

Faith in uncertain times

What does Christian faith say about fear and uncertainty? Many people are uncertain about the future; it could be that they are fleeing war, have an undiagnosed illness, have just been made redundant from their workplace or one of many other situations.

Christianity does not say 'there, there, it will be alright, all the difficulties will go away', the daily challenges still remain. Christian faith is about facing the challenges and trusting.

The Bible is full of stories about people facing big challenges; including the people of Israel fleeing slavery in Egypt and Jesus facing death and humiliation by crucifixion.

The Israelites fleeing slavery were given a promise that they would go to the Promised Land, but they were not told how. They did not know that it would take forty years, that they would face dehydration and starvation. Many times the people would turn to Moses and tell him that they should go back to slavery. Jesus knew that the scriptures said that the Messiah would rise again but we are told that when he was in agony on the cross he cried out 'My God, why have you forsaken me?'

The pain and anguish that is told in these accounts are very real and shared by many people today. The accounts of Moses, Jesus and many other people in the Bible tell us about how they faced the daily challenges – with faith and trust. Faith in the God who says that no matter what you are facing I will be with you and that, no matter what happens to you, you will be with me.

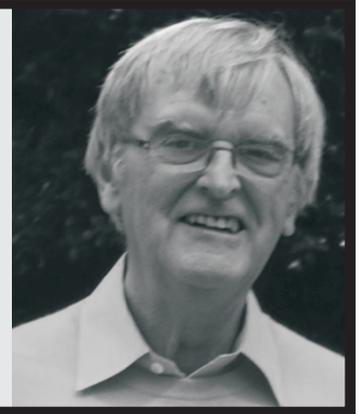
In that time of uncertainty sometimes incredible things happen; a friend offers support and encouragement, a country takes in a refugee, scientists discover new treatments, people find moments of peace.

Recently people from St Mary's have been walking some of the streets of Shortlands, knocking on doors and asking 'is there anything you would like us to pray for?' Often we hear stories of uncertainty and fear and take those back to church where we simply offer those people and situations to God in prayer. We do not know the future but we have faith and trust that God is with us, with you.

Rev Richard Finch

REMEMBERING:

St Mary's hosted a service of thanksgiving for the life of Rev Canon Doug Redman, vicar of St Mary's from 1980 to 2000 (see inside for an obituary).



Planning for the future

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's met together on a Saturday in May to think about how we will work together to deliver our aim: St Mary's church endeavours to bring the love of God into the everyday lives of the people of Shortlands.

As we considered ways in which we can share God's love, we thought about how we can make better use of our space for the benefit of the community. This is also important because the buildings on our site are in poor repair and need work done on them. At this stage, we are just starting to look at different options. We will consult extensively with the community on what we will do in the future, but we need to do some more thinking first on what the options might be.

Following the meeting, several working groups are being set up, overseen by a steering group, to progress this further. We will keep you posted as our thinking develops.

Rev Morag Finch

Say it with flowers



The Guild of Flower Arrangers celebrated their 50th anniversary with cake and enjoyed a demonstration by Graham Harmer, Floral Designer, on 6 June.

New flower arrangers are very welcome – the Guild is a friendly group who will happily guide and advise anyone interested in joining the team. Enquire via the Parish Office for more information.

Special Events and Services

Sunday 10 July

10.30am Sea Sunday

Speaker: Reverend Andrew Wright, Secretary General, The Mission to Seafarers

Sunday 17 July

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Responses: Sanders
Canticles: Walmsley

Anthem: Blessed be the God - Wesley



From the Registers

Holy Matrimony

We congratulate:

11 June Andrew Brown
and Lucy Beard

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Gladys Webber 18 May aged 95
David Vydelingham
14 June aged 83

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Beryl Powell 2 June



CONGRATULATIONS to Andy and Lucy Brown, married at St Mary's in June



Remembering



The Rev Canon Doug Redman

Doug was born in Margate in 1935, grew up in Kent and went to The Skinners School in Tunbridge Wells.

He then worked for a couple of years for Tunbridge Wells Council during which time he studied for his Building Surveyor qualification, before joining the Royal Engineers for three years: service of which he was very proud.

Through his love of Scouting he met Valerie: they were married in 1957 and had two sons: Andrew and Peter.

By 1966 he had begun his theological training. He studied at Rochester, was ordained Deacon in 1968 and priested in 1969. His first post, as Curate, was here at St Mary's: he then went, as vicar, to West Kingsdown and then to Chatham.

It was with great joy that he was welcomed back in Shortlands in 1980 as Vicar for what was to be his final post lasting some twenty years.

Andy and Peter realised from an early age that they were sharing their Dad with many others; they have memories of him disappearing from the Christmas dinner table or similar family occasions because there was someone who needed him. Doug would be there for people seven days a week.

