

St Mary's Church, Bromley

Parish Magazine

MAY 2025

61 College Road Bromley BR1 3QG



God makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth: He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses. Psalm 135:7

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way. Exodus 13:21

God covers the sky with clouds. He supplies the earth with rain and makes the grass grow. Psalm 147:8

"Can you count the clouds or pour out their rain?" Job 38:37

A bright cloud covered them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My Son and I love him. Listen to him!" Mark 9:7

And while they were watching, Jesus was taken up into a cloud, and was hidden from view. Acts 1:9





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Welcome to the May 2025 edition of the Parish Magazine.

Welcome to the May edition of our magazine, which because of all the excitement of Easter has been put together at rather the last minute. Thank you again to all those who have “put pen to paper” (or fingers to keyboard) and to Atlanta for sorting the layout. As usual, there is a broad range of articles, and I have just enjoyed reading or re-reading them all on my train journey. There is a lot going on in May, so all the more reason to send us your photos and articles. Keep writing!

Jill

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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.

Vicar's Letter



Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the lighter evenings and signs of spring all around us. There's something about May that always feels full of promise—new life in the garden, warmer days, and, of course, the continuing joy of the Easter season.

Firstly, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who played a part in our Easter celebrations—those who read, served, sang, decorated, welcomed, prayed, and supported quietly in the background. Thank you also to all who attended the services whether in person or online. We are very grateful to you for offering your time and gifts so generously and making Easter a truly inspirational time.

This past month has also been a time of special joy as we welcomed new members into the family of faith—both children and adults.

Congratulations to all the newly baptized and to your families! It's always such a hopeful moment to witness people taking these steps of faith. To the adults who were baptized—well done for saying yes to God's invitation. I pray your journey of faith continues to deepen, and that you always know you are part of a supportive and loving church family.

Looking ahead, May is shaping up to be quite a full and exciting month. On Wednesday 8th May, we'll be marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a special service, followed by a weekend of celebration with the community—do come along as we give thanks, remember, and pray for peace in our world today.

All are invited for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (*APCM*) on 18th May. Then we journey on to Ascension Day (Thursday 29th May), a reminder that Jesus goes ahead of us, interceding for us.

As we walk through this season together, I want to encourage us in three simple but powerful ways to grow deeper in faith and wider in love
Prayer – Keep the lines of communication open with God. Pray for your neighbours, for your own heart, for peace, and for our world. It can be five quiet minutes or a walk with God in nature—it all counts.

Fellowship – stay connected. Whether it's coffee after church, come to Grace Café coffee mornings, say hello to someone new or simply checking in with someone. Community matters and relationships are the lifeblood of any church family.

Pastoral care – let's look out for one another and keep an eye on those who might need a visit or a chat. If someone's struggling, let's be a listening ear or a helping hand. And if you need support—please don't hesitate to reach out. This is what community is for.

As we look outward, we also ask: how can we be a blessing in our wider parish? How can we offer welcome to those who feel on the edge, hope to those who feel low, and support to those who carry heavy burdens?
Through small acts of love, we can make a lasting difference.

May this Easter season continue to fill us with joy and draw us closer to God and to one another.

With every blessing,

Rev Eucharika Asiegbu

APCM— 18th May 2025

All are invited to the St Mary's Annual Parochial Church meeting on Sunday 18th May, straight after service.

Alleluia Christ is Risen - He is Risen indeed Alleluia So What happens next?



The two pictures with the first page of this article are signs from the 'ghost town' edge of Famagusta in Cyprus, which I visited recently and found very shocking. It is a large area now uninhabited since 1974, following civil warfare involving both local groups and troops from Turkey leading to 'formal' division, and is now part of a 'green line' buffer zone supervised by the United Nations, since the fighting stopped. Cyprus is divided between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, the latter now augmented by Turks from the Turkish mainland, who come for a number of reasons including escaping from conscription.

The island has never really been independent. The Knights Templar, the Ottoman Turks and even the British controlled it at one stage, to name but three, and the struggles to devise a widely acceptable compromise structure have led to conflict and disagreement even though the failure is so costly. A large, now uninhabited, part of the island is slowly disintegrating due to the absence of its owners and no one else being responsible for its upkeep. In over 50 years no progress has really been made towards living together in peace and investing effort into the future.

So what does happen next after a conflict - is it really always just rot and disintegration? There are, it seems as always, no easy answers to making peace. Even the Peace and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa did not entirely succeed, although it made a good attempt. The pain can be too great to be overcome .

