

Christmas Hats

How many hats do you have? I don't mean beanie hats or baseball caps, but the roles you have in life. We often talk about having many hats when we have many roles to play. So the dance teacher has her teacher hat but also wears the hats (roles) of being a parent, child, friend, neighbour and colleague. Each of these roles requires her to wear different hats at different times depending on what she is doing.

In December because the weather turns colder we often see people's hats (and scarves and gloves). They may be plain, sombre colours or perhaps they are bright and jazzy. You may have a Christmas pudding hat or a practical tweed cap. Do you have a favourite?

In the coming month we will hear the Christmas story retold in St Mary's whether by our toddlers or pre-school, one of the local nurseries or schools or on Christmas morning. As we hear the familiar story we realise that there are many people in it with different roles to play. There are the shepherds on the hillside - a close community of hard-working people, often shunned by others. There are the Angels - heavenly messengers with voices like... well, Angels! There is the Inn-keeper, Herod, Wise Men and others. Not to mention Mary, Joseph and the donkey. Each has a role to play and different hats to wear.

I wonder if there is one of these characters that you find yourself identifying with. Think about the part they play in introducing Jesus to the world: each has a role. This is the Good News of Christmas - through God reaching out to us, we can all be introduced to Jesus and we can all introduce others to him too.

Whichever hat you wear or role you have, there is always room for you to meet Jesus this Christmas. This was true for the lowly Shepherds and majestic Wise Men back then - and it is true for us today. May this be your blessing this Christmas.

Rev Morag Finch

Special Events and Services

Sunday 4 December

4.00pm Christingle Service

Come and see the children's faces glowing in the light of candles

Sunday 11 December

10.30am Family Toy Service

You are invited to bring a new, unwrapped toy or voucher suitable for children aged 8-13 years, which will become a gift for a local child in need of support through Welcare in Bromley. Please, no soft toys. Wrapping paper also welcome.

Sunday 18 December

6.30pm The Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Saturday 24 December - Christmas Eve

3.30pm Crib Service with Nativity Play

11.30pm Procession by Candlelight and Midnight Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord

Sunday 25 December - Christmas Day

9.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Communion for Christmas Day





From the Registers

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

13 Nov Donovan Wootton

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Carol Walkin 12 Nov

Confirmation

Confirming their Christian faith:

6 Nov Lucy Hemsley
Oliver Wright-Jones

CONFIRMED: Lucy Hemsley and Oliver Wright-Jones were among 28 candidates recently confirmed at St John's Eden Park.



REMEMBERING: the community of Shortlands came together to commemorate Remembrance Sunday around a wooden cross, a temporary replacement for the stone cross at the War Memorial damaged in a car accident earlier in the year.

Respect

In September and October I led assemblies on the theme of respect at Highfield Infants' and Junior Schools, and Harris Primary Academy Shortlands. The children had been learning what respect means and how we respect other people.

I told the children the story of The Good Samaritan, or Good Stranger (Luke 10, 30-37). Jesus told this story to illustrate what it means to keep one of God's commandments in the Bible: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind ... Love your neighbour as you love yourself.'

This story tells us that all people - including those who are different from us - are equally valuable and that we should treat others with care and respect.

If a Samaritan could be a neighbour to a Jew, and Jesus told us to 'go and do the same', then all of God's people must be our neighbours and we must love them just as the Samaritan man did.

Rev Morag Finch

Walking the frontline

Ann-Marie Jefferys recently walked 100km across northern France and Belgium following the frontline of the Battle of the Somme, from Lochnagar Crater to Ypres.

She was among one hundred walkers remembering those who gave their lives, visiting memorials and cemeteries along the way. This was in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity who support serving soldiers, veterans and their families. To donate, visit

www.justgiving.com/Ann-MariewalkingtheFrontline2016



Saint of the Month December

St Nicholas – 6 December

St Nicholas, or Santa Claus, is one of the most popular saints of Christendom with countless churches dedicated to him. Yet all that is known for sure about him is that he was the bishop of Myra in Southern Turkey in the fourth century.

However there are many legends about him. For example, he had a reputation for secret gift-giving, such as putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him, a practice celebrated on his feast day.

Another legend tells how, during a terrible famine, a malicious butcher lured three little children into his house, where he killed them, placing their remains in a barrel to cure, planning to sell them off as ham. St Nicholas, visiting the region to care for the hungry, resurrected the three children by his prayers.

