

A sign of hope



Lent arrives early in 2016; many of us will eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday (9th February) before the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday.

Lent is a time traditionally used for prayer, reflection, repentance and self-denial in the period leading up to Easter. Many churches remove flowers from church and churchgoers have extra times of study. Details of how to find out what's happening at St Mary's can be found inside this month's SPAN.

The name 'Ash Wednesday' comes from the ancient practice of placing ashes on worshippers' heads as a sign of humility before God, a symbol of mourning and sorrow at the death that sin brings into the world. Ashes symbolise that attitude of penitence reflected in the Lord's Prayer: 'forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'.

On Ash Wednesday, we use ashes made from the burned palm branches distributed on the Palm Sunday of the previous year. The priest blesses the ashes and uses them to mark the foreheads of those who wish, making the sign of the cross and saying, 'Remember, that you are dust and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ'.

Remembering the significance of the ashes we receive, we mourn and do penance for our sins. We turn our hearts to Jesus, who suffered, died and rose for our salvation. Knowing that our lives on earth are transitory, we do our best to live the best that we can and look forward to fulfilment in heaven.

Lent is a season that reminds us to get our priorities straight. It offers us a new chance to say, 'yes' to the God who created us, who made us in his own image.

Lent is a season of hope: with ashes on our foreheads and hope in our hearts, we go forward to love and serve. For by God's grace in Christ, we do not have to stay the way we are.

Rev Morag Finch

Musical Concert

Sunday 21 February, 4pm

St Mary's Church



In aid of the Choir's residency at St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Tickets £10 inc glass of wine or soft drink.

On sale after the 10.30am services or from Tony Wright-Jones:

07801 321964 / twrightjones@btinternet.com

Special Events and Services

Sunday 7 February

6.30pm An Evening Service to Celebrate Candlemas

Wednesday 10 February - Ash Wednesday

10.00am Holy Communion Services

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

Sunday 28 February

6.30pm 'For the love of creation'

An informal service for all ages led by the Music group

Sunday 6 March - Mothering Sunday

10.30am Family and Parade Service

With the help of Junior Choir
Including the blessing and distribution of posies



PATHFINDERS held a cake stall to raise funds for refugees - more details inside

Pictured, left to right: Stella Nightingale, Val Burton, Callum Brown, Bethan Brown.

Stay in touch!

To keep up with news from St. Mary's in between editions of SPAN, you can like our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter – search for 'St Mary's Shortlands'.

Don't forget our website
www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk





From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Sylvia Tieman 4 Jan aged 86



More Wartime memories

We received the following memories from David Townshend, an ex-parishioner, who was following the news from St Mary's via SPAN. Shortly before going to print, we heard with great sadness of his death: an obituary will follow in a future edition of SPAN.

When Great Britain declared war on Nazi Germany (in honour of treaties) I was 15 and at boarding school, Oundle, in the Midlands. My parents were in Burma - my father was an engineer on the Indo-Burma railway.

We were all excited as we watched the Battle of Britain in 1940 fought overhead. In 1943 I joined the army. After extensive training I was on board a troop ship, heading for the Far East where I joined the Indian army in Bombay.

While on board we learnt that Germany had surrendered unconditionally (VE Day) but this made no difference to us as we were already committed to the war against Japan in the Far East.

On arrival in Bombay I joined the Indian Army. After further training in Indian customs and languages I was awaiting dispatch to Burma as a reinforcement when the two atomic bombs were dropped. The Japanese agreed to an unconditional surrender and thus ended my memories of the Second World War.

Terrorism: a reflection

A friend who lives abroad had planned to visit London before Christmas, but cancelled the trip after the terrorist attacks in Paris. It made me realise how many worries there are about terrorism close to home. It is difficult when we worry about our own safety, or that of a parent or partner who travels to central London for work, like so many of us do in Shortlands. It is hard to know what to do. Even if risks are low, they are real.

One moving interview at the site of the Paris attacks was seen far and wide. It was with Brandon, a young French boy, and his father Angel. When Brandon thought they needed to move house because of the 'bad guys', his father said to him that they didn't need to worry because of the flowers that were being laid. 'The flowers and the candles are here to protect us?' said Brandon. 'Yes', said his father. Brandon looked round at the hundreds of flowers, smiled, and said he felt better.

Flowers, candles, and prayers can't stop bullets physically. But they can help us in another way. They can help remind us that evil will not be overcome with evil, but by goodness and love.

