

*St Mary's Church, Bromley*  
*Parish Magazine*

*December 23 and January 24*

*61 College Road Bromley BR1 3QG*



[www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk](http://www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk)

Minimum donation 75p

# CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH

December is a wonderful month with many delightful services to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We have a wide range of types of services with many people playing a part. It is a time of great joy and we look forward to you joining us for as many as you are able.

Christmas is celebrated in the depths of winter when the days are shortest and the world feels inhospitable. We proclaim that Jesus is the light of the world. We do this with familiar passages of the Bible, well known carols and choral pieces, mince pies mulled wines and of course candles.

We wish you a very Happy Christmas.

## Sunday 10th

### 4.00pm Christingle



Plenty of oranges with candles and the wonder of the lights being turned off to make a truly emotive experience.

## Sunday 17th

### 10.30am Family Service



A presentation by our Sunday Club of the nativity with plenty of participation.

### 6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols



Our choir accompanies our journey through familiar passages that herald Jesus' birth and the wonder of his presence with us now.

*Followed by mulled wine and mince pies.*

## Christmas Eve

### 4.00pm Crib Service



It is the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi beginning his celebration of Jesus in the manger. It is as meaningful now as it was then.

### 11.30pm Holy Communion



The First Communion of Christmas to welcome in our great day of rejoicing. *There will be carols from 11pm*

## Christmas Day

### 9.30am Holy Communion



A quiet spoken service with the traditional words of the Book of Common Prayer.

### 11.00am Family Service



An informal gathering to celebrate that Jesus is with us now and forever



# FUNCTION ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

*Warwick Hall - £40.00 per hour  
Buchan Hall - £28.00 per hour  
Front Room - £17.00 per hour*



## St Mary's Church House and Hall

61 College Road, Bromley BR1 3QG  
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## Welcome to the December 23 and January 24 edition of the Parish Magazine.

Welcome to our special December 23/January 24 Magazine.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this bumper edition, please do keep your articles coming in, the deadline for our February edition is the 19th January.

Sunday the 21st January 2024 will be Revd. Alan Keelers last service as Vicar of St. Mary's before he retires, may this new chapter in his life be filled with joy, rest, and the fulfilment of dreams. Thank you for being the guiding light in our lives

Happy retirement!



*I wish you all a Happy Christmas, and Happy New Year.*

Atlanta Topham

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This month's editor: Atlanta Topham

Editor for February 2024: Jo Clark

Copy date: Friday 19th January 2024

*Please support the editors by giving articles and notices to them by the copy date.*



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## Memorial Book

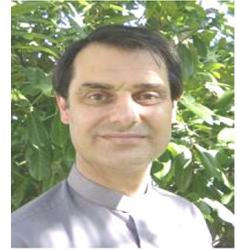


St. Mary's Church has a memorial book in which may be inscribed names of people associated with the parish. If you would like to know more details please contact Alan or Jean Read on 020 8402 0886.

### ***Disclaimer***

***The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various participants in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editors.***

# The Vicar's Valediction



It is time for me to write my last article for St. Mary's parish magazine. At the end of January I will not only be ending my service at St. Mary's but also retiring from stipendiary ministry. There is much more life to be lived and I will in some capacity seek to be of service to the church where we will be living. A valediction is a farewell address. What are my reflections on seventeen years at St. Mary's and thirty three years of ordained ministry?

I can remember approaching the start of my time at St. Mary's. The editor of the magazine asked me for an article. I said I would be pleased to provide a piece and it was my intention to always meet the deadlines for the magazine. This was a bold and sadly rarely observed intention! It is worrying about how the most honourable of intentions can be thwarted. When Prime Minister Harold Macmillan was asked what was the greatest challenge for a statesman, he replied: 'Events, dear boy, events'. Events are a reality for all of us even if we are not statesmen.

I almost think that events are not what church life is about. We have our committees, agendas and minutes that seek to order activity. It is good to have a goal, a project, some progress and finally an achievement. But it is just as important how things get done, the relationships that share the load and how we manage the difficulties along the way.

St. Mary's has been a wonderful church to have served. There have been so many people who have been great to work with. People have shared a wide variety of gifts to enable our common life to flourish. There is a generous heart to our life that looks out at the community around us and a variety of mission and social action to support.

Before I came to St. Mary's I was given a wallet with photographs of members of the congregation. Gill and I spent some time going through these to be able to hit the ground running. Yes I could see the position I had as Vicar of St. Mary's but it was so good to see the variety of

people and groups who cared for each other with friendship and practical service.

I recently went through these photographs again. There were children who are now adults. People who I have got to know very well. There are also the people who have sadly died but it is good still to recognise the presence they had with us. Particularly for Gill and me there was Josie who was greatly valued and accepted so whole heartedly at St. Mary's. There are also many people who have joined St. Mary's Church over the years. We have continued to add names to our company. Some have come and gone. Others have become very much part of our current family.

As well as a range of people there have been a wide range of activities which can be quite bewildering. A company of people on a Sunday. Members of committees. On a small scale a one to one conversation that engage with pastoral need. There are opportunities to serve people at a crucial time in their life with care, attention to detail and then never see them again! It has been wonderful to be with church members who give great amounts of time and skill and who can be completely depended upon. Hopefully most of the time these activities turn out well. Sometimes they may not but can then illustrate patience, forbearance and with time lead to good lessons being learnt.

I am extremely grateful to so many people who have played a part in St. Mary's Church. It is only because of the life that we have together that it is worth doing. I am grateful to the folk who have given greatly of themselves. But it is gratitude for everyone. People whose worship leads them to service in the family, community and employment. The quiet actions that speak of generosity and faithfulness. Folk who are humble to allow others to be of help. St. Paul speaks of the fragrance of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). It may sound undefinable, but we know what he means.

