

*St Mary's Church, Bromley*  
*Parish Magazine*  
*November 2023*  
*61 College Road Bromley BR1 3QG*



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

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## Welcome to the November 2023 edition of the Parish Magazine.

Welcome to our November Parish magazine. After all the excitement of our birthday celebrations in September, I think everyone has been taking a rest in October, as contributions to this issue have been in short supply. Hopefully everyone is saving themselves up for the December magazine – it is your last opportunity to appear in print in 2023! As this will be a joint December/January issue, it is perhaps also your last chance to reflect on the years since Alan arrived as our “new vicar” and to share your memories of everything that has taken place since. But the sooner you put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) the better – Atlanta will have plenty to do in November without last minute magazine editing.

Jill Atkinson

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This month's editor: Jill Atkinson

Editor for December/January 24: Atlanta Topham

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



## Table of Contents

Vicar's Article.....	6
Revd Alison Tyler .....	8
Happy Birthday, King Charles! .....	10
Mothers' Union Matters .....	11
Choir Notes and Music .....	13
A View from the Pew .....	15
A new kind of remembrance poppy .....	16
More about Colour.....	17
Colour-in.....	20
Maze.....	21
St James the Least .....	22
Worship Diary .....	23

## 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.***

## Blessed are the Peacemakers



The great peril of being a peacekeeper is that you will be attacked by both sides. Seeking to resolve a problem may give you twice as many adversaries. The ancient advice which originates with the Roman author Vegetius was 'if you want peace prepare for war'. That is from the fourth or fifth century AD. But we can see how that leads to a cycle of violence with one wrong being punished by another and the destruction and death just escalating.

Recent news from the Middle East has been of atrocity and outrage now being perpetrated by both sides. This comes on top of the brutal war in Ukraine. Our human reaction is of horror and revulsion about the cruelty. This is particularly when the suffering is by people who have been going about their peaceful daily lives. We react to the savagery with disgust for such inhuman actions. But we also reflect that the situation has a long history and that so many claims and counter claims have been made over the years.

I heard of a conversation where someone was talking about who won the First World War. The comment was made 'who won the San Francisco earthquake?' In the face of such destruction in 1918 surely some other term than 'win' was required. I heard of people talking about the cycle of violence during The Troubles in Northern Ireland that 'they are just the same it is just one of them started it'. Arguably the conflict in Ireland goes back to at least the seventeenth century.

Faced with what can be truly terrible events it is very easy to see how people wish to respond with how wronged they have been, how terrible the other party is and how justified their vengeful actions are. As bystanders it can be hard to question these responses. As bystanders it can also be impossible to choose a side. Looking at the long story they will be both saying these things.

Perhaps the statement most easy to agree on is that on both sides there are humans of value although some have behaved atrociously. On both sides many of the casualties will be the least to blame and least able to defend themselves.

Another statement might be if you want peace, work for peace. On the one hand this looks stupidly naïve. But I would say it is the opposite. It is very demanding to know what true peace looks like let alone how to work for it.

It was Martin Luther King who said 'without justice, there can be no peace.' For him, peace was not some tranquil absence of trouble. It was about looking at the life of society to determine how people are respected or not. The task is to work for all citizens to be treated with dignity and included in the politics, services and prosperity of the nation.

Following the work of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King sought to do this without the use of violence. His movement suffered much violence and Martin Luther King was himself assassinated. But for both of these leaders they saw another path from cycle of a violence. They explained what a just society should look like and pursued justice with courage and sacrifice.

There is a hymn that begins:

Through the night of doubt and sorrow, onward goes the pilgrim band.

There is a side of faith that is not about comfort or ease. It means looking at points of view we might want to ignore. It means paying attention to people who do not wish us well. It means being honest about what has not been working maybe for many years and seeking a fresh approach.

That opening verse continues:

singing songs of expectation, marching to the promised land.

The promised land is not just a place, it is a community of people and a way of life. It is a vision of peace and justice which is eternal and not to descend into the old pattern of hostility and destruction.

