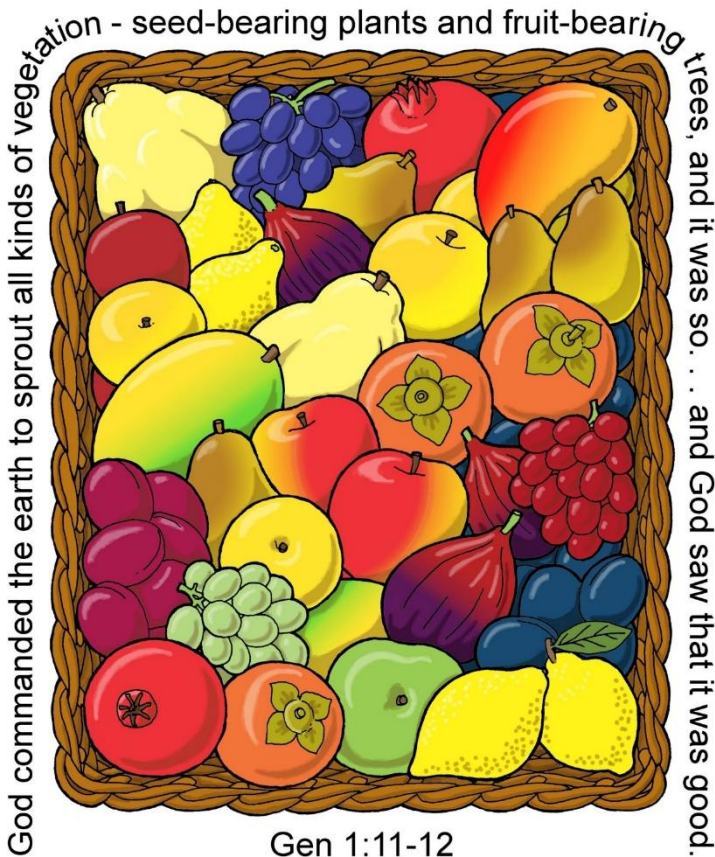


St Mary's Church, Bromley

Parish Magazine

October 2026

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WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER 2026 EDITION OF THE PARISH MAGAZINE

One of the exciting things about editing the magazine is being the first – or one of the first – to see what other people have contributed. Will there be any articles at all? What will she write this month? Has anyone thought to include....

So, I am always grateful when the articles come in, amazed by the variety of styles and topics, and thankful when the magazine comes together successfully. If you haven't contributed before, it is really quite simple, and if you have, many thanks again!

This month I have put the layout in the expert hands of our (relatively) new Parish Administrator, Manisha, who I am sure has much better publishing skills than I have. Thanks, Manisha!

As with every voluntary activity, we could always use more – more contributors, more advertisers, more readers, more people involved in the production – so if that could potentially be you, please speak to one of the people listed on the back page.

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This month's (October) editor:

Editor for November

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Copy deadline for the November edition:

Jill Atkinson

Atlanta Topham

Fri 23rd October

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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.

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VICAR'S LETTER – OCTOBER 2026



Dear friends,

I give thanks to God for the life we share at St Mary's. I am especially grateful to all our teams and everyone who gives their time, gifts and energy so faithfully.

Much of what happens in our church happens because people quietly say “yes” to serving, often without being seen. Thank you.

September has been a meaningful month as we journeyed through Creation Season, reflecting on God's wonderful world and our responsibility to care for it. Through worship, prayer, children's activities and community engagement, we have been reminded that creation is not simply something to admire. It is a gift entrusted to us, and caring for it is part of loving our neighbours, particularly those affected by poverty, environmental change and injustice.

One of my greatest joys has been seeing our children get more involved in our worship, fellowship, Creation Season activities and Harvest preparations. Their enthusiasm, questions and willingness to participate bring a wonderful energy to our church. Jerome Berryman, founder of Godly Play, reminds us that children have their own way of encountering God and helping the community to listen and wonder afresh. Children are not simply the future of the Church; they are part of the Church today.

September has also brought moments of significance: an infant baptism, a wedding, our first Prayer Breakfast and the launch of Messy Vintage. Each has opened a different door into the life of faith. We have celebrated new beginnings, strengthened relationships, created space for prayer and offered friendship and belonging to people in our community. These moments may look different, but each reflects our calling to be a church where people can encounter God, find welcome and discover hope.