Many years ago I met a young Christian woman who captivated me with her personality and persuaded me to consider the faith for myself. I accepted Christ as my saviour and she accepted my proposal of marriage. Faithfully, lovingly and often quietly she has served the churches I have been at along with me. It is of course God's church and it to him that the glory is to be given. But he has many servants and I am very grateful to Gill for her partnership in the Gospel along with you all.

Best wishes

Alan Keeler

## **Compassion and Coming – “Come, Lord Jesus come” *Hope, Peace, Joy and Love***



There is sometimes, or rather very often, these days, a real temptation to ask, “When will there be good news?”, echoing the title of a crime novel by Kate Atkinson, and at the same time to observe as Shakespeare puts it in *The Tempest* “Hell is empty and all the devils are here”.

That questioning and observation is much more than just noticing the presence of evil in the world, and a seeming lack of good, it comes with a sense of escalation attached, things seem to be getting worse. Or perhaps we are just getting tired.

We live currently in very uncertain times and the tide of terrible events, floods and storms, forests ablaze, the death of babies and children in wars, human wickedness, violence and incompetence seem unrelentingly to increase. Holding onto faith and hope is really challenging as we move through the Kingdom season, through Advent and towards Christmas. Even Christmas, which is now for many just a social celebration, as well as a joyous festival of faith for Christians celebrating Emanuel - God with us, comes so heavily weighed down with issues of poverty, of peace and justice, of sustainability, simplicity and excess, that good news is almost lost in the volume of need and disaster.

and yet I was taught to expect good things....

Jesus still comes and Jesus is coming again, I still smile when I find in a folder the wonderfully irreverent poster, given to me by a colleague at Wormwood Scrubs saying, “Jesus is coming look busy”. We are already busy. dealing with heavy issues mentioned above, and still we believe that Jesus is coming, that he is coming again, even knowing already, as he must surely know what it might be like for him, given how it was it was the first time he came.

When he comes again in judgement though, I sometimes wonder what will be left to judge.

It is when oppressed by the daily diet of bad and then of worse news that we most value and need the traditions of prayer and poetry in our faith, when we most need to hear again the gospel, the good news. They remind me always of God's love and compassion, God's limitless freely given unconditional love and unearned grace, but most of all of God's continuing choice to be with us, and to remain with us always.

R S Thomas's poem 'The Coming' sums up God's choice to send his son to us, even more starkly than the challenging words of the Hebrew prophets. The poem pictures our world from God's viewpoint, the whole planet, so bleak and barren, as if in the aftermath of war and catastrophe, so very appropriate for November and Remembrance, and for all times of war and natural disaster, the Father and Son looking at the desolation together. The land itself is ruined and desolate and the people are sticklike and distressed holding up pleading arms, and the last line tells us this:

"The son watched

Them. Let me go there, he said."

(It is a short and very moving read <https://allpoetry.com/The-Coming> )

I was drawn into ministry, as a young woman, by reading Jesus's response to the crowds in Matthew 9:36-37 'When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.' Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

Compassion is such a beautiful word, which apparently means "to suffer together" for me it is to feel called to companionship and to the offering of encouragement, to walk together with others so that they do not feel alone, when harassed or helpless, to hold onto hope and to share it when I find it. So Jesus came to us to suffer together with us.

It is quite clear that God's compassion in Jesus prompts him to act, he comes to us as Emanuel, God with us, he loves, heals and forgives bringing us new life and transformation. Jesus's very presence in the world is the ultimate act of compassion.

We know that He was born of Mary, but also born of God's grace and God's unconditional love. Even in the darkest of times we can hold onto that love of God for us, because despite appearances, and no matter how we may *feel*, we learn from scripture, especially from passages like this one from

Ps 103 :

'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast  
and have no compassion on the child she has borne?  
Though she may forget,  
I will not forget you!' .....

As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him'  
God's compassion, grace and unconditional, generous love are the key  
notes of our journey of faith, he is here to suffer together with us. If we  
are looking for Jesus we find him in the dark, difficult and dangerous  
places, with those who suffer.

We are almost at the end of the Church's year, the feast of Christ the King  
will soon be upon us, rather low key and oppressed by fear and anxiety,  
war and distress of all kinds, in so many parts of God's world, but still it is  
a recognition that Christ rules, and not as an earthly ruler does, but as a  
servant king. Christ comes to each of us where we are, seeking always to  
meet the needs of all God's children for restoration and renewal.

It will soon be Advent and then Christmas, and this year because there is  
so much to cause us sorrow and worry, there is every reason to look for  
the hope that comes with Christ into the world, rather than to focus  
solely, as often before, on penitence and the four last things.

So watching and waiting, celebrating and lamenting, it is my prayer for all  
of us, that in *hope* we can seek *peace* from the Prince of peace, and know  
*joy* in the birth of new life, and share together in God's *love* for one  
another and for the whole of creation.

Alison Tyler



### **Candlelit Compline – Saturdays in Advent, 6pm**

***In church and online for half an hour  
December 2nd , 9th , 16th and 23rd***

Watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord at Christmas with a focus  
each week on one of the following: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Please bring with you a sentence to add to the prayers on the topic for the  
week either of thanksgiving or of intercession.

# *A view from the pew*



Alan will soon be leaving us. We wish him and Gill a very happy retirement, and the opportunity to catch up on all those things that have had to be put on hold during his many years as a vicar. Retirement sounds like the end of the road, but – as I have found – it is really just the beginning.....

