

St Mary's Church, Bromley

Parish Magazine

JUNE 2026

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Welcome to the June 2026 edition of the Parish Magazine.

As we move into the summer season, this month's magazine reflects a time of growth, renewal, and connection within our church and wider community. Following a busy and encouraging May, there is much to give thanks for and to look forward to.

In this issue, you will find highlights from parish life, including the success of the Mothers' Union plant sale, the work with Community Payback, and a warm welcome to our new Parish Administrator, Manisha. It is also encouraging to see our continued links with the wider community, including welcoming local councillors to Grace Café.

This edition offers a rich variety of contributions, from reflections on the work of the Holy Spirit to memories of St Mary's choir life, reminding us of both the faith and history we share.

My thanks go to everyone who has contributed and helped produce the magazine.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

With best wishes

Atlanta

If you wish to make payment for the magazine online the bank details are:

Sort Code 09 01 51

Account 27769404 (St Marys Plaistow Parish Magazine)

This month's editor: Atlanta Topham

Editor for : July and August : Jill Atkinson

Copy date: 20th August 2026

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.

VICARS LETTER—JUNE 2026



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the month of June! I want to begin by giving thanks to God for all that has blessed our parish during May. It has been a full and encouraging month, reminding us once again that church life is about people growing together in faith, service, and friendship.

There have been many signs of God at work among us. We were delighted to become registered as part of the Warm Welcome Spaces initiative, [Warm Welcome Space](#) continuing our calling to be a church where all people can find kindness, hospitality, and community. It has also been wonderful to see Community Payback begin their work with us on Saturdays. Their contribution is already making a visible difference, and it is good to play our part in offering opportunities for restoration and positive change.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to our new Parish Administrator, Manisha. We are delighted to welcome her into the life of our church community, and we look forward to getting to know one another and working together.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been faithfully supporting the administrative work of the parish over the past year. Much of what keeps church life running smoothly happens quietly behind the scenes, and your care and dedication are deeply appreciated.

Our Vision Day, led by Fr Jeremy, and our APCM gave us important opportunities to reflect on all that has been achieved and to prayerfully consider where God may be leading us next. I was especially grateful for the thoughtful conversations, encouragement, and willingness shown by so many people to play their part in the life of the parish.

It was also lovely to welcome our two newly elected ward councillors, Panos and Alwin to church during Grace Café coffee morning. Building strong relationships within our wider community is so important, and it was a pleasure to spend time together.

Meanwhile, thanks must also go to the Mother's Union for their successful plant sale fundraiser, another example of fellowship, generosity, and shared purpose. Thank you to everyone who supported the plant sales in any way.

Spiritually, May has carried us through some of the most powerful and joyful moments of the Christian year: Ascension Day, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. These great festivals remind us that ours is a living faith. Jesus ascends to the Father, the Holy Spirit comes with power and encouragement, and we are drawn into the mystery and love of the Holy Trinity. Alongside these celebrations, it was a particular joy to baptise Mila and baby Isaac, welcoming them and their families into the family of faith. Baptisms always remind us that God is continually doing new things among us.

June itself brings many opportunities for fellowship and reflection. We look forward to the Mother's Union Cream Tea, our Quiet Morning, and Father's Day celebrations. June has traditionally been associated with growth and renewal in the natural world, and perhaps that offers us a gentle spiritual reminder too: growth often happens quietly, steadily, and faithfully.

As we move into the summer season, I encourage us all to focus especially on prayer and outreach. Summer gives many opportunities to connect with neighbours, welcome visitors, and simply spend time with one another. Small acts of kindness and invitation can speak volumes about the love of Christ.

We see daily reminders of conflict, suffering, uncertainty, and division across many nations and communities. In times like this, prayer is not a last resort but a vital act of hope and trust. As Mother Teresa once reminded us, *“Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.”* May we continue to hold the world before God in prayer, trusting His presence to sustain and guide us.

