sunday. Sun shone.

Valance for the night.

4th March 1964:

Lyon. Hoped to get a train to Dover. Long hunt for the station. Not available till Summer. (Had depended on this).

Chalon-sur-Seine. Place for night with turkeys and geese. Think it's here we woke to snow. Slipped and slithered up hill and down dale.

5th March 1964:

Accompanied by even more fervent arrow prayers for our safety, we found the road not quite so slippery as yesterday. Hardly any other traffic on road, none with pram wheels strapped to the roof. (Would it have been better to have gone home free by plane?) Arrived at

Chalons-sur-Marne. At the hotel Shirley carried a packet of Dreft the wrong way up and left a trail of powder from hall to bedroom.

6th March 1964:

Etapes. First time mentioned that Wendy cried a lot. She obviously had had enough! A cage with two budgies here. “Mummy had soup each night as she ‘wasn’t hungry’”.

7th March 1964:

Boulogne. Stayed the night. Sent off telegram to Don's parents to say we would be arriving in Petts Wood. Sent a postcard to Don in Nicosia.

Home at last

Arrived at Woodhurst Avenue, Petts Wood, at 6.45pm where we were warmly greeted at grandparents' house.

Olive Green

A very brave man

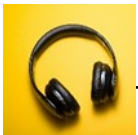
Alexei Navalny who was reported as having died in a Russian prison in the Arctic on 16th February said:

“Never give up. There is no need to, you are not allowed to give up. If this has happened and they decided to kill me then we are at a moment of incredible strength. All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing. So don't do nothing.”



As we follow in the footsteps of Jesus to the Cross, another very brave man through Lent, remember and pray for Alexei Navalny who died opposing president Putin in Russia, and lived knowing always that this might happen to him.

Alison Tyler



“Worship at St Mary's is live streamed and can be watched via Facebook. This is much appreciated by those who cannot be at the services and we would like to continue to offer this to our fellow members of our congregation. **If you would like to help us with this, please contact Trine, Sally, Alison or Paddy.**”

MOTHERS' UNION MATTERS

RISE UP against Domestic abuse



Respond

Inform

Support

Empower

Unite

Pray



Mothers' Union new campaign to raise awareness about Domestic Abuse is called:

“Rise Up”

Its aim is to make sure that activism against domestic abuse and gender-based violence happens 365 days a year and not just during the 16 Days of Activism campaign in November and December.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone from any walk of life. It isn't just unemployed, single parents who suffer from abuse. It is the educated, the affluent, both women and men. It can happen to anyone. Abuse can and does happen anywhere. Unfortunately, some people hide behind miscommunicated Bible passages to justify their actions or feel like they should stay with an abusive partner. MU want to raise awareness that this not OK.



It is hoped that Mothers' Union members and churches will work together to be a part of the change and will get involved with the **MU RISE UP** challenge

Domestic abuse is the most prevalent form of abuse within our society, and the church plays an important part in recognising and responding to this complex social problem that impacts people, communities and services across our society, spanning health, housing, social care, the Criminal Justice System and beyond. Church should be a source of support for people experiencing abuse, but it all too often creates barriers and difficulties.

A recent study undertaken in partnership with Mothers' Union and the national safeguarding team highlighted there is still some way to go to ensure that anyone experiencing domestic abuse feels safe and supported by their church community. In some cases, "domestic abuse is not considered a subject to be talked about in the Church to which I belong."



3 in 5 people interviewed thought that their church can do more to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

37% feel domestic abuse is present in their church

37% of them felt that domestic abuse was present in their church.

85% of people stated that Domestic abuse should be openly spoken about.

85% say domestic abuse should be spoken about in church

But only 1 in 20 (5%) people said that it is mentioned in their church, either in sermons, worship or prayers.

Only 5% say domestic abuse is spoken about in church

Mothers' Union will be working across Church communities to develop stronger partnerships, and will be providing resources and training to support confidence in recognising and responding to domestic abuse.

Posy Making – Saturday 9th March, 9.30am

We are meeting on Saturday 9th March at 9.30am in the Front Room of Church House to make the posies for the Mothering Sunday Service on the 10th March. You are invited to join us

Mothers' Union Programme in March/April

March

Friday 1 st	10.30 a.m.	World Day of Prayer at St Mary's
Wednesday 6 th	10.00 a.m.	Grace Café in church, hosted by M.U.
Saturday 9 th	9.30 a.m.	Making Mothering Sunday posies
Thursday 21 st	10.00 a.m.	Knit and Knatter

April

Wednesday 3 rd	10.00 a.m.	Grace Café in church, hosted by M.U.
Monday 8 th	1.00 p.m.	Lady Day Service at St Augustine's followed by soup, rolls and cake.

please let Margaret Eames know by 20th March if you plan to go (for catering purposes).

