

## Immersive church

Immersive experiences are now a popular theatre genre. At the recent Van Gogh event, people were crying. The combination of paintings, music, tragedy and overcoming was overwhelming. The virtual painterly journey through the fields and villages poignantly evoked the life of the troubled genius.

The Church year also provides immersive experiences as the bible narrative unfolds. Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, the wise men visit from the Orient and Jesus walks to his death on the cross.

The events comprise colour, symbolism, spoken words, singing and music. Advent and Lent are sombre and purple; the music of solemn cadence. This is uplifted by the vibrant gold and white of Christmas nativity and Easter resurrection.

Our emotions are sharpened by a sense of complicity as the adoration of the Christ child turns to betrayal and death. The crowd that cries 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday hollers 'Crucify him' on Good Friday. The palm crosses we held aloft are burnt to make the ash crosses on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday (22 February this year).

Holy Week starts on Palm Sunday (2 April). We walk the Way of the Cross, to the green hill outside the city walls. We are ashamed as our feet, like the disciples', are washed by Jesus on Maundy Thursday (6 April), we keep watch in the garden as the disciples desert Christ one by one, we flinch at the piercing of cruel nails on Good Friday (7 April).

These immersive experiences cause us to face the frailty of humanity: infidelity, fickleness,

disloyalty, and cowardice. Are our emotions too raw, our outrage too hard to bear? Perhaps, but this is only to make more joyous the fanfare of Easter morning, the race for chocolate and the fizzy celebration!

Please be encouraged to join in this immersive journey from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. It may not be easy but it will deepen and enrich your relationship with God in unexpected ways.

*Rev Jane Kustner*

St Mary's Community Café is a  
**Warm Space**

Join us every Wednesday  
10.30am – 12.30pm  
Free refreshments



A WINTER SCENE: St Mary's last December

### Special Events and Services

**Sunday 12 February**

4 - 5.30pm      Tea Time Together  
6 - 7.30pm      Youth Club

**Sunday 19 February**

4.00pm          Choral Evensong

**Wednesday 22 February - Ash Wednesday**  
7.00pm          Holy Communion

## Remembering



### Melanie Jones

Melanie spent nearly all her life in Shortlands. Much of that time was in Druids Way where Tim and Gill Dawson were neighbours. Melanie worked for many years in publishing: when Revd. Gary Best came to St Mary's they discovered they already knew each other from those days.

Eighteen years ago Melanie decided to re-train as a Community Musician at Goldsmiths College. She loved working with older people and people living with dementia. She ran programmes with the Royal Palaces, The Bach Choir and Age Exchange in Blackheath as well as her choir at Ben Curtis Park in West Wickham.

Malcolm and Melanie's daughter Raven was baptised at St Mary's and attended Brownies and Guides. They became regulars at St Mary's after lockdown after they had so enjoyed the online services.

Mel was diagnosed four years ago with cancer, which was initially cured but returned in late 2019. Her courage and determination, and the prayers from St Mary's, kept her going with a very good quality of life for most of those four years.

In 2021 Mel was so well that they moved to Charing in the Kent countryside, which was her dream. When there were no local services they always tuned in to St Mary's.

Melanie appreciated the support she got from St Mary's and loved the welcoming atmosphere of the church and hearing the choir.

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## A new mission

Last August, your parish church embarked on a journey of self-reflection to create the future direction for St Mary's. I hope you had an opportunity to add your thoughts to the 'graffiti board' at the west end of the church. We were blessed by honest and insightful comments, not all of them easy to read.

The fruit of this work is a vision and mission; which will be a beating heart at the centre of our ministry to the community.

Our mission is: **sharing the love of God**. We will make manifest that bold umbrella statement in who we are and what we do for people who look to us for hope and certainty. Sharing the love of God begins in the heart of each one who would call themselves a child of God; it is built into the church which aims to be the body of Christ, and it flows out into the community as a beacon of hope in a confused and darkening world.

There will be more to come and increasing opportunities for you to be involved and to actively contribute. It is not that we want you to come and swell our numbers in what we already do; it is that we want you to become part of a journey with us.

Already St Mary's on the hill embraces our local community through inclusive welcome, hospitality, and pastoral support. We want to do more, to be more relevant, more compassionate and clearer in our communication of the good news of the unconditional, undeserved, and abundant love of God.

*Rev Jane Kustner*

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## SAVE THE DATE

**An event for St George's Day  
Saturday 22 April (evening)  
The Friends of St Mary's**

## It's official!

Did you know that St Mary's has some people in official roles, in addition to the Vicar, who play an important part in the management of the church and its activities?

Kate Buchanan and Marion Westropp are our churchwardens. They share with the vicar a responsibility for the good order of the church buildings, fabric and worship, which basically means being involved in a number of committees and related discussions. They also have a major role in supporting the vicar and caring for the congregation. Kate says: 'Fortunately much of the practical work to do with buildings and fabric can be shared with other church members, allowing more time for us to be involved in arrangements for services and other church activities. It is a privilege to do both of these, and so to be involved more deeply in the life and worship of the church and to share conversations with many of the people who join us for church services'.

Tim Dawson is St Mary's treasurer: 'I am responsible for the church's finances, making sure the accounting records are kept up to date, suppliers paid, debts collected and ensuring the accounts are presented to the PCC on a timely basis. I need to make sure there is always enough cash to pay our debts and that the church's assets are safe'.

Jay Sharma is the secretary of the Parochial Church Council. The role involves managing the secretariat for the PCC, ensuring good governance at all times. This includes taking minutes, ensuring policies are up to date, advising on risk management and holding and updating the church electoral roll. Jay says: 'I intend to uphold this role according to the rules and regulations of the Diocese'.