Consider Ireland, where despite the best efforts of many there is still mistrust and hatred, or the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, Korea or Gaza, or any of several other places where the processes have not yet started, nor even been imagined. Peace is not just the absence of war; it is a building of genuine community and will take a very long time because we are such slow learners, and the waste will continue, children and the sick will still die daily, all because we are such slow learners.

Hurt and division, pride and power seeking, vengeance and desire for reparation, or restoration and repair cause immense damage in human communities. Peacemaking is very costly. It demands honesty, humility, forgiveness, generosity, listening and sharing, hearing and understanding. It is patient and longsuffering, it is sacrificial love in action, seeking a better future, concerned with interests other than our own and very few of us can do or manage all - or any - of these. It has to become our heart's desire, our continual prayer, the focus of much energy and effort, and there is no guarantee of success.

Jesus calls us "to do to others as you would have them do to you." We are those who seek to follow his example, despite knowing the success rate for peacemaking is low. It is doing good to those who hate us, blessing those who curse us, turning the other cheek, and loving our enemies, giving without condition or restriction, and the cost of that was his Crucifixion.

But God has raised him from the dead, and death has no more power over him. Since that first Easter, God continues to challenge the certainty of death with the promise of life. He calls us daily to that same unending work of peacemaking.

There is a terrible joke about a man who prays to win the lottery but never buys a ticket, despite being urged to by his friends, and eventually God says to him when he complains that he still has not won, “give me a hand here and buy a ticket”. Peacemaking is a bit like that; if we do not even try to make peace wherever we are, it will not happen anywhere. We have to desire peace above all things, and train to build it, remembering it may be very costly - costing not less than everything, but because Jesus is Risen from the dead there is always hope.....

Alleluia Christ has Risen - He has risen indeed Alleluia!

The dawn of new Resurrection life has come.



Dawn over the Mediterranean, Cyprus.

Alison Tyler

Thank you to Keith from Parish School



The pupils and staff of Parish School made a colourful, joy-filled thank-you huge card for Keith, celebrating his amazing *forty-plus years* of leading worship at the school. With smiles Keith gracefully received the card: his face beaming with joy and lighting up like Easter morning at this touching tribute . A moment to remember, full of gratitude, laughter, and love!



“Keith has been the heart and soul of our school worship for decades,” said Headteacher Rachel **“His warmth, wisdom, and unwavering faith have touched generations.”**

A view from the pew



Have you got an antidote for news?

I ask because I believe that I may need one.

I have always been a creature of habit – what man doesn't have his favourite chair/meal/hobby/newspaper? – but I seem to have become *addicted* to news. Gone are the days when I would come in after a hard day's work and settle down to listen to the Home Service Six o'clock News. And that would be enough for the day.

Soon, it could be topped up with pictures, so it was the TV Nine o'clock News – now Ten o'clock on both channels! – so I can't watch both, one after the other, as used to be the case.

Now, well, now there are morning news bulletins on all (radio)channels for me to binge on – I still think TV before 6 p.m. is immoral (apart from Children's programmes, of course). Then news might be updated during the morning, if the wireless is on a channel other than Classic fm / BBC Radio 3 - which is rare nowadays. One o'clock news (BBC tv) is a fixture, with lunch on a tray, after a hard morning thinking about gardening. As the credits roll, I turn my thoughts to the busy afternoon.



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Perhaps a short time on the computer (an article for the Church magazine, perhaps?) - followed by a nice cup of tea. And a sneaky listen to half-hourly headlines. Not usually any change, but you never know.....! Got to keep in touch. Don't want to be the last person to hear about an important local issue, such as a tree being chopped down, or a practice evacuation of The Glades.

And the Foreign news is important for talking points. We all like to be able to comment on President Trump's latest rudeness. Or on the Chinese leader's foreign tour. Well, perhaps not all of us, but you know what I mean. You don't want to feel left out when the conversation turns to politics, or war, or climate change. You know, all the red-hot issues. (Cunning juxtaposition of "climate" and "hot"). And there is usually a cuddly news item at the end we can all warm to. Usually about an animal. Do other countries have the same fixation with small beasts? Which reminds me, must take the dog for a walk/feed the cat/change the goldfish water/look for the tortoise/remember grandchild's birthday! These are the real news items that engage us – and broadcast news cannot compete.

At least, not yet!

Peter Fall



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Choir Notes

You will not be surprised to hear that members of the Church Choir actually enjoy singing. This is not a direction from which I would normally come, but needs must..... I mean, in the old days, when choirs were paid servants of the church, it didn't really matter whether the choristers enjoyed it or not. They were paid to do a job, and got on with it. As so often in life, the singing job was sometimes fun, occasionally inconveniently difficult, but usually just a calm interlude in a busy schedule.