As we look towards October, my hope is that we will continue to grow as a praying, welcoming and outward-looking church. We look forward

to marking Black History Month through our community concert, Harvest celebrations, confirmation for two of our congregation members, Poverty and Hope appeal and many more.

Let us continue to pray for our confirmation candidates as they prepare to make their own response to God's call. Let us also engage with the Quiet Day which gives us an opportunity to step aside from the busyness of life, become still and listen for God.

These moments remind us that Christian life is both celebration and formation: we gather to worship and give thanks, but also to grow in faith, deepen our prayer and discover how God is calling us to serve.

My hope is that October will deepen our commitment to prayer. Prayer is not an extra to church life; it is its foundation. As Paul encourages us: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." Colossians 4:2

Thank you for all you bring to the life of St Mary's. Please continue to pray for one another, for our church and for our wider community. May God bless us all, and continue to keep us faithful in prayer, generous in service, hopeful in mission, and use us to bring his love to others. Amen.

With every blessing,

Rev'd Eucharis

Vicar

ST MARY'S WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Stay connected with our parish community. To submit an item or subscribe to receive the newsletter in your inbox each week, please email admin@stmarys-bromley.org.uk.

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NAPIT



“and thou most kind and gentle death.....”

During the summer whilst on holiday I was reminded, via someone else's sermon, of the words of the ordination service on the role of a priest; one of the tasks mentioned is “to prepare the dying for their death”.

Which is not quite what it seems at first sight, because reflecting later I realised that as we are all on a journey towards our death, starting from being full of beans and very well nowhere near to death - to being very sick and **very** near to our death. I am sure that we all remember that piece of good advice of both Matthew and Mark to live each day as if it is our last, because ‘no one knows the day or the hour’ when it will actually be our last. So, ministry is about continually seeking to build up the faith for all God's people, especially including oneself, so that all of us are prepared for our own death, and are ready no matter when it comes. .

Then the Assisted Dying Bill came back to parliament again, another nudge to think more about death, on balance I was glad it did not pass in its present form because a much greater effort is needed to make it work well and without problems. It caused me to think again about ‘a good death’ and what it might involve. I am still not quite sure but I am open to compassionate and creative possibilities and to prolonged reflection.

I was subsequently asked to prepare a group discussion session on the death of St Francis, as this year October 3rd is the 800th Anniversary of his death at sunset on that day.

In the 13th century making a ‘good death’ was very important, it was as important or even more important than having a good work/life balance seems to be in our modern world.

When he knew that his death was approaching, Francis requested to be carried back to the Porziuncola near Assisi so he could die in the place where his spiritual journey began, and he wrote a final verse for the Canticle of the Sun beginning ‘Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.’



Which became verses 5 and 6 of the well-known hymn 'All Creatures of our God and king' that go like this:

*5. All ye that are of tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye, alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God, and on him cast your care: [Refrain]*

*6 And thou, most kind and gentle death,
waiting to hush our latest breath,
O praise him, alleluia!
Thou leadest home the child of God,
and Christ our Lord the way has trod: [Refrain]*

The hymn writer accurately captured Francis' s own attitude to his death, as described by his followers and biographers. It involved bearing bravely any pain and suffering, forgiving those who had wounded or hurt him and turning over to God the unresolved and unfinished business of life. Above all there is confidence and no fear because Christ had gone before him, as he does before all of us.

Apparently, one of the brothers had once asked him what kind of a death he hoped for: a quick, unexpected death or a prolonged, painful death. And St. Francis said, "Brother, I want whatever death God wants for me."

Bishop David Walker recently speaking of Francis said: 'the death of Francis is the fulfilment of his life. The manner of his death expresses the completion of the things that mattered most to him. He wanted in every way, as much as he could, to draw close to his Lord Jesus.'