Best wishes

Alan Keeler

# Remembrance - Anticipation



We are rushing towards the end of the Church's year which is the feast of Christ the King on 26<sup>th</sup> November, but before we get there, we have All Saints Day, the feast of All Souls and Remembrance Sunday. Together they encourage us towards a time of reflection and recollection, and they are then, after Christ the King, closely followed by Advent Sunday which ushers in a time of watching and waiting.

Memory and memories are really interesting and are fundamental aspects of our interior lives, sometimes joyous they are there to be shared, at other times they are to be mulled over quietly, and yet other memories cause us great sorrow or possibly shame and guilt.

Our memories can be fragile and can sometimes fail us as we get old, when we lose our memories, we lose parts of ourselves, which is why the slow agony of Alzheimers disease is so cruel. On the other hand if we dwell too long on difficult past memories and do not learn to let some of the pain go, they can blight our whole future.

I knew I was recovering some faith, hope and resilience when I was able to stop brooding on my dying father and be able to remember him again as he had been when well and healthy, when he was full of vigour and energy, warm, intelligent, gifted and hospitable, and was then able to give God grateful thanks that I had him as a father at all, though only for 21 years. We give thanks always for God's great gift of life, but then in bereavement and grief have to learn to continue our own lives without our loved ones present.

I was so blessed by those who told me the truth and made me in turn tell the truth, and then helped me to deal with it. I needed to be able to rant and to rage with the people who loved me and were able to understand. Without their help it would not have been possible to continue to live my life fully or successfully, whilst continually blighted by that acute sense of loss and the rage that accompanied his early death.



We do, if we are fortunate have support and help, and learn to live with the spaces our loved ones leave behind in *our* lives when *they* die. We manage somehow to at least fill up the time we would have spent with them.

The All Saints and All Souls commemorations coming so close together give us the opportunity to revisit on the one hand, the glorious lives of all the Saints of the church witnessing to the Good News, now members of that great multitude worshipping God in heaven. They have since been joined by all those we have loved and known. Whilst on the other hand, we can reflect at All Souls on the sorrow of loss, and the mixture of longing and gratitude that is part of all our adult lives when we recall our loved ones after they have died. We may well be thankful for having shared God's gift of life with them, but living without them is often sad and difficult, keeping faith and hope alive within us can be a superhuman struggle. It can be a real source of strength when we are able to remember together, and offer company and support on that difficult journey.

Then on the Sunday nearest to the end of the first World War our nation keeps Remembrance Sunday, sometimes derided as a celebration of war and death, but in reality a collective opportunity for remembering the destruction, sufferings, sacrifices and deaths of all wars, in hope that ultimately, by remembering, we are trying to ensure that wars will one day cease.

It will be even more poignant this year as in addition to the continuing war in Ukraine, there is now also war in Israel and Palestine, as I write several 1000s of people have already died, either in terrorist attacks in Israel or from aerial bombardment in Gaza. We are struggling again in the darkness of death and destruction, to keep faith and hope alive in the world.

In these ways the month of November comes to reflect a collection of human sorrows building up - and then compelling us to acknowledge just how much we need God's presence with us.

So all the while we continue to bless and break the bread and to bless the wine, and to share them, in remembrance of Jesus until he comes, keeping alive faith and hope as well as we can, and spreading the rumours of God's love for us and for all creation.

No wonder then, that when we celebrate Christ the King, at the ending of the Christian year it may be quite low key. Not so much a triumphant, but a measured and solemn celebration, in a time of both reflection and of looking forward.

On the one hand, a reminder of glory, and on the other the beginning of a time of watching and waiting during Advent for the coming of the light, confident that 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.'

Alison Tyler

## Happy Birthday, King Charles!

King Charles was born 75 years ago this month, on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1948, at Buckingham Palace in London. He was the longest-serving monarch-in-waiting in British history and did not ascend the throne until he was 73, following the death of his mother in September 2022.



Charles was crowned in the first coronation in seven decades, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023. His current title is King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

But King Charles has also become head of the Commonwealth, an association of 56 independent countries and 2.5 billion people. For 14 of these countries, as well as the UK, the King is head of state. These countries are known as the Commonwealth realms. They are Australia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, St Christopher and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.