Nowadays, the choir members turn up to sing because they want to! Shock, horror! No financial incentive in sight. The choir is not seen as a punishment for awkward churchgoers (though this description may fit some of us!). Nor are incumbents indoctrinated with the idea that a robed choir will attract new church members. It may deter some! Hence having a regular choir singing during church services is at the mercy of local keen churchgoers prepared to dedicate time, talent and vocal commitment to the service of regular worship.

St Mary's continues to have these advantages with its choir members. And the proof is in the weekly singing of hymns and anthems. In the absence of Mattins and Evensong, the "Singing of Psalms and canticles" (as enjoined by St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians*) is suspended for the time being. But this loss may have enhanced the choir's attention to its weekly choral anthem, and its focus on the hymns at each service. Hence the occasional descant to a verse in a hymn, or the introduction of a less familiar anthem with appropriate words for the season.

A further balance is also sought between recognisable composers, such as J. S. Bach and John Rutter, and those less frequently encountered musicians such as Flor Peeters or Hugh Robertson. For major Festival services, the choir will often help to set the tone of the service with an Introit – or introductory piece of music – just before the order of service begins.

It is a while since the choir processed around the church while singing a hymn, at the beginning and end of services. And maybe that is how it should be left! Singing, while walking about the church, is a skill not many of us have retained. And members of the congregation would not all be enthusiastic in their welcome for choir members singing in their faces!

However, now that you have mentioned it, we may be persuaded to consider a re-introduction of “music on the move” at Christmas! Or maybe not! Processing is a tricky business when you are concentrating fully on keeping the right gaps with colleagues, turning, bowing, timing steps to cover the ground while carrying heavy music hymn books, reading words and music while marching around an old building with an uneven floor..... and steps to negotiate..... A recipe for disaster!

But let it not be said that choir members are complaining. Regarding processing, those who prefer not to take part can wait in the choir pews for their colleagues to join them. Hymn books may be left on the stand and not carried around, and some know the piece by heart. In extremis, a choir member may mime the words and tune – though it is probably better if this is not adopted by the whole choir at once!

This does give me an idea..... do you remember the dummy keyboard? A musical quiz programme on TV where the chairman played a piece of music on a “dummy” keyboard leaving the contestants to guess what had been played from the activity of the fingers alone, without any musical sound. Well, perhaps the choir could mime an anthem – or to make it easy – a hymn - and members of the congregation had to guess what they had been miming.

Just an idea!

Peter Fall



Christian Aid Week 2025 is from 11 to 17 May, and as usual envelopes will be available in Church for those wishing to donate cash or cheques to this worthy cause. To donate online please go to christianaid.org.uk and click the word 'Give' on the home page.

The theme of this year's collection, the 80th annual Christian Aid Week, is the effect of global warming on the poorer farmers of Guatemala, one of whom, Aurelia, will feature on some of the collecting envelopes.

Aurelia lives in the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala, where 90% of people are living in poverty. The region is home to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' (Co-WAY-chee) people. Men in the community often seek work away from their homes, while many women grow crops to feed their families.

Aurelia is a community leader, a mother of eight and a beloved grandmother. Record high temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns have hit farmers like her hard. Water sources are drying up or being polluted by industry in communities like Aurelia's, so that she and her neighbours now walk for around four hours each day during the two trips they must make to collect safe, clean water.

Aurelia has seen first-hand the impact of the climate crisis. **'Climate change has been killing our crops, and this is our food,'** she says. **'As the plants are dying, the next thing that will die is us.'**

But she isn't giving up. Congcoop, Christian Aid's partner in Guatemala, supports communities with agricultural resources and training that help them to become more climate resilient. Aurelia took up the opportunity to gain new skills with Congcoop. She's combining her deep knowledge and understanding of her land with innovative techniques to make organic fertiliser, construct rainwater collection systems, and grow a wider range of crops.



Aurelia holding the organic fertiliser she learned to make with Christian Aid's partner, Congcoop.

With Congcoop's support, Aurelia is using her cacao harvest to make chocolate products to sell at a local market. **'I feel very joyful and grateful when I'm preparing chocolate,'** Aurelia says. **'I make cocoa products with all my heart! Perhaps that's why they have such a good flavour!'**

Aurelia has a big multi-generational family to take care of. But she's always looking to help more people in her community. **'I really give my life to my neighbours, sharing my knowledge with them,'** she told Christian Aid.