Thursday 11 th	10.00 a.m.	Veronica Loh - "What was your first job?"
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Peter Fall



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Electoral Roll

We would like to invite you to consider your support for St Mary's by joining the Electoral Roll.

An Electoral Roll is just that – it gives you the right to vote in the Annual Meetings and is open to anyone who is over the age of 16 who lives in the Parish or has been worshipping at St Mary's for more than 6 months. It is also our official membership list and gives an indication of the size of our congregation. It is good to recognise your presence with us.

You can do so by completing the Electoral Roll Form at the back of church and returning it to admin@stmarys-bromley.org.uk. Alternatively, return it to the Parish Office marked for the attention of Atlanta Topham

Concert in aid of Careplus – Saturday 9th March, 7.30pm

BOeS Choir (Bromley Oecumenical Singers) is holding a concert at St. Mary's on Saturday 9th March, 7.30pm, they will sing "Crucifixion" by Stainer, and some other pieces. The proceeds will go to Careplus, the local Charity which recruits volunteers to help older people stay in their own homes longer. Tickets are £10 and will be available soon. Please put this date in your diary - St. Mary's supports Careplus in its work, and this will be a very enjoyable evening

Easter Flowers and Church Cleaning – Saturday 30th March.

The flower arranging team have booked Easter Saturday to decorate the Church, between 10-12 in the morning. But we can all help by turning up to clean the Church, ready for Easter Sunday and some of us might like to decorate a window sill ourselves or help by making tea and coffee. Speak to Anne Yolland and discuss the options with her.

Meaningful Easter Eggs



The Egg that shares the Easter story will be available to order again this year. Fairtrade chocolate is available in milk £4.90 or dark chocolate £5.50. These eggs are not available to buy in supermarkets. Please use the sign-up sheet at the back of church. Easter is early this year, so please do order in good time

Grace Café – Change of Venue

Please note that Grace Café will move to the Buchan Hall in Church House until the weather warms up. Please enter via the side doors. More volunteers are very welcome.

Refreshments Rota

Many thanks to all who willingly and regularly serve refreshments on a Sunday morning after the service. **If you would like to volunteer to help, please have a word with Anne Yolland.**



Prayer during our Vacancy

Loving God,
we ask you to be present with the St Mary's family
as we wait and pray for a new vicar.
You know those things that we need to encourage us in our faith;
and you know too the person we need to teach us and lead us,
before we can even form the thought to ask you.
Whilst we wait keep us patient, wise and united,
working together for the good of our community.
Build us up into a flourishing and inclusive part of Christ's body
of love and service,
make us ready to welcome and to work with the one you send.
We offer our prayer in the name of Jesus our friend and brother. **Amen.**
**We thought possibly we could undertake to pray in our own homes or
offices either early in the morning or sometime between 5-6**
Blessings

Worship Diary

We offer a variety of services through the year. They are mostly on a Sunday at 10.30am and are mostly Family Communion. Most months we also have a Family Service which does not include Holy Communion. We hope you will find us a warm and friendly congregation. If you have questions about what we do, why we do it or how you might like to be more involved please do speak with a Church Warden, a sidesman... or anyone really!

Our Sunday Club is a valued provision for our youngest members. They do not meet when we have a Family Service or during school holidays.

Services for March

3rd March: 3rd Sunday in Lent 10.30 - Family Communion

10th March: 4th Sunday in Lent Mothering Sunday Family Service – Sunday Club

17th March: 5th Sunday in Lent 10.30 - Family Communion

HOLY WEEK begins

A reflective journey as we go together with Jesus to the Cross

24th March: **PALM SUNDAY** 10.30 Family Communion with Palms

25th March: Compline 8.00pm

26th March: Compline 8.00pm

27th March: Compline 8.00pm

28th March: **MAUNDY THURSDAY Church 8.00pm**

Remembering that first celebration of The Last Supper -

29th March: **GOOD FRIDAY** "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" an hour at the Cross 2-3 pm and then making the Easter Garden in church. Hot Cross Buns and Tea to follow

30th March: **HOLY SATURDAY** Flower decorating and Church cleaning 10-12 noon

31st March: **EASTER SUNDAY** - Resurrection Day 10.30 Holy Communion followed by Fizz and lovely nibbles!! (and possible Easter Egg Hunt tbc)

**ALLELUIA!! CHRIST IS RISEN
HE IS RISEN INDEED ALLELUIA!!!!**

St Mary's (Plaistow) College Road Bromley

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