Compassionate God, as you know each star you have created, so you know the secrets of every heart; in your loving mercy bring to your table all who are fearful and broken, all who are wounded and needy, that our hungers may be satisfied in the city of your peace; through Christ who is our peace. (From the Church of England's service of Morning Prayer)

Tim Aldred

Choir in Residence

The choir of St Mary's Shortlands, under the leadership of Canon Claire Tillotson, are delighted to announce that they will be spending four days in residence at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. The residency is from 25 – 28 August 2016 and will require the choir to undertake six services of Evensong and mass.

'To be invited to such a prestigious Cathedral and to lead the worship through music is a huge honour and privilege' said Claire. 'Following singing Evensong at Rochester and recently at Bromley and Sheppard's Colleges I was delighted that we were asked to submit a recording of the choir to the Cathedral: the response was an invitation to visit'.

The choir will be fundraising throughout the coming months for travel and accommodation expenses. There will be a cake stall after the 10.30 service on the last Sunday in each month. On 21 February there will be a concert by the choir with instrumental and vocal solos as well as some well-known choral classics. Other events will appear in the pew papers and forthcoming editions of SPAN.

Worship at the site of St Edmundsbury has continued since the 9th century and the cathedral boasts some five different choirs. More information is at www.stedscathedral.co.uk

Members of the congregation are very welcome to attend any of the services but will have to make their own travel arrangements.

+ Lent 2016 +

Lent is an opportunity before the great Festival of Easter to take time out and reflect on our journey through life. There are a number of ways to help you to get the most out of Lent

1. Home Groups

The weeks during Lent are a time when we reflect on our faith, and prepare for the joy of Easter to come. Lent home groups are a wonderful way of exploring our faith in more depth and of getting to know each other better.

This year we will be following a course created by the Diocese of Winchester entitled 'I witness'.

There will be groups both during the day and in the evening and details of these are available from the Parish Office (8460 5682) and on the notice board at the back of church.

Lent home groups offer the opportunity of asking questions in a safe environment and are led by experienced leaders. If you have not joined a group before, do consider it!

2. Lent Lunches

A simple lunch for up to 10 people, providing an opportunity to meet together, enjoy hospitality and support a charity.

Dates and locations are on lists at the back of the church where you can sign up to attend, or please ring the Parish Office on 8460 5682 for more information.

3. Holy Week and Easter

Join with us as we prepare for the Easter celebrations

March 20th - Palm Sunday

10.30am Procession of Palms and Eucharist for Palm Sunday

6.30pm A Passiontide Service of Readings, Anthems and Hymns for Holy Week

March 21st, 22nd and 23rd

8.00pm Compline with reflection

March 24th - Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Washing of Feet and Eucharist of the Last Supper

March 25th - Good Friday

10.30am Family Service

2.00pm An Hour at the Cross

3.00pm Half an hour for private prayer

March 27th - Easter Day

8.00am Easter Communion

10.30am Eucharist of the Resurrection including the renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt



Saint of the Month St Valentine – 14th February

The saints featured in this Saint of the Month series have been chosen as they are the most familiar and well-known today. It is not claimed that the articles are strictly accurate, though as much care as possible has been taken with them. The information about some or all of the saints in this series comes only from legend.

The origins of St Valentine are clouded in mystery – he may indeed be two people – but it would appear that he was a bishop of Terni, about 65 miles north east of Rome where he is buried. Possibly he was martyred for encouraging Christian marriage between one man and one woman as opposed to the then more popular polygamy. This may be what led to his feast day being linked with romance.

However in his 1375 work 'Parliament of Fowles', Chaucer links a tradition of courtly love with the celebration of St. Valentine's feast day – an association that didn't exist until after his poem received widespread attention. The poem refers to the 14th February as the day birds (and humans) come together to find a mate.

He is the patron saint of, among others, lovers, beekeeping and epilepsy, as well as the plague, fainting and travelling. As you might expect, he is also the patron saint of engaged couples and happy marriages.

His flower-adorned skull can be seen in Rome. You will find other bits of St. Valentine's skeleton on display in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Scotland, England and France!

Refugees: a Christian response

The Pathfinder group has spent some weeks reflecting on the migrant crisis and discussing a Christian response to refugees. We followed the news, noted what European governments are doing, and considered a petition to Parliament asking for it 'to accept more asylum seekers and increase support for Refugee migrants in the UK'. We read about the personal response of our local MP to the conflict in Syria and examined what other Churches were doing.

