

St Mary's Church, Bromley
Parish Magazine

DECEMBER 24 & JANUARY 25

61 College Road Bromley BR1 3QG

THE HOLLY



& THE IVY

www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk

Minimum donation 75p

Bishop Jonathan's Christmas Message 2024 – A light in the darkness

As we approach Christmas this year, I guess many of us feel that we are living in anxious and uncertain times. There is a sense of gathering gloom and darkness in our world that isn't just to do with the nights drawing in!

We are seeing wars in numerous places, with fear of their escalation even right here in Europe. There is the growing impact of climate change. And then there is the rise of Artificial Intelligence, alongside the power of social media and their effect on the mental health especially of young people.

All in all, it can seem a pretty dark and scary world out there at times!

And it is into this situation that the message of Christmas speaks so clearly. Saint John says at the start of his Gospel, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

That light is Jesus Christ who came into the world to bring God's light to us, to show us the way, to guide us and to bring us hope.

Jesus can bring us that light because he is the one who made the world. And he invites us to receive that light by receiving him into our lives. As Saint John says, "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God."

And that is the invitation that he issues to every single one of us. It is the invitation that our churches celebrate and proclaim afresh every year at Christmas – and throughout the whole of the year.

However dark our world may appear – and however dark the circumstances we ourselves may be facing – Jesus offers us light in the darkness and hope for the future. So may I invite you this Christmas to come along and hear more about the light of Jesus in your local church – and if you're a regular there already, then to invite others along to discover the light of Christ for themselves.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it". May the light of Christ shine ever more brightly in our hearts and in our world this Christmas and in the year to come.

Bishop Jonathan Gibbs

The Bishop of Rochester



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Welcome to the December 24 and January 25 edition of the Parish Magazine.

The last Parish Magazine of 2024 What a Year! We have had wars in the Ukraine, and the Middle East and further afield, plus the wildfires, storms and floods Perhaps some of you reading the magazine may be facing a cost of living crisis and a hard winter with little to be cheerful about .Yet the message of Christmas is just as real for us today as it was 2000 years ago, let us believe that Christmas will bring us Hope and Joy.

St Mary's hope and joy was the Rev. Asiegbu's Collation, Induction and Installation. There are lots of pictures in for you to enjoy plus photographs of the Armistice Day Commemoration. Do not forget if you have snapshots that you would like to share with the Parish please do not hesitate to send to one of the editors. Hopefully the February Magazine will have picture updates on the restored Murals.

This Parish Magazine is also the first of 2025 as always - do not forget the Magazine can only survive if YOU contribute articles. The Magazine Editors with you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2025

Jo Clark

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

Table of Contents

Vicars Article.....	6
Revd Alison Tyler	8
A view from the Pew	10
Choir and Music.....	12
Mothers' Union Matters	14
Children's Page	16
A very Special Baby.....	17
Memories of Christmas	19
Tea	20
Springhill and Environs (Part 2).....	23
Worship Diary	27

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.

Greetings in the name of Christ!



I am truly delighted to write my first letter for the parish magazine as your new vicar. Though I am still settling in, please know that my heart is open to you, and I look forward to sharing in the life, faith, and fellowship of this community.

I would like to use this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers, visiting clergy and everyone who have worked so tirelessly to support the church during the vacancy. From those who have kept the day-to-day running of the church on track to those who have nurtured its ministry and mission. Your efforts, dedication, faithfulness and service have been truly inspiring and a blessing. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ during this transitional period. May God continue to bless and keep you all.

As we enter Advent season, we are reminded of the anticipation that lies at the heart of our Christian story. It is a time that highlights the beauty of waiting, watching, and hoping as we wait for the celebration of Christ's birth and prepare for His coming again. Advent is a period of seeking God's light in the midst of darkness. It mirrors, perhaps, the yearning many of us for peace and restoration in a world that can often feel uncertain.. Isaiah 9:6 says: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This is a powerful reminder that the light of Christ shines even in our darkest moments!

Advent invites us to pause amidst the busyness, light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, and reflect on the profound truth that Emmanuel, God with us, is at the heart of our faith. May we open our hearts to that light and reach out in kindness and love to those around us.

Christmas is, of course, a highlight of the church year. It also reminds us of God's immeasurable love, breaking into the world in the most unexpected of ways: a child born in a stable, bringing a glorious culmination of hope and light. In the birth of Jesus, God draws near to us, not in splendour or power, but in vulnerability, humility and love. It is a story that speaks to all

of us, no matter where we find ourselves

Christmas is a season of celebration and awe when we reflect on the great gift of God's love in sending His Son to dwell among us. The words of John 1:14 resonate deeply: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." This season is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with the profound truth of the incarnation—God with us.

