

Love changes everything!

February sees red roses and hearts adorning shop windows in readiness for Valentine's Day on the 14th.

So, who was St Valentine? Born in Italy, he served as a priest in Rome and was possibly the former Bishop of Terna, Umbria. Valentine, whilst under house arrest by Judge Asterius, discussed his faith with him and the validity of Jesus.

The judge put Valentine to the test, asking him to restore the sight of his adopted daughter. Valentine prayed hard to God, and laid his hands on the girl's eyes, and her vision was restored. The judge was astonished and he, with his household, converted to Christianity and was baptised. Valentine ministered to persecuted Christians but Claudius II ordered him to renounce his faith. Valentine refused and was executed on 14th February 269.

Legend states that, before his execution, Valentine wrote a note to Asterius' daughter signed 'from your Valentine', which is said to have inspired today's romantic missives!

Valentine's love for God saved a young girl's sight and supported persecuted Christians but lost him his earthly life. Throughout the Bible God showed his love for his people, the whole of humanity. God loved us so much that he sent His Son, Jesus, as a baby, to be our role model through his earthly life, throughout which He showed his love for God, his Father, in all that he did. This led to Jesus ultimately losing his earthly life at the hands of the Romans, just as Valentine did 300 years later. But Jesus rose from the dead, to bring salvation to all humanity, as Valentine did through his witness to God's love.

At St. Mary's, we want to share the love of God with our whole community, including you! Why not come and join us for one of our Sunday morning services, for a cup of coffee at the Wednesday Community Café, or one of our special events? You would be most welcome, and you may gain insight into how God's love can change everything!

Ann-Marie Jefferys, Licensed Lay Minister



WINGS OF HOPE: Local Guide Ojal Sangle is raising funds with her friends: see page 2 for more information. Pictured (left to right): Ojal, Aria, Shubhangini and Preethi (Team Valara).

Special Services and Events

Sunday 2 February

5.00pm Come Holy Spirit

Sunday 16 February

4.00pm Choral Evensong

Junior Church

Welcome all children from 0-16

10.30am Sundays on February: 2nd, 9th, 16th

March: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd

We meet in church at the

10.30am service and go together to our activities in the hall just after the start



From the Registers



Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family: Isla Willow Yapp 1 Dec
We apologise for incorrectly recording Isla's name in last month's SPAN.

Sharing knowledge, sharing joy

The Wings of Hope Achievement Award (WOHAA) is a prestigious, nationally recognized social enterprise competition. It calls on students in years 9-10 to fundraise and support their communities while fostering essential skills for leadership and social impact. All profits from their efforts go directly to the Wings of Hope charity, which dedicates its work to empowering education-starved children in India and Africa.

Ojal Sangle is a Guide at St Mary's, and also a member of Team Valara (which means 'growth' in Tamil), four girls participating in the WOHAA challenge. Their goal is to raise £2,000 for children's education in Chennai and Malawi and to spread awareness of the tremendous educational challenges in these countries, whether it's the lack of basic materials or the undervaluing of education in their circumstances.

Ojal explains that 'Education is not just the foundation of personal success; it is the bedrock of equality and empowerment. It unlocks doors to opportunity, fosters self-reliance and has the power to transform entire communities. Yet, millions of children are denied this vital tool. Together, we can help change that.'

The team are making products and offering services such as dog walking, car washing, and more: for more information email valarawohaa@gmail.com. Alternatively, to make a donation <https://thewingsofhope.org/donations/wohaa-team-valara/>

Pause for reflection

The period of Lent – which runs for 40 days from Ash Wednesday on 5 March until Easter – is a time of reflection and asking for forgiveness as we remember the events leading up to the death of Jesus on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Day.

At St Mary's our discussion groups are a great way to pause and consider the meaning of Lent as we look forward to the great festival of Easter. They are very informal, friendly spaces in which we read the Bible and discuss what it means in the context of the world today. No prior knowledge is needed and all are welcome.

We are planning to have groups meeting at different times and locations (including one on zoom), and hope that everyone who wants to come will be able to make one of those times. Do sign up on the sheets which will be at the back of church, email the church office on office@stmaryshortlands.church or call 020 8460 5682 to get more information and put your name down to attend.

Tea Time Together

(for families with children up to year 5)

4 - 5.30 pm

Youth Club

(years 6 -13)

6 - 7.30 pm

February 9th, March 9th, May 11th, June 8th, July 13th

Contact: racheltilotson3@gmail.com

Commemorations

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War with two key dates to remember: Thursday 8th May and Friday 15th August. Victory in Europe (VE Day) is the day the German forces surrendered to the Allied powers and Victory in Japan (VJ Day) marks the day Japan surrendered in 1945, which in effect ended the Second World War.

