

## ... As we forgive those who sin against us

The recent BBC adaptation of *Les Miserables* reminded me not only of seeing the musical at the Barbican in 1985 but also of the 2012 film. The story presents two conflicting Christian worldviews; on one hand judgement and punishment, on the other forgiveness and grace. The key moment, when forgiveness and grace begin to triumph, is when the main character is forgiven by the bishop he has just stolen from.

Valjean has just been released from 19 years in prison for stealing bread to feed his starving nephew. His papers identify him as an ex-convict so he cannot earn a proper wage. The bishop generously offers him hospitality for the night. Valjean, seeking revenge on a society that treats him so badly, abuses this hospitality; running off with some of the bishop's silver.

Protesting his innocence, when caught by the police, he says the silver was a gift. Seeking confirmation that the silver was stolen, the police confront him with the bishop, who tells the police that Valjean is telling the truth; the silver was a gift. He goes on to add that he actually offered Valjean more silver, additionally giving him two silver candlesticks. Valjean is gradually healed of his bitterness; the rest of Valjean's life is lived out as a positive response to this act of forgiveness.

Seeing the film, I realised that Colm Wilkinson, playing the bishop, had played Valjean in the original production at the Barbican. Seeing Colm Wilkinson as the bishop, forgiving the ex-convict Valjean, I had a great sense of realising that Colm Wilkinson had stood in the same place as Valjean. He, too, had been in that role; he had stood there as a sinner and expected accusation, judgement and punishment, but had received forgiveness, mercy and a second chance.

We, too, have been in that role as the one who has wronged someone and been forgiven. God offers

forgiveness. We forgive because we have needed forgiveness, and have been forgiven. Forgiveness isn't always easy, but has the power to heal our wounds and break down barriers. Forgiveness and grace triumph over judgement and punishment.

**Stuart Buchanan**

### Special Events and Services

#### Wednesday 6 March - Ash Wednesday

**10.00am Holy Communion services**  
& **8.00pm** *With the Imposition of Ashes for those who wish it*

#### Sunday 17 March

**6.30pm Friends of St Mary's annual service of Choral Evensong**  
*Responses: Sanders*  
*Canticles: Dyson in D*  
*Anthem: The Secret of Christ - Shephard*

#### Sunday 31 March - Mothering Sunday

**10.30am Family and Parade Service**

### Stay in touch!

The Parish Office email is [office@stmaryshortlands.church](mailto:office@stmaryshortlands.church)  
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](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)



### An overview of the Bible

#### A drama in five acts

9.45am to 12.45am

**Saturday 9 March**

The Chapel, St Mary's Church

Bring a bible with you – or use one of ours!

Stuart Buchanan presents the big picture of the biblical story, how the different parts of the Bible fit together and its implications for us today.

### Friends AGM and Choral Evensong

The Friends of St Mary's welcome everyone to Choral Evensong on Sunday, 17 March at 6.30pm, which will be followed by wine, soft drinks and nibbles.

The service will be preceded by the Friends AGM at 6.00pm in the Friends Room – tea and cakes will be served from 5.30pm.



## Remembering

### Ann Lawford

Ann Lawford lived as a child with her family in Beckenham, was baptised at St Mary's, Shortlands and lived for many years in the parish.

She had a distinguished academic record, starting at St Christopher's School in Beckenham before attending Newnham College, Cambridge. Ann there achieved a degree in Maths and in 1941 went to work in research at Farnborough.

She was however not solely gifted academically but was something of an all-rounder. At Cambridge she became a Blue at chess, squash, diving and tennis and was a gifted pianist accompanying professional singers.

She was to spend some 23 years living in India with her husband and daughters, where she was able to indulge her competitive sporting streak. She won awards in squash, golf, riding, tennis and table tennis and rode a 500cc Triumph motor bike. She was a very able rock climber and played a hard game of chess and bridge.

In her later years she played tennis and golf into her 70s and chess into her 80s. Well into her 90s she continued her crosswords, bridge and driving!

Sadly her husband, Bob, died in 2009 aged 93. She moved to more suitable accommodation and was there able to remain independent until only very recently.

Her life was one filled with interest and enthusiasm. A woman far ahead of her time academically but for whom family was key.

### Jane French

Jane was born in 1947 in Anerley. On leaving school she worked for a year at Sun Life Assurance in Cheapside before training to become a Domestic Science teacher.

In 1960 Bob French moved to Anerley and got to know Jane via the youth club. They were married in 1969.

