

Waiting for light

November has been a month of remembering, when St. Mary's held its annual Memorial and Remembrance services. Each of these services was important in providing a coming together of family, friends and community, remembering those loved ones who are no longer with us.

Our attention now turns to waiting, spiritual preparation for the coming of the light of Christ into our world, the birth of Jesus Christ, to Advent and Christmas.

At the four principal Sunday services (10.30am) leading up to Christmas Day, and on Christmas Day itself, candles will be lit on the Advent Wreath, symbolising those who prepared for the coming of Christ. The candles are lit remembering the patriarchs (Abraham and David); the prophets, who foretold the birth of Christ; John the Baptist who proclaimed the coming of Christ; and of course, Mary, the mother of Christ. Finally, a fifth candle is lit on Christmas Day symbolising the birth of Christ, the arrival of the light of Christ into the world.

You will not have to wait until the final candle is lit before you are able to see the church ready for Christmas. This year, St. Mary's will be decorated for Christmas from Sunday 8th December: the crib will be on display and the church will be ready for the various Christmas services including Christingle and the Crib Service. There are also many community services being hosted at St. Mary's, including the Highfield and Harris Schools' Christmas Concerts, and the St. Mary's pre-school service.

Outside of the services, if the church is open as you are passing by, please call in to escape the busyness of life and to reflect on your own personal journey towards Christmas. I hope and pray this will be free from the stresses and pressures of consumerism, a time of peace where you can be with family, friends and neighbours.

At Christmas, St. Mary's church welcomes you to be part of something special. Let's celebrate it as a community.

Whatever you are doing this Christmas, I wish you a peaceful and blessed time.

Love and Blessings, Revd. Gary Best

Special Events and Services

Sunday 1 December – Advent Sunday

6.30pm Advent Carol Service

Sunday 8 December

10.30am All Age Service

Sunday 15 December

4.00pm Christingle

Come and see the children's faces glowing in the candlelight.

Sunday 22 December

6.30pm Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Followed by mince pies

Tuesday 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

Wednesday 25 December - Christmas Day

9.00am Holy Communion

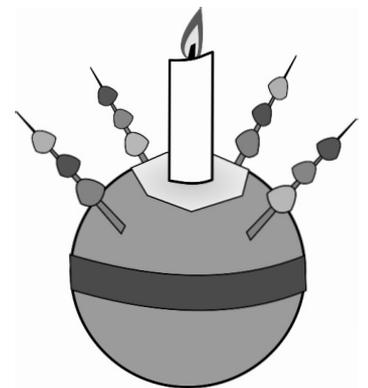
10.30am Family Communion

Families at Christmas

Christingle will take place on 15 December at 4pm, when we will enjoy the story behind the Christingle and share the light of Christ as we process around the church.

On Christmas Eve at 3.30pm, we will hold our Crib Service at which children and young people will gather in church to share the story of the nativity with carols old and new. All families are invited, along with your friends and neighbours to this very special service - everyone is welcome. Children are invited to dress as a shepherd, a wise man, an angel or a stable animal and journey with us to Bethlehem to see the new born baby Jesus.

Two special services for you to consider this Christmas. We look forward to seeing you at St. Mary's.





From the Registers

Confirmation

Confirming their Christian faith:

30 October Ann Gramlich
 Michelle Doa Duque
 Sebastian Doa Duque
 Heather Leveton
 Amarachi Olumba
 Chiamaka Olumba
 Lloyd Maurel
 Rebecca Aldred
 Jade Kibazo

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Pamela Wilson 30 October

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Heather Guntrip 17 October

The Go Club

50 years ago this November, a group of St Mary's teenagers organised a curry supper in the Church Hall as a fundraiser for the Church Mission Society (CMS) Youth Project. After that we started meeting regularly after Evensong, first in people's homes, later in the Friends' Room or Choir Vestry, and were involved in all sorts of activities linked to CMS. It was a pretty important part of my Christian journey, and I don't think I was the only one.



I've recently rediscovered a box of slides of activities of the Go Club which were part of a CMS competition entry (we won!)

Some older members may recognise the clergyman in the picture: the Revd Keith Sutton, who was briefly our curate after having to leave Uganda with his young children and wife Jean; he later became Bishop of Lichfield.



David Runcorn, David Cook and I were the first three to be involved in the Go Club – in April 1970 we went off together to a CMS work camp in Howarth, 5 miles from where I now live.

David Runcorn, David Cook and I

Revd. Colin Penfold

Thanks to Ian Stewart for kind permission to publish these photographs

Leaders of tomorrow

The early 1900s weren't a very exciting time for girls! They were expected to sit indoors, do embroidery, and grow up to be young ladies.

