

Time to be grateful

As you read this, we are deep in Lent; the thoughtful, reflective few weeks before the sorrow and triumph of Good Friday and Easter. However, on 30 March we pause for Mothering Sunday which has a slightly different feel from the rest of Lent.

Traditionally – and leaving aside the commercialism of ‘Mothers’ Day’ – this was a day when those in service would return home, see their family and attend a service of Thanksgiving at their ‘mother’ church. A welcome break from the constraints of employment for a chance to stop and smell the flowers!

It’s strange to be thinking about Mothering Sunday for the March edition of SPAN as I am writing this in the week between Christmas and New Year – a week when the world seems to stop to take a deep breath, take stock and maybe wonder about resolutions. The shortest day was a week ago and we will, doubtless, have more chill and gloom to endure before welcoming the posies of Mothering Sunday. And yet, looking out of the kitchen window this morning we saw two robins: one was ‘courtship feeding’ the other. Nature is so much more aware of the shortening and lengthening of days than we mere humans: aware of the turn of the earth and of its cycle.

Walking down to the shops I noticed that the hard little buds on the street trees are marginally less hard and tight than they were. Things are happening underground there too: slowly, inevitably, but surely. It is so important to take a little time out to be aware of and to take delight in things around us. I hope this year, maybe for the first time, you will join us at St Mary’s for our Mothering Sunday service. It is a happy service, perceived by many to be a chance to say thank you to (or for) our mothers or those who ‘mother’ us. For some who have not been able to have a child there is sorrow and we hold them in our prayers just as, at Christmas, we think of those who are alone.

There is much to be grateful for all around us. A kind word. A thoughtful touch. The beautiful area in which we live. The signs of creation in nature can bring peace to our busy souls and bodies!

Please join us at our 10.30am service on 30 March. You will receive a warm welcome as we meet to say thank you for all that we have and for our own Mother Church – St Mary’s, Shortlands.

Rev Jane Peters



Revd Dave and Cait Edmondson will be coming to St Mary’s in May (see page 2)

Special Services and Events

Wednesday 5 March – Ash Wednesday
10.00am Holy Communion

with the Imposition of Ashes

Sunday 16 March

4.00pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 30 March - Mothering Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (said)

10.30am Parade Service

A service for all the family with the distribution of posies



From the Registers

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:
Elizabeth and Olivia Sartori 9 Feb

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:
Valerie Redman 19 Feb



Welcome



It's always a joy to welcome those who want, or want their children, to be baptised at St Mary's. We always say a big 'yes' when people ask. Everyone may be baptised into the church family although if you have no connection with St Mary's, nor live in the parish, we may ask you, as a courtesy, to let your local vicar know.

Why be baptised? Probably all mainstream religions have some kind of ritual of purification or cleansing. This is rather unhelpful, old-fashioned language. I don't think a baby is deep 'in sin'. I know they will face ups and downs in life: that is what it is to be human.

For some people, baptism is a way of saying 'thank you' for the gift of a child; a reason to celebrate with close family and friends.

In the same way that Jesus was baptised by the Holy Spirit which strengthened him for the life ahead of him, we believe the Spirit of God does help the child through life.

It is more usual to baptise children as babies but this isn't set in stone. Elizabeth and Olivia (the girls pictured) asked their parents to let them be baptised as this had not happened when they were infants for various reasons. Some families prefer to wait so the child is more involved and may have asked for thanksgiving prayers instead following the birth.

I explained to Elizabeth and Olivia that their parents and godparents would be asked to make promises in church: to lead a decent life, reject evil and trust God – to turn away from what is wrong and hurts others. The language is not as old-fashioned as it once was but these are serious promises.

There are symbols after the promises. The child is marked with a cross on the forehead with holy anointing oil. Water is blessed and the child is 'washed' (gently) three times: 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. There is a prayer of welcome into the family of the church and the child is given a candle to show that they are to walk 'in the light of Christ'.

It's never too late! We are also very happy to baptise adults.

Do contact me or one of the Pastoral Assistants (contact details on back of SPAN): you will get a form to fill in and we will arrange a date (as part of the morning service or later on a Sunday just for you and your family). One of us will visit you at home and talk through the service, make suggestions, answer any queries you may have.

You may become one of the regular congregation or you may not, following your faith journey in another way. Whatever suits you best, we welcome you.

Rev Jane Peters

Our new vicar

Hello! It's great to send a quick message to introduce myself. I feel so privileged to have been appointed as Vicar of St Mary's Shortlands and am really excited to join you in May. I'm currently in Durham Diocese but grew up in South London and Surrey. In my twenties I lived in Forest Hill, during which time I met my wife, Caitlin. We're looking forward to our move to Shortlands with our children, Lydia (5) and Josiah (3), and to making St Mary's our home.

When Caitlin and I visited a service in October we were so warmly welcomed. That experience confirmed our sense that St Mary's is a community we want to belong to and we were quickly made to feel at home.

Looking ahead, I hope St Mary's continues to be known for that same hospitality and its commitment to sharing God's love with the whole Parish. I believe the Good News of Jesus Christ is deeply relevant to daily life, and I'm so excited to have the privilege of leading this community as we explore and deepen our faith together. In doing this, I pray that we will build on the amazing ministry already thriving through St Mary's and build a church that will continue to welcome and grow disciples for generations to come.