## MOTHERS' UNION MATTERS

So many people have laboured so often and so effectively over their knitting needles, that it is lovely to be able to print a "Thank you" from the main beneficiary of the knitted goods you make.

Here is some of the response received from the charity "Knit for Peace", to whom most of your knitted goods are delivered:

*Dear St. Mary's Bromley Mother's Union Knit&Natter Group,*

*I am delighted to say that we have received your wonderful knitted donations. We look forward to delivering the knitted items, as they will undoubtedly make a big difference to those in need. Thank you for your support, we truly appreciate it.*

*All the latest information from Knit for Peace can be found in our monthly newsletter and on our Facebook page! You can also support our projects through the Good Gifts Catalogue.*

*Warm wishes from the whole team,*

*Emma*

*Knit for Peace Team*



The next "Knit 'n' Natter" meeting will be on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 10.00 a.m. in the Buchan Hall. Needles, wool, patterns and coffee are always available to support everyone's efforts, and the chat is not intrusive – in fact it seems to lubricate the knitting arms!

Last month we had a fascinating talk by Peter Yolland about Agatha Christie, the amazing writer of so many detective stories. We learned a lot about her life, and about how she managed to become the world's best-selling author. Peter also featured her famous detectives, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple – though without giving away the plots of the novels!



On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November the regular monthly MU meeting will welcome Beverley Nicklin, from the London Borough of Bromley, talking about “Trading Standards”. She will doubtless tell us how this department interacts with local traders to help maintain legal standards, and how members of the public can contact the department to assist them in keeping us all safe.

Peter Fall



Formed in 1987 by a partnership between churches in Bromley North and Bromley Social Services Careplus was very much the brain child of people in St. Mary’s Church Bromley. Careplus has consistently provided practical and social help to older people in the London Borough of Bromley.

Careplus works with individuals, statutory and voluntary agencies in their aim to provide free local volunteer support for older people in the London Borough of Bromley. 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 (trips to medical appointments).

Like many organisations Careplus is looking for volunteers to help with the services they provide. Please consider helping. It will also be wonderful if there could be a representative of St. Mary’s Church to be on the organising committee which meets three times a year.

Please speak with Alan Keeler if you would like to know more. Or there is a website with much useful information. <http://www.careplusbromley.org.uk>



## Choir and Music



By and large, if there is one thing that people don't associate with choirs, it is fun. Now I am not saying that St Mary's Church Choir is the golden exception that proves the rule, but I do maintain that our Church Choir is not over-serious. It has its moments, as any group of humans

is bound to do, but, overall, members of the church choir are friends who enjoy meeting together to produce choral music. Making music is special whenever, and however, it is done. Combining with others to produce music has a special flavour, a lifting of spirits, a mixing of talents, an altruistic supporting of colleagues for the benefit of all.

Most cultures have their songs, their rhythms, their distinctive voices that distinguish them. The church choir is no different. We sing in a tradition that goes back hundreds of years. We learn to listen to each other, attempting to preserve a balance between tune and accompaniment. People want to hear a melody clearly, whichever voice is carrying it. We learn to enunciate the words intelligibly, for they carry the message, and need to be understood by the listener. And yet, we mustn't over-emphasise words to the detriment of the musical flow. All the time, the performer has to be aware of the listener, who is hearing with "innocent ear", and make it easy for them to follow the plot laid out by the composer. Through the tangle of different voice pitches, singers must ensure that the tune is obvious, and that the words are clear.

After many rehearsals, it is easy to forget that, for some folk hearing the choir perform, it may be the first time they have heard that piece of music. The choir's task is therefore to make the process as easy as possible for the listener. Clear lines, accurate intonation, maintaining the flow of the melody, will all enable people to concentrate on the words and absorb the general effect of the music. Composers go to great lengths to illustrate or underline the words that are sung. Singers spend much time practising the accuracy of pitch and duration of notes. They spend a little less time on the clarity of the words.