As we journey into June together, the words of St Paul feel especially fitting: *“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”* (Romans 12:12). In all that lies ahead, may we continue to encourage one another in faith, trusting that God is gently at work among us with love, grace, and purpose. May His peace sustain you, and His presence remain with you.

With every blessing,

Rev. Eucharua Asiegbu

Vicar

A Joyful Welcome to Our New Parish Administrator

We are delighted to welcome Mrs Manisha Sharma as our new Parish Administrator. We look forward to working with her and are grateful that she is joining us in the life and ministry of the parish. Please keep her in your prayers as she settles into her new role among us.



**Her office hours are: Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 10.00 am to 1.00 pm
and Thursdays: 10.00 am to 2.00 pm.**

“Come Holy Spirit.....”



The time between the Ascension and Pentecost often feels quite empty; Jesus has ascended and the Spirit has not yet come. The Church in a programme called ‘Thy Kingdom come’ encourages us to pray for about 5 people we know, during this time, that they might come to know Jesus when the Spirit comes.

It’s a part of the fulfilment of both Jesus’s command and his promise in Matthew 28 . The command is to make disciples of all nations to baptise and to teach them, and the promise is to be with us to the end of the age. We start any ministry and mission with prayer, asking for God’s blessing as we start and as we finish. In Acts 1 we are further promised “ you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem,and to the ends of the earth.”

It is a scary thing on many levels, remember it’s the Holy Spirit we are praying for, the unpredictable, dynamic Holy Spirit, the one who brooded over the waters of creation in the beginning, the one who like the wind cannot be controlled, and who comes as a mighty rushing wind and tongues of flame in Acts. Yet the same Spirit is also described as a spring of living water welling up within us to eternal life.

The same Spirit is breathed upon the disciples by Jesus as they are given the power to forgive sins in John’s gospel where Jesus describes the spirit in different ways at different times. So the holy Spirit has many names and qualities the comforter, or the advocate ‘the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said...’ or even the teacher. ‘But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

Images and descriptions of the Spirit are so rich and multi layered its difficult to grasp the amazing truth of God's promise fulfilled. It also hard to grasp all the challenges of the Spirit, the Spirit of truth, and of power, cleansing and unpredictability. We cannot imagine the greatness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; St Paul has an attempt in 1 Corinthians 12: 3-12 they are all different. but are given for the common good. We cannot be possessive of our gifts or skills they are there for us to use and to share together.

Taken together they provide all the gifts we need to build up the kingdom of God. It is often said that by their fruits you can know what people are like, so spirit filled people using the gifts of the Spirit, should produce communities full of the fruit of the Spirit, As Paul wrote to the Galatians the fruits to look for are love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'.

To build such communities we will need both comfort and challenge, the ability to see and understand the truth about ourselves, the need for cleansing and renewal, and the power to grow, change and develop together - dealing imaginatively and creatively as taught by the Spirit, with the unpredictable and enormous challenges to be taken on slowly and carefully, including all our sisters and brothers in the process, and exploring all the generous possibilities of the Holy Spirit. We will need the comfort and encouragement of the Spirit in all the times of trial, misery and mistakes when things go wrong.

Not just a life giving spring of living water welling up to eternal life, the Spirit might also be described as a gracious gift that keeps on giving and meeting our needs for growth throughout our whole life journey, as we take on our share in the ministry and mission of love and service, following in the footsteps of Jesus. So our continuing prayer for the journey needs to be 'Come Holy Spirit and kindle in us the fire of your love'. Amen

Mothers Union Matters



The Mothers' Union held their Annual Plant Sale on Saturday 23rd May. A big thank you from the Mothers' Union to all who helped in different ways to create another successful sale. It was good to see people from the local community enjoying buying the wide range of plants and the supporting the café. Over £1,000 will have been raised. The money raised will go to the 150th MU Anniversary Fund which is tackling domestic abuse in this country and helping literacy and agricultural projects overseas.