As we prepare to celebrate together in carols, worship, gatherings and food, let us approach the manger afresh, open our hearts ready to receive the joy, wonder and light of Christ, and carry this light into our homes, our streets, and every corner of our community. May we also extend Christ's love and peace to all and hold in our hearts those for whom this season may be challenging, whether due to loneliness, loss, or hardship.

Looking ahead to the New Year, I am filled with hope and excitement for what lies ahead for our parish. Jeremiah 29:11, declares: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." With this assurance, I trust that God will continue to guide and bless our church as we seek to serve Him and our community.

As we step into the New Year, may we embrace it with renewed hope because God is always doing something new. Let us therefore listen to His leading, seek His will, and trust that He will guide us to be a source of peace, love, hope and light not only for those who worship here but for the whole community and those around us.

May the hope of Advent and the joy of Christmas be a time of renewal for you and bring you peace that fills your hearts and homes; and may the New Year be filled with the joy of God's presence in all you do.

With every blessing,

Rev'd Eucharika Asiegbu

Look Busy



The grey days of November remind me irresistibly of my grim little office in Wormwood Scrubs, crammed with chairs and 2 large desks, with its dismal view of high walls topped with coiled razor wire. To cope with the doleful outlook, we rotated uplifting posters with slogans ranging from Keep Calm and Carry on, to beautiful pictures, or scripture quotes all the way round to the one which said, “Jesus is Coming-look busy.”. We saved that last one for Advent, partly because it was funny, but also because it seemed absurd and that made it even funnier.

It was impossible not to be busy in prison ministry, so being busy was our usual state.

Being busy or not would make no difference to Jesus, for Jesus is always coming to us in the middle of everything, he is ‘God with us’ wherever we are going, and whether or not we are busy.

But also it opens up our thinking about Advent and Christmas, Advent has two strands intricately woven together, waiting and preparing, for the coming of the Lord. We have been waiting for Christ to return for over 2000 years now, and annually we prepare again to celebrate his first coming, as ‘Emanuel,’ ‘God-with-us,’ with joyful festivities, feasting and generous giving.

Waiting has an element of reflection and contemplation, in contrast to potentially busier and more active preparation.

At the same time we prepare, spiritually at least, for the possibility that Christ might actually return at any time, as we do not know the day or the hour. It’s a bit like having your bag packed for a quick dash to hospital when expecting a baby, because again we don’t know when exactly the baby will come either.

At risk of great generalisation and over simplification, I have noticed, as I have got older what seems like a slight decline in self-indulgence during Advent, and certainly at Christmas amongst people of faith in my own generation, giving more and consuming less. Increasingly the focus has

shifted to giving to those in need, rather than to family and friends, in a move away possibly from the immediate post war urge to make up for rationing by going over the top as my own parents seemed to. They wanted everyone to have the best and threw wildly extravagant parties at Christmas. Sustainability, simplicity and generosity ,concern for others and for the planet have now become much more prevalent.

The first time I celebrated Christmas in a night shelter as a teenaged helper, was a revelation to me, leading me firstly to become a probation officer and later into prison ministry. It has also meant that in Advent and at Christmas, I am more aware than usual of poverty and disadvantage. And sadly, though I wish I become a good deal more generous, I am still over indulgent, but perhaps less so than I might have been.

Whereas some people who are apparently rich and others without faith or knowledge have seemingly just carried on equating celebration with an invitation to continual over indulgence, and not just at Christmas but more generally. The rich are different and the chasm between rich and poor grows ever wider, though in the Magnificat it is clear that God's priorities are quite different.

We have though I think and hope come to a time of increasing realisation that resources are not infinite and that satisfaction, meaning and pleasure are not to be found in just accumulating stuff. Or maybe I am gaining just a little wisdom with increasing age and find pleasure in generosity and doing things for others. Realising at the same time that when he comes again Christ *will expect* us to be busy – following in his footsteps loving God and our neighbour, living lives of service as peacemakers and builders of God's kingdom.

I wish for us all a reflective and yet active time in Advent and despite continual bad news including war, conflict, division and natural disaster a joyful, blessed and generous Christmas. For when Christ himself came for the first time as God, with us, it was to a war torn and conquered country , to a poor family in dangerous circumstances who themselves became refugees in Egypt. But as the angel said to Mary "with God nothing is impossible".

Alison Tyler

A view from the pew



The way I have laid out that heading, it looks suspiciously like a Christmas Eve note! So here is mine – are you listening, Father Christmas?

Firstly, isn't it time that you did something about the continuing war in the Middle East? I realise that not all of the cultures involved may include you in their festive celebrations, but I am sure that they would know who you are if you appeared and spoke sternly to them about making peace. They might even listen!