If the singers don't know the words, and stumble, the listener is unlikely to be able to decipher them. Some choirs spend time reading aloud the words of a new piece, so that they don't become an encumbrance when sung. Church choirs are fortunate in that most of the words are very familiar, be they Bible texts, hymns or devotional poetry. The task of the choir is to project these familiar words, through the medium of the music, to the listener. It is no accident that, before every service, St Mary's Church Choir prays: "Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives." Singing is just one part of our lives, but it can have greater impact than we realise.

Peter Fall



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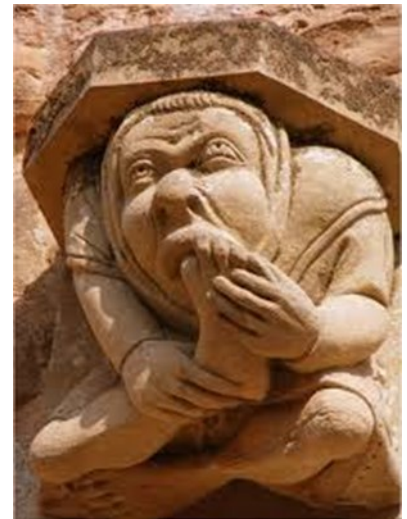
# *A view from the pew*



It is not like me to complain. (Please don't check the accuracy of this statement with my wife, Mary). I am a long-suffering and accepting soul, prone to assume that any problem must be of my own making, rather than caused by someone else. (Please don't try to confirm this with members of my family). I am usually more hard-done-by than creating my own problems. (Please don't follow this up with my friends and colleagues). I always have the best of intentions when things unexpectedly go wrong. Unexpected by me, that is. Folk who know me better have got used to hare-brained schemes, launched without sufficient preparation. They have become accustomed to my bright ideas that can only end in chaos and/or disaster. They have been called on to comfort when the half-thought-out edifice blows over like a house of cards.

The good news is that I recognise this, accept it, and have the T-shirt. The bad news is that it doesn't make the slightest difference to the way I go about life. I am a great proponent of the maxim "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs". So, I continue to embarrass myself (and others) by forgetting their name, asking single people about their children, and widow(er)s about their (dead) spouse. I must have the most chewed toenails in history, from the number of foot-in-mouth episodes I have experienced.

I have always prided myself on my eyesight. Although I need glasses for reading – and I find that they help particularly when it is music and words together – my middle and long-range vision continues to provide a stream of clear pictures for me to translate. This creates its own problem. I



recognise them, I am sure that I know them, but who on earth are the people I see? Fortunately, most folk are very understanding, but it can still be embarrassing later when I can't say who I have just spoken to.

Why am I telling you all this? Soul-baring is not my usual position. Well, I suppose I am getting my retaliation in first, hoping that my frank

admission will enable you to understand the occasional blips in the even tenor (why not bass?) of my way. And then, it also allows you to think that, although you may not have my gross stupidity, it may be possible occasionally for you to admit to minor shortcomings. You will find that it takes a lot of pressure off, lifts a weight from sore shoulders, and can even be redemptive.

I had better stop before I get too serious for a Church Magazine letter.

Peter Fall

### **A new kind of Remembrance poppy**

For the first time in 28 years, there is a new kind of poppy for Remembrance Sunday this year: it is plastic free.

Director of the Poppy Appeal, Andy Taylor-Whyte explains: “We are very proud to introduce the plastic-free poppy. It will not only enable people to support our Armed Forces community but also continues the RBL’s commitment to sustainability.”



The new poppy has been three years in the development and making. The aim was to reduce the use of single-use plastic and to “be economical, sustainable, and less impactful to the environment.”

The new poppy design has a 40% smaller carbon footprint, and it made from “bespoke red and green paper.” The paper comes from a blend of renewable fibres, 50 per cent of which has been recovered from the waste used in the production of coffee cups.

The plastic-free poppy will be available alongside remaining stocks of the current poppy, to reduce any waste of poppies already produced. Poppies containing single-use plastic can be returned to Sainsbury’s stores for recycling.