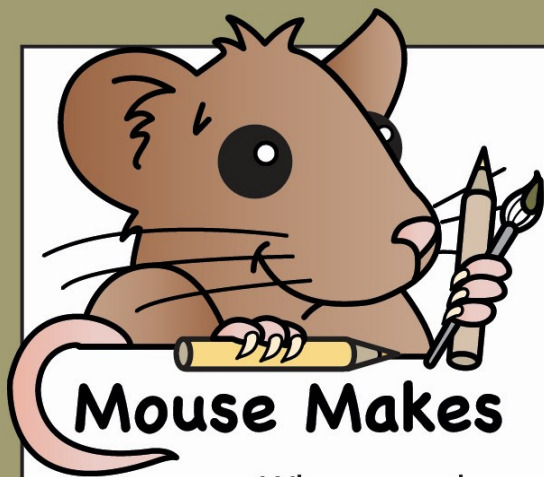
Life for Aurelia and her community remains tough, and as the climate crisis intensifies, she fears things will get tougher. Enduring droughts, storms and fierce heat, Aurelia can see the impacts of climate change accelerating. **'There was a prediction this would happen in the future,'** she says, **'but it has come earlier. This is very worrying for our kids and especially our grandkids.'**

'I want to tell donors to continue supporting Christian Aid,' Aurelia says.

To which we reply, 'Amen'.

Peter Boyden

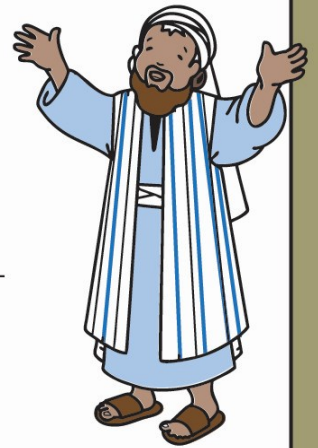




MIRACLES OF PETER

At which temple gate
did the crippled man lay?

Acts 3:1-10



Who were the man and wife
who lied to God?

and

Acts 5:1-11

People carried the sick into
the streets so that when Peter
came by at least his

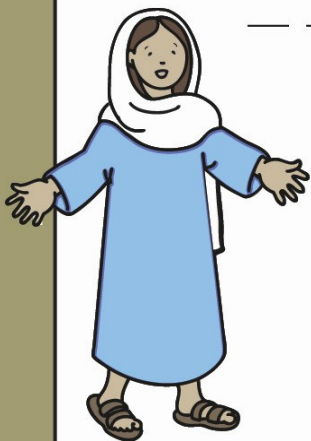
Acts 5:12-16

How long had Aeneas
been paralysed for?

_____ years
Acts 9:32-35

Where had Tabitha's body been laid?
in the _____

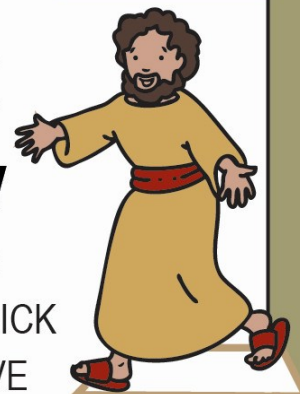
Acts 9:36-42



"And the word
of God
continued to
increase,
and the number
of the disciples
multiplied
greatly."
Acts 6:7

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

After Jesus
ascended into
heaven, the
Holy Spirit
came upon
the Apostles
and Peter was
able to perform
many miracles
in Jesus' name.
*See the book
of ACTS*



PETER • SIGNS • WONDERS • MIRACLES • HEALED
CRIPPLE • LAME • WALK • LEAPING • PRAISING • LIED • DIED • SICK
AENEAS • PARALISED • TABITHA • ILL • PRAYED • ALIVE

Mothers' Union Matters



The Mothers' Union runs one of the most cost-effective literacy programmes in the world. Community volunteers are trained as literacy facilitators, who are then equipped to run literacy circles in their own community. The programme uses participatory methods to enable communities to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills whilst discussing and planning action on their daily issues and challenges.

In Burundi and South Sudan MU members have brought literacy learning to over 20,000 women and men in just over a decade. Thanks to generous funding from Comic Relief and a strong working relationship with Five Talents, the Literacy and Financial Education Programme (LFEP) groups are stabilising family and community life.

As women are given education and value through these groups, attitudes towards them gradually change. Both genders discuss together the positive contributions of women and realise how much more women can do than raise a family and run a home. Contributing to the family income as a result of learning has seen many women enjoy greater equality in their married relationships.