A new life beckons. There are places to visit, people to meet, friendships to renew, holidays to enjoy, finances to re-assess, houses to make-over! Not all of the prospect is equally attractive, of course, but that is true of all life. We just need to take the whole dose and ensure we enjoy the best bits that much more.

Of course, there are great advantages to being retired: freedom from the tyranny of the clock; a more relaxed dress code; and TIME! Time to think, time to plan and organise. Time to wonder what our new role in life is. Time to get used to seeing more of our partner. Time to remember all the things that went wrong – and those that went right! Time to learn new skills, and brush up on old ones. Time to tackle all those jobs we never had time for – and now don't have so much energy!



Time to say “No” to well-meaning offers, tempting though they may be. Time to put the two of you first among equals, instead of last. Time for the family and for friends. Time to explore with your remaining energy, and to treat yourselves to all those wonders you missed earlier in life. Time to be just a little bit more selfish, to

make the most of your golden years, to leave no regrets, tick the boxes and empty the bucket-list.

After an initial shock to the system, you may well think “Why didn’t I do this before?” Well, now that you have, we pray that it will be everything you plan for, everything that you hope for, and everything that you are looking forward to. I am sure that you will miss the busy-ness of pastoral care, and the rewards that have occasionally come. But a new life beckons, without deadlines, or fixed performances, or intractable people problems. Embrace it and make it your own. We wish you a very happy, healthy and long retirement. Thank you for having been with us and led us through good times and challenging years. We will miss you.

Peter Fall

## **An Explosion of Colour**

This was the title of the class I entered in the Bromley and District Floral Society ‘Nature’s Palette’ show in October. The standard of entries is always very high in the show and a lot of hard work takes place in putting on a show each year. I was drawn by the title to this class and had to decide which type of flowers, colours, and style of arrangement to choose. The space allowed was 80cm wide x 68cm deep and 100 cm high and exhibitors must keep within these dimensions, otherwise it would count as a disqualification. I arrived at the flower wholesalers in Lee with an open mind



and a whole rainbow of colours before me...which should I choose? The pressure was on, I had to make a fairly quick decision, as I needed to get back home to spray some dried Allium heads in co-ordinating colours!

In the end I decided to go for shades of orange and cerise flowers and the display included large headed Roses, Gemini, Heliconia, Nerines, Celosia and Autumn Ilex berries. . I also chose some exotic Asia leaves with tinges of pink and large Fatsia Japonica leaves to complement the overall design, together with a stem of twisted willow to add some height to the arrangement.

It was then a quick dash to the hall to help set-up before the official staging took place from 3 pm.

The NAFAS National judge was due early on the Saturday morning to go around the show and to make their decision on the awards for each class and to write on the comment cards. Unfortunately, the judge was held up en route and arrived an hour late and had to contend with an arm injury sustained a few weeks prior, so their partner had to write out the comment cards! There is always an element of eager anticipation before the show opens and the competitors see how they have done. At this time, I was pre-occupied with getting the Tea Room ready for business and did not go into the Chapel to check. When I was finally encouraged to “take a look”, I was very surprised to discover I had received a First in the ‘Explosion of Colour’ class and ‘Best Use of Colour’ in the show award!

If this has inspired you...why not get a festive feel for flowers at Bromley Flower Club’s Christmas meeting on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December when Robin White will be demonstrating a ‘White Christmas’ at 2 pm at the URC next to Boots in Widmore Road. Visitors welcome. First visit free.

Anne Yolland

## **COVID Autumn/Winter Booster in Bromley**

Get your COVID Booster before 15 December 2023

### **Who is eligible for the COVID booster**

All residents over 65

Pregnant women

People aged 5-64 with a weakened immune system

### **Where can you get your booster:**

Please check the [Bromley page](#) for the latest offer on clinics at:

- Bromley Health Hub – The Glades Shopping Centre (first floor)
- Community Pharmacies
- GP surgeries
- Pop-up clinics

## MOTHERS' UNION MATTERS

Mothers' Union members had a talk on 9<sup>th</sup> November, which gave them a lot of information about trading scams and rogue traders. Beverley Nicklin of Bromley Trading Standards Department gave examples of people calling at the door offering to mend the roof, but deliberately damaging it when they went up to check it for you. By and large, she warned of anyone who "cold-calls" at the house i.e. uninvited, and advised checking the borough's extensive list of approved traders, or with a person who has employed the contractor previously. Her talk was timely and well received – the audience being of an age that might feel vulnerable to being fleeced. She distributed some useful leaflets giving advice, and a sticky note to advise visitors that you do not deal with cold callers.



## Latest news from the Mothers' Union holiday programme

"Thanks to the generosity of Mothers' Union members and their supporters in parishes, seven adults and thirteen children were able to enjoy a week at the seaside during the summer.

Altogether, seven applications for holidays were received from different sources including community leaders and social workers. Three applications were rejected as the family either had a holiday last year or the referee did not return the paperwork. Four families were delighted to be offered a holiday and two sent us letters of thanks:



***"We arrived safely, it's absolutely beautiful, caravan is lovely, a beach right here on site so no need to leave. The kids run into the sea fully clothed and in shoes. Lol. It's perfect, we could never thank you enough for this opportunity ❤️"***

***thank you XXX"***



We also received some pretty painted pebbles.

In this time of great need and sadness at the state of world affairs, the AFIA programme feels like a tiny pebble in the sea, but for the families involved we hope the holiday experience has helped them move forward with happy memories of a relaxed time together.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the cost of the programme. The budget was only £5,000 but it made a big difference to some lives.”