We reflected on the stone image on the west wall of the Church depicting the Flight into Egypt: Jesus and his family had been refugees. Together we prayed for all refugees and undertook to pray throughout our lives for those in such great need.

Our Christian response needed to be rooted in the Bible, so we studied various passages including Matthew 25, verses 34-46, helped by the words of the hymn 'When I needed a Neighbour', which was based on this passage. The hymn tells us 'the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, were you there?' It does not matter who the people in need are, or what their religion is, our Christian response should be to help if we can.

Prayer and contemplation are not enough, so we held a cake sale to raise money for Embrace Me, a Christian charity working throughout the Middle East to provide health, education and community development programmes to those in need – regardless of their faith or nationality. We were delighted by the response: we raised enough money to provide six mattresses and blankets and an emergency food parcel for Syrian refugees.

Fiona Bratt

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Mission of the month

St. Christopher's Group

The St Christopher's Group comprises St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham and St Christopher's Bromley in Orpington. Both care for adults from the age of 18 years upwards in the London boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark.

St Christopher's care for over 2,500 adults each year. Each year they provide over 15,000 days of care on their wards and support around 2,400 people in their own homes. There is also a 'social hub' for patients and families, day care and a bereavement project for children and their families.

It costs £19million a year to deliver all the services. Only about a third of this comes from the NHS, so they need to raise approximately £13million from supporters and the local community.

The biennial Bluebell Fundraising walk will be on Sunday 8th May 2016 in Cudham Woods: there will be more information about this and the charity on the Missions notice board during February and further information can be found at www.stchristophers.org.uk

How Does St Mary's Survive?

Contrary to what some people believe, St Mary's is not financed by the Church of England or the Government. Every penny we spend we raise ourselves and in addition we make payments to the Church of England to contribute towards its wider running costs.

Last year St Mary's running costs amounted to £183,000. So, how do we finance them?

Our primary source of income is from our Stewardship Scheme, which anyone can join – even if you do not attend Church but want to support its mission, buildings and grounds. Stewardship is a scheme whereby an individual commits to give to St Mary's a fixed amount each month. This can be done using Stewardship envelopes or by standing order. If you sign the appropriate charity form we can claim tax relief on this giving.

Our second biggest source of income is from renting out the Church Hall and meeting rooms where many activities take place each week such as the Pre School, dance classes and community meetings.

If you would like to help support St Mary's either by joining the Stewardship Scheme or hiring the Church Hall or one of our meeting rooms, please visit the Parish Office in Church House, or call 8460 5682.

Dementia Awareness Event

Saturday 27 February 10am

St Mary's Church Shortlands



Now that we are living longer, more of us are experiencing the effects of dementia ourselves or because we know someone who has it.

A 'Dementia Friend' learns a little bit more about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action – it is about the small ways you can help. From telling people about Dementia Friends to visiting someone you know living with dementia, every action counts. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend.

Judith West, a Dementia Friends Champion, will be running a Dementia Friends workshop at St Mary's on Saturday February 27th at 10am. Judith set up the Chislehurst Dementia Café with Christ Church Chislehurst, and worked for several years for Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services in Gravesend.

This interactive workshop, which will run for approximately two hours, is open to all, whether or not you are a church member. You are welcome if you just want to find out more about dementia.

If possible, please let the Parish Office know if you wish to attend on 020 8460 5682 or office@stmaryshortlands.plus.com. You will also be very welcome if you just come along on the day.

The Parish Church of St. Mary, Shortlands

Link Parish
St. Francis of Assisi, Douai, France



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

- 17.00 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	
Associate Vicar	Rev. R. Finch	8464 8065
Associate Vicar	Rev. J. Peters	07531 617302/
(Sun, Mon, Wed)		8460 5682
Reader Emeritus	Mrs. A. Gimson	8460 6494
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	Mr. S. Buchanan	8777 8008
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	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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	Mr. B. Waring	07957 186027
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Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0031
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Assistant Organist	Mr Daniel Beach	8289 6510
Electoral Roll	Mr. N. Stoffel	8460 0063
Stewardship	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178
Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978

PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.plus.com
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	Mrs H. Ashford	07979 504079

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

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Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Wed.)	Mrs. R. Kateswaran	
		8249 0984
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms. W. Keeping	8466 1599
	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
Pre-School	Mrs. P. Chase	8290 6704
		or 07960 988552
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Heayberd	8460 9537
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Mission Chairman	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
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LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. M. Cooke	020 3665 0357
(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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Editorial Parish Office 8460 5682
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