The groups have benefitted by learning to forgive those who hurt them, which has freed them to pursue life opportunities, rather than dwelling on their pain. Despite atrocities many have witnessed, and which had a direct impact on them, they have learned to share their grief and minister to one another. Participants have been able to open the “doors of trust”. This means that they are more open to the wider world, including foreign agencies. An example of this trust in action is that without it they would not have believed the information about COVID-19. They have also been able to improve inter-ethnic communication and mutual support.

Which brings me to the MU Plant Sale on Saturday 17th May. Money raised at this popular annual event will go to the Mothers' Union Literacy Project.

Peter Fall

Wednesday 7 th	10-12 noon	Grace café
Thursday 15 th	10 am	Knit and Natter
Saturday 17 th	10 –12 noon	Plant Sale

St Mary's Mothers' Union

PLANT SALE

Raffle and Tea-room

St Mary's Church Hall

College Road, Bromley BR1 3QG

SATURDAY

17 May

10am – 12 noon, entrance 50p

*For M.U. Literacy Project and
"Away from It All" holiday scheme*

Easter Flowers

The church looked so springlike on Easter Day after the bleakness of having no flowers during the Lenten season. Spring flowers are so awakening to the senses and give us sign of hope and new growth. It was good for the small flower team to have extra help on Holy Saturday.



The porch was beautifully decorated by Jean Read. Inside the church, the window sills were decorated by Vicki, Rev Alison, Chris, Jill, Rev Eucharika. The café table arrangements by Sylvia and Mary and the nave pedestal by Anne. There was a great hive of activity during the morning getting the church ready for Easter Day. A big thank you to all those who kindly helped in any way and to those who kindly contributed towards the cost of the Easter flowers, very much appreciated.

Anne Yolland



Malaga Spring

Last week we went to Malaga for a holiday. It was the two weeks before Palm Sunday, so we were hoping for a bit of sunshine and tourism. What we had not realised was that Malaga takes Easter seriously. They have 42 Brotherhoods or *cofradia* who make 45 processions in the lead up to Easter. Some of these Brotherhoods are old; the one we saw was only started between the two World Wars.

We had not expected anything, so when we came out of our restaurant at about 10 p.m. we were intrigued to see the street lined with people. They were making way for a pair of council workers in high-vis jackets who were jet washing the street.

We then hung around to see what was happening and the procession started with two lines of teenage school children with large candles. After them came the brass band.



After the Procession had passed, we all continued. As we walked along the main street leading to the Cathedral, we noticed that all the balconies and windows had been decorated with read banners. This went on for several hundred yards and must have taken a lot of effort and co-ordination, but it did give unity to the whole street



When I got home, I looked it up. What we had seen was just the warm-up, moving the Virgin Mary and Christ from their normal resting place to the Brotherhood's headquarters by the amphitheatre, ready for the real procession during Holy Week. Unfortunately, we could not stay for that, but even what we saw was very impressive.

Trine Hevezi

Congratulations and God's blessings to the Newly Baptised!!

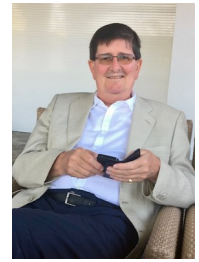
We joyfully welcome Baby Jude, baptised on 6th April 2025, and Sonny and Molly, baptised on 20th April 2025, into the family of faith! May this sacred beginning be the first step of a lifelong journey filled with God's love, grace, and guidance. As a parish community, we celebrate with you and promise our prayers and support as you grow in faith.



A Funeral at St. Mary's, Bromley.

David Charles Howard Crimmin

28th May 1947 – Easter Sunday 12th April 2020



Husband of Sheila, father of three, Andrew, Helen and Jane, father-in-law of Terri, Stephen and Martin and grandfather of six, James, Ollie, Samuel, Alice, Isla and Emilia.



David died during the first lock-down, of cancer not Covid, and we couldn't have the funeral we wanted for him and couldn't even meet together. He was cremated with no service and his ashes brought back to us. It has taken five years, for me, to get to the right place and the right time.

When I first talked to Alison and Eucharis about it, I told them how important Easter was to me as David and I were married on Easter Saturday, 1st April 1972, and he died on Easter Sunday 12th April 2020. Also, our younger daughter was baptised, in St Mary's, Easter Sunday 1983, soon after my father had died. Immediately they suggested the afternoon of Easter Saturday, because the church would be looking beautiful ready for the Sunday service. I am so grateful that they were prepared to give their time in the middle of what is the busiest time of the church calendar, but that is the kind and thoughtful people that they both are.