## More about Colour



### Heat & Colour

Colour is partly explained by the wavelength of light, with the shorter wavelengths at the high energy, blue end and red going into infrared at the longer, lower energy end.

We all know that as things get hotter, they start to glow, starting to get red hot at about 1000 C, cherry red at 1500 C going on to yellow/orange at 2000, Yellow/white at 3000 C then blue hot at over 10,000 C (mainly in stars). These colours do not depend on the type of material, red hot poker, molten metals or glass, give very similar colours to stars. It is only the temperature that matters. This is studied and called blackbody radiation; the radiation a perfectly black object would give out. It created a real puzzle for scientists. By the end of the 1800's scientists thought that they had solved almost everything. Just a couple of small queries – this black body radiation, a few minor irregularities in the orbit of the planet Mercury, and fluid mechanics. Everything else that mattered had been solved.

The problem with the changing of colour with temperature is, that whereas you would expect the amount of radiation of any particular colour to just increase as more energy was put into the system, it did not. Instead, the radiation tends to crowd around a particular colour's wavelength, the colour of which varies from red to blue with the temperature. Eventually the mystery was solved and was one of Einstein's first big breakthroughs, leading to a whole new way of looking at the world – Quantum Mechanics.

Incidentally, Einstein also addressed the little problem of Mercury's orbit. That led to the General Theory of Relativity. Fluid mechanics is still a problem.

## **Aniline Dyes**

William Henry Perkin discovered the first aniline dye Perkin's mauve, from coal tar, mauve, in 1856 and it changed the colour industry for ever.

The original purple dyes were very expensive to produce and could only be used on silk and wool, not cotton, This should have killed the project but for a stroke of luck. Just as he launched his first dyes, the French Empress Eugenie, the most fashionable woman in Europe, and certainly the most imitated in terms of dress, decided that lilacs, purples and mauves matched her eyes perfectly. Following her was the dress Queen Victoria wore to the wedding of her daughter the Princess Royal in 1858. The colour of Queen Victoria's dress was probably due to a natural dye made from lichen, but the result was the same: all shades of purple were in.

Once they had started, they went to develop a full palette of chemical dyes which was eagerly adopted by the fabric and garment industries.

The new colours were used for everything. Embroidery, cloth, paints, the lot.

At this time south-east Europe was still heavily influenced by the Turks. Turkish raiders took everything, including the people. There are no individual farmsteads in southeast Europe, as we have here in England; everyone lived in the greater safety of villages. This was still true when I worked in western Turkey. We would still meet peasants who lived in temporary camp tents on the summer pastures and returned to their village in winter, just in case.

At about the same time that the aniline dyes were being discovered, the Turkish influence was retreating from Southeastern Europe, so the population was getting more confident that what they made, they could keep. One of the visible signs of this was that the women were getting bolder and started to embroider in brighter colours, giving rise to the colorful Kalocsi and other south European embroidery styles.

## **Colour vision**

I said at the beginning that colour is explained by the wavelength of light. This is only half the story. The other half is, of course, us. We have colour receptors on the retinas of our eyes and brains to interpret the results. Without the receptors colours would not exist, just differing lengths of

electromagnetic radiation from radio waves measured in miles to gamma rays smaller than an atom.

At school we were all tested for colour vision. It was explained to us that the gene for colour vision was on one of the branches of the XY chromosome. Girls would normally have two copies of this gene, but boys only the one, but this is normally not a problem as only one copy of the gene is needed for colour vision. However, if this gene is missing, the person will be colour blind. As boys only have the one gene, they are much more likely to be colour blind than girls.

This is what I was taught.

In reality, it is not so simple. Colour blindness is not an all-or-nothing affair, but is gradual, with almost all men being able to distinguish some colours, but with women tending to have a greater number of colour receptors in their eyes, giving better colour discrimination than men, especially in the green part of the spectrum. An unexpected piece of information from James Wong on Gardener's Question Time.

Trine Hevezi

### Grace Café



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 you.