Then there is the ongoing crisis here. Folk with no home, no job, no support group, no friends – and many other “no”s. What have you in your sack for them? They need more than warm words, or understanding smiles, or a packet of Smarties! Can you conjure up a bright future for them, for those who have been sidelined, and excluded, and rejected?

And too often we overlook the disabled. Please don't do the same. They too are part of our “big society” and deserve an equal share of its goodies. We are too quick to exclude those who are different “for their own good”. We need to put ourselves into their shoes and feel what it is like to be “talked over”. From what I have heard, you might just be the person who can sidestep the “accepted view” and try to include “difference” with everyone else, on equal terms.

We know that children love Christmas presents – but old folk need stockings too! And not just because of varicose veins! Please include the middle-aged, the elderly and the old in your visits. A small bar of chocolate or of soap will be gratefully received. But best of all, a personal visit makes all the difference to someone who seldom meets up with another. A bearded, red-coated old man suddenly appearing to them (do you still use a chimney?) may come as a bit of a surprise, but will hardly be a problem for most of the older generation.

And finally, do you have any tips? Not for my snooker cue. Not for the 2.15 at Wincanton. Not to pass on to the waiter. No, - have you any suggestions for a successful Christmas? Any ideas that always work? – with children, with adults, with Grinches?

Things like.....

“Laughter?”

“Silly games, like pass-the-parcel?”

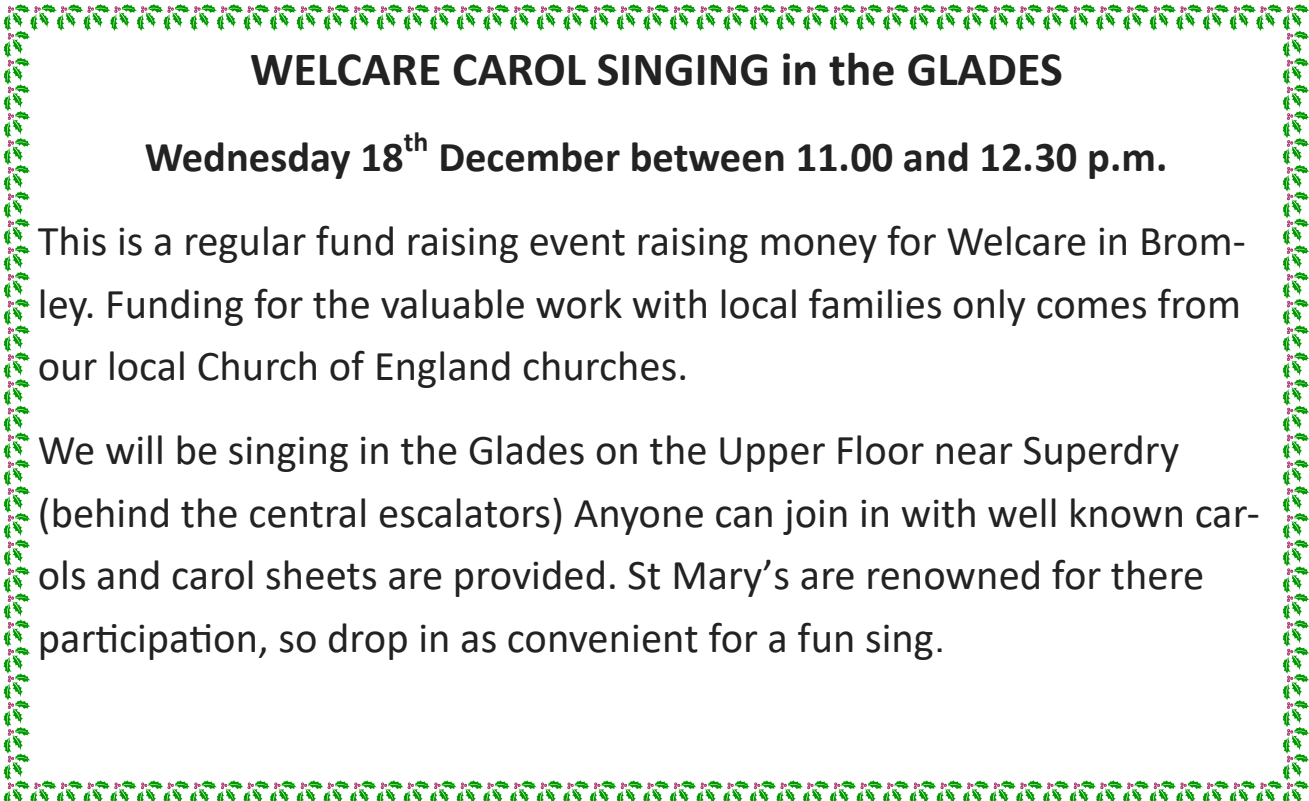
“Do-it-yourself” Christmas decorations?