On the day, the church looked wonderful, the sun shone and David had the funeral and interment that he deserved, with the people he loved the most, his immediate family. It was both a sad but joyful day and I know he is in the right place. So, thank you to Alison, Eucharika, Mike for getting me there and to Marilyn, the organist, who also gave her time. David and his family are at peace now.

As a final word we have magic windows, at St Mary's, according to Isla, my six year old granddaughter. They look dark and grey from the outside but come into the church and they come alive with colour and light. What a beautiful thought, as we all come inside to worship and enjoy our surroundings. We are very lucky.

Sheila

Prayer for Ascension Day

Dear God, our loving, sending and almighty Father, Thank you that because Jesus died, rose and ascended into heaven, You were able to send your Holy Spirit to empower Your disciples then and today. That, equipped by that same Spirit, we can confidently work for Your kingdom to come on earth, as in heaven.

Lord, in these strange, topsy- turvy days, where earthly rulers terrify and destroy and disappoint, we rejoice that You are the Sovereign Lord of all things, and all times, and all places.

You, our God and Father, truly reign. We are Your people. We are secure within Your love and protection. Thank you that at the name of Jesus *every* knee shall ultimately bow – and we pray, thankfully in His name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

John Edmonds

John Edmonds passed away quietly and peacefully on the morning of 16th February 2025 his funeral service was arranged by himself with the help of John Cox. A short committal service was given at Hither Green Crematorium, hearse drawn by two horses. Rev Alan Keeler kindly returned from Nottinghamshire and together with Rev Alison Tyler carried out the committal with special liturgy for the occasion.

We all then went to St Mary's Church for a Memorial Service.

We heard reflections from John Cox, Rosemary his sister and cousins Sal and Audrey, Rev Alan and Bishop Simon.

Words from Rosemary

John grew up living with his parents and sister in Cambridge Road his local Church was St Mary's his father was a Sidesman where they attended regularly, John's cousins would visit on occasions playing board games and ball games until the ball disappeared over the fence. War came causing John and Rosemary to be evacuated to Bath, John would walk Rosemary to and from school including lunchtimes but, John's long legs were taking big strides making it hard for Rosemary to keep up, at bedtime John would make up stories to comfort Rosemary. John adored his grandmother, known to them all as Aha, a name given when he was a small boy in bed and hearing someone coming up the stairs. He would call out "Who's there"? she replied "Aha".

On returning from evacuation their cousins would visit regularly enjoying fun together. John was very sociable, one weekend, "with parents' permission" he arranged an all-night party, moving the furniture out of the dining room, rolling up the carpet, and staining the floor. Several people stayed the night and helped put everything back. Because they would be away on holiday, the three maiden ladies who lived next door were most upset at

the thought they would miss all the fun. Another time we went by car to collect our parents from Sidmouth. Leaving very early we had a cooked breakfast using a Primus stove at Stonehenge. In 1954 John was called up for the mandatory two years National Service, a time he did not particularly enjoy. It had its bonuses in that he learned to type, but the downside was the army issue boots didn't fit and ruined his feet for later life. It did give him understanding of other people, their lives and problems, which helped when working as a surveyor in local government. John had many varied interests. He belonged to Bromley Little Theatre, was secretary to the Bromley & District Musical & Literary Society and the Beckenham branch of the National Trust. He joined the Bath Preservation Trust and the Somerset & Dorset Railway Preservation Society where, after work on a Friday evening, John and a friend would drive down the M5 to Washford to spend the weekend repairing and renovating the station.

For a few years John had an allotment which was his place to relax. He successfully grew marrows, runner beans, raspberries and strawberries. He had his sister Rosemary netting these—and weeding...

Words from John Cox

I have the privilege of speaking about my good friend John.

John was a quiet gentle humble man, a real gentleman. I first came to this church in 1994 John had been attending St Mary's for most of his life, after his retirement in 1995 John became sacristan that is when we got to know one another. Every Sunday morning and evening John would quietly set up the Church for services, he also prepared services for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, then quietly cleared things away.

John became unwell after the loss of his wife Gerry in 2018 which is when I started to visit John, after a few weeks he would ask me if I could do a few jobs, which I willingly carried out. One morning after a cup of tea together, John confided in me saying he wasn't up to being sacristan anymore,

I could see how distressed he was so, I said, “not to worry I’ll do it come to church on Sunday show me what to do, then I’ll carry on”.