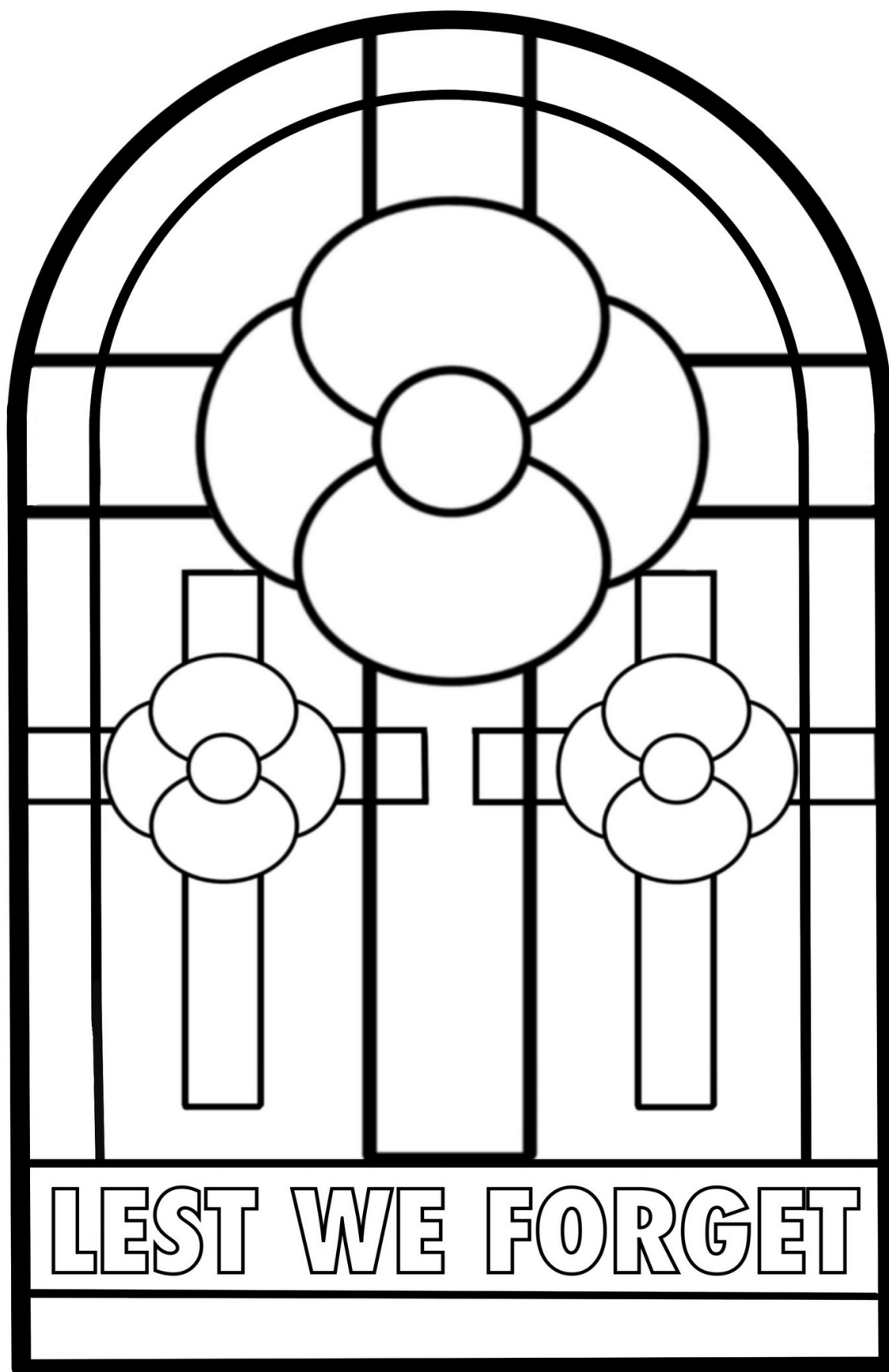
### **NEWS LETTER** of St. Mary Bromley

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 through the home page of our website.