And what did you just add?

“The story of the baby in the manger.”

Now you are talking!

Peter Fall



WELCARE CAROL SINGING in the GLADES

Wednesday 18th December between 11.00 and 12.30 p.m.

This is a regular fund raising event raising money for Welcare in Bromley. Funding for the valuable work with local families only comes from our local Church of England churches.

We will be singing in the Glades on the Upper Floor near Superdry (behind the central escalators) Anyone can join in with well known carols and carol sheets are provided. St Mary's are renowned for there participation, so drop in as convenient for a fun sing.

Choir Notes

“All church members are encouraged to get involved in the leading of worship – from leading prayers and reading lessons to playing in worship bands and preparing the space for worship.” To reassure you, this is not a new instruction from the Bishop, but an excerpt from the *Methodist Church’s* resource hub. However, it is not a bad starting point for a discussion about how we can involve everyone who attends St Mary’s for a service.

We start from a strong position. Anglican church services always include the need for congregational involvement, whether this is reciting the Creed, responding to sentences by the priest, or singing hymns. There is also a lot of standing and sitting included – plus a little optional kneeling! The knees can certainly get a work-out at St Mary’s! The church choir is aware of its position at the front of the church, requiring a good example to be set, i.e. what to do, and when! We don’t always get it right, and we don’t always do it “in unison”, but we try hard to be in the right position at the right time – most of the time! We have the added excitement of being able to turn to the altar (e.g. for the Creed), when the congregation are already facing in that direction.

Baptisms are a special case when the choir is at the *front* of the church, but at the *back* of the onlookers, and we sometimes find it difficult to see what is going on around the font.

But we are mainly in the service to support the “leading of worship”, piping up clearly when needed, either with spoken or sung responses: and hoping that the congregation are able to follow suit. We are fortunate with the style of worship that has come down to us. It expects involvement from everyone present, providing opportunities for spoken and sung interludes that counterpoint the priest’s input. There are hymns and responses: and the choir has the chance to sing an anthem during communion. At the

We don't realise how important music is for our worship until the organ breaks down, or there is no organist, or we have a spoken service. And at Christmas....? Come and join us in the joy of singing carols. We know the words. We know the tunes. We sing with expectation and love. The Nine Lessons and Carols Service is on Sunday 22nd December at 6.30 p.m.

Peter Fall

Christmas window decorating:



The St Mary's flower arranging team would like to invite others to help with decorating the church for Christmas and in particular if anyone would like to decorate a window sill, following on from the lovely Easter and Harvest window displays. The church will be decorated on Monday 23rd December between 10.00 am – 12 noon. Jean, Vicki & Anne will be very pleased if others would like to be involved and join them in getting the church suitably decorated for this special festival. An arrangement could simply be some foliage, with a few berries, pine cones and some Christmas baubles. Mike will put some lovely candles adjacent to the window displays. Please let Anne Yolland know if you are interested in helping with this. Festive refreshments will be on offer.

Anne Yolland

Guild of Church Flower Arrangers: On Monday 2nd December at St Andrews Church, Burnt Ash Lane, Bromley at 2 pm in the afternoon. This will be a festive demonstration by Eleanor Bracken. Visitors welcome £5.

Bromley Flower Club: A festive demonstration by Graham King 'All that Glitters' on Tuesday 3rd December at the United Reformed Church, Widmore Road, Bromley. Demonstration starts at 2 pm. Come early and enjoy some seasonal treats from 1.30 pm. Visitors welcome £5 (first visit is free).

Mothers' Union Matters



The branch of Mothers' Union at St Mary's continues to support the grassroots charity that now has over 4 million members in more than 80 countries. We try to work alongside our local community to have a real and lasting positive impact on specific needs. We advocate and campaign where this is useful, for example to eliminate gender-based violence and abuse. And we promote equality, healthy relationships and the role of women in key roles who can build communities and bring peace and reconciliation.

Mothers' Union continues to have a powerful voice, often calling for change, at local, national and international level. St Mary's members and supporters are keen to impact positively issues of social justice at all levels. This is done by learning, engaging and communicating on issues that matter to communities. Sometimes our speakers bring us the facts that we need to continue our campaigns. Sometimes it is one of our members who has a heart burdened by a particular social ill. Sometimes we are alerted to the need by our MU team, either at national or local level. This includes the main annual campaigns: Make a Mothers' Day, Summer of Hope and the Christmas Appeal (partnered with the Big Give). Our patron, the Most Revd. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, says "Mothers' Union is the heart and love of the Church."