What a mistake that was, like any other job in our church, it’s not until we are actually doing it we realise just how much is involved. Luckily I had the opportunity to preach the Sunday following so, I spoke about how I couldn’t cope, asking for help. At the end of the service as we (Alan and I) walked up the aisle people reached out their hands saying “I’ll help you John”, I then had four people on a rota covering all services this just shows what good people we have in St Mary’s. John and I became good friends. I would visit once or twice a week, give a phone call daily, carry out some small jobs for John, his sister Rosemary called me Mr Fix it. Rosemary would mention something that needed doing by texting or calling, I just got on with it, again I made another friend in Rosemary. I made more friends in Margaret and Alan who lived across the way. Margaret would call into John daily making a mug of tea with cake in the afternoons, Margaret also made a list of his required weekly shopping, plus providing the occasional Sunday lunch as did Lyn opposite. John had many friends in the close. Over time we got closer he really did trust me with his paperwork, some required signatures which needed myself being a witness, there were hospital appointments needing transport until transport were late returning home so, I drove John to other appointments where we arrived home a lot earlier, when John was admitted to hospital on being sent home his carers would escort him home.

John had four carers a day which he thought the world of, he had district nurses calling from time, then John deteriorated so much he had his carers 24/7 until he passed away quietly and peacefully.

Finally, I would like to tell you the order of service you have in front of you were all John’s requests for this service, John asked me two years ago to put his funeral service together, I was his friend who carried out his wishes....

Memories from Cousin Sal.

These memories are spoken of the four “young” cousins, me, Ali, Trina and Suzy.

John... Uncle John to us... was, throughout our childhoods, the tall uncle, often in a smart suit, gentle, kind, softly spoken; as young children he appeared to us to be a gentle giant of a man with large ears and a rather enthusiastic spikey moustache. He would ask how we were and would always really listen to the answers given, giving us his complete attention; He was always interested in us and what we were doing and would willingly give his wisdom and input when invited. Uncle John was always very very good at remembering birthdays and Christmas and he would give great thought to the cards that he gave, he was also generous with bank notes slipped into cards, and we enjoyed visits to the Bromley Little Theatre with him – feeling very grown up. John would bring the Edmonds over for a drink at Christmas, and during these visits it was very apparent that he was always interested in the teenager’s perspective on modern life. As teenagers we came to notice something else about Uncle John. Something rather surprising in fact. When not wearing a suit, he actually wore great jumpers!!! John sought fashion advice from us young ones and, always eager to show that he had listened and understood any fashion tips we may pass on, he would follow them meticulously, albeit sometimes a year late, when he would turn up the following Christmas suitably attired in whatever we had recommended the previous year, clearly rather proud to have achieved trend status! As adults we have enjoyed John’s friendship and wisdom. In more recent years, time spent together over Christmas where his dry sense of humour was much in evidence, and when it was agreed that he really must have quite a large head as none of the Christmas cracker hats would fit him without ripping! We are grateful for the memories we have of our time with John – of him holding our children as babies he was a little uncomfortable at that; of excited family dogs covering his best on-trend

jumper with all manner of hairs (He said he didn't mind!), the interest he took in our lives; he was always there, always ready for a chat and an exchange of views on current events; he was polite, kind and gentle man with a good heart, and a very distinctive chuckle which could occasionally escalate into a very loud laugh. John was a devoted son who spent much time of his adult life as a carer. He appreciated all the care and kindness he received, and he deeply respected his sister Rosemary, speaking warmly and with deep affection and gratitude of her care of him, particularly in recent years. It was really important to him that he was able to be at home in his last weeks and days. He was incredibly resilient 93-year-old, withstanding many hospital admissions (and he never got covid!), he must have had incredible genes! To John, a life well lived, a strong faith, now at peace with the Lord he Loved and served.

Audrey his cousin said, John was special, the war and evacuation in different parts of the country meant that we didn't see much of each other. There was the occasional tea party at Cambridge Road. I particularly remember my father, uncle Cyril, making sure that he was sitting next to John. Occasionally you would hear peals of laughter from John as a result of "fooling about", resulting in severe looks from granny Ah ha and my mother. Once as we set off I heard my mother say "Now Cyril, you will behave won't you!" John loved it.

A big event which was a highlight for John and I was accompanying the adults to a family pantomime usually at Coliseum in London, John and I sat together we were so happy and relaxed although disappointed when the second half was shorter and over too soon, but we did enjoy the train journey home. Another very strong memory, the adults of the family were treated to a visit to a lady's night at a top London hotel. I was 14 or 15 at the time so John would have been 18. . I will never forget- as I entered the reception area, John appeared from the gentleman's changing area. He was in full evening dress. I was stunned. With his tall, dark hair, I thought he looked really handsome!