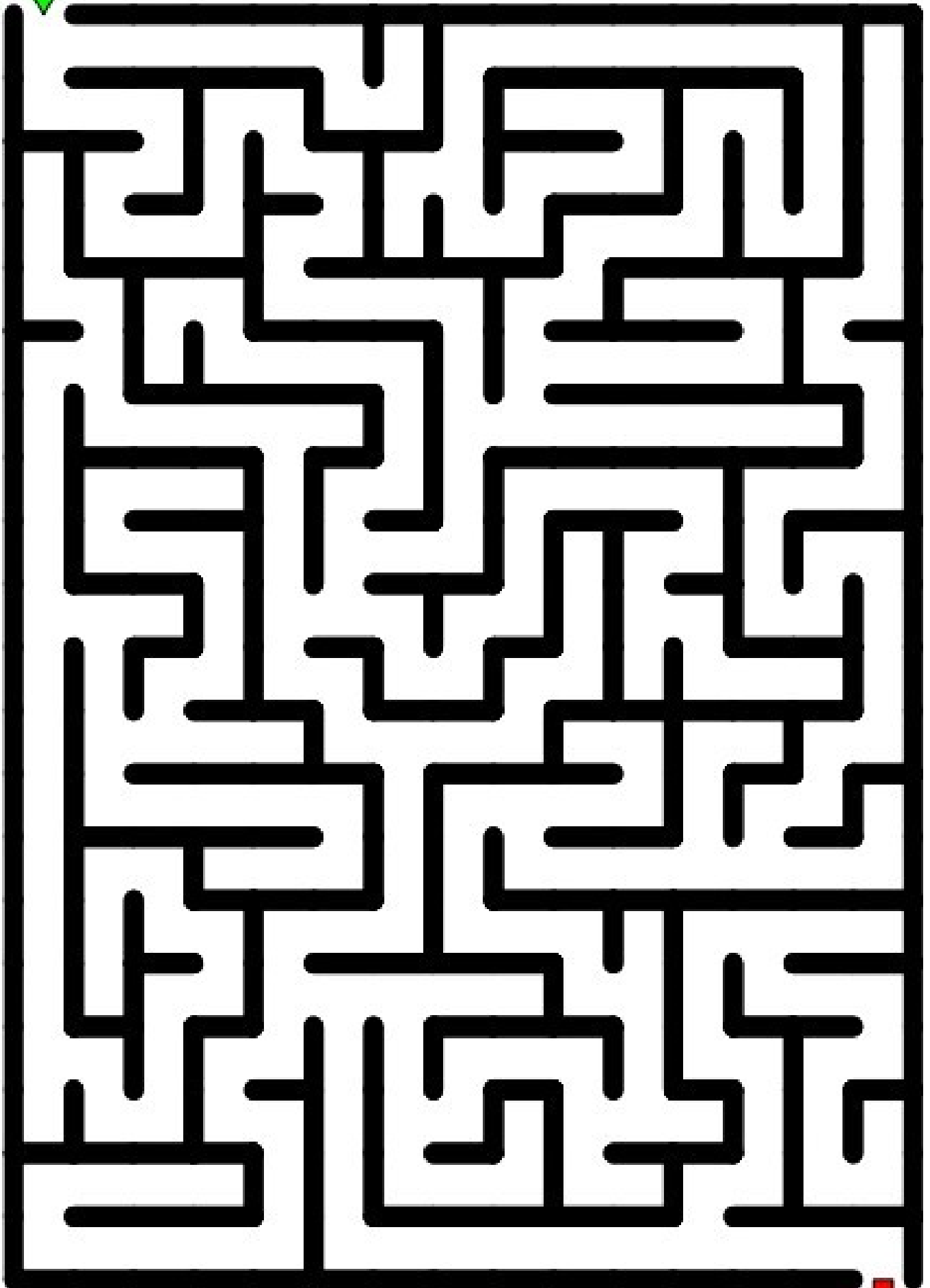
Please let Alan know about notices you would like to be included by noon on a Wednesday.