Mothers Union Meetings in June and July

June

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 3 rd | Grace Café from 10am |
| Thursday 11 th | Outing for a Cream Tea at Bromley Court Hotel |
| Thursday 18 th | Knit and Knatter |

in the Front Room of Church House from 10am, open to all

July

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Wednesday 1st | Grace Café from 10am |
| Date to be confirmed | Diocesan Wave of Prayer |
| Thursday 16 th | Knit and Knatter |

in the Front Room of Church House from 10am, open to all.

Vision Day and APCM



A wonderful day of prayer, fellowship, and shared vision for the future of our church community. Thank you to everyone who took part in our Vision Day as we continue seeking God's guidance together



Grateful for the conversations, encouragement, and shared thoughts for the life of our church during our APCM.

Working Together in Our Community



Working together with Community Payback, building positive connections and supporting a shared commitment to service and renewal within our local community

“Serve one another humbly in love.”

— Galatians 5:13

It was a joy to welcome our two newly elected Councillors to St Mary's Grace Café- A Place of Welcome.



From left to right: Councillor Panos and Councillor Alwin

Councillor Alwin Puthenpurakal: Plaistow ward

Alwin is a proud Plaistow ward resident and his parents live a stone throw away in Bickley and Sundridge ward. Both of his young sons attend the local nursery and the Catholic primary school, where he also serves as a School Governor. Professionally, Alwin has worked across healthcare and higher education for almost two decades in a variety of leadership and academic roles. He currently leads several university programmes in London to help meet national and international healthcare workforce demands.

Councillor Panos Papayannakos, Plaistow ward

I have lived in Plaistow ward for over 30 years, attending Burnt Ash primary school, and I am now raising my own young family in the ward. Four generations of my family have lived in this ward and this has allowed me to gain an insight into how each generation lives in the ward, uses the facilities and amenities, what they like and what they would like to see changed or improved.

I am very passionate about children's services and I have previously spent a number of years volunteering as an Independent Visitor for a child in the care system and, together with my wife, have also been a Foster Carer for the London Borough of Bromley.

I am a freelance Chartered Engineering working within the railway industry on multidisciplinary, large-scale enhancement projects delivering new technology with my role focussing on integration and safety assurance. I have a keen interest on science, technology, sustainable travel and the environment."



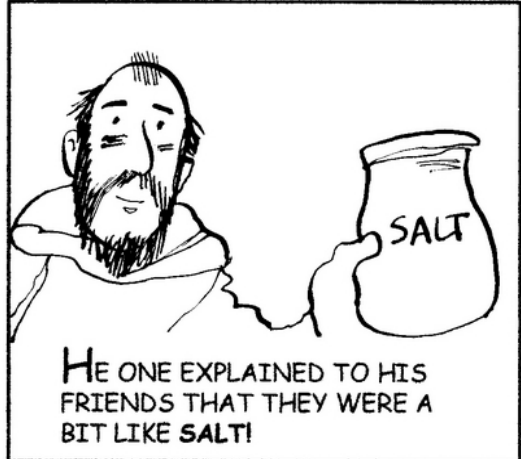
Colour-in



The tale of the Salt and Light

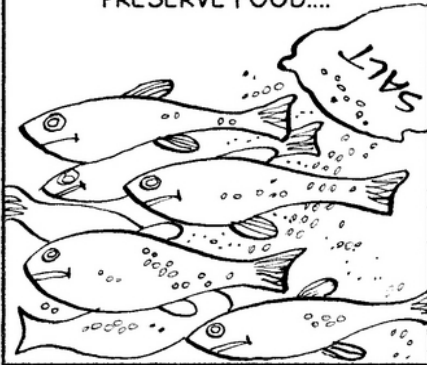


JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

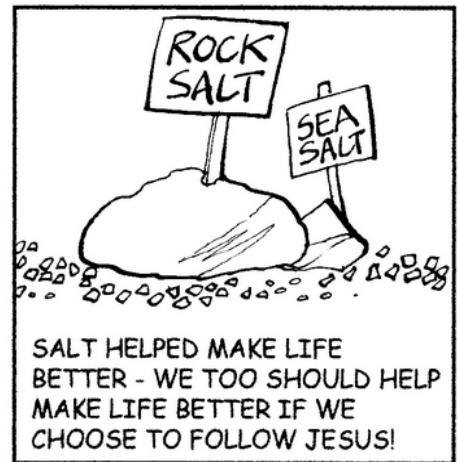


HE ONE EXPLAINED TO HIS FRIENDS THAT THEY WERE A BIT LIKE SALT!