However, it isn't all serious stuff! There is still time for Qwirkle! And we played a number of rounds of this simple (and rather silly) game at one of our more relaxed meetings last month. It was great to see our members laughing and chattering as an antidote to the difficult circumstances some find themselves. Qwirkle may have to be included in a future MU programme!

Christingle Making. The Mothers' Union will, again, be making the Christingles for the service on Sunday 15th December. If you are able to help with this task please join us in the **Front Room of Church House on Saturday 14th December from 9.30am.**

**Nativity service organised by the Sunday Club.
Sunday 22nd December at 10.30 am.**

All welcome - do join us to celebrate this very special birthday!

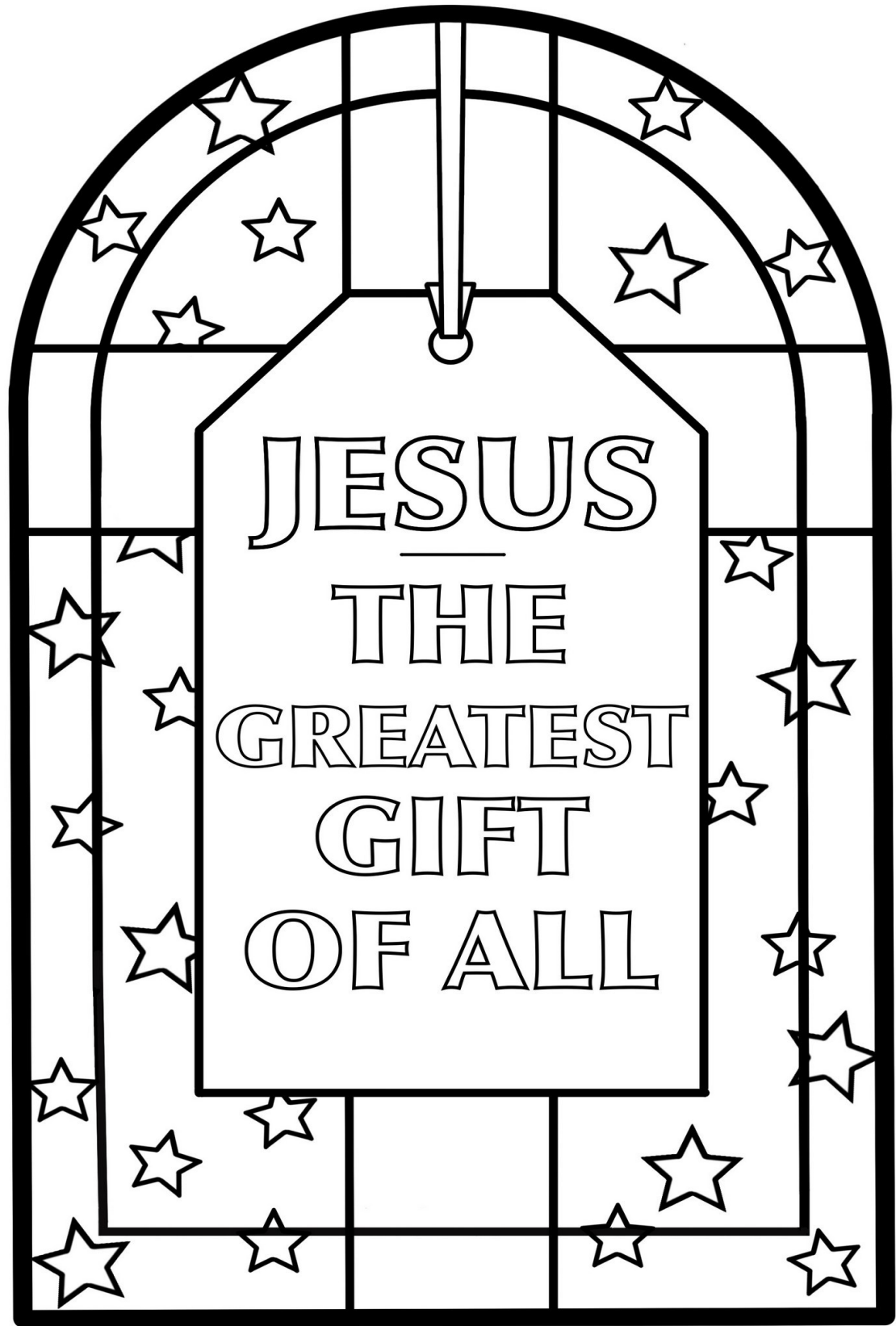
Sunday Club Nativity Service

22nd December 10.30 am

All welcome - do join us



stmarys-bromley.org.uk



A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.