Colour-in





Maze





My dear Nephew Darren

I hear you have joined the committee which wants to convert the waste land between the abandoned soap factory and canal in your parish into allotments – although I would have thought there were holier sorts of conversions you could have concentrated on. I am sure you will soon be caught up in arguments which make that little disagreement over an apple in the Garden of Eden seem quite trivial.

Some years ago, we similarly decided to let part of our Glebe land become allotments; the outcome was not wholly as may have been anticipated. Colonel Wainwright saw it as an opportunity of re-living his War years and was only just restrained from digging trenches around his plot; no doubt he would have offered to play football with neighbouring allotment holders on Christmas Day.

It caused some surprise when the Earl of Stowe applied for a plot, but it has become something of an attraction to see his daily procession, preceded by his gardener pushing the wheelbarrow, the under-gardener carrying the tools and following him, his butler with the newspaper, a deckchair, and a flask of coffee. He then settles down for a comfortable hour while occasionally supervising the work, once reports on the local hunt have been read.

Miss Simpson managed to unite everyone in communal outrage by using her plot to encourage fluffy bunnies, darling foxes, and sweet squirrels. She seemed to be particularly grateful to everyone else for providing fruit and vegetables for their happiness. Resolution was only achieved when she was convinced to grow potatoes, helping the Colonel in his War Effort. Fortunately, he did not ask her to arrive equipped with the regulation gas mask.

Our local architect seems to spend most of his time beautifying his garden shed, rather than growing produce. With its gothic arched windows, Norman tower and flying buttresses, I do wonder if he may have spent rather too much of his time renovating ancient churches. Neighbouring plot-holders look forward to the agricultural equivalent of the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

I am sure you will find you have committed yourself to many hours of unnecessary work. Just make sure you get a percentage of their produce for your Harvest Festival.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

## **Worship Diary**

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:

The words of the service can be found on our website:

<https://www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk/lockdown/st-marys-worship/>

### Services November

Sunday 5th – 4 Sunday before Advent

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

Sunday 12th – Remembrance Sunday

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

Sunday 19th – 2 Sunday before Advent

10.30am Family Service

Sunday 26th – Christ the King

10.30am Family Communion, with Sunday Club

### **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

## St Mary's (Plaistow) College Road Bromley

Vicar	Revd ALAN KEELER	020 8460 1827
<i>Day off Friday</i>	74 London Lane BR1 4HE e.mail:agkeeler@tiscali.co.uk	
Associate Priest	Revd ALISON TYLER	020 8249 8843
	59 Bishops Avenue BR1 3ET ar.tyler@ntlworld.com	
Readers	Mr JOHN COX	020 8464 8269
	47 Mooreland Road, Bromley BR1 3RD	
	Mr MIKE EAMES	020 8851 5180
	4 Powster Road, Bromley BR1 5HF	
	Dr KEITH NYE	020 8464 9346
	61 Wharton Road, Bromley BR1 3LE	
Pastoral Assistant	Mrs ANTHIA PAGE	020 8460 1960
	21 Rodway Road Bromley BR1 3JJ	
Churchwardens	Clem Sutton/Maria Staines	020 8697 0127
	Maria Staines	07932 637 002
Parish Administrator	Mrs. ATLANTA TOPHAM	020 8466 6969
	e.mail: admin@stmarys-bromley.org.uk	
Church House	Mrs. ATLANTA TOPHAM	07951 748 155
Bookings	e.mail:stmaryshouseandhall@gmail.com	
Concerts & Choir	Mr PETER FALL	020 8464 1239
CarePlus	Mrs MIRANDA SUIT	07930 955 398
	e.mail:info@careplusbromley.org.uk	

### Magazine Committee

Jo Clark	Editor e-mail:joc1947@msn.com	020 8289 6535
Atlanta Topham	Editor, Postal distribution, Advertising e-mail: admin@stmarys-bromley.org.uk	020 8466 6969
Jill Atkinson	Editor e-mail: jilleatk@aol.com	
Lesley Speller	Distribution Manager	020 8460 5569