

## Reflection and healing

October, bookended by Michaelmas Day and All Saints Day, is the month the Church sets aside for reflection, thanksgiving and healing. Michaelmas Day, the Feast of St Michael and all Angels, is on 29th September and historically marked the last day of harvest. It is the day when land rentals had to be paid is associated with many traditions.

The Bible has references to the Angel Michael in the books of Daniel, Jude, Revelations (Chapter 12 vs 7-12) and St Michael's prayer is in Ephesians 6 vs 12. Michael, the leader of God's holy army, is the protector of faith, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. The saying 'all it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing' was attributed to him by the early church. He was designated an Archangel and canonised by the early church because of healing miracles which were attributed to him.

On All Saints Day (1<sup>st</sup> November) we remember those Saints with no dedicated Feast Day. On All Hallows' Eve we recall those, alive and dead, who led holy or saintly lives in local communities. This commemoration spawned the modern commercial events of Halloween. Perhaps the celebration of our local saints might be revived and replace the travesty of the original Halloween that we have today.

The rhythm of the seasons remains important for our physical and mental wellbeing. Climate change and modern farming mean the harvest for many crops has become shorter and earlier. Our harvest festival at St Mary's is on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October, do join us as we reflect on God's generosity.

60 years ago, mass famine was predicted by the 2020s. Today with a global population of over 8 billion (almost three times greater) most people are fed, some increasingly overfed. Famines are mostly related to supply disruptions due to conflicts. However, this very welcome huge increase in food production has come at a major environmental cost.

There is much to reflect on this autumn. We need to invoke the spirit of Michael and play our part in combating climate change and promoting sustainable development.

*David Jefferys*



St Mary's Choir sang at services at Rochester Cathedral over the weekend of 20-21 July

### Special Services and Events

#### Sunday 6 October

##### 5.00pm Come Holy Spirit

*A service of silence, readings and worship songs*

#### Sunday 13 October - Harvest Festival

##### 9.00am Holy Communion

##### 10.30am Family and Parade Service

*Harvest gifts will be given to the Bromley*

*Foodbank*

*Followed by Bring and Share Harvest lunch*

#### Sunday 20 October

##### 6.30pm Choral Evensong

#### Sunday 27 October

##### 4.00pm Service for Departed Loved Ones

#### Sunday 10 November- Remembrance Sunday

##### 10.00am Holy Communion

**10.45am Act Of Remembrance** *at the War Memorial*

## Welcome Cllr Gemma!

Cllr Gemma Turrell was elected as ward councillor for Shortlands and Park Langley in May 2024, joining Cllrs Felicity Bainbridge and Adam Grant.

We asked her what led her to stand as a councillor: 'I have always believed in 'Be the change you want to see', so when the opportunity came to stand in the ward I live in I couldn't pass it up. I firmly believe that Shortlands & Park Langley is the greatest ward in the Borough and wished to help keep it that way working alongside Adam & Felicity!'

Gemma has lived in the ward for eight years with her husband and their two cats, Odysseus and Phryne (named after her love of Green mythology and crime dramas). She loves that Shortlands is a peaceful place to live with access to green spaces, the shops in Bromley and Beckenham and quick transport to central London for work.

She is passionate about the environment, so ensuring that Bromley remains London's best recycling borough is top of her hopes for her term as councillor. She has got stuck into the job and had her first success in getting the bus stop names changed to include the term Shortlands Village on the route for the 227 and 358.

Gemma says: 'I wish to diligently serve the people of Shortlands & Park Langley who so kindly put their trust in me in May. It is the greatest honour to hold elected office, and I will do all I can to honour that trust. I also want to pay homage to all our amazing community groups in the ward and to thank them for their kindness whilst I have been settling in.

Please do contact us if you have any queries / feel that we can help you in any way, we are here to serve you and no query is too big or small'. You can find the contact details for our local councillors on the back of SPAN.



CONGRATULATIONS to Theo Davidge who was baptised in July – it was a joyous occasion!

### Vacancy update

We have readvertised the role of vicar at St Mary's. Depending on applications, we hope to interview in November. Please keep praying that the right applicant will see the advert and apply, and pray for our church and community in this time of vacancy.

## MISSION OF THE MONTH

### Prison Fellowship

'Our mission is to show Christ's love to help people in prison and by coming alongside them and supporting them we seek through prayer and practical care, to support and develop a Christian ministry to prisoners and their families'.

Prison Fellowship (PF) was founded in 1976 in the USA by Charles Colson after serving a prison sentence for a Watergate-related crime. Shortly afterwards Sylvia Alison from the UK met Charles Colson and believed this meeting was an answer to her prayers. Sylvia envisaged an organisation where people could meet together, worship and pray for prisons and prisoners and use the power of God's love to improve their lives and reduce reoffending.

PF has grown since the 1970s and is now a worldwide organisation. There are over 100 local groups throughout the UK with committed volunteers. In addition to daily work with prisoners, support to the chaplaincy and assisting with services and running Bible study groups, PF also helps in other practical ways.

Through the Letter Link, PF volunteers working from home write letters to prisoners. Very often this can be the only communication a prisoner will receive. The Sycamore Tree Restorative Justice programme is a victim awareness course, delivered by trained volunteers from PF, which endeavours to help prisoners to explore the impact of their crime and reduce reoffending.