After a period in which they lived and Bob worked in Liberia, they moved to Shortlands and Jane worked for the Water Board before they moved to Dubai in 1975.

Their son Peter was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis soon after his birth: Jane nursed Peter all his life until he died at the age of 22. Peter was a cub at St Mary's and his ashes are buried in the church garden.

Jane was a very caring and loving person and an excellent cook.

She suffered from Raynaud's from a young age, which brought on scleroderma, which attacks all the organs in the body. She also had pulmonary hypertension and was only the fifth person in the world to receive a special research procedure of putting wires from her neck into her lungs, which helped her tremendously for a while.

Jane died in early December 2018.

### Juliette's going to Iceland!

Juliette James of 2nd Shortlands (Friday) Guides has been selected to represent her Guide county of Greater London Kent on a trip to Iceland in July, along with Guides and Rangers from London and South-East England Region.



They will be camping for ten days, visiting Reykjavik, Golden Circle, Iceberg lagoon and Black Beach puffins, and doing lots of hiking. The cost of the trip has gone up due to Brexit, and is now £1,444. Juliette has been busy fundraising, but would really appreciate it if people could support the Mothering Sunday Cake Sale on 31st March in the Church Hall after the Parade Service. Many thanks!

### A royal retirement

The first Sunday after the Epiphany saw a small group of St Mary's congregation attending a service of Sung Mattins at the Chapel Royal in St James's Palace. The occasion was the last sermon to be given there by the Reverend Canon Paul Miller (previously Vicar of St Mary's, pictured with his grandchildren) in his role as a Chaplain to the Queen. Lynne, his wife, and several members of his family were there.



The Chapel building has a long history. Its function remains the same: a body of priests and singers serve the spiritual needs of the sovereign. The site of St James's Palace was acquired by Henry VIII in 1531 and rebuilt as the Manor of St James, but little of the Tudor building remains. A busy working chapel, the Chapel Royal holds regular services which are open to the general public, as well as hosting some unique Royal services.

Canon Paul became Chaplain to the Queen in 2005 whilst still at St Mary's. His role has required him to give one sermon a year for the past 13 years at a royal chapel, in addition to his other everyday duties.

During his sermon Canon Paul referred to the New Year's message of the Bishop of Tonbridge which urged us all to listen to each other, especially to those who have different opinions from our own. He said 'societies flourish where there is forgiveness, and strangers are shown kindness'. Canon Paul also referred to St Paul's missionary journeys, including the last one where he was shipwrecked off Malta. Out of a time of uncertainty, almost catastrophe, came something positive: the conversion of the islands where there are currently 365 churches, one for every day of the year.

Canon Paul asked 'how long does it take to make a difference in life?'. St Paul was only in Malta for three months. How each of us lives makes a difference to the Christian story in our own times.

*Susie Shelton*

### Help on the streets

Street pastors are people from the Christian community who are willing and available to help others, especially young people and those that are marginalised, on the streets at night. The Street Pastors engage with and get to know their local community, building relationships with people: caring, listening and, if necessary, helping.



The Christian gospel is at the centre of their work, but not at the forefront of what they say. They try to show the love of Jesus Christ in practical ways as they interact with those whom they meet.

In Beckenham and Bromley the Street Pastors work in teams, patrolling the town centres and visiting pubs and clubs. They aim to be a presence on the streets from 10pm to about 2am on Friday evenings working in collaboration with the Police and Council. The local police and door staff at the clubs often comment how much calmer the streets are when the Pastors are a visible presence.

For those interested in becoming a Street Pastor, training takes place twice a year, covering a Pastor's roles and responsibilities, listening skills and much more. Volunteers are asked to commit to one evening per month, though many offer more.

Before a team of Street Pastors go out, they meet for a time of prayer, led by another volunteer, to affirm and encourage the Pastors and to offer up to the Holy Spirit each of the evening's encounters. Volunteers for this are always welcome, and prayers for this outreach are much appreciated.

More information about this work in our community can be found at the back of church, on [www.streetpastors.co.uk](http://www.streetpastors.co.uk) or by emailing [jennydavis2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennydavis2@yahoo.co.uk) who co-ordinates our local Street Pastors.

# Mission of the month

## Make A Wish UK

Make A Wish UK creates life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.



Children's wishes vary; wishes can be as simple as having a bedroom makeover, be a prince or princess for a day or sometimes a bigger wish of meeting a celebrity hero or going on an amazing holiday. Make A Wish helps make the child's personal wish become a reality at a time when they need it the most. A child's life shouldn't be about illness, hospitals and diagnosis; Make A Wish believes it should be about wonder, joy and hope.