St Mary’s MU continues to support this project and contributed £200 from our Plant Sale in May. We continue to fundraise for this venture to enable further holidays to be taken in 2024. Donations can be made to Mary Fall, the MU Treasurer.

Peter Fall

### **Mothers’ Union meetings in December 23/January 24**

*In 2024 Mothers’ Union members will be attending Grace Café on the first Wednesday of each month and serving coffee and home-made cakes.*

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 9.30 a.m. Making Christingles in Front Room

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 12.00 noon Christmas Buffet Lunch in Buchan Hall

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 10.00 a.m. Knit and Knatter in Front Room

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January at 10.00 a.m. MU at Grace Café.

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00 a.m. Beetle Drive in Front Room

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00 a.m. Knit and Knatter in Front Room



### **Christingle Service Preparation**

**Saturday 9th December, 9.30 am approx.**

As many of you will know members of our Mothers Union always make the “Christingles” which are handed out during the service to all the children and many of the congregation also. We make them up the day before on the Saturday morning in Church House at 9.30 am approx. Any offers of help would be much appreciated. Friendly company and refreshments are provided We look forward to seeing you.

## Choir and Music



There is always a buzz in the air when this time of the year approaches. As it gets darker earlier, so the pressure to find that elusive last present increases, and the food shopping looms larger (like the turkey!). The worry of missing out someone with a card, or repeating a

present to a relative, or, horror of horrors, running out of food over Christmas! All these potential disasters loom larger as the great day nears.

What we hear less about is the worry that singers experience. Will their musical preparation for the many festive events be adequate? Will they know the pieces of music put in front of them? Will they lose their voice by singing carols in the open air? Will they catch a cold and be unable to sing at all?

Singers are a delicate lot. They need to be cosseted, kept warm and encouraged. That's why there aren't a lot of them - usually. And yet at Christmas they suddenly appear, wishing to do all those things that they have avoided all year, just to share in this most magical of musical seasons. It is no accident that "carolling" means singing (or saying) something happily. Carols are happy songs, hence carol-singers are (generally) happy people. And, on the basis that it is "better to give than to receive", the ones who are singing usually appear to be happier than the ones on the receiving (listening) end! Or it may just be down to the noise that the choir makes when trying to sing "happily"!



Nonetheless, the church choir will continue to add its musical (?) input to our services and streets during Advent. It will continue to welcome old and new members to sing the familiar melodies (familiar to the choir, that is). And it will always be a place of refuge for time-constrained commuters and worried pensioners alike. Music has a healing power,

especially when linked to words of "comfort and joy", which is felt by all who partake in communal singing.

St Mary's Church Choir is pleased to lead this extended community, and invites you to be part of this journey, either within the choir or firmly in the congregation. "Singing connects the mind with the heart and the heart with the soul. So sing. I dare you!" (Neale Donald Walsch)

Peter Fall



**Showcase of Talent**  
**JUSB'S FUNDRAISING EVENT**  
*Celebrating 20 Years of Jusb*  
**6th December 2023**  
6:00PM to 8:00PM

Brook Lane Community Church,  
Bromley, BR1 4PU.

**CONTACT US:**  
RSVP: [Anne@jusb.co.uk](mailto:Anne@jusb.co.uk) or [Tina@jusb.co.uk](mailto:Tina@jusb.co.uk)  
Landline: 02084642722 Mobile: 07483143430  
RSVP by: 29th November 2023

Website: [www.jusb.co.uk](http://www.jusb.co.uk)

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## Service Assistants

There is a long tradition of people welcoming worshippers to services and dealing with practicalities in preparing for the service. The position has been called Sidesman. We are grateful for so many people who have done this role over the years. The Church Wardens are now looking to reestablish this position. We would now like them to be called Service Assistants, a term which is inclusive of male and female. We hope you will understand this and support the change. There will be a sheet on the back table for people to sign up and there will be preparation events to explain what is involved. Please do think about continuing what you have been doing or joining this important role.

## Remembrance Sunday 2023

Remembrance Sunday was more poignant for me as it was 80 years this year since my uncle, Raymond George Bates, died on 7th July 1943 aged 27. He was a navigator on Wellington IC X3160 on a cross country training



flight from RAF Harwell, which broke up over White Horse Hill, Oxfordshire after an engine caught fire. All 8 men on board were killed.

Peter and I walked on White Horse Hill on 7th July. It was a peaceful, hot, sunny afternoon with larks singing in the blue sky and wildflowers and grasses waving in the breeze.

The following day we visited his grave in St Peter's churchyard, Hersham, having to reposition a bramble in order to get a clear view of his headstone.

On Friday 10th November we attended the Remembrance Service at Elm Park School, Brixton, originally Strand School where my father and three uncles were pupils. As I guessed I was the only person present who had a family member's name on the 1939-45 board I gave a brief impromptu talk about my Uncle Ray.

Frances Boyden

### Sale of poppies

Thank you for your support. Mothers' Union have been able to send a donation of £62 to the Royal British Legion as a result of your purchases.



## Murals Conservation Funding- The Latest News

We all enjoy good news so it's time to share an update on the progress of our appeal. Some of our beautiful 19th century chancel murals have been severely damaged by water ingress and have now been stabilised ready for repainting.



Conservation and restoration is a very expensive business and our most recent estimate was £64,000. This includes specialist scaffolding and a large VAT bill. St Mary's is not, at present, a listed building, therefore VAT is payable on all repairs and improvements.