...YOU MUST CALL YOUR BABY JESUS

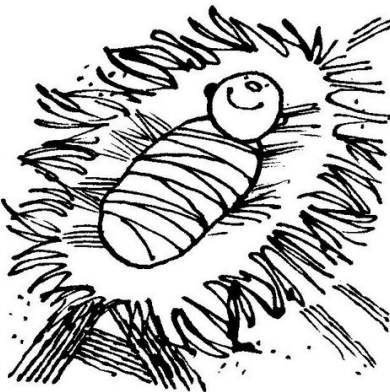


MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE FOR THE CENSUS.

BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL



...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.

WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.



BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...



Emily's Swim update:



Thanks to all who so generously supported Emily on her two swimming challenges for Bromley Little Theatre. A total of £1,870 raised including gift aid and match funding from First Group.



A date for your diary

The World Day of Prayer service will be held on
Friday 7th March at 10.30 a.m. at
St Joseph's,

Plaistow Lane, Bromley

The Christian Women from the Cook Islands have prepared
the service on the theme of 'I made you wonderful'.

Further details from Frances Boyden

Memories of Christmas at St. Mary's

We had a plumber round the other day and as he was leaving he asked what the chalk marks above our front door were for: 20+ C+M+B +13 . I hadn't thought much about them lately as they have been there for many years now. I expect you will realise that these are the initials of the 3 Kings – Casper, Melchior and Balshaza. And they came to bless our house disguised as our young Curate of the time, Gemma. It was suggested that we could invite others to join us for the occasion and we invited two neighbours who hadn't any church connection. It was a good visit. Did the Kings come to your house?

The second special event was the Holy Family, again visiting the houses of church members. I think this was Rachel Archer's idea. The Holy Family were knitted figures lying in straw in baskets. I think there were two sets and these were passed around from house to house. This was based on the Posadas (lodgings) from 16th century Spain commemorating the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and their nightly search for somewhere to stay. Each participating parishioner would look after the Holy Family for one night and then would take them on to someone else. I remember the person I had to deliver to lived on the Downham Estate and I didn't know her . I got lost and knocked on several wrong doors where the occupants declined to take the family in for the night! I also recall visiting Sally A. As we are both in Guiding we knew some of the songs based on the Posadas which required a bit of singing - lovely in the well of a block of flats). By Christmas Day the Family were all back in St. Mary's

I think more people will remember the third event - ' Fire at the Christmas Eve Mass'. Alan had built a large very effective candle holder which was in front of the pulpit. Unfortunately it caught fire as he was giving the sermon. We watched in fascination as the sermon continued until someone in the congregation, who happened to be a fireman, ran forward with a fire extinguisher.

What fun we have at St. Mary's!

Mary Mills

TEA

Tea – an infusion of parts of a plant in hot water; usually, but not always, the leaves or flowers.

People have been drinking teas for as long as anyone knows. Many teas are just there to make the water more interesting and give it a flavour – like lemon verbena – which is still very popular in the Middle East, mainly because it tastes nice, but there are other teas. We all know about mint tea for the digestion, but what about Fennel tea? So soothing that it used to be the main ingredient of Gripe Water for babies. Other teas that are often drunk include Camomile – given to Peter Rabbit when he had a cold, and now mainly used for its soothing and relaxing properties. Lime Blossom is also good for colds (especially with lemon, ginger and honey) and just the thing if you are fretting about Life, the Universe and things in general (this time – no ginger). By the way, this type of Lime blossom is the flowers of the lime or linden trees that are often grown in your streets, not the fragrant blossom of the sour, lemon-like lime fruit, which would make a very different tea. Just look on the chemist shelves in the supermarket for these and many more for all sorts of uses, besides just tasting nice.

However, when we say Tea, we more often mean the old fashioned Indian or Chinese Tea, made from *Camellia Sinensis* Originating in South East Asia.



Tea can be grown in the UK and there are a few commercial tea plantation, mainly in the south of England. The tea that they produce is said to be high quality and delicate in taste. They also tend to be at the top end of the price bracket.

Tea, like any other camelia, likes acid soil and will die in chalky soil which chelates and removes the iron from the soil, which the plant needs for its glossy green leaves.

I am told that you can make a tea which tastes like tea, from the young shoots of the ordinary garden Camilla, although garden camellias are mainly derived from the Camillia Japonica and Camellia Sasanqua. By the way, when camellias were initially brought to Europe they were thought to be not only exotic, but also delicate, only to be grown in a greenhouse, as in the Romantic novel 'La Dame aux Camélias' , by Alexandre Dumas fils, son of the Alexandre Dumas who wrote the 'Three Musketeers' and grandson of General Thomas Alexandre Dumas, himself a descendent of Haitian slaves, who fought in the French Revolution for Napoleon, and probably deserves an article all to himself.