With the founding of the Scout Association in 1907, things were about to change. In 1909 a few feisty girls turned up at a rally for 11,000 Scouts at Crystal Palace, dressed in neckerchieves, Scout shirts with long skirts, big Scout hats, and carrying poles and haversacks. They had watched their brothers enjoying exciting and adventurous activities and wanted to be part of it. The girls pleaded with Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouts, to provide 'something for the girls, please'. He asked his sister Agnes to organise a new movement for girls, which she did.

The original Girl Scouts were renamed Girl Guides, and started taking part in activities such as camping, First Aid and signalling. Some parents weren't happy with their budding young ladies being seen enjoying unladylike activities!

Today Girlguiding still places great importance on giving service to others. This month the Guides are helping clear dead leaves in our Church Gardens after their Christmas Sleepover. We go camping, we go on night hikes, and take part in just as many adventurous activities as the Scouts.

All these activities can only be carried out if there are enough adults to supervise them. We are constantly on the look-out for people to join us for a really fulfilling and fun job, helping young people fulfil their aspirations, meet new challenges and become the leaders of tomorrow. We have lots of opportunities to help out in whatever capacity people feel able, depending on their skills and available time. For more information about becoming a Rainbow, Brownie, Guide or unit leader please visit www.girlguiding.org.uk

Gill "Rusty" Dawson

Pictured are some of St Mary's Men's Group members who visited Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Gravesend, alongside their host, Amarbeer Singh.



The visit was very educational, and the Group gained an insight into the Sikh faith. They even witnessed a Sikh wedding which was very special.



The St. Mary's Pastoral Team recently received certificates of appreciation for the work they undertake within the community. Within St. Mary's we have many people who undertake pastoral work through helping others. This might involve home visits, chatting over a cup of tea, or simply offering a listening ear. It may be just keeping an eye out for those neighbours whom we know are alone. Pastoral care is about looking after others in whatever way is appropriate. If pastoral work is something you might be interested in getting involved with, please contact Revd. Gary Best – vicar@stmaryshortlands.church.

Burns Night dinner

Book the evening of Friday 24th January 2020 in your diaries now! The Friends of St Mary's have arranged a special Burns Night dinner at Langley Park Golf Club.

Join us for a 3-course meal, half a bottle of wine, plus coffee and mints and a "wee nip". We will have a piper and a Scottish dancing caller all for the price of £45.00.

Tickets will go on sale in Church after Sunday morning services, or on weekday mornings from the Church Office.

Say it with flowers

At St Mary's we have a friendly flower arranging team. We arrange flowers weekly throughout the year (except when keeping Lent and Advent). It is an extremely pleasant and rewarding thing to do, making the church look inviting, colourful and beautiful

We also decorate the church for the church's three main festivals: Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Flowers can be arranged in a pedestal at special times beside the Book of Remembrance which records the names of loved ones.

If you are interested in joining our friendly team or wish to have flowers arranged in memory of someone please contact Cecilia on (020) 8313 0246.

Mission of the month

The Children's Society

The Children's Society campaigns against child poverty, exploitation and neglect.

Children and young people trapped in such situations struggle to cope with the trauma of their everyday lives and can't access the support they need. The Children's Society tries to help these children to have a better life and to provide that support but need our continued support to be able to do so.

St Mary's Church supports The Children's Society as our mission of the month in December and with our dedicated Christingle service. Through Christingle, you can help give a child a Christmas free from sadness, fear and hunger. This year our Christingle celebration is on 15th December.

Children can contribute by putting coins into cardboard candles, available from the uniformed groups in advance or in church on the day. Adults are invited to put anything they can spare into the special envelopes available in church.

However small your contribution it will have a huge impact on a child's life. We look forward to seeing you on the 15th December at 4pm to celebrate Christingle.

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

'Mersi' from Romania

October saw loyal St Mary's congregation members once again supporting the Biggin Hill Romania Group (BHRG) Christmas appeal. For years a heart-warming array of knitted goods (blankets, mittens, scarves), household goods (bed linen and more) and clothes has been kindly donated and sent to Comanesti in north east Romania.

Every autumn shoe boxes and family boxes filled with gifts have also been collected for distribution to the poorest families. The shoe boxes often represented the only present many children would receive all year. St Mary's congregation has also supported BHRG through Mission beyond the Parish giving on several occasions.

