

New Year's Resolutions

So, here we are, another New Year begins and an opportunity to think about our New Year's resolutions.

What was it for you, or perhaps you are still thinking about one? It is likely that one of the following will appear on many lists... cutting back on fast food; eating healthier options; getting fitter; losing a few pounds off the waist-line; signing up to the local gym. Whatever it is, will you be able to keep to it?

Studies show that around 80% of New Year resolutions fail and I certainly know that I have fallen into that number on many occasions! But why do our resolutions fail?

Why is it that most of the 80% that fail actually do so by mid-February? Maybe it is because we just feel overwhelmed at the challenge we have set for ourselves? Maybe life just gets in the way of the practicality of following the resolution through? Maybe it is because you just become impatient that change isn't happening as quickly as you would like?

For me, I turn to scripture during these challenging times. If exercise is just a struggle and not working out, I turn to the New Testament (1 Timothy), where the Apostle Paul instructs us to keep exercise in perspective, 'for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come' (1 Timothy 4:8). This has been my answer in not going to the gym!

These words are of course an encouragement with developing our spiritual fitness, and perhaps a new approach to committing to a New Year's resolution. But this mustn't be a resolution out of vanity, or just to be seen doing something different for the sake of it. It should be a real commitment to areas of our lives such as praying, reading the Bible on a regular basis, perhaps getting involved in church life in some way.

Through a resolution that focuses on our spiritual fitness we can develop our faith to allow us to deal with the challenges of life in a more positive way. Our spiritual fitness enables us to give thanks for the life we have and the family and friends that surround us; it enables us to grow in faith as a community, offering support and love to each other when needed.

Whatever your New Year resolution, whether practical or spiritual, I wish you a very happy and peaceful 2020.

Love and Blessings,

Revd Gary Best

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It was all the fun of the fair at the St Mary's Christmas Fair. £3000 was raised, and shared between the Bromley Homeless Shelter and the church's own Future Generations project.



From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Andre van't Hoff 6 December

Local Blue Plaques

Alexander Muirhead

The first of a series of articles on blue plaques commemorating notable people in and around our parish.

Alexander Muirhead, FRS, (26 May 1848 – 13 December 1920) was born in East Lothian, Scotland. He was an electrical engineer specialising in wireless telegraphy.

He studied at University College London and then at St Bartholomew's Hospital 1869–1872 where he is credited with recording the first human electrocardiogram.

While working as scientific adviser to his father's company, he designed precision instruments and patented a method of duplexing telegraph signals for use in submarine cables.

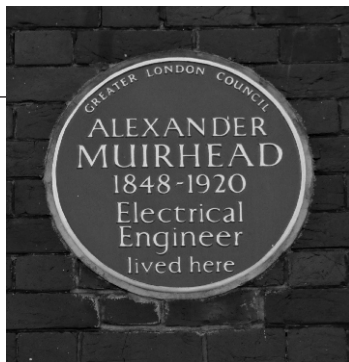
He later worked on the development of wireless telegraphy, selling their important tuning patents to Marconi in 1912. He became a member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers in 1877, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1904. He died at 20 Church Road on 13 December 1920 and is buried at West Norwood Cemetery.

The Blue Plaque is on the wall of 20 Church Road.

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Ann Gimson 11 December



Foster Care

It was in 2007 that Gary and I decided we would consider foster caring for children who had found themselves in the care system for whatever reason and, over a period of nine years, we fostered 16 children...and ended up adopting three of them!

Writing in SPAN provides an opportunity to raise an awareness that there is a real need in our society for more foster carers (and adopters) as the number of children being taken into care increases year on year. Currently, there are nearly 80,000 children in the care system and it is estimated by the Fostering Network that a further 7,000 foster families are required to cope with the existing levels alone, let alone for the future.

Whilst the process to become a foster carer could be seen as intrusive, involving interviews, background checks etc, the rewards are tremendous in being able to support not just the children taken into care, but often the birth parents themselves. Not every story of a child taken into care is a bad story, as some parents just lose their way in life and need support from different agencies to get their lives back on track with many outcomes of children and parents being re-united. Clearly, there are more challenging cases and so there is a need to be strong in character, offering love and support to the children, but also demonstrating a compassion towards the parents.