The funding is a complicated process with income coming from a number of different streams. These include a very substantial one off donation, a generous bequest, regular donations and fund raising events. Our recent events include the following results:-

Ride and Stride £250

Cream tea £300

Concert £250

Table Sale £700

Jigsaw Sale- £409.50

Grants have been made by various bodies associated with church conservation with the most recent being for £4,500 from the Society of Antiquaries William Morris fund. Acknowledgement of all these grants will be given in due course. However many grants aren't actually payable until this highly skilled restoration is completed. This situation will be covered by loans to be repaid on completion of the restoration when the grants are received.

So the excellent news is we are moving close to our target and the commencement of work.

Our thanks again to all who have given so much money, time and effort to achieve this splendid result. Once that final financial gap is bridged we look forward to the start of restoring our murals to their full glory.

Chris Soper

## **Two recent events -**

**The annual London to Brighton Veteran Car Run and the 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of King Charles III - brought to mind a memorable moment in the life of my late father exactly 75 years ago, writes Shelagh Frankham.**

Kenneth “Jack” Taylor enjoyed a long career as a motor mechanic in Croydon, a profession which allowed him to indulge his lifelong passion for all things automotive.

A highlight of his year was seeing scores of pre-1905 vehicles chugging through his hometown every autumn as part of the “Old Crocks Race” first run in 1896.

The event was curtailed during the Second World War, so it was a dream come true for him to be asked to take part once it resumed following the cessation of hostilities and petrol rationing.

The vehicle he was to drive, a Benz Velocipede, belonged to his employers, the Miles brothers (proprietors of The Onward Motors Steam Works in Brighton Road, Croydon), having been bought by their father in 1899.

Presumably they wanted him along in case the aging contraption - a valuable example of the world’s first standardised serial production car - broke down en route, but nevertheless he grasped the opportunity with both hands.

On the appointed day, my mother, brother and I waited excitedly in Purley Way to wave to him on his way from Hyde Park to the coast. It was a cold day, so my father was glad of the padded leather coat he had chosen to wear as the open-topped Benz’s 11mph top speed meant spending several hours on the road. Despite the discomfort, he clearly loved every minute of the experience. He was a quiet man, not demonstrative at all, so his ear-to-ear grin when he got home that evening really said it all.

As we ate our evening meal, discussing the events of the day, we pricked up our ears when an announcement came over the radio that the future Queen, Princess Elizabeth, had given birth to a baby boy that day.

It is often difficult to pin events from one’s life to a particular year, but the news set the date forever in stone: November 14, 1948.

**Jack Taylor**



Shelagh Frankham



Careplus aims to provide free local volunteer support for older people locally. Their needs are met for befriending, social support and practical assistance. This is undertaken by volunteers who give support in the form of befriending, shopping and transport.

Please consider helping Careplus. It will also be wonderful if there could be a representative of St. Mary's Church to be on the organizing committee which meets three times a year. To know more please speak with Alan Keeler. Or visit <http://www.careplusbromley.org.uk>

ST MARY'S & ARTFORM  
PRESENT



---

A NIGHT  
AT THE  
MUSICALS

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Songs from the West End and Broadway performed cabaret style

Saturday 13th January  
Doors open at 7:15pm - Show at 7.45pm

Tickets £13.50

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/artform](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/artform) in advance or on the door

Bring your own drinks and nibbles

St Mary's Church Hall  
63 College Road  
Bromley BR1 3QG



## Ride & Stride for Kent Churches

September 9<sup>th</sup> was the very hottest day of the year when Ride & Striders started on their sponsored visits to churches in their various counties and shires. The object being to not only have an interesting day out but raise funds for their churches and other churches in their area.

The Boydens and the Sopers from St. Mary's set off for different parts of Kent for their second year of Ride & Stride. Our own story starts with crawling along in heavy traffic through Bromley to finally pass the Kent County sign and into the green leafy lanes en route to Shoreham. Early customers to the picturesque Samuel Palmer were already outside enjoying refreshments in the sunshine when we arrived. Ignoring temptation we crossed over the road and headed up the long brick path lined with yews to the entrance of St Peter & St Paul where we received a warm greeting from the church warden. A very interesting chat followed and we admired the historic wooden screen that had

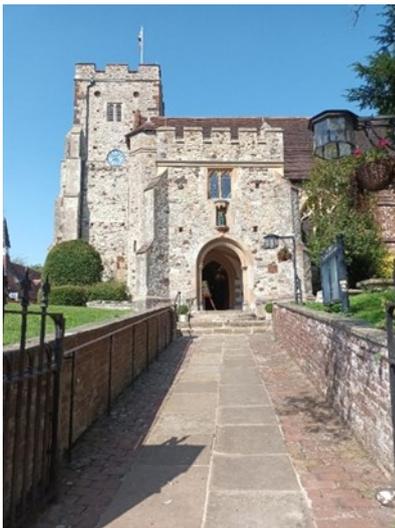


been hidden during the Reformation and the pulpit (see photo) where Queen Victoria's Coronation sermon had been preached from in Westminster Abbey. On a different note we also admired the very modern extension that beautifully blended in and comprised toilets, kitchen and meeting rooms. It seems the cost of £700k was raised in 2 years so the claim to be "well supported" was something of an understatement!