In his most famous exploit, a poor man had three daughters but could not afford a proper dowry for them. This meant that they would remain unmarried and probably would have to become prostitutes. Hearing of the girls' plight, Nicholas decided to help them, so he went to the house at night and threw three purses filled with gold coins through their open window.

Many years after he died about half of his bones were reburied in Bari, while the other half were later taken to Venice!

He is the patron saint of bakers, brewers, brides, children, merchants, pawnbrokers and travellers.

Following the Camino



A SIGN OF THE WAY:
the scallop shell, used to guide pilgrims along the Camino.

Twenty-eight members of St Mary's congregation and friends travelled to Santiago de Compostela in October, in a trip led by Rev Bruce Driver, of Bromley College. The trip followed part of the 'Camino' or 'Way': the route taken by pilgrims since the Middle Ages to the site of the remains of St James in north-western Spain.

The travellers did not attempt to walk or cycle the 480 miles of the French route, but travelled by coach, joining the Way at Burgos, around 300 miles from Santiago.

Having explored the beautiful cathedral and historic centre of that city, they moved on to Leon, a further 110 miles along the route. For many, the medieval stained glass windows of Leon cathedral were a

highlight of the trip, as was a service of communion held for the group in the cathedral.

The journey continued on to Santiago itself, where the group enjoyed a guided tour of the cathedral and historic city centre. Having participated in the group's own service of communion in the cathedral earlier in the day, many returned that evening to attend the Pilgrims' Mass, which included the use of the largest censer (container of incense) in the world. Ropes were pulled bringing the censer into a swinging motion almost to the roof of the cathedral, reaching speeds of 80km per hour.

Some of the travellers also managed to find time to walk the last 5km of the Way, starting at the site where pilgrims first get a glimpse of the city of Santiago.

Valerie Burton, one of those travelling, said 'People have different reasons for going to Santiago de Compostela: it gave me time to reflect'. Annette German remembered many special moments of reflection as the coach passed those making the pilgrimage on foot. She said: 'Feeling the presence of St Mary's congregation in an utterly different environment, it was good to be in a different place, it's what pilgrimage is all about'.



PICTURED:
the travellers in front of the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela.

Mission of the month

The Children's Society

The Children's Society is driven by the belief that every child deserves a good childhood. Its resources are targeted to four priority areas of work:



The Children's Society

Children in trouble with the law - exposed to bullying, violence and deprivation, some children are driven to crime. The Children's Society provides preventative support and guidance to lead children away from the cycle of crime and custody.

Children at risk on the streets - each year in the UK 100,000 children run away from home, and many resort to begging, stealing and prostitution to survive. The Children's Society helps them find solutions to their problems at their point of greatest need.

Disabled children - the Children's Society ensures that disabled

children are given a voice in decisions that affect them now and in the future, to overcome the effects of exclusion, ignorance and disrespect.

Young refugees - the Society helps refugee children rebuild their lives in new communities, surrounded and supported by friends, providing help with finding accommodation and education, and assisting with language barriers.

Alongside this core work it also supports projects involving traveller and gypsy children, and young people affected by adult drug and alcohol misuse.

The Children's Society relies heavily on donations. This allows it to concentrate its work where the need is greatest and not just in areas where government funding is available, and to be a truly independent organisation.

You are warmly invited to attend our Christingle service in St Mary's on Sunday 4 December at 4.00pm which will be the highlight of our financial support for the Children's Society this year.

For more information see the display at the back of church or visit www.childrenssociety.org.uk

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WORSHIP

Every Sunday

- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except when notified. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
- 18.30 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

Every Monday

- 17.30 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

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

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Rev. M. Finch	8464 8065
(Sat - Thu)	revfinch@btinternet.com	
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(Sun, Mon, Wed)		
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PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.church
Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Mothers & Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8650 4553
Mothers' Union Fellowship Group		
	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	Miss J. Rambridge	8650 0947

For admissions to Beavers, Cubs & Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Ms E. Hay	07932758801

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901 or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Guides (Tues.)	Ms. N. Keast	07516 650940
Guides (Fri)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Wed.)	Mrs. R. Katheswaran	

		8249 0984
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms. H. Last	8460 1705
	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
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		or 07960 988552
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(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Cllr D. Jefferys	020 8460 6030
(Email: david.jefferys@bromley.gov.uk)	

Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

SPAN INFORMATION

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