Thank you so much to everyone who has been praying for us throughout the period when the role of vicar was vacant. Please do continue to pray for us as we are, of course, praying for all of you. We're really excited to meet and get to know you soon.

Revd Dave Edmondson

Can you help?

Congratulations to Isabella who recently completed all six Theme Awards at Brownies. She also gave a talk to Rainbows about moving to Brownies to earn her Brownie Gold Award. A fantastic achievement!

If you would like to help other girls reach this special milestone, please do consider offering to lead one of our Brownie units and keep this opportunity open for our girls in Shortlands.

Our current Brownie leaders will be leaving at the end of the summer term so we NEED women to step into their shoes ASAP to ensure that the unit is still running in September.

The current leaders are happy to support a new team until Christmas. Leading a unit is a very rewarding thing to do and Girlguiding UK will support you all the way. Please feel free to talk to any of our Girlguiding leaders if you are at all interested (details on back of SPAN) or sign up via www.girlguiding.org.uk "Become a Volunteer".



PLANT SALE

Spring is just around the corner



Officially Spring begins on the vernal equinox (20th March this year), although according to the meteorological calendar Spring begins on 1st March. Whichever calendar you follow it's still seed sowing time!

Please sow extra seed, divide perennials and take cuttings for the community-centred St Mary's Plant Sale on **Saturday 17th May between 11am and 1 pm.** Refreshments will be available at the St Mary's Cafe.

What to look out for in spring



If you ask a hundred people what Spring means to them, I'm sure the answers would include daffodils, bluebells, Easter eggs and cute baby animals, especially those spring-heeled lambs! Quintessentially, Spring is a time when nature renews itself and prepares for another cycle of growth and reproduction.

With global warming Spring seems earlier every year, but that does not make it any less welcome after a miserable January. As I write, the first buttercup yellow aconites, snowdrops and crocuses are appearing in the garden. Birds are more active and vocal, as they begin to prioritise finding a mate. The great spotted woodpecker has begun to drum, and the urban foxes nightly caterwaul their dating profiles.

We are fortunate to have South Hill Wood nearby. A mere scrap of ancient woodland but, thanks to its dedicated volunteers, somewhere we can watch Spring unfold.

The increase in bird song is one of the first signs. A little sun and a hint of warmth gives all the encouragement that the tits, robins, nuthatches and especially the wrens, need. Some time in March the chiffchaff can be heard, as sure a herald of Spring as any I know, and the Blackcaps are not far behind.

The earliest plant to flower is Dog's Mercury, curiously named and distinctly unglamorous, with tiny yellow-green flowers, but an indicator of ancient woodland. Following soon after, we have the white wood anemones that love the cleared glades, with, if we are lucky, the occasional primrose. Next comes one of the true glories of Spring, the native bluebell, which thrives wherever bramble is cleared.

The path edges soon become full of the white umbels of Cow parsley, and Spring is at its zenith. With flowers come insects. The two insects that most represent Spring for me are the bee-fly, which looks like a bee, hovers like a hover-fly and has an extraordinarily long proboscis to collect nectar, and the brilliant citrus-yellow Brimstone butterfly.

By mid-April, birds will be sitting on clutches of eggs or feeding a first brood. Hopefully there will be enough varied insects to fill those demanding little beaks.

David Linstead

MISSION OF THE MONTH

St Christopher's Hospice

Founded in 1967 by Dame Cicely Saunders, St Christopher's Hospice exists to promote and provide skilled and compassionate palliative care of the highest quality.

The charity's vision is of a world in which all dying people and those close to them have access to the care and support they need, when and wherever they need it. It believes each person is unique and it tailors care to meet social, emotional and spiritual needs, as well as manage physical symptoms.

The hospice has been a centre of education, innovation and insight ever since its foundation. The Group now consists of St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham and St. Christopher's Bromley based in Orpington.

St Christopher's provides care and support for over 7,500 people a year across the boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth. It costs £25.3m a year to run its services, £16m of which has to be provided by fundraising.

For more information see www.stchristophers.org.uk and the display at the back of the church.

Around the boundary

David and Ann-Marie Jefferys (the Mayor and Mayoress of Bromley) have been walking the 49.5 miles around the boundary of Bromley over three days to raise money for the Mayoral charities and to mark the 60th anniversary of the London Borough of Bromley. To support them, visit www.justgiving.com and search for 'Mayor of Bromley'.



CONGRATULATIONS to Heather Donovan who recently celebrated her 99th birthday with friends at the Community Café

Junior Church

Welcome all children from 0-16
10.30am Sundays on
March: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd



CAKE SALE

Sunday 30 March
11.30am in the Church Hall
in aid of the Guides' trip to
Kenya/ the Napenda Solar Project



VE Day commemorations - dates for your diary

Exhibition 3 - 18 May

Tea Party 3pm Saturday May 10th

Contact Kay Coleman (07879 337567) to offer memorabilia or memories for the exhibition

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
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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

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Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

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