IN JESUS' DAY, SALT WAS VERY PRECIOUS. IT HELPED PRESERVE FOOD....

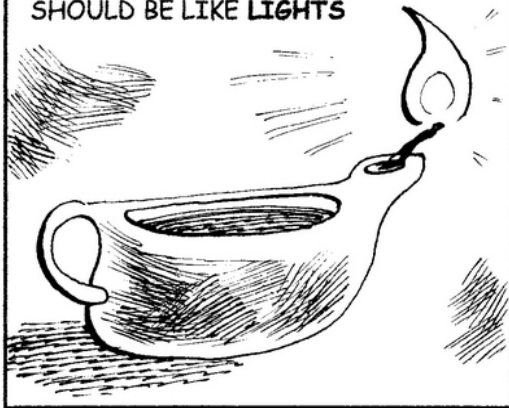


....AND SALT GAVE FLAVOUR. IT WAS VERY USEFUL INDEED



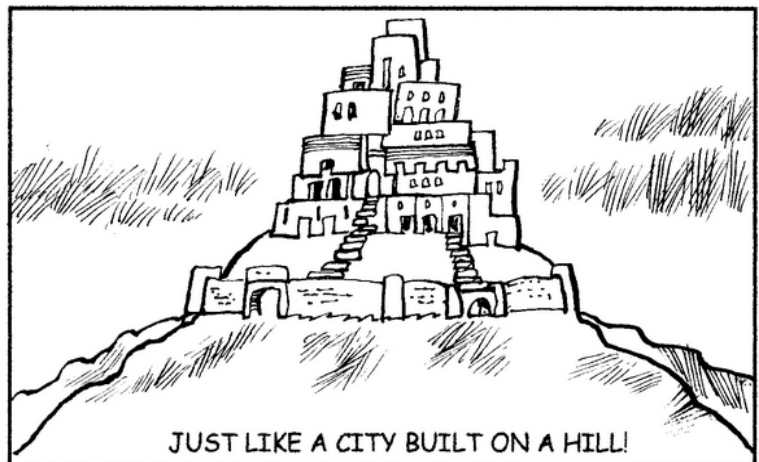
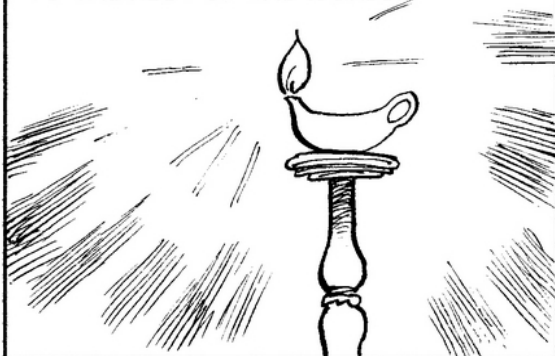
SALT HELPED MAKE LIFE BETTER - WE TOO SHOULD HELP MAKE LIFE BETTER IF WE CHOOSE TO FOLLOW JESUS!

JESUS ALSO SAID HIS FOLLOWERS SHOULD BE LIKE LIGHTS



'NOBODY LIGHTS A LAMP - THEN PUTS IT UNDER A BOWL', SAID JESUS

THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE AN EXAMPLE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.



JUST LIKE A CITY BUILT ON A HILL!

A choirboy in St Mary's Church from the mid 1950's

When I was in Class 2 at St Mary's Primary School, Fairfield Road, Mrs Hersee was appointed Headmistress in 1954, having succeeded Miss Young. Early in 1955, Mrs Hersee suggested that I should go along to a choir practice in St Mary's Church, so I went along with another boy and we quite enjoyed the experience. This was in April 1955 when I was nine and a half years of age. In my 1955 school reports, Mrs Hersee stated "He is a great help with the music in the school" and "...in music lessons, when he seems to enjoy himself very much".