Foster care is about providing love and support to a child/children who need it at that time in their lives. It is about providing a time of stability in what is often a traumatic time for those involved. It is about being committed to playing a part in bringing hope and a sense of belonging to some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Gary and I would be happy to discuss foster care in more detail if you have an interest, but we would also encourage you to make contact with the fostering team at Bromley Council (020 8461 7701) who would be able to advise on their own procedures and requirements.

Lynn Best

My day job

Most of my working life was spent wherever my husband's work took him. When we married in 1969, I had just qualified as a Registered Nurse (RN) in the US. Two weeks after our wedding, I joined him in Frankfurt, Germany where I worked in a US Army immunisation clinic and then in a military nursery for newborns and toddlers.

After he finished his time in the army, he returned to university in Missouri, where I began my hospital nursing career that took me to seven cities in different areas of the US; all moves as he changed careers and advanced in them. Most of my work was in critical areas, such as burns, cardiac, and emergency units.

We moved to London in 1989, just as I had finished my course work and exams for a PhD in sociology, specialising in health care delivery systems and doctor-patient relationships. I worked as a researcher in the Department of General Practice at St Mary's and as part of a medical advisor team for the Barnet Family Health Services Authority.

After abandoning my dissertation, I took a course in practical horticulture and did an internship at a stately home in Buckinghamshire. Then, off to Paris in 1995 for Mike's work. There, I ended my paid work and began years of volunteer work which continued when we moved back to the US in 2000.

The first move in my life made without reference to Mike's work was my move, after his death in 2008, to Whidbey Island in Washington, where I built a beautiful garden, served teas, and taught meditation. I moved back to London in 2017, where I still do volunteer work and have much joy with my son and grandchildren.

Glo Sherman



Helping local homeless people

The Bromley Homeless Shelter is a project run by Bromley and Beckenham churches to help homeless people, in particular those with connection to Bromley Borough. The shelter is also supported by a number of local businesses and many local residents.

Every Thursday throughout the year the United Reformed Church in Widmore Road, Bromley hosts a welfare advice session, advising on benefits and homelessness.

During the coldest and most difficult time of the year (November to March), a night shelter is operated for homeless people in central Bromley. In the evenings a meal is shared following which the guests sleep overnight in a warm, safe hall, and in the morning are served a hot or cold breakfast. During the mornings, there are opportunities for guests to access other support and advice services.

Guests who find accommodation are offered starter packs which provide basic household items such as a duvet, bed linen, crockery, toiletries and kitchen items. Donations are always needed, and can be taken to Bromley Parish church on the first Saturday of each month between 10am and 12.30pm.

Last winter an additional shelter scheme was set up in the north-west of the borough. This year the central Bromley shelter has been open since mid-November and the north-west Bromley shelter will open just after New Year.

The night shelter scheme relies on many volunteers: those who cook, serve the food, wash up, stay overnight with the guests, and serve breakfast. The winter season is organised on a rota system, and volunteers are always welcome.

St Mary's donated £750 from the proceeds of this year's Christmas Fair and £250 from the Harvest lunch to the Bromley Homeless Shelter.

More details about the work of the shelter, list of items required for the starter packs and a short film of a typical winter night at the shelter can be found on <https://bromleyshelter.weebly.com>

Mission of the month

The Lily Trust

Human trafficking is the recruiting, moving and exploiting of men, women and children in various forms including sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ trade, benefit fraud, domestic servitude and forced marriage. Through modern slavery, employers force victims to work illegally against their will in many different sectors, such as brothels, cannabis farms, nail bars and agriculture. Thousands are being trafficked into/within the UK every year.

The Lily Trust came into being in 2016 after Julie Hughes had met trafficked women and their children who, albeit rescued and alive, were left with nothing at all. They were taken to temporary accommodation with broken souls and bodies, lacking even the most essential of items.

The Lily Trust supports survivors of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. It provides rescued women and children with essential items for their personal care. Heavily pregnant women need maternity pads, disposable briefs, sponges, flannels, breast pads and nursing bras for hospital essentials.