Thanks to the volunteers and generous contributions, 12,000 life-changing wishes have been granted to date since 1986.

Granting a wish for a seriously ill child can bring them happiness, confidence, and incredible memories which provide respite from the daily struggles.

You can find additional information at the back of Church or by visiting [www.make-a-wish.org.uk](http://www.make-a-wish.org.uk)

## United in Christ



As Brexit looms, why not show we can rise above all the dissent and division, and still enjoy fun and fellowship with our good friends in the Parish of St Francis of Assisi in Douai. We have been twinned for 24 years, so it will take more than the current uncertainty to shake our firm friendship and shared faith!

We will travel by luxury coach via the Shuttle on Saturday 4th May, and after a picnic lunch on arrival will visit the newly refurbished Musée de la Chartreuse in Douai with its magnificent chapel and cloister yard housing a wide range of art treasures: paintings, sculptures and mirrors. There is also a special exhibition on the Douai breweries, with tasting and the opportunity to buy.

People joining the trip will enjoy a warm welcome with home hospitality, shared worship at Sunday morning mass, followed by a celebratory lunch together prior to the coach ride home. We will arrive back in Shortlands around 7pm, and as it is a Bank Holiday weekend there is still Monday to recover!

Everyone is welcome – you don't have to be a member of St Mary's or be able to speak French in order to have a great time! Newcomers are particularly welcome. For more details, contact Gill Dawson on 07767 365318 or [gill@gill.dawson.name](mailto:gill@gill.dawson.name)

## Supporting SPAN

Do you value the chance to hear news from St Mary's and the local community each month? We are grateful for all financial contributions – however small – which help us to print and deliver SPAN to every door in the parish. Donations can be made via the Parish Office.

## Musings from an armchair gardener

Spring is here! Is this the season to consolidate those horticultural dreams or come down to earth with a spadeful of reality?

Back in January the daffodil and tulip bulbs, bought in the autumn and which languished accusingly on the kitchen worktop as they began to sprout, were finally planted into pots outside and covered with a layer of horticultural grit to deter the squirrels.

Enthusiasm grew after several visits to a popular garden centre. The patio became a repository for pots of perennials and shrubs. Sweet peas were carefully sown in newly purchased root-trainer pots, perhaps a tad too soon as by February they were reaching heavenwards and in danger of collapse!

March is crunch time: out of the armchair and plans into action! The sweet peas have been pinched out and moved into the cool of the porch. The hardy annuals - calendula, cosmos and nigella - are sown into seed trays, covered with grit and stood outside to germinate. They'll be potted on until large enough to plant out and not be mistaken for annual weeds to be consigned to the compost bin!

In April and May the beans and peas will be sown in deep pots and grown into sturdy plants before planting out to try to avoid feeding the local slug population. Good intentions of a succession of sowing rarely come to fruition but the satisfaction of 'picking your own', however small the amount, cannot be beaten.

The garden centres have a wide variety of tomato plants, different sizes and colours, far easier than having to find homes for fifty identical seedlings. How many courgette or capsicum plants does one family need? The obvious answer is to share seeds with a friend or two if you're determined to grow from seed.

Spring is definitely here: happy gardening!

## Desert Island Discs

A series based on the Radio 4 programme featuring people who live or work in the parish with the eight tracks of music they would choose to have with them if marooned on a desert island, and why.

This month Canon Claire Tillotson chooses her music:

1. Gwahoddiaid (sung by a Welsh Male Voice Choir) - I'm Welsh and this reminds me of my beloved Dad.
2. Piano Concerto no. 2 in C minor (Rachmaninov) - in my opinion one of the best piano concertos written.
3. Clarinet Concerto (Mozart) - the first clarinet concerto I learnt to play.
4. Locus Iste (Bruckner) - sung by St Mary's choir, obviously!
5. Dancing Queen (ABBA) - love a bit of ABBA!
6. View to a Kill (Duran Duran) - I was a massive fan in my teens.
7. Cwm Rhondda - best hymn ever!
8. Baker Street (Gerry Rafferty) - I love playing the saxophone part.

.As a musician it has been really difficult to pin point eight choices. There are so many from so many different musical genres but these all bring back many lovely memories.



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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**

- 17.30 Evening Prayers

**Every Wednesday**

- 10.00 Holy Communion

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

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Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these

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	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	Miss J. Rambridge	8650 0947

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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](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested)

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**LOCAL CONTACTS**

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Cllr A. Cuthbert (Email: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)

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