

Sharing the love of God

Back in Roman history, January triggered a reflection on the Old Year and an intention to do better in the New. The two-faced god Janus looked back and forward at the same time; the month of January, the month of reflection and commitment, was named after him. This custom was older than Rome and endures into modernity. Historical focus was to put things right or back in balance, or to become more virtuous. There is not much in the older traditions about giving up an intoxicant or going on a diet: as my son would say, these are first-world problems!

The Parochial Church Council, the governing body of St Mary's, has agreed in principle the proposal for a Vision and Mission for the church that a small group has been working on for several months. Our mission as a church is sharing the love of God. This simple but loaded phrase encapsulates our aspiration to show God's love to the community through our behaviour, activities, and relationships.

Jesus sums up the ten commandments of the Old Testament in the words "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12, verses 30-31).

Most people, even those who say they are not religious in any way, would accept the universal wisdom of the second commandment.

Let our resolutions be to soften our hearts and open our eyes and ears to the people around us and ourselves with some small and achievable shifts in behaviour. Surprise someone with a gift of

kindness, baby-sit or do their ironing. Put the phone away to play and talk. Invite someone for a walk or to go shopping.

The great irony of generosity of heart is that it has a funny way of producing more generosity of heart, bringing positivity and hope to those around us!

Rev Jane Kustner



Meet the maintenance team!

Read more in 'A light bulb moment' on page 3

Special Events and Services

Sunday 8 January

4 - 5.30pm Tea Time Together

6 - 7.30pm Youth Club

Sunday 22 January

5.00pm Come Holy Spirit

A service of silence, readings and simple songs

Sunday 29 January

4.00pm Taize service

Led by the choir and music group

New Year Hopes

We were delighted to receive these hopes for 2023 from the councillors for Shortlands and Park Langley ward:

Cllr Felicity Bainbridge: 'My hope for 2023 is health and happiness for all members of our wonderful community. Personally, I hope to spend more time with my family and friends throughout next year'.

Cllr Aisha Cuthbert: 'My hope is to continue to provide help and support for Shortlands residents and to spend quality time with my husband and two children'.

Cllr Adam Grant: 'My hope is to be able to preserve, enhance and protect our beautiful area. Secondly I hope England win the Rugby World Cup next year'.

Christine Hall, Leader of St Mary's Pre-School, says: 'My hope for the New Year is that more post-pandemic support is provided for young children in their early years to facilitate the recovery of the developmental delay caused by lockdown. The Early Years sector is often forgotten about but is so important. In the first five years of life a child's brain develops more substantially and rapidly than at any other time in life. Here at St Mary's Pre-School, I hope we continue to help build strong foundations for all of our wonderful children'.



THANK YOU to the Guides who helped to tidy the church grounds before Christmas.

Fun for young people and families

Back in May 2022, Shortlands Youth Club opened its doors to the youth of Shortlands. We were delighted by the number of young people who came to see what the club could offer them and for the last six months we have seen over 20 young people return each month.

Those who come have the opportunity to play video games, table tennis, air hockey, board games and in the summer lots of outdoor games too. There's always great music (we take requests!) and **free** snacks which always go down well. But most importantly it is a space for our young people to go once a month to chill, hang out and possibly to make new friends.

If you are in Year 6 or above and are looking for somewhere to go once a month, Shortlands Youth Club is the place for you. We meet on the second Sunday of every month, 6 – 7.30pm, and we would love to see some new faces.

Also at St Mary's on the second Sunday of each month from 4 – 5.30pm we have Tea Time Together, a group for families with children aged 0 – 6. We have a fun song, a short interactive bible story, arts and crafts, lots of games and of course cake served by our community café (with tea and coffee for the adults!) Each month has a different theme, from kindness to joy and more. We'd love to welcome you and your family here, regardless of your beliefs.

Rachel Tillotson



In and Out

As Girlguiding District Commissioner I recently had the pleasure of presenting our 2nd Shortlands Rainbow Leader (AKA Otter) with her Leadership Qualification award. The Rainbows learnt on that particular evening that grown ups get to earn badges and get certificates too!

On a sadder note we are saying goodbye to two of our very longstanding Brownie Leaders Sue and Helen (pictured right, above) although I am pleased to say that we have had several new adults step up as a team to take over the unit, for which we are very grateful and wish them luck in their own new adventures.