Despite his intense physical pain, from a variety of ailments and primitive unsuccessful medical treatment, all without pain relief of any kind, historical accounts note that Francis remained spiritually joyful to the end. He asked his brothers to sing the Canticle of the Sun he had written, complete with the new verse and to sing the psalms he loved with him, as he lay dying, and he asked his friend to bring his favourite almond cakes to him to share. At the very end of his life he asked his brothers to lay his naked body on the bare earth, covering him with very little. Because He wished to leave the world as he had lived wedded to Poverty and possessing nothing, completely dependent on the ground that God created.

While lying on the ground, Francis engaged in several final acts, asking his brothers to read aloud the Passion of Christ from the Gospel of John, starting with Jesus washing his disciples' feet....

Following the example of Christ, he blessed all his gathered friars, forgiving their faults and sharing his final wishes and spiritual inheritance with them. He requested bread, blessed it, and shared it with his brothers, just as Jesus had shared a last meal with his disciples, and as we still do today, a sign of love—a reminder of that Last Supper. With his last breaths, he began praying Psalm 142 (*"I cry to the Lord with my voice..."*) he did get to the end.

According to Franciscan tradition, the moment Francis died, a massive flock of larks—birds that usually love the morning sun—descended onto the roof of the chapel and sang loudly, seemingly bidding farewell to the saint who had famously preached to them.

A very dear and much loved and missed friend Susan died on 8th February 2023 having been terminally ill for some time; she had clearly prepared for her death. She was quoted at her funeral as saying "I feel as if I am in God's hands, and God's timing is perfect. For this I can rejoice and feel that all will be well. My life was filled with purpose and wonderful happiness. As my life made sense, so now does my death". This was quoted in her funeral service. Her last days had had space, an opportunity for her to give thanks for the gift of her life. And to let it go.

The late Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson, who died earlier this year after a sudden and swift diagnosis and death from cancer, spoke in his last book about how as death came nearer, he divested himself of many roles, he let them go, and he asked questions in one of his sermons about who he actually was.

Ultimately, he affirmed with St Paul that because God, when he looks at us, looks at us in Jesus, and because Jesus is beloved by God, we by His grace are also beloved. Quoting Archbishop Justin Welby he said "I find who I am in Jesus Christ ...loved, called and blessed beyond measure,and my identity in him never changes"

He, like St Francis and Susan was faithful and confident in his faith at the time of his death, so now when I think of death I think particularly of those three shining examples of confident faith, and pray that when the time comes it will be true for all of us.

Alison Tyler

SEVEN UP

I wonder if anyone else watched Michael Apted's "Up" series, culminating recently in the final programme, "70 Up" made by Asif Kapadia? Some of my friends and I have followed the series with affection, having watched the first two ("7 Up" and "14 Up") as part of our course in child development. Suffice it to say, at that time, "21 Up" had yet to be made. The series was allegedly inspired by the Jesuit saying "Give me a child until he is seven, and I will show you the man."

In my days as a student teacher, it was commonplace to believe that the seven-year-old pupil defined the adult they would become, and presumably, that was behind the introduction of selection tests at eleven plus, when those predicted to academic success followed a different education path to those who "failed the test" for whatever reason. Many of our year 6 children locally still sit these tests. Looking back at my own past pupils, there was very high correlation between interests and abilities at an early age and adult career paths – the bright six-year-old who is now a GP; the sporty footballer's son who is now a professional golfer; the larger-than-life girl who is now a well-known comedian. The one exception I can think of was quite probably because a significant change in home circumstances meant that she didn't fulfil her early promise.

I don't have my school reports and can't say what future my teachers would have predicted for me. I can, however, admit, that I spent hours teaching my dolls, giving them all dates of birth, house points, & filling in registers and spreadsheets. In my spare time I even ran Guide camps for them! I know some of my teacher friends have similar memories. Nursing friends, however, used to play hospitals with their dolls. Some habits instilled in me by my parents from a young age still continue, too – such as cleaning my teeth before breakfast & not after; reading Bible Reading Fellowship notes at bedtime, attending church regularly – and contributing to the church collection, and even not opening birthday presents before 7am & Christmas presents until "after the Queen / King"!

I can remember some of the St Mary's congregation as children, too, and am so pleased to see child members of the choir active within the current congregation, and to hear about former guides who have been or are running units of their own – or sending their daughters along to brownies. One former guide took up floristry after decorating church windowsills at festivals; &

another is now a vicar. I'm not pretending to take the credit for these! I only know about the future choices of a small proportion of the children for whom I have, at some point, had some responsibility - and I know of others who have "opted out" of church life, for whatever reason. However, early experiences must surely influenced future choices.