He was a humble man, a man who listened intently to the 'inner voice'. A member of the congregation had had open heart surgery: all was going well for a few days but suddenly there was a crisis. Although it was a London hospital, just when he was needed, Doug was there. The family found great comfort in this and his explanation was: 'I felt I had to come, to be here'.

His passion for faith in action brought about many community schemes – the Community Help Scheme in West Kingsdown is still going strong some 50 years on. Doug started the SPAN magazine for St Mary's – still distributed free to every home in the Parish – in 1980. He also started the St Mary's Pre-School, and his work to found the Wisdom Hospice in Rochester led to work to support the establishment of the Demelza Children's Hospice.

Throughout his life he stood up for what he believed to be right and he wasn't afraid to make himself unpopular. He was quite visionary and radical in his thinking: projects that seemed impossible to many he approached with great faith and a practical sense that 'we can do this.' He didn't seek the limelight for himself and he had a tremendous ability to initiate, inspire and empower others to succeed for themselves: his faith in the love of God shone through all he did.

Many people have strong memories of Doug's preaching: it has been said that when he preached it was as if he was speaking to you personally.

His vision and drive which led to the building of the Vestry for the Vicar and of the Millennium Chapel. His experience as a building surveyor was invaluable in the maintenance of our buildings.

He served on the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches, advising on the architecture, archaeology, art and history of

Gladys Webber

Gladys was born and grew up in South London, and left school when she was about 13.

She joined the RAF during the war and that was where she met Reg – at Ibbesley in the New Forest. They married in Oakhampton in 1946 and then lived in Clapham. They then moved to Lewisham, to Eden Park Avenue and then to Shortlands.

Gladys was a hard worker and also enjoyed looking after others, for example she helped at the White Gables Alzheimer's club on Bromley Common. Ian, Geoff and Nigel were all choristers at Southwark Cathedral and Gladys regularly cooked dinner for the choir in the chapter house which they ate between the Sunday morning service and Evensong.

She had a simple faith which was important to her. She was a gentle caring and encouraging lady who knew the difference between right and wrong.

Gladys was totally devoted to her family. She leaves three surviving sons, John, Geoff and Nigel, and two grandchildren – Matt and Becky. Kevin died in infancy and Ian in 2002.

When the boys were more or less grown up Gladys returned to clerical work. For many years she worked at the Home Office administering prison officers' wages.

Geoff moved back home about 20 years ago and gave great care and support, firstly to both parents and then, after Reg died in 2006, to Gladys.

Life wasn't easy for Gladys – she was registered blind, deaf and disabled due to hip problems and suffered with dementia. She enjoyed outings in her wheelchair with Geoff.

places of worship. He was a strong supporter of the Friends of Kent Churches. He was also involved in Rochester Diocese's pension scheme and his model became that for the whole Church of England.

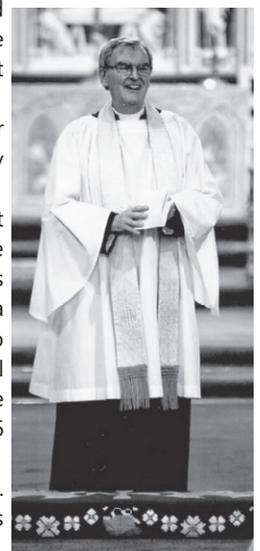
During his time at St Mary's Doug was Rural Dean (now called Area Dean) and for this he was appointed an Honorary Canon of Rochester Cathedral.

Doug was also a very active member of the Rotary Club of Beckenham. He was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship for his great 'service above self'. St Mary's link with the parish of St Francis of Assisi in Douai, France, was established by Doug and a member of Beckenham Rotary, in collaboration with his good friend Marcel Brevers, a member of Douai Rotary. The churches have recently enjoyed their 21st annual visit.

He was well known for his sense of humour – his twinkling eye, his love of puns and silly songs.

Doug was very proud of his Kentish roots: it was, therefore, no surprise that he and Valerie chose to retire to Kent. He was very conscious that Valerie had married a surveyor, not a priest: he would have been the first to acknowledge the integral role she played in all aspects of his ministry and this continued in the varied works he involved himself in over the 16 years of his so-called retirement.

One of Doug's bywords was Commitment. He certainly was committed himself both to his God and to his family of whom he was proud.



A message from the Redman family

In the past couple of weeks we have received literally hundreds of cards and letters from so many people who wanted to share their thoughts and memories of Doug. He was a reassuring presence for so many people; this was also very true for us as a family and he will be sorely missed.

The service at St Mary's was truly an afternoon of celebration and we are so grateful to all those who made this such a special occasion. Thank you again for all of your love and support; it really is much appreciated.

News of flora and fauna

The Friends of South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen have steadily pressed on with improvements. These include: bulb planting; clearing invasive laurel; clearing brambles and the like from the beds of English Bluebells, which are in the area of Ancient Woodland; and cleaning and recoating the seats.