It was Agatha Christie the crime writer, who pioneered and popularised growing camellias outdoors in England, where they have flourished to give the not so small trees and bushes that we see today.

There are many type of teas that can be brewed from the Camillia family.

Chinese tea

This seems to have been first documented in BC 2700 by The Chinese emperor Shen Nong. It is pan roasted to give it a distinctive taste and there are many varieties of it from all the different regions in which it is grown. It is a different variety of Camillia from the very similar Japanese teas, so it does have a different, sweeter taste, but the preparation is the same. They are typically drunk with no milk or sugar and made with water just off the boil, to preserve the volatile oils that enhance the flavour

Indian Tea.

This is what we usually are talking about when we say 'tea'. It started out as China tea which was brought to Darjeeling in 1841 by Archibald Campbell and which since then has developed into a distinct sub-species and has evolved into some really distinct varieties and with different methods of preparation.

Black Tea - The most common form and can be made from teas grown in several regions – Darjeeling from the Himalayas and Assam are the biggest growers. Here the leaves are hand-picked and then fermented for 45-60 minutes after pricking, which gives it a more pronounced flavour. They are only then dried and packed. In the UK this is often drunk with milk and, maybe, sugar, a practice which amazes many other countries, who drink red tea straight, maybe with a bit of sugar, but definitely no milk.

Green tea has become popular recently for its health benefits as it has a high concentration of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. These teas are processed by steaming or pan roasting and not fermented. This prevents oxidation, so the resulting tea is light green, as its name suggests.

Oolong Tea - This tea is semi-fermented and tastes similar to black teas but has the health benefits of green teas. It is a more select tea, and not all tea gardens are qualified to yield Oolong tea. Oolong tea is made from hand plucked leaves, usually two leaves and a bud. It is sometimes withered naturally in sun and air, lightly rolled in a rolling machine, and quickly roasted at 220°C in a high quality dryer before being packed and distributed.

White Tea – Here the tea is grown under cover, so the leaves are very light in colour. It is treated similarly to Green Tea and gives similar health benefits, but the resultant tea is lighter and more delicate. White tea is labour intensive, so it is a specialist tea and rare.

Chai – This is more of a method of making tea than a variety of tea. It is very popular in India and getting more common over here. There are many different methods and recipes, but they all result in a warm and spicy, milk tea, which is often made by infusing the tea and spices directly in hot milk.

We could go on to discuss the different times of harvesting tea – the first crop is premium, a bit like Premier Cru in wine, but then we would never finish, so I will stop now.

Trine Hevezi

Springhill and Environs (Part 2)

Correction: Part 1, paragraph starting “By 1909, all houses, No’s 67 to 103 from St Mary’s Church to the site of Springhill Farm buildings in College Road.....” should include house No 65.

Back in the 1870’s, Home Meadow was a pasture field between St Mary’s Church and Plaistow Green and it was part of Springhill Dairy Farm. It became Plaistow Cricket Club and Ground between 1879 and 1885 and was known as “Major Clement Satterthwaite’s Field”. It also became the site of the annual Plaistow Fair and known as “Fair Field”. The field was also used by St Mary’s Church for parochial activities, Summer Treats for the Sunday Schools, St Mary’s School games and loaned to Quernmore Preparatory School for their games.

During WW1, there was a rapidly increasing requirement in 1915 for more hospital beds to accommodate injured and convalescing soldiers being sent to Bromley and surrounding areas, because of the convenient location of Bromley South station and other local railway stations. These stations were easily accessed from the Kent coast, where injured soldiers were brought across the English Channel from the front lines in France, Belgium and elsewhere. As a result, Springhill was lent by the Kent Education Committee to the Red Cross Society for use as a V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) hospital affiliated to the Brook Hospital (Shooters Hill Road, Woolwich). Springhill V.A.D. opened in November 1915 with 38 beds and an operating theatre and by 1917, the number of beds increased to 40 and later to 43. A complete range of staff from doctors, nurses, medical officers, catering, cooking, office, linen-room, stretcher bearers, drivers to untrained staff were required to run each auxiliary hospital. The Springhill hospital closed after the end of the war in 1918, having had 764 patients passing through the wards..