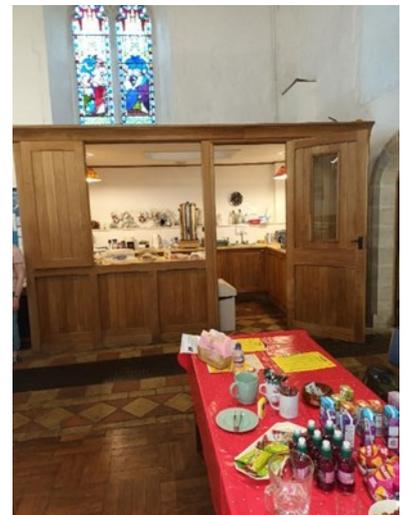
Otford followed, with three churches spaced along the High Street. By now it was "High Noon" so intense heat but we refrained from being tempted to stop. Ladies from St Bartholomew's, which overlooks the village pond, gave a friendly welcome from a shady table with drinks, biscuits and pots of homemade jam for sale. On then to the strikingly modern Methodist church with a high, cool dove grey interior and an impressive acrylic artwork window of flames reaching upward to blue skies. Welcomers there told us the original church had been too small and could only seat 80.

so with “sacrificial giving” the new church had been funded with modern facilities adjoining. Tucked away further along the High Street we entered the small modern Holy Trinity Catholic Church and again received a friendly welcome from members of the congregation.

At Kemsing refreshments at the Bull helped us to revive. Although St Mary’s there was empty the beautiful red embroidered kneelers were lined up on display above the pews. Alongside the church an impressive new build was taking shape to include a vicarage and church rooms.



Our next stop was the Grade 1 listed St. George’s in Wrotham. A very warm welcome was received and we admired their very impressive “tea station” (see photo) which served a range of biscuits, cakes, drinks and sausage rolls! We learnt that as a listed church they couldn’t have a kitchen installed but a compromise was reached with this ingenious “tea station”



which when closed blends in beautifully with the church interior.

Both churches at Borough Green (Church of the Good Shepherd) and St Mary Platt (St. Mary’s) just had Ride & Stride forms to sign. After a brief look at both churches we then made our way to West Malling. Our first stop there was the Pilsdown Christian Community. It is one of two in this country, the other being in Dorset. This one is a community set in 6 acres that offers therapeutic recovery to those whose lives have been torn apart by addictions or traumatic events. It is largely self sufficient and currently the 11 residents (male and female) work the land and care for a variety of animals. A very cheerful tattooed resident who showed us around looked after the rescued battery hens. He also kept the stream that ran through the grounds clear to avoid flooding the adjacent land buildings, including the Nunnery from whom the land is leased. The residents were full of praise for Pilsdown and great pride was shown in the huge granary barn Chapel where prayers are offered 4 times a day. This also serves as a meeting space for the residents and visitors. Delicious tea and excellent rhubarb and ginger cake were enjoyed and more homemade jam to buy - irresistible!

Our 10<sup>th</sup> and final church was another St Mary's perched on a hill at the top of the High Street. An interesting welcome from a member of the choir who informed us the church has a thriving musical life with both junior and senior choirs plus an organ scholar and excellent music director. Indeed the West Malling Music Festival is held there despite there being no facilities at present – porta loos are needed though there is a discussion underway to provide more permanent facilities despite the church being surrounded by a graveyard.

To end our day, it was a short drive to visit a relative for a lovely supper, a good chat and a family catch up. A very enjoyable day out with a selection of jams as a nice reminder of some beautiful churches and friendly people on a baking hot day.

Ride & Stride raised a total of £500. Thanks again to all who gave their time and contributions. A particular thanks to Francis and Peter Boyden who Rode & Strode just before leaving to see their family in the USA.

Chris Soper



**Oven  
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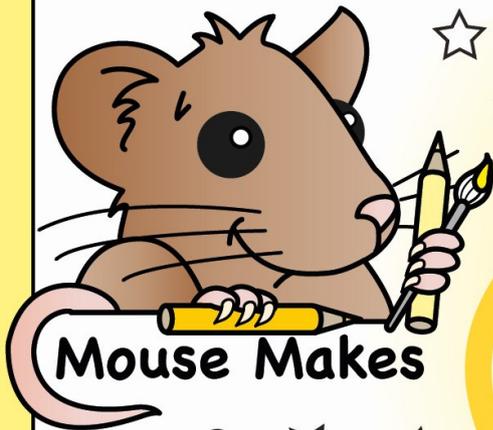
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# ❄️ CHRISTMAS ❄️ countdown calendar





**GOD'S PROMISE**

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

CHILD • BORN • SON  
GIVEN • WONDERFUL  
COUNCELLOR  
MIGHTY • GOD  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER • PRINCE  
PEACE • LORD



**AN ANGEL MESSENGER**

*Luke 1:26-38*

ANGEL • GABRIEL  
JOSEPH • MARY  
FAVOUR • SON  
JESUS • GREAT  
THRONE • REIGN  
FOREVER • HOLY  
SERVANT • WORD

**ADVENT**  
comes from  
the Latin  
'AD VENTO'  
which means  
**ARRIVAL**

In Advent we  
celebrate Jesus' birth  
and look forward to  
the time when Jesus  
will come again.



**A LONG JOURNEY**

*Luke 2:1-20*

BETHLEHEM  
REGISTER • BIRTH  
MANGER • INN  
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK  
ANGELS • JOY  
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE  
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



**THE BEST GIFT OF ALL**

*John 3:16*

GOD • SO • LOVED  
WORLD • HE • GAVE  
ONLY • SON  
WHOEVER • BELIEVES  
ETERNAL • LIFE

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
E	S	L	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	N	S
P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
H	R	O	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
F	A	V	O	U	R	E	F	R	W	S	O
B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
I	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	U	R	L	O
F	E	C	O	U	N	C	E	L	L	O	R
A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	G	E	S
L	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	G	O	D	V
I	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	T	D	S	M
F	P	G	I	V	E	N	A	H	U	O	A
E	E	H	G	A	V	E	S	R	W	N	R
S	A	E	G	R	E	A	T	O	N	L	Y
O	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	N	N	J	O
N	E	O	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S	N
F	L	O	C	K	M	I	G	H	T	Y	B

# St Mary's Sunday Club Nativity

17 December

10.30 am

All welcome - do join us!