The birdlife is now striking and melodious, and bats and moths abound. The main pond, in Kingswood Glen, has recovered from its renovation a couple of years ago, and is now clear and home to newts, frogs, mallards, and moorhens.

Future work includes converting the hedge area by the pavilion to a shrub bed, and making the herbaceous border better but smaller. There is also work on longer term plans, requiring Lottery Grants, to restore Helicar's fountain feature; restoring as many of the original features as practicable; opening up long-lost vistas, and possibly indicating water features, which were key features of Sir Thomas Dewey's garden.

The Friends are planning, with the Shortlands Residents' Association, a guided walk around Wood and Glen, in spring / early summer of 2017, when the flowers are best. The walk will cover flora and fauna and the history - from Iron Age hill fort, and Roman camp, to Dewey's house and garden features, and the use of his premises in the First World War as a convalescent hospital, into use in the Second World War by Canadian troops.

It is free to sign up as a Friend. Workdays are the second Saturday each month. If you would like to become a Friend, or to know more - contact Peter White through the Parish Office.



Saint of the Month St Swithun - 15 July

Though his name is very familiar, little is known about St Swithun (or Swithin). We do know that he was a 9th century bishop of Winchester, and a trusted counsellor of the Wessex kings Egbert and Ethelwulf. His best known miracle was his restoration of a basket of eggs that workmen had maliciously broken.

On his deathbed Swithun begged that he should be buried outside the north wall of his cathedral where passers-by would walk over his grave and raindrops from the eaves fall upon it. The origins of the legend that, if it rains on St Swithun's day it will rain for the next forty days, can perhaps be explained by the fact that, in 971, just over a hundred years after his death, it was decided to move his body to a new indoor shrine. Allegedly, the saint marked his displeasure towards those who were removing his remains by a heavy shower on the day of the move. This story, however, cannot be traced further back than the 17th or 18th century!

There is a scientific basis to the weather pattern behind the legend of St Swithun's day. Around the middle of July, the jet stream settles into a pattern which, in the majority of years, holds reasonably steady until the end of August. When the jet stream lies north of the British Isles then continental high pressure is able to move in; when it lies across or south of the British Isles, Arctic air and Atlantic weather systems predominate.

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Mission of the month

The Mission to Seafarers

Join us on Sea Sunday, 10 July, as we mark 160 years of The Mission to Seafarers which works tirelessly the world over, to support those who bring us all those goods we rely on every day.

This charity is the world's largest port-based welfare service, operating 365 days a year to give help and vital support to crews visiting over two hundred ports in fifty countries. Whether providing emergency assistance, post-traumatic care for victims of piracy and their families or a lifeline to those stranded in foreign ports, the Mission delivers an increasingly essential service for over 1.3million men and women who crew the merchant fleet throughout the world.

Put the date in your diary now! Our speaker will be Rev. Andrew Wright, the Secretary General of this global mission, which acts as a 'Flying Angel' to those in peril on the sea, to give shelter from the storm.

For more information see the display at the back of church or <http://www.missiontoseafarers.org>

Licensed to serve

At the end of May, after 3 years' training, Sally Aldred and Catherine Bingham, along with 25 others from across the diocese, were licensed as Lay Ministers at a service in Rochester Cathedral. So what is a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM)?

LLMs work as part of the existing team at the church, so the exact role will depend on the needs of the church at any particular time, and will be different for each individual.

An LLM can plan and lead worship, take funerals, teach, preach and offer pastoral care. Some LLMs might do these things only occasionally or not at all as they may focus on other areas. For example, they may take responsibility for another area within the worshipping life of their church or be the main church link with other groups in the community. In some cases they may be deployed elsewhere in the diocese.

All those licensed have spent some time with Bishop James discussing what their particular focus might initially be. Catherine, in addition to preaching and her involvement in working with the teenagers at St Mary's, will be exploring how the local churches might meet the spiritual needs of those who are involved in business, whether in the City or locally. Sally, whilst continuing as Junior Church Co-ordinator, will be exploring how we can enable our Christian faith to connect more deeply with our everyday lives and the lives of those around us, as well as becoming more involved in funeral and bereavement ministry.

They are both very much looking forward to developing their new roles in our church community and beyond.

PICTURED (left to right): Sally Aldred, The Rt Rev James Langstaff, Catherine Bingham



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- 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.

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Vicar	Rev. M. Finch	8464 8065
(Sat - Thu)	revfinch@btinternet.com	
Associate Vicar	Rev. R. Finch	8464 8065
Associate Vicar	Rev. J. Peters	07531 617302/8460 5682
(Sun, Mon, Wed)		
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Stewardship	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178
Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978

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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	Mr. C. Wood	8658 1825

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
		8460 8122
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8466 1599
Rainbows	Mrs. W. Keeping	8460 8122
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	Mrs. A. Heayberd	8460 9537
The 2WW's	Mrs. M. Parr	8249 7127
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Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

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