It is always a pleasure to welcome new people into the Girlguiding family and if you are interested in joining in the fun yourself please go to www.girlguiding.org.uk to register your interest. We are looking especially for anyone who could help out with our Guide unit on a Tuesday evening. We are also keen to create a new team to help us set up another Rainbow unit to help reduce our extensive waiting list of girls wanting to start their Girlguiding journey. A volunteering link and contact information can also be found on the Girlguiding in Shortlands Facebook page (www.facebook.com/GGShortlands).

Nicola Blake

And breathe...

After the somewhat frenetic celebrations of Christmas and the New Year, January can seem a long, cold and dark mid-winter month. So, the prospect of a Taizé service to celebrate the almost two-thousand-year-old service of Candlemas, on 29 January, is a wonderful way of instilling some light and joy into the gloom!

Candlemas celebrates the Presentation of Christ at the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary when the people would process into church bearing lighted candles. On a lighter note, if you'll excuse the pun, it was also a tradition to bring your own year's candles to church to have them blessed. For Christians, a blessed candle is a symbol of Jesus Christ the Light of the World.

So, what has Taizé to do with this? Well, it is a simpler, gentler form of worship as practised by the Taizé community of over one hundred brothers, founded in France in 1940. They hail from over thirty countries and are both Catholic and Protestant, some of whom work all over the world. Their purpose is to be of service to young people and the promotion of ecumenism. They live solely by their work, not accepting donations, gifts or bequests.

Their worship is based on prayer, short and repetitive meditative songs, reflection and silence: 'peaceful communion with God can do without words.' Those who attended the last Taizé service will know of its uplifting qualities. For the uninitiated please do join us for a chance to explore this calm and reflective style of worship.

Jan Boam

MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Leprosy Mission

The Leprosy Mission (TLM) is a worldwide Christian organisation, founded in 1874. The charity leads the fight against leprosy and works in 28 countries, principally in Africa and Asia (India accounts for just over half of those affected).

TLM is globally recognised for excellence in the fields of leprosy, neglected tropical diseases and disability and provides groundbreaking techniques and rehabilitation programmes that transform lives. TLM's work goes beyond medical care for a holistic approach that includes early detection, education, rehabilitation, water and sanitation, community reintegration, counselling and psychosocial support, and together with its partners TLM researches a diagnostic test and a long-awaited vaccine for leprosy.

The continuing fear and stigma surrounding the disease deters many of those affected from coming forward for early diagnosis and treatment that is essential to limit irreversible disability and further transmission. Consequently, and because of the medical priority in recent times in dealing with the problems of the coronavirus pandemic, the task of reducing the transmission of leprosy has become increasingly challenging: the number of new cases stands at around 200,000 per year.

Future Traidcraft stalls in church will include items sourced from The Leprosy Mission Shop and the purchase of such goods will provide further financial support for this charity, as will the collection of used stamps which can be placed in the box provided in the porch.

Further information is available from the display at the back of the church throughout January and at leprosymission.org.uk



There was plenty of fun for all at St Mary's Christmas Fair

A light bulb moment

One Sunday morning, whilst waiting for the service to begin, I noticed one of the bulbs over the pulpit had 'blown'.

'So what?' you may ask. Well have you ever wondered who changes the light bulbs? Who sorts out the dodgy plumbing and the floods in the cellar? Which kind soul replaced the broken loo seat, who is up a ladder with a paint brush? We've rather got used to our temporary kitchen, but do we know who sorted out its water supply, electrics and drainage?

All who enter our church can't help but be impressed by the flowers that decorate it, but who helps by installing all the high-level decorations at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, not forgetting the Christmas tree and nativity installation?

These and other DIY tasks are done by an army of maintenance volunteers. As with other church teams, many of its members have other roles within the church. At present, the team comprises: Tim Dawson (Treasurer), Robin Hogg (PCC and choir), Mike Harrison, Graham Smedley, Gordon Willatt and Tony Chase (Friends).

If anyone feels they have useful and transferable skills or expertise, do please approach members of the team to discuss how you may be able to help St. Mary's in continuing to run smoothly.

Jan Boam

The Friends of St Mary's invite you to a **Race Night**

Saturday 11th February 2023

at 7.30pm



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You can access these services online at:

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands

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

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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

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Friends of St Mary's	Mr. T. Chase	8464 6188

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

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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

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
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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 www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk

Editorial Parish Office

Distribution Mr. M. Harrison 07821 691567

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