We at St Mary's are intending to commemorate these events. On May 3rd we will be opening the church to a display of memorabilia related to the events of World War 2 and how it impacted the residents of Shortlands. As the original church was destroyed in that war, only those killed in World War 1 are named on the Shortlands War Memorial. The church does however hold a list of local armed services and Civil Defence personnel and Shortlands civilians who died in World War 2, and some of these will be especially remembered. It is hoped that in the future we may be able to fund the installation of a memorial board remembering them.

There will be displays in church from Saturday May 3rd to Sunday May 11th. We also plan to hold a ticketed tea party on Saturday 10th May at 3.00pm: further details will follow.

Another date for the future this year is November 20th. The original church of St Mary's was severely damaged by a landmine on September 21st 1940 and then extensively damaged by a doodlebug at 1am on July 22nd 1944. Yet another bomb landed on the junction of Kingswood Road and St Mary's Avenue on July 27th 1944. The church was demolished in 1948, rebuilding started in 1953, finished in 1955 and it was consecrated on November 20th 1955.

If you have any memorabilia from the Second World War, any stories that you may remember or your own recollections if you or a family member were alive during the war then please contact Kay Coleman on 07879 227567. Were any members of your family evacuated or impacted in any way? Meanwhile, please keep these dates in your diaries.

Cake Sale alert!

Zoe Elliot, Young Leader with Rainbows and Friday Guides, has been selected from girls all over London and South East Region to take part in a Girlguiding trip to Kenya in July.

15 girls and leaders will be taking part in the Napenda Solar Project, installing solar systems in rural homes to bring sustainable energy to communities. Zoe has to raise over £3,000

for the trip and will be holding a Cake Sale in St Mary's Church Hall at 11.30am on Sunday 30th March after the Mothering Sunday Parade Service. Everyone is welcome.

Beckenham Rotary have kindly made a donation towards the cost of her trip, and Zoe will be visiting them in the autumn to tell them about her experiences.

(Pictured: Zoe in the hoodie designed by the girls for their trip).



Maths and music

I have always enjoyed maths since childhood which has led to an MSc in Probability and Statistics and a Ph.D. in Epidemiology. Having met and married Pauline at Sheffield University, we both worked overseas for over 20 years in the Caribbean and the Middle East, returning to England in 1994.

Music also began at an early age so that by age 14 I was playing the organ for services at the Methodist church in Sittingbourne where my father was minister. I also enjoy singing and so have sung in church choirs wherever I have lived as well as performing in amateur opera and choral groups.

When my organ skills were discovered at St Mary's, Canon Claire Tillotson (St Mary's Director of Music) had me on her rota straight away. I was very graciously given the title of Honorary Assistant Organist. This church is extremely musical and it is a pleasure to be able to contribute.

The organ is a very versatile instrument and I enjoy trying less conventional pieces on it – such as the film themes of last summer. You will have to wait and see what the summer of 2025 holds in store!



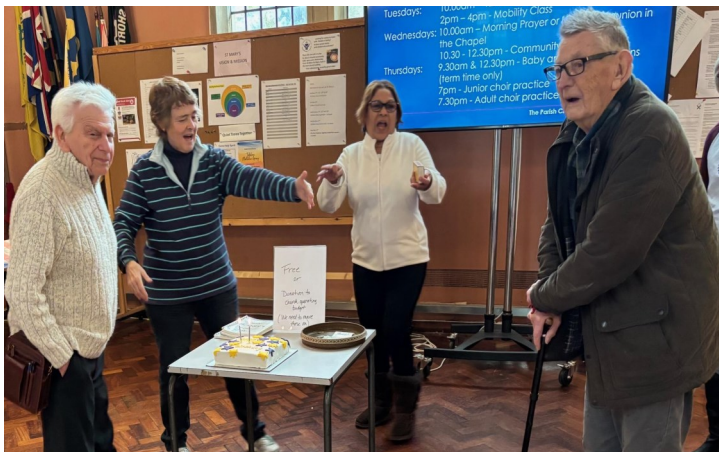
Adrian Lambourne

Home to roost

Marking its 15th birthday, The Friends of South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen (FSHWKG) together with the RSPB and idverde, Bromley Council's contractor, successfully installed three new bat roosting boxes in the ancient woodlands at South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen, Shortlands.

Patrick Phillips, Chair of FSHWKG, said: 'UK bat populations are important for woodland biodiversity, pollination and insect control. Bats don't make nests, but roost instead. We hope these new boxes will encourage bats to take up residence! A big thank you to Luke Blanchard, RSPB Biodiversity Advisor for idverde, who helped with the installation.'

FSHWKG volunteers meet on the second Saturday of every month from 10.30am to 12.30pm at the bowling club pavilion, Tootswood Road, for litter-picking, pruning and weeding. Refreshments served afterwards. Everyone welcome!