[www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk](http://www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk)

***Come and join us for our 'pop up' and interactive Nativity service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30 am.***

***We are looking forward to seeing some shepherds, angels, wise men and Marys/Josephs.***

***Come dressed up or costumes will be available on the day.***

***Do come and join us for this all age service.***

***Check newsletter for further information.***

The Rectory  
St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir members were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.

Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first – *'pour encourager les autres'*. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

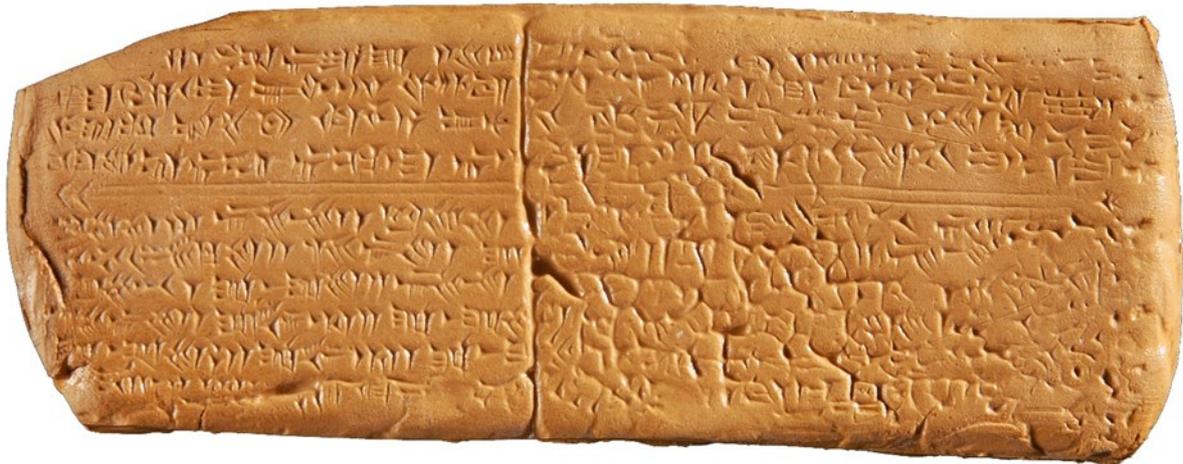
Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

## The Development of Written Music



The oldest written music found so far, as far as I know, is about 3,400 years old, from the city of Ugarit on the Mediterranean coast in Northern Syria. Now, the city is just a collection of worked stones in the grass, but in its day, Ugarit was a major city and a ground-breaking discovery for the archeologists. The tablet that was found is more of a description of how to play the music than what we would think of as written music, being instructions of which string on the harp to pluck, how to pluck it and so on. The music has been reconstructed and you can listen to it on YouTube. Just Google “Hurrian Hymn No. 6”



Ο ΖΩΝ ΖΗΣ ΦΑΙΝΟΥ  
ΜΗ ΔΕ ΝΟΛΟ ΣΣΥ  
ΛΥ ΠΟΥ ΤΡΟΣΟΛΙ  
ΓΟΝΕ ΣΤΙ ΤΟ ΖΗΝ  
ΤΟ ΤΕ ΛΟΣ Ο ΧΡΟ  
ΝΟΣ ΑΤΑΙ ΤΕΙ

We also have written music from Ancient Greece, written in the second century BC, found in what is now Turkey.

Here we have the words to be sung with symbols above them denoting the actual notes.

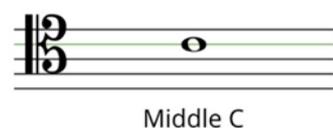
We are reasonably sure that they were using a similar scale to us, as Pythagoras wrote a treatise on music where he notes the relative lengths of strings to produce various pitches – half to go up and octave,  $2/3$  for a fifth and so on. This is not perfect, musicians would go on improving it for centuries, the best known master of tuning being J S Bach with this “Well Tempered Clavier”

The next step was to develop notation to define the actual music, with the object of reminding the musician of the tune. Music was becoming an integral part of Church worship and in about 500 AD Pope Gregory (the popularizer of the Gregorian Chant) set up music schools.

Here we have both people with knowledge of music and stuff to write on, and systems to note the actual music soon followed. It seems that once they had the idea that it could be usefully done, similar musical notation was derived in more than one place – Seville in the seventh century AD and Charlemagne not much later.

These systems all used lines of discrete squiggles, each squiggle representing a note or group of notes, a bit like a modern day trill or turn. The squiggles also rose and fell as the tune went up and down and the words typically were written underneath the line. In the beginning there was no stave or even lines, so there was no indication of the absolute pitch. Even so, we still know the music of some of the notable composers of that time, who used this method of notation for example, Hildegard of Bingen.

As time went on, reference lines crept in. Initially a red line for the note “F” and a yellow one for “C”. The use of the notes “C” and “F” as the reference point can still be seen if you look at the bass clef in any score, where there are two dots to show which line is “F”, or the tenor clef which points to middle “C”.



By early in the eleventh century in Southern Italy, four lines were becoming standard and individual notes were being shown by little squares. This continued to be the norm in Germany until sometime in the sixteenth century.