Neither of my parents were churchgoers and I hadn't been Baptized, so it was quite an experience to enter St Mary's Church for the first time and see the lavish decorations in such a large open space. Probationers had separate practices on Tuesday early evenings but the main choir practices were on Thursday evenings, when the boys had a practice before the men, who joined them later. Mr Leslie Ellis was organist and choir master and he took all choir practices, plus the training of boy probationers. At the probationer choir practices, there were several boys undergoing training for singing in tune, music ability including basic music notation, singing scales and learning note names etc. We practised hymn and anthem singing and were introduced to the pointing for the chanting of psalms and canticles. Many probationers couldn't cope with the intricacies of these skills, so they freely left or didn't pass the basic tests, so there was a high turn-around of probationers.



Mr Ellis (photo c1958) had been organist and choir master at St Mary's Church since at least before the start of WW2 (1st September 1939). He was very kind but at the same time strict with the boys.

I was also allowed to join the Thursday choir practices, being placed next to a senior boy to assist me with singing and sorting the music as required. After a 3 month training period, I was allowed to sing in Sunday Matins and Evensong services. Probationers wore a cassock and ruff but no surplice. Extra chairs were added to the choir stalls to accommodate all choir singers. After a further period, if successful, a probationer was admitted as a junior choir boy, denoted by wearing a surplice.

On becoming a junior choir boy, there was an initiation ritual carried out by senior choir boys, which was probably unknown to the congregation and clergy. Adjacent to the steps outside of the choir vestry, there was a dense holly bush about 5-6 feet tall. Four senior choir boys would pick up the junior choir boy by arms and legs, swing him several times to gain height and throw him as high as possible into the holly bush. It became a rite of passage into the choir and I was no exception to this experience! Incidentally, that holly bush over the last 70 years has now grown into a tall holly tree.

In the days when I was admitted to the choir, only the head choir boys on Cantoris (right side) and Decani (left side) looking towards the Chancel wore Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) badges on ribbons. With so many boys and men in the choir, their surplices, plus ruffs (worn by boys only) were regularly laundered and starched by a local company. From time to time, cassocks were also laundered. The dirty items were sent off in a large trunk and returned in pristine condition.

All choir boys and men were paid, depending on attendances at services and choir practices, with unpunctuality and bad conduct deducted, all judged by Mr Ellis. There were a considerable number of church weddings in a year when I was a choir boy and a high percentage of couples requested a choir. On some Saturdays, there were up to 4 weddings in the high season, so it was well worth singing in the choir. There were occasional funerals which also requested a choir.

The Revd John Rahe-Hughes (1948-1959) was vicar when I joined the choir. He was well loved by everyone and it was at a time when the Church was packed for Matins at 11.00am and Evensong at 6.30pm (photo c1956). Mr Ellis, like many people of the day, was a heavy smoker and during the sermons,



he would regularly disappear outside the North Transept or the choir vestry to get his nicotine fix. On Sundays, the school gates, one in Fairfield Road and the other between the playground and the churchyard were specially unlocked, so it was a matter of yards for me to walk across Fairfield Road through the school playground to the choir vestry.

Shortly after I joined the choir, four of my cousins also joined, namely twins Pat and Chris Powling, their younger brother Terry and also George Underwood, who became a life friend of David Jones (Bowie) and gave David his dilated left eye in a fight over a girl in 1962 when they were both aged 15. David Jones was reportedly in the choir for a brief spell but I do not remember him as he was a couple of years younger than me. Chris Powling was married at St Mary's Church on the 27th August 1966 and Terry on the 27th July 1968, with the choir, including myself, singing at both weddings.

Whilst in the choir in my early years, my lifelong nickname of "Ginge" came about and stuck because of the colour of my hair. The name has remained and 4 or 5 of those who used to be members of St Mary's Church still address me by my nickname when we meet.