The Church's work with children is much-debated; with advocates of special groups and activities for children and young people; and of services which integrate all age-groups at once. There are no easy answers, but if the influences of our early years are really so powerful, then what we do must be really important, not only for the children themselves, but also for the future of the Church as a whole.

Jill Atkinson

WORD SEARCH FOR ST LUKE

To St Luke, whose feast-day is 18th October, we owe a beautifully written gospel as well as the Book of Acts. He was a Greek physician and faithful travelling companion to St Paul. Under house arrest near the end of his life Paul noted, 'only Luke is with me'. Luke's gospel focuses on the compassion of Christ, and offers us moving parables, such as the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son. Women figure more prominently in Luke's gospel than in any other: look out for the extended story of the Virgin Birth, and stories of Mary, Elizabeth, and the woman who was a sinner. His gospel also features more poor people, more lepers, more 'sinners', who are all shown to be 'inside' the love of Christ. In Acts, Luke skilfully links sacred and profane history, as subsequent archaeology has shown. He tells of how the early Christians moved away from Jerusalem into the pagan world, and especially on to Rome.

Solution on Page 26

L P F Y A A M P O P G I M Y
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Luke	Acts	Paul	Good	Sinners
Feast	Greek	Compassion	Samaritan	Jerusalem
Day	Physician	Parables	Women	Pagan
Written	Travelling	Prodigal	Poor	Rome
Gospel	Faithful	Son	Lepers	Early

ABERFAN: 60 YEARS ON

The Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham looks back on a national tragedy...

On 21st October 1966 the Aberfan disaster took place in South Wales. A colliery slag heap collapsed, releasing a torrent of slurry onto the village. It engulfed a number of houses and Pantglas Junior School, killing 116 children and 28 adults. It was a disaster that shocked the nation. As we reflect on it today, we are left asking the question, *‘where was God when this happened?’*

At the time there was a mixture of strong emotions: grief and sadness over the loss of those who had died, and anger against the Coal Board in allowing the disaster. However, people gave their energy to support each another. A local Baptist Minister, Revd Kenneth Hayes, who lost his



those
gave
his

eldest son at the school, responded in this way: *‘For 36 hours he was working non-stop either at the school, or going around comforting bereaved and stricken families and kept open house for many who came seeking news and comfort.’*

How should we respond to such an incident? *‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?’* (Romans 8:35). Paul reminds us that even in our darkest times of loss, God is with us to bring comfort. *‘Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.’* (34). Paul also tells us that Jesus understands our suffering and is praying for us. *‘If God is for us, who can be against us?’* (31). We can let go of bitterness and blame, because God is a God of justice.

King Charles III (then Prince of Wales) on the 50th anniversary summed up the community’s response: *‘darkest sorrow, but also the most shining selflessness.’*

ST MARY'S SPIRE - UPDATE



Our The carpenter has finished his work, and the newly carved spire is already in place, awaiting the addition of wooden “shingles”, many of which have had donors’ names inscribed. We are now arranging a date for the return of the roofing company to finish replacing lead & slipped tiles to ensure the church roof is ready for the winter.

How about donations? Well, they have been coming in steadily. We have received £9,725 since the start of August, mostly in a tax-efficient manner, so the Inland Revenue due course will be adding nearly £3,000. These donations have come from local residents, church members, & from friends of Mary’s in this country & abroad, & range in value from £5 to £1,000 – so many thanks to everyone, and perhaps particularly to John Beale, who has masterminded the whole exercise.



in

St



The carpenter has been paid, using the money from the appeal and (hopefully temporarily) with reserves from the Knight bequest, which were earmarked for work to the roof. But it isn’t too late to contribute, as we still have to pay for the rest of the roof to be repaired & would like those reserves back to do so!

Jill Atkinson

WAYS TO DONATE:

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Bank Transfer: Pay the ST MARY PCC account (Account: **42417198** | Sort Code: **60-04-02**), using "Church Spire Donation" as your reference.