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## Time for reflection

As Rev Kustner says, Lent is a time for preparation. Join us to share in reflections and discussion about our faith, and our place in the world as we prepare for the joy of Easter. There will be small groups meeting weekly throughout Lent (between 22 February and 6 April) – no prior knowledge of the Bible necessary. Groups will be held during the day and evenings: some will be in homes and others in church. Look for more information at the back of church and on the pew paper:

[www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk/news](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk/news)



## Long Service

At the 7th Bromley (St Mary's Shortlands) Scout Group AGM in late 2022, Tony Chase (Group Chair), Sheila Roberts (Secretary) and Graham Smedley (Treasurer) received awards for 30, 25 and 5 years' service respectively from Alys Helm, Bromley Deputy District Commissioner. Kim Pack Cubs Leader James Griffiths also received his Leader's Wood Badge.



## MISSION OF THE MONTH

### Bromley Homeless

In Bromley there is a great need to find shelter for those living and suffering on our streets. Bromley Homeless provides friendly, confidential and supportive advice. It also offers many other free services to those of 18 years of age and over, such as liaising with the council, finding affordable accommodation, or preventing eviction. In the winter months there is emergency accommodation, with local charities donating food. There is also support for those with medical and psychological problems.

In 2022 volunteers gave 7,500 hours of support. Without these volunteers the charity could not exist, so if you would like to join them please email [volunteers@bromleyhomeless.org](mailto:volunteers@bromleyhomeless.org). Even an hour a week can make a huge difference to those in need.

Due to shortage of accommodation, guests are housed in hostels where they remain for a limited period until they find work. Each guest has a social worker who applies for funds from the council for accommodation. Once moved in, guests have basically four walls and a roof. The Starter Pack Scheme provides bedding, toiletries, crockery, and pots and pans. Bromley Relief in Need can provide funds for beds and white goods if the guest is not eligible for other support. You can find more information about these projects at <https://bromleystarterpacks.weebly.com> and <https://bromleyrelief.weebly.com>. There is also a collection point at St Mary's Church.

For more information, and to donate visit [www.bromleyhomeless.org](http://www.bromleyhomeless.org) or see the display at the back of the church.

## Fair Trade at St Mary's



St Mary's Shortlands is registered with the Fairtrade Foundation as a Fairtrade Church. The Foundation is an independent organisation that checks that fair trade standards have been met by farmers, workers and companies that are part of the product supply chain. To reassure consumers that this has happened, they license the use of the fair trade mark on products and packaging.

Many producers, especially in developed countries, are paid a fair price for their goods and their working conditions are reasonable and safe. Sadly this is often not the story in many parts of the world. Can the people that have grown the rice for my meal afford clothes and to send their children to school? Do they have enough to eat? When I buy fairly traded rice I know that the producers have been paid a fair price, their working conditions are safe, no child labour has been involved and it has been grown sustainably with the environment in mind.

By using our power as consumers we can make a direct difference to so many of the most disadvantaged workers in the world: they get a decent wage for the decent work they do so they can live safely, have enough to eat, pay for their children to be educated and above all have dignity in life.

At St Mary's we are celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight (February 20<sup>th</sup> to March 5<sup>th</sup>) by holding the famous 'Big Brew' in the Community Café on Wednesday 22nd February. There will be delicious home-made refreshments made with fair trade ingredients, fair trade tea and coffee will be served and there will be a raffle and quiz with prizes. Our fair trade stall will also be set up for you to browse.

At St Mary's we have a stall of fair traded goods twice monthly: after the 10.30am service on a Sunday (about 11.30am) and on a Wednesday morning at the café. Please look at the noticeboard or pew paper for dates.

If you are interested in becoming involved in our work or would like more information about Fairtrade please contact Cecilia Willatt 07511 885 941.



FAIRTRADE

The Friends of St Mary's invite you to a

## Race Night

Saturday 11th February 2023

at 7.30pm



In the Church Hall



Tickets £12.50 each (inc Fish and Chip supper) or £40 for a family of 4

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### WORSHIP

**Sunday 10.30am - Holy Communion (in church)**

**Wednesday 10.00am - Holy Communion**

You can access these services online at:

[www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands](http://www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands)

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

### PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Reverend Jane Kustner	07947 778 441
	vicar@stmarysshortlands.church	
Licensed Lay	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
Ministers	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
Reader	Mr S. Buchanan	8777 8008
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
	Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
	Mr D. Speller	07941415082
Parish Administrator	Ms. N. Blake	8460 5682
Churchwardens	Mrs M. Westropp	07970011626
	Mrs K. Buchanan	07811528181
Deputies	Mrs. P. Chase	8464 6188
	Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
	Prof. M. Fox	8650 3252
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
PCC Secretary	Mrs J. Sharma	07900971867
Treasurer	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Organist and Director of Music		
	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs. K. Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	Mrs J. Sharma	07900971867
Junior Church	Miss. R Tillotson	07503 680612
Stewardship	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884

**PARISH OFFICE** 020 8460 5682  
office@stmarysshortlands.church  
Open 10.00am - 12.00pm weekdays.  
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

### ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8402 5599
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	Ms. E Hay	07932758801

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies or Guides please go to [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://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)	Mrs S. Tight	8460 8122
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	8313 0246
Mission Chair	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Fair Trade	Mrs. C Willatt	8313 0246

### LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. A. Cuthbert	Aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk
Cllr. Felicity Bainbridge	Felicity.Bainbridge@bromley.gov.uk
Cllr. Adam Jude Grant	Adam.Grant@bromley.gov.uk
Residents Association	8460 0395
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

### SPAN INFORMATION

Website	<a href="http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk">www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk</a>
Editorial	Parish Office

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