Other prominent ministers who came to assist at St Mary's Church in the 1950's included The Revd Cannon Fenton Morley (CBE 1980), who didn't tolerate any nonsense and talking from choir boys during services. Also, there was The Prebendary Revd Donald Lynch (CBE 1972) of The Church Army. After John Rahe-Hughes left in 1959, Donald Lynch mainly stepped in

as interregnum minister until the appointment of The Revd W Angus MacFarlane (1959-1971).

Another big change came for the choir when Leslie Ellis left around 1962 to take up an appointment at St Mary's Church, Shortlands. Mr Ian Henderson was appointed the new organist and choir master at St Mary's Church, Bromley in the spring of 1962 and stayed until the spring of 1967. The choir thrived under his direction and benefited from him being on the staff and studying at



the RSCM, Addington Palace Croydon (photo, opened 1954 to 1966). The choir grew considerably again under his leadership, enabling the purchase of new music, promotion schemes for choir boys, away choir courses and weekend courses at St Mary's Church. There were choir holidays at Wimborne Minster and Winchester, visits and singing in London Cathedrals, socials and football matches. Ian Henderson started the choir magazine in November 1963, which was named Crescendo! from the 5th issue. The final and 47th issue was in November 1977 (with John G Bowden as editor, organist and choir master).

I stepped down as Head Chorister in 1964 at the ripe old age of 19, dropping voice to join the Alto line. The following article was published in the Bromley Kentish Times on the 24th April 1964.

ST. MARY'S
 A presentation was made by the Vicar, the Rev. W. A. MacFarlane, at choir practice on Thursday last week to the choir side with most points for attendance, punctuality and general behaviour during the first quarter of the year. Each side of the choir is given a name, the left being called "Decani," and right "Cantoris." The winners of the shield this time were "Decani." The shield, which consists of the coat of arms and motto of the Royal School of Church Music, was presented to the head chorister, Roger Benoy, who has been a member of the choir for nine years. Two of the boys from the winning side, Nicholas Tidman and Peter Warren, recently attended an instructional course organised by the Royal School of Church Music, held at their headquarters at Addington Palace, Croydon.



CHOIR SHIELD.—The Vicar of St. Mary's, Bromley, the Rev. A. MacFarlane, presenting the shield to members of the choir. Mr. I. Henderson, choirmaster, is on the left in the picture. The others are: Andrew Cannon, Peter Warren, Nicholas Tidman, Jeremy Buller, Edwin Tate and Roger Benoy (head choirboy).—(K.T. Photo No. QO/2977.)

Celebrations & Greetings from Our Parish Family



Joy sends her warm greetings and love to all our church family. Although now living in a care home, she continues to keep St Mary's church in her thoughts and prayers.



Happy 90th Birthday, John!

Wishing you a joyful and blessed 90th birthday. May this special milestone be filled with love, joy and treasured memories.

With every blessing and warmest wishes from all at the St Mary's Bromley.

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 an All Age Family Service. 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 a Church Warden, a sidesman... or anyone really!

Our Sunday Club is a valued provision for our youngest members. They do not meet during school holidays.

Our services are often livestreamed and can be viewed on our Facebook page

Tuesday 2nd June		9.00am—9.30am Morning Prayer in Church
Sunday 7 th June	Trinity 1	10.30am Parish Communion
Sunday 14 th June	Trinity 2	10.30am Parish Communion
Sunday 21 st June	Trinity 3 Father's Day	8.30am BCP Communion- followed by Breakfast Café 10.30am Family Service
Sunday 28 th June	Trinity 4	10.30am Parish Communion

Events

Saturday: 06/06/26	Monthly Church Cleaning 10.00 am – 12.00 noon
Thursday: 11/06/26	Mother's Union Cream Tea Outing 2.00 pm
Every Tuesday	Morning Prayer 9.00 - 9.30 am
Every Wednesday	Grace Café: A Place of Welcome 10.00 am – 12.00 noon
Every Thursday	Choir Practice 7.30 pm

St Mary's (Plaistow) College Road Bromley

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