After WW1, Springhill became known as Springhill Hostel for Women Students (Kent Education Committee) until WW2 and the Hostel had three Principles during the inter-war period. From Kelly's directories, Miss Chambers held the position from 1923 to 1933, then Miss Miller from 1934 to 1937 and finally Mrs E Best from 1938 to 1939



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SPRINGHILL NO.1 POST A.P.R. PRACTICE OCTOBER 1939



MESSRS. LEWIS, MARTIN, HARVEY, TRUMBLE & S. LEWIS
SPRINGHILL NO.1 POST A.P.R. WAR-TIME APPROX. 1939

During WW2, Springhill served as an Auxiliary Fire Station with Rescue Teams and First Aid Parties. It was named No.1 Post A.R.P. (Air Raid Precaution) with A.R.P. practice regularly taking place (photo October 1939). On an overcast morning around 10am on the 2nd November 1940, there was an alert of an approaching enemy aircraft. The fire engine crew were ready in their vehicle when it and the fire station (Springhill) received a direct hit by a bomb dropped by a low level raider. Two firemen were killed under mounds of debris and other firemen were injured. The two firemen killed were John James Taylor and Harold George Jerome, who were local men and I have witnessed their names commemorated on the Martin's Hill War Memorial inscribed as Taylor. J. J. and Jerome. H. G. Mr Taylor is in the October 1939 photo and the second photo shows the splendid house with period vehicles used during the war, plus some of the personnel stationed at No.1 Post.

After WW2, Springhill reverted back to education and became the Bromley Technical Institute (Kent Education Committee). With Home Meadow long lost to housing, St Mary's Church hired the grounds of Springhill and held their Summer Garden Parties on the lawn surrounded

by the well tended gardens. These events were certainly held in 1960, 1961, 1962, and may have been held in other years. A programme cover and magazine advertisement relate to care-free afternoons at Springhill full of entertainment



A new Bromley Technical College had been built and opened at Rookery Lane, Bromley Common in September 1959 and it was well equipped for technical, professional, commercial and general studies. However, Springhill housed the Department of General Studies and became an annex of the new college thereafter. After I left Quernmore Secondary School in 1961 aged 15 with no qualifications, I started full-time work on my 16th birthday. Following a year with the firm, I was given one half-day afternoon release per week to study at the London College of Printing in Elephant and Castle. I quite enjoyed it and found it interesting and stimulating. After getting back into a “classroom” environment, I enrolled at Springhill from 1963 to 1967 to study for a few “O” levels in the evenings. I recall Springhill partially surrounded by a red brick wall about 6 feet high. The building was gracious and imposing with large high roomed ceilings surrounded by lovely grounds.

In 1967, Bromley Council decided to amalgamate the Department of General Studies at Springhill with the Rookery Lane main college site.

The Council deemed that Springhill with its “dangerously weak floors and bulges in walls” made restoration uneconomical. So, in highly equivocal circumstances, the Council rapidly destroyed a fine 260 year old house, with the assistance of Sid Bishops’ bulldozers at the end of 1967. With Springhill Cottage also demolished along with all outbuildings, the site subsequently became an open landscaped green and Paxton Road was driven through to form what is now the large irregular rectangular shaped roundabout, with a never ending stream of traffic hurtling around it 24/7. The “new” green was named Plaistow Green and it was officially recognized by the London Borough of Bromley Council early in 1991 with the erection of Plaistow Green name-plates. So, history has repeated itself by using the same name but at an adjacent location from the original green. An article written in 1994 quotes “Plaistow Green-a tranquil spot”.....?!



ST MARY'S OPEN-AIR SERVICE AND MIDSUMMER FAIR TUG-OF-WAR ON PLAISTOW GREEN ROUNDABOUT ON JUNE 21ST 1987



ST MARY'S CHURCH MARCHES ALONG COLLEGE ROAD TO THE ROUNDABOUT SERVICE WITH THE SALVATION ARMY ON SUNDAY 16TH JULY 1989

In slightly quieter times between 1987 and 2003, and also possibly during years either side, St Mary’s Church held their Roundabout Midsummer service and “village fair” on the new Plaistow Green (photos) but these events have long ceased.

Plaistow has played host to providing amenities over the centuries from local fairs, cricket matches, Church and School activities, plus an important route for passing travellers. However, one of the greatest losses is that of the house named Springhill, which could and should have been saved.

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 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 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.

Services for December



Sunday 1st December—Advent 1

10.30 am Family Communion with Sunday Club

Sunday 8th December—Advent 1

10.30 am Family Communion with Sunday Club

Sunday 15th December—Advent 3

10.30 am Family Communion

4.30 am Christingle

Sunday 22nd December—Advent 4

10.30 Family Communion with—Nativity Service

6.30 pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Tuesday 24th December—Christmas Eve

4.30 pm Crib Service

11.00 pm Carols and Midnight Mass

Wednesday 25th December—Christmas Day

10.30 am All Age Communion

Sunday 29th December - 1st Sunday of Christmas

10.30 am Family Communion

St Mary's (Plaistow) College Road Bromley

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