In Italy, things were moving on. Guido d’Arezzo is credited with formalising the four lined stave and also with introducing time signatures, although bar lines were not yet invented. He is also credited with inventing the tonic sol-fa, using the names of the first letters of popular hymn lines to define the notes.

By the twelfth century distinct symbols of notes for different times (crotchets, quavers etc.) were starting to be used. Polyphony and counterpoint meant that you had to know how long to hold a note, so Franco of Cologne in about 1250 wrote a treatise setting out the shapes and shading of the different note types. The shorter notes also acquired little upright lines – as we still use today. This was still a bit vague as the actual length of a note depended not only on how it was written, but also on what it was following or, even worse, the preceding notes.

Bars started to be used in the seventeenth century, but the actual number of beats in a bar was still variable. The bar at that time was more an indication of phrasing, or the structure of the music, so that even composers like J S Bach and Handel had different numbers of beats in different bars. It was not until the Sonata form was introduced in Mozart's time that bars and time signatures were formalized.

Here we have the elements of the written music that we use today – notes, times, the staff and the paper to write them on. Composers have continued to try to define their music more and more closely, there is always the question of whether we should be trying to reproduce exactly what the composer thought, or should the music be open to creative interpretation, but this is basically what we use today.

Trine Hevezi

## **Hedgehogs (part2)**

I've been approached by the congregation to continue my hedgehog story. This time I'll be telling you a few more facts about hedgehogs and some of my experiences interwoven into the article.

The European hedgehog is officially called *Erinaceus Europaeus*. There are 17 hedgehog species worldwide, Britain's only spiny mammal, which has not changed for 15 million years. It is a nocturnal creature (if seen in the daytime it is probably unwell and should be rescued immediately- Hedgehog Preservation Society- 01584 890801). It hibernates between November to April, but this could change because of climate change.

The hedgehog is a popular animal with strong public support, even the ancient Egyptians had models of them in their tombs because they believed that they represented rebirth. Now hedgehogs appear as toys, featured in books and cards etc.

They are distributed across the UK however they are not found in moors, marshes, and pinewoods because there is little space for them to hibernate in these areas.

Hedgehogs are solitary creatures and have a mutually avoid one another. They do not protect their territory. They rely on their sense of smell and hearing as they have poor eye sight. They are often noisy and have a range of noises. I have been told off by them for disturbing them, when I've been in the potting shed and they have been residing underneath.

They give birth to their young between May and September. They generally have two sets of litters annually. The latter litter doesn't do as well because they need to put on weight to see them through the winter. They should look like the same size as a small loaf. However, in New Zealand they breed all year and seen as a pest as they feast on their native birds eggs, which often lay their eggs on ground level. They were exported to NZ years ago. Now they are being culled to reduce numbers.

Their diet consists of beetles, worms, slugs, earwigs, caterpillars and millipedes. In urban areas they rely on people feeding them. I buy dry hedgehog food. Please don't give them bread and milk as they are lactulose intolerant. I put food and water out throughout the year. They sometimes wake up from hibernation hungry!

The average size of the litters are about 4-5 hoglets. They are born blind, pink and are at risk of being eaten by their mother if they are disturbed in their nest. The hoglets leave the nest after about 4 weeks and are fully weaned by 8 weeks. The mothers solely responsible for raising the litter and she takes them on nightly visits to introduce them to the world of foraging.

There are three types of nests; daytime, breeding, and hibernacula. The daytime nests can be found under bushes, long grass (it's important to look before strimming or mowing your lawns). The hibernation nests are more robust and waterproof to see them through the cold months .They always live alone.

Next time, I'll tell you about how to spot the signs of a hedgehog in your garden, how far they roam nightly, dangers and ways to help the hedgehog in your area. Until next time....

Lynda Zissell



Do come and get to know some of us a bit better. We have a weekly café in the church on a Wednesday between 10am and noon. The refreshments are delightful, and we will be pleased to see.

**NEWS LETTER**  
of St. Mary Bromley

our weekly round up of  
events, prayer and  
how to join in

The life of St. Mary's has much going on. Our weekly Newsletter is full of useful information. There are copies in the church, we are happy to email a copy to you or alternatively post you one. Ask our administrator Atlanta if you are interested. Or it can be obtained though the home page of our website.

Please let Atlanta Topham know about notices you would like to be included by noon on a Wednesday.

***We offer a variety of services through the year. They are mostly on a Sunday at 10.30am and are mostly Family Communion. Most months we also have a Family Service which does not include Holy Communion. We hope you will find us a warm and friendly congregation. If you have questions about what we do, why we do it or how you might like to be more involved please do speak with the Vicar Alan Keeler, a sidesman... or anyone really!***

***Our Sunday Clubs are a valued provision for your youngest members. They do not meet when we have a Family Service or during school holidays.***

***Our services will continued to be live streamed and can be viewed on our Facebook page unless otherwise stated:***

**Save the Date**

Come and join us for Alan's last service as Vicar of St. Mary's before he retires which will be at 10.30am on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024

## **Worship Diary**

### **Services December**

Sunday 3rd – Advent Sunday

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

Sunday 10 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

4.00pm Christingle

Sunday 17th – 3rd Sunday of Advent

10.30am Family Service

6.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 24th – 4 Sunday of Advent

10.30am Family Communion

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib Service

11.30pm Holy Communion

*carols from 11pm*

Christmas Day

9.30am Holy Communion

11.00am Family Service

Sunday 31st – 1 Sunday of Christmas

10.30am Family Communion

### **Services January**

Sunday 7th – 1 Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

Sunday 14th – 2 Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Family Communion

*with admission to Holy Communion*

Sunday 21st – 3 Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

Sunday 28th—4 Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

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