CONGRATULATIONS: to David Merritt and Stan Clark who recently celebrated their birthdays at the Community Café: the team were pleased to make it a special day.

MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Mayor of Bromley Charity Appeal 2024-2025

This year, the Mayor's Charity Appeal is raising money for Alzheimer's Research UK (ARUK), Welcare in Bromley and Bromley Youth Music Trust (BYMT). These are familiar, well-deserving charities and all are active in the borough.

The Mayor has highlighted the work of ARUK which coordinates and signposts the dementia cafes and wellbeing centres across the borough. If nothing changes, one in two of us will be directly affected by dementia – either by developing the condition ourselves, caring for someone with it, or both. ARUK is working to revolutionise the way we treat, diagnose and prevent dementia, accelerating progress towards a cure. Both locally and nationally it is supporting leading edge research into new treatments and diagnostic tools.

Welcare in Bromley provides a practical and emotional support and advice service for families with children up to the age of 13 who are experiencing temporary or long-term challenges.

BYMT is an independent music service, known nationally for providing a high quality instrumental and vocal music education to young people in the borough. The Trust's teachers and support team work with families, schools and partner organisations to ensure that children and young people have opportunities to sing, play, create and perform music in a wide range of community settings and professional concert venues.

Thank you for your support for all their great work. Please visit their websites for more information: www.alzheimersresearchuk.org, www.welcare.org and www.bymt.co.uk or see the display at the back of church.

Time to learn

Engagement with local schools is an important part of our mission and ministry.

During December St Mary's were delighted to host a number of local school events. These included the Highfield Junior School Christmas Concert with the Rev Jane Peters, and two visits from other local schools led by Ann-Marie Jefferys, Licensed Lay Minister.

Year 1 from Highfield Infants' School came to learn about the features of a church as part of their RE curriculum. The children were well informed and it was lovely to see them engaging with the building and the Christmas story using the crib scene in the chancel.

Year 2 from Harris Shortlands visited to learn about the true meaning of Advent and Christmas. The Christmas story was retold as a pop-up Nativity Play which the children really enjoyed.

We look forward to continuing to build these relationships.

STOP PRESS

We are delighted to announce that the Reverend Dave Edmondson is to be appointed Vicar of St Mary's, Shortlands. Dave is currently Associate Rector at St Mary & St Cuthbert, Chester-le-Street in Durham Diocese, a post he has held since completing his curacy in Chelmsford Diocese. Dave is married to Caitlin, who is a secondary school teacher, and they have two children, Lydia (5) and Josiah (3). Dave, Caitlin and the children will be moving to the Vicarage around Easter time, ready for his licensing service at St Mary's on the evening of Tuesday, 6th May.

The Parish Church of St. Mary, Shortlands



Link Parish
St Francis of Assisi, Douai, France

WORSHIP

Sunday 10.30am - Holy Communion (in church)

Wednesday 10.00am - Morning Prayer. Holy Communion will take place once a month

You can access Sunday services online at:

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands

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

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar		8460 5682
office@stmaryshortlands.church		
Licensed Lay	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
Ministers	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
	Mrs. D. Speller	07941415082
Parish Administrator	Mrs. E. Woolven	8460 5682
Church wardens	Mrs. G. Sherman	07500751265
	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Treasurer	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
PCC Secretary	Mrs J. Sharma	07900971867
Organist and Director of Music		
	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Safeguarding	Mrs P. Lambourne	8658 0470
Electoral Roll	Mrs J. Sharma	07900971867
Junior Church	Miss. R Tillotson	07503680612
Stewardship	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884

PARISH OFFICE

Telephone: 020 8460 5682

Email: office@stmaryshortlands.church

Open 10.00am - 12.00pm weekdays.

Contact the office for Baptisms and Weddings

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	07790 304711
Craft and Chatter	Mrs. J. Boam	8460 7101
Friends of St Mary's	Mr. T. Chase	8464 6188

For admission to Beavers, Cubs and Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mr O. Swinfen	07758458077
Cubs (Tue)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954437658
Beavers	thomas.nickalls@gmail.com	

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies or Guides please go to www.girlguiding.org.uk

Guides (Tue)	Ms. E Thompson	07910340908
Guide (Fri)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Thu)	fourtbromleybrownies@outlook.com	
Rainbows	2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com	
Pre-school	Mrs. C. Hall	8290 6704 or 07960988552
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
Church Flowers	Mrs. C. Willatt	07511885941
Mission Chair	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884 8
Fair Trade	Mrs. C Willatt	07511885941

LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. G Turrell	gemma.turrell@bromley.gov.uk
Cllr. F. Bainbridge	Felicity.Bainbridge@bromley.gov.uk
Cllr. A. Grant	Adam.Grant@bromley.gov.uk
Residents Association	8460 0395
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

SPAN INFORMATION

Website www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

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