All memories from Rosemary, of all people giving me the opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to them.

John Cox, a true friend who visited John every week, took him to the post office and hospital appointments. His funeral service was discussed two years earlier by the two Johns then finalised very recently so that my brother is having the service he wanted. His close neighbours Margaret and Alan, who did his shopping and kept an eye on the bungalow. Margaret made sure he had all he needed when he had to go to hospital. Nikki a friend of many years came every week and kept him organised.

St Christopher's cared for John as well as our mother. Finally, Sue and Sarah from Bridges health care & nursing, who made sure his medications were in the right boxes and, when he was discharged from hospital, collected and brought him home. They are continuing to support and help me. Lastly, but most importantly are his carers, or his girls as he liked to call you, Bintu, Fatu, Juliet, Fiona, Stacy and Claudia who sat with him throughout his last night.

You treated him with courtesy, respect and affection. Thank you because, living in Bristol, you reassured me that he was being well cared for. My lasting abiding memory of John and them will be of hearing a key in the front door first thing in the morning and his reply to the voice calling out "Morning Papa John " . Thank You.

Words spoken by Rev Alan Keeler

In loving memory of John Edmonds

I knew John Edmonds as someone who was cheerful, faithful and self-effacing. Much as I had quite a long ministry at St. Marys' he was here long before I was and was still part at least of the extended congregation even if illness made attendance difficult.

John had a ready smile and a delightful chuckle. But he had had a serious professional career. I could see the joyful marriage he had with Gerry and

also the task of supporting her in a long and declining illness. So as well as his easy and approachable character John faced the duties and challenges of life with faithfulness and dedication.

John showed that faithfulness among other things as sacristan and assisting at Holy Communion here in St. Mary's. The life of worship is about faith shown in how we act with reliability and service as much as in what we believe. John was content to offer his time and attention in a humble way which gave the attention to the worship rather than in himself.

Our first reading was about humble things, a father, dust, grass. The things of life that are transient. But the great contrast is made that 'the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting'. What can seem humble is nevertheless of significance and the true value is given by the God who has made all things and can be trusted.

In contrast to these gentle reflections the reading from Revelation is a massive production of heaven and earth, the descent of a new city, a mighty voice, the abolition of death, renewal, completion and the gift of life.

Linking the gentle reflection and the noisy panorama are children. God being faithful to the generations through the children and God welcoming the faithful as his children. We are not invited to make a choice between the quiet and the storm but to see God present in both as he gives his blessing and extends his welcome.

Cheerfulness, faithfulness and modesty might easily be taken for granted. But they are the stuff of relationships that last, of communities that can be trusted and endure. They are qualities of life that underpin love and hold together the times that are fraught and anxious.

You might have noticed that the title of today's order of service is 'In loving memory of John Edmonds' It is a gentle expression to which I can imagine John chuckling and feeling a little embarrassed by. But our memories make us and the people who have been loving inspire us.

I am reminded by the closing scene of the film Goodbye Mr Chips where the longstanding member of a boarding school is passing away. Someone at his side says 'it is sad that he had no children', and Mr. Chips reflects on all of the boys who he has taught as they passed though the school and he says 'oh I had so many'.

We gather as those who have been befriended, touched and inspired by John who played his part well and who we will remember with great love and affection. In a sense we are all his children.

Message from Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge.

I am so grateful to have known John. He was such a kind, gentle and thoughtful man who went about things with a natural humility. I couldn't have aske for a better sacristan when I was incumbent. The minutes leading up to a service are often a little chaotic, but John brought a quiet serenity to those moments, which I always appreciated. And his support during a service was always reliable, faithful, discrete. My prayers are for his family, and also for St Mary's Church. If I felt this way about John, I'm trying to imagine how much more his loss will be experienced among the church and friends he devoted so much more time to. Rest in peace, John, and rise in glory.

John Carlyon Edmonds.



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 May

Sunday 4th May—3rd Sunday of Easter

10.30 am Family Communion with Sunday Club

Sunday 11th May—4th Sunday of Easter

10.30am All Age Communion

Sunday 18th May—5th Sunday of Easter

10.30am Family Communion with Sunday Club
APCM

Sunday 25th May - 6th Sunday of Easter

10.30am Family Communion with Sunday Club

Sunday 29th May—Ascension Day

10.30am Family Communion with Sunday Club



St Mary's (Plaistow) College Road Bromley

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