Angel Tree enables parents in prison to send a gift to their children at Christmas, strengthening their parent-child relationship. PF volunteers work with prison chaplains and local churches to buy, wrap and deliver the presents. As long as prisoners are allowed access to their children, they are given the opportunity to apply to Angel Tree for a gift to be sent to them. A special personal message from the parent is always included with the present, which helps to make the gift extra special.

For more information, see the display at the back of the church or [www.prisonfellowship.org.uk](http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk)

### Remembering departed loved ones

When someone we love dies we begin a complex journey, the goalposts of our lives having shifted. Part of that journey is about the mixture of holding on and letting go, of remembering and forgetting, of finding a new way to live our lives out of the shadow of loss. For everyone it will be different. Pain may lessen though for some this never seems to happen. For some there's a feeling of guilt when days pass without thinking of their loved one.

Anniversaries are, and remain, important. There is something to be said for remembering together in community. This is what we offer at St Mary's in our annual 'Departed Loved Ones' Service. This is held on the nearest Sunday to the festival of All Souls on 2 November. All Souls' remembers and honours all those we love who have died and All Saints' on 1 November remembers Saints and Martyrs.

We invite you to a simple service of thanksgiving; we read out names (a book for the names will be in the Church porch from 13<sup>th</sup> October), give you the opportunity to light a candle, sing and hear prayers and to reinforce the Christian hope and belief that our loved ones live on in some way and that we will be reunited one day.

Do come and join us and stay for refreshments and conversation afterwards if you'd like to. You're assured of a warm welcome at St Mary's.

## Come Holy Spirit

In the last year, St Mary's has added two monthly services. A recent SPAN introduced 'Take Time': Christian meditation. It meets on the second Saturday of the month from 10:15-11:00am.

The second service is 'Come Holy Spirit'. It is a short time (30-45 minutes) of music, inspirational readings and periods of silence, providing an alternative to the more traditional, structured services we offer. It is an informal time to spend in contemplation, meditation or rest, in an intimate, candlelit place where your spirit can be recharged for the week ahead. The service is on the first Sunday of the month (except December) at 5:00 pm in our small Millennium Chapel.

## Join the celebrations!

The Friends of South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen (FSHWKG) celebrate their 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a public event on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October from 1-3pm at South Hill Wood, by the bowling club pavilion. There will be information about the site history, drinks and nibbles, and a nature activity for children.

The Wood was originally the gardens of 1 South Hill Road, built in 1887 for Thomas Dewey, former Charter Mayor of Bromley. Kingswood Glen was originally a small Iron Age hill fort!

Now, thanks to FSHWKG volunteers, Bromley Council and its contractors, the Wood and Glen are important wildlife habitats for trees, wildflowers, bats, birds, insects and amphibians, as well as tranquil green spaces for people to enjoy.

Patrick Phillips, FSHWKG Chair, said: 'It's fantastic we'll come together to celebrate achievements over 15 years, encouraging biodiversity and ecosystems in these cherished green spaces. Thank you to the Bromley Friends Forum and other sponsors for their generous support for this event.'

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

## The Friends of St Mary's present University of Greenwich Big Band in concert

*1950s and '60s big band classics*

3pm Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October

in the Church Hall

Tickets (£12.50) available after services,  
at Community Café and in the Parish Office

Bring and Share

## Harvest lunch

Sunday 13 October, 12.15pm

Tickets £5 per person

(suggested donation) available from the  
Parish Office, after services and at the  
Community Café. Fun and games for all

## Out and about



Pictured: Robin Hogg (churchwarden) and Tim

It is a sad feeling to be moving on from St Mary's, which has been my church family for many years. But there is a good reason – this autumn I will be ordained as a deacon and will move to serve in the parish church in Hayes.

In preparation, I met with Jonathan Gibbs, the Bishop of Rochester: he asked me what I thought being a deacon meant. It's a good question, because most people are more familiar with the idea of priests. But every minister in the Church of England is a deacon, even if they acquire additional titles later on. It's a role from the earliest days of the church.

This made me think of a story about King David, the ancient King of Israel (2 Samuel, chapter 7). When King David comes to power, he thinks he ought to build God a large Temple, but God speaks to David and says "no"! Why would God say that? It sounds like God wants David to understand that the divine is at work everywhere, not just in special religious buildings.

Often, Jesus isn't in religious buildings either: he's healing and teaching in the fields and towns where people lived their lives. Jesus seems to be making a similar point - God is alive and at work everywhere, even in places that might not be particularly special at all.

We too can be on the lookout for God's love and beauty everywhere and anywhere in our amazing world today, whether in the glory of nature, in work or community life, or in the love of those close to us – not just in religious buildings. There's no need for a badge or training course to do this, it is something anyone can do.

Deacons have lots to do in church, helping with services, church life and so on - and that's something I'm really looking forward to. But deacons are also commissioned to be out and about outside church, where people live their daily lives. God's presence, love and beauty doesn't stop at the church walls – it is all around us. If that's where God is at work, then that's a good place to be.

*Tim Aldred*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Christmas Fair**

2 pm – 4pm

Saturday 23 November

In church and the church  
grounds

Fun for all the family!



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**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](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**

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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
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	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
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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](mailto: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](mailto: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)		<a href="mailto:fourtbromleybrownies@outlook.com">fourtbromleybrownies@outlook.com</a>
Rainbows		<a href="mailto:2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com">2ndshortlandsrainbows@gmail.com</a>
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

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