MOTHERS UNION UPDATES

OCTOBER 2026

- **Wednesday 7th October**
↳ **Grace Café** – open from **10:00 am**.
- **Saturday 10th October**
↳ **Diocesan Autumn Members' Meeting** – held at **St Edith Hall**, Kemsing Village Hall, Sevenoaks. Arrive at **9:30 am** for a **10:00 am** start.
- **Thursday 15th October**
↳ **Knit and Knatter** – meeting in the **Front Room of Church House** from **10:00 am**. All are welcome to join.
- **Thursday 22nd October**
↳ **Gentle Exercise Class** – our official October branch meeting runs from **10:00 am to 12:00 noon** in the **Buchan Room at Church House**. Our guest instructor, **Sara Cunningham**, will lead a gentle session suitable for all fitness levels, which can be completed fully seated if required. It is highly important to stay active as we age, and it promises to be great fun! Open to everyone - please feel free to bring your partners along.



NOVEMBER 2026

- **Wednesday 4th November**
↳ **Grace Café** – open from **10:00 am**.
- **Thursday 12th November**
↳ **Annual Autumn Quiz** – Chris and John Soper are returning to host their highly popular community quiz. Come along and join us for a fun, lively morning.
- **Thursday 19th November**
↳ **Knit and Knatter** – meeting in the **Front Room of Church House** from **10:00 am**.

FLOWERS AT ST MARY'S



Grateful Thanks to Our Team

A very big **thank you** to everyone who continues to support our church flowers, with special appreciation to Sue and Jean for all their tireless work on a regular basis. We are also incredibly grateful to those who have donated to the flower fund; it is always a profound honour to create arrangements for special parish occasions and

personal remembrances.

Harvest Festival Decorating

We will be decorating the church for our **Harvest Festival on Friday 9th October from 10:00 am**, and we would be very grateful for some extra helping hands to dress the windowsills. Please do come along if you can! Even if you have never tried flower arranging before, you are warmly welcome to join us, see what we do, and help fill the church with colour. Refreshments will be provided.



Forthcoming Community Events

Bromley Flower Club Show — “A Window into Autumn”

- **Where:** Bromley United Reformed Church, Widmore Road
- **When:** Saturday 31st October 2026
- **Time:** 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm (*Tea and cakes served from 2:00 pm*)
- **Admission:** £2
- **Notice:** All are warmly welcome to attend and enjoy the autumn displays.

Anne Yolland

COLOURING ACTIVITY:



MORE BULGARIAN RECOLLECTIONS.

Reading the interesting article by BB in the September edition prompted memories of a 1971 holiday in Bulgaria at the purpose-built resort on the Black Sea. It translated as "Sunny Beach" which indeed it was plus - very cheap!

Arriving at Burgas Airport practically everyone on board was transferred by coach to what at the time was a rather futuristic looking resort. Basically, it consisted of hotels and somewhat tacky themed restaurants. Visitors could eat at any restaurant though you soon discovered the food was basically the same. Also, popular dishes were often mysteriously unavailable apart from the inescapable tomato salad!

We found ourselves housed on the 6th floor of our hotel. Sadly, the hot water rarely got there and protestations to the management fell on deaf ears. To our delight we woke up one morning to the sound of the pipes rattling and shaking - the hot water had arrived! It transpired that a lot of Russians from a collective farm had been billeted at our hotel as their annual holiday and their communist holiday rep (KGB probably) had roused the hotel management to action.

After this experience of the delights of communist efficiency we found that wherever we went Russians received preferential treatment. They could enter a restaurant last and all the staff would flock to serve them. Often, they would finish before even our tomato salad starter had arrived. If you were politely queuing to be seated you would be ignored and those wearing a small metal red star badge (Communist party) would be seated first. It was a very uncomfortable lesson in what it feels like to be excluded and ignored in a society that gives others preferential treatment.

If you felt desperate you could try the local "extra cognac." Chris did one night thinking the word "extra" meant better - sadly she was very mistaken and possibly what was left of her drink helped power a local tractor the next day to pull yet another load of tomatoes!

A stroll one evening revealed another hotel being built nearby. We wondered why there were guards around the perimeter but then realised many of the workers were manacled prisoners.