BHRG was set up in 1990 following the end of Ceausescu's leadership of Romania. Outsiders could finally see the shocking conditions the country's poorest citizens had endured. Many children were given up for care in state orphanages, in the mistaken belief that they would have a better life.

Members of the BHRG and other UK groups aimed to bring practical help, dignity and love into the lives of these children and the poorest families living on the fringes of the community. One of the first children seen by the group, inspiring their work, was ten-year-old Victor who could not stand or walk due to confinement in a cot his whole life.

For years the BHRG with the help of many donations has created a loving, inclusive environment for children and young people with special needs. Recently these children have begun to be accepted into mainstream education, so the Robert Cole Centre in Comanesti is now being used as a base to support pre-school children. BHRG is re-shaping its fundraising, and will no longer operate its shop. Child sponsorship will continue (contact Sandra.dolan9@gmail.com for more information).

A big MERSI (thank you) to everyone for all your support over the years.

Ready to save lives

We are delighted to announce that St Mary's new community defibrillator is now located on an external wall outside Church House so that it is accessible to the whole community.

A defibrillator is a machine used to give an electric shock to restart a patient's heart when they are in cardiac arrest. Every year there are over 30,000 out of hospital cardiac arrests in the UK. Having a defibrillator can increase the chance of surviving by up to 90%.

The unit is designed to be simple to use, so no matter whether rescuers are an experienced rescuer or a first-time responder they can deliver effective therapy to a Sudden Cardiac Arrest victim with confidence.

When we launched our fundraising campaign, we were looking to raise funds to cover the purchase of the defibrillator, heated cabinet and training with London Ambulance Service (LAS).

We held a cake sale, received donations from Shortlands Residents Association and members of the congregation, and successfully reached our target. We were then exceptionally lucky as St Christopher's School in Beckenham did a sponsored danceathon to raise funds to purchase a defibrillator. They exceeded their wildest dreams and raised enough to purchase several, which they have shared with the community. St Mary's church was presented with a defibrillator unit by a couple of the students who had raised substantial sponsorship.

We have therefore been able to purchase the heated cabinet, spare electrodes and battery, and a training package with the LAS for St Mary's first aid team.

The balance of the money we raised will be used to cover annual refresher training, which will allow us to seek accreditation, including ongoing advice and support from the LAS.

Desert Island Discs

A series based on the Radio 4 programme featuring people from 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, Julie Runicles, one of the leaders of St Mary's Toddlers Group, chooses her music:

1. Wonderful world (Nat King Cole) – I have memories of my Grandad singing this to my Grandmother when I was a little girl and loved it.
2. The white horses - this was the theme tune to my favourite programme ever in the 1970s.
3. Move closer (Phyllis Nelson) - our song and played as the first dance at our wedding.
4. Forever love and die (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) – or anything by this band I followed in my teenage years.
5. I had a dream (Les Miserables) - or any song from this, my favourite musical.
6. Hushabye mountain (Chitty Chitty Bang Bang) - my favourite film.
7. The flower duet from Lakmé (Delibes) - more commonly known as the British Airways theme tune. Reminds me of summer and holidays.
8. O come all ye faithful – my favourite carol, with harmonies.



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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 Tuesday

- 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 Revd Gary Best 8460 0262
(day off - Friday)

Vicar@stmaryshortlands.church

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Mrs C. Bingham 8460 0324

Mrs A-M. Jefferys 8460 6030

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Mr S. Buchanan 8777 8008

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Junior Church

Mrs J. Eade 3624 0559

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e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.church

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Weddings can be obtained during these

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers Mrs J. Runicles 8402 6599

Craft and Chatter Group

Mrs J. Boam 8460 7101

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. Blake 07773986337

Guides (Fri.) Mrs G. Dawson 8460 5884

Brownies (Mon.) Miss K. Higgs 8462 3285

Brownies (Wed.) Ms E. Bingham 07947347068

Brownies (Thurs.) Mrs S. Tight 8460 8122

Rainbows Ms H. Last 8460 1705

Pre-School Mrs C. Hall 8290 6704

or 07960 988552

The 2WW's Mrs A. Swatton 8650 1114

Church Flowers Mrs C. Willatt 8313 0246

Mission Chairman Mrs S. Shelton 8402 3299

Douai Link Mrs G. Dawson 8460 5884

Fair Trade Mrs C. Willatt 8313 0246

LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr M. Cooke 07912 649058

(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)

Cllr A. Cuthbert

(Email: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)

Residents' Association 8460 4060

Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood 8721 2614

SPAN INFORMATION

Website www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk

Editorial Parish Office 8460 5682

Distribution Mr. M. Harrison 8464 0284

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