Mothers need cotton wool, baby wipes, Sudocrem, nappies of all sizes, nappy sacks for their babies and shampoos, conditioners, shower gels, toothbrushes, toothpaste, lip balm, deodorants, hairbrushes, facial wipes and sanitary pads for themselves. Please bring what you can and place in the 'Lily Trust' box at church: thank you for caring enough to help

For more information see www.thelilytrust.org or the display at the back of church.

Learning about mines

Armed with a torch and wellies, the intrepid members of Mowgli Cub Pack proceeded cautiously through a minefield... Let me explain!

As part of their Personal Safety badge work this term, and in tandem with Mines Advisory Group (MAG), our mission of the month for November, I devised a very special activity for the cubs in the field by the hut.

With the help of our local PCSO, I cordoned off a little route for them to explore with several (pretend) hazards littered around – small toys and other objects to arouse their curiosity. After this exercise, they drew a map of the area and we talked about the extremely dangerous struggle for communities who live in such places.

I wanted the cubs to have an appreciation of trying to live under such constraints and in particular how scared those children are to play or go out, for fear of being blown up or wounded, not being able to have a normal life, which we take for granted: schooling, playgrounds, farming and earning a living.

This has proved a valuable lesson, as well as being a fun activity - which of course they were able to do in the complete safety of our home environment.



'Chil' (Tricia Braithwaite)

What do you know...

...about the 7th Bromley Scout Group? Charles Wood, Group Scout Leader, answers some questions:

Where is it? Our hut is tucked away behind St Mary's Church Hall, alongside an area of grass and trees which is great for outdoor activities.

Who belongs to it? We have four sections: a Colony of 28 Beavers (aged 6 to 8), two Cub Packs with a total of 41 Cubs (aged 8 to 10 and a half) and a Scout Troop of 28 Scouts (aged 10 and a half to 14 years). Scouting is for boys and girls. Contact details are on the back cover of SPAN.

What does it do? Have fun and friendship, play lots of games and learn skills for life! The Scout Association provides a programme of activities, leadership training and use of great District and Regional Scout campsites.

Why does it exist? It's worthwhile! Inspired by Baden Powell, our Scout Group was one of the first to be established in 1911. We are part of a worldwide movement of 28 million members. We are sponsored by St Mary's Church.

How does this all happen? Because of volunteers! Our Group has 16 uniformed leaders and many parent helpers, supported by an executive committee (chairman, treasurer, secretary and quartermaster). If you would like to join our amazing team please contact me: charleswooduk@yahoo.com



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

Marathon plans

Hi, I am a regular member of the congregation and helper at Junior Church.

I am aiming to run the London marathon in 2020 for Make A Wish Foundation which creates life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. Some wishes are as simple as wishing for a toy car, whilst others can be a wish to be a prince/princess for a day and some are a bit more ambitious of meeting someone famous or going on a holiday of a lifetime. These wishes bring joy to the child, their families and can help them in such a difficult time of their lives.

I was due to run the London marathon in 2019, however had to defer my place following an emergency operation for appendicitis. I now face the challenge of training following a fractured metatarsal in May 2019 but am determined to complete the marathon in 2020 (all being medically well).

For me, the time in which I finish does not matter, it really is about raising as much awareness as I can for this amazing charity – what's 26.2 miles when it comes to making a child's dream come true?

If you would like to find out more about Make A Wish you can do so at www.make-a-wish.org.uk.

If you would like to sponsor me for the London marathon I'd be delighted and you can do so at www.virginmoneygiving.com/LynseyGrover2020.

Lynsey Grover



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- 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.

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(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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Mrs M. Westropp 8650 5178

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Churchwardens Mr A. Williams 07914343495
Mrs S. Leonard 07725313432

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Assistant Treasurer Mr R. Hogg 8290 0613

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Stewardship Mr J. Westropp 8650 5178

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e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.church

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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 (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

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LOCAL CONTACTS

Clr M. Cooke 07912 649058
(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)

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

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Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood 8721 2614

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