It would be unfair to Bulgarians to paint too bleak a picture. Much of the countryside is lovely and they are a major grower of roses often used in perfume. Since

independence, life has massively improved for the population though if I eat out anywhere, I always avoid the tomato salad!

John Soper

THE BEGINNING OF THE M25

Editor: Tim Lenton considers an iconic road ...you could easily make this local by inviting any of your readers to share a 'horror story' of how long they have spent in a traffic jam on a motorway...



Forty years ago, on 29th October 1986, the M25 motorway around Greater London was opened.

An orbital motorway for London had been proposed in 1944, but by 1966 this idea had evolved into two ringways, to the north and south. By the time the first sections opened in 1975, however, it had been rethought again, and so joining them together to make a full orbital motorway was again the plan.

Just over ten years later, in 1986, the final section was opened by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the new M25 was the longest ring road in Europe. The Dartford Crossing is technically not a motorway, but few would know the difference.

Environmental considerations became a factor, and almost 40 public inquiries took place, the most controversial area being in Kent over the North Downs. However, none of the public inquiries came out in favour of objectors.

At first the M25 was popular with the public. In the 1987 General Election, the Conservatives won everywhere the motorway passed through. But problems quickly surfaced, the obvious one being chronic congestion.

Part of this was due to apparently unanticipated office and retail development along its route, generating in-and-out slower-moving traffic. Also, it was soon clear that more lanes were needed in many places: in some areas three had become five or six. Some churches even objected because it created a kind of stone wall between those congregations within and those without.

A report in *The Economist* said it "had taken 70 years to plan, 12 to build it and just one to find it was inadequate".

The M25 is now well established and used in practice as an alternative boundary for Greater London, especially by haulage companies. If you ever get stuck in a traffic jam on the M25, it might help to remember that it was designed for a maximum of 88,000 vehicles a day but instead carries at times up to 300,000 a day.

4th October – 800 years since the death of St Francis of Assisi

Editor: The Rev Roy Shaw looks back on Francis' life and the contribution he made. It is a long article, but we feel it is well worth it, as 800 years is a significant milestone!



You'll have heard of Giovanni di Pietro di Bernadone, although he is more probably familiar as Francis of Assisi. On 4th October we will mark 800 years since his death; such was his fame, influence and holiness that he was declared a saint by the pope less than two years after his death.

Francis was born into a prosperous family of silk merchants in Assisi, central Italy, probably in 1181. As a young man he loved clothes, spent money lavishly, and enjoyed a reputation of a jack-the-lad, pleasure-loving and irresponsible. But experience both as a prisoner of war and of illness led him to think deeply about his life, although it took some time for this reappraisal to bear fruit.

Just outside Assisi was the ruined chapel of San Damiano, and it was here that he felt God speak to him, asking him to "repair my church, which as you can see, is falling into ruin". Little did Francis know at that point that 'repairing my church' meant much more than repairing this simple chapel - a task he set about doing.

Francis became known for his devotion to Christ and also his commitment to the poor and bereft. Others were attracted to join him in preaching the gospel and serving the poor. Eventually this was organised into a congregation of poor men (friars), which today we know as the Franciscans.

He established a Rule of Life for these men, later revised as more joined them. A sister organisation, the Poor Clares, was founded for women who wanted to give their lives to God and the service of the poor. Two years before his death, in a period of intense prayer, he is said to have displayed the *stigmata* - the wounds of Christ - in his hands and side. By then he was increasingly ill; blindness and malaria took its toll. He died aged just 45.

Simplicity was a hallmark of his life, which has come down to us in a number of ways. Care for the environment is one way; patron saint of animals is another. World Animal Day is marked on the same day as Francis' death. Many churches will be holding a 'Blessing of the Animals' service, often a cheerful riot of barking dogs, hissing cats, rats and mice in cages, even a stick insect, and horses tethered outside. Is there one in your area where you could take your pet to be blessed?

We should see Francis as a visionary and inspirer, who, impelled by the love of Christ, was able to give himself to, and draw others to, a life of service to the poor, care for the environment, and prayer. By the time he died, there were Franciscan friars over much of Europe. Today, inspired by his legacy, his followers - friars, sisters and lay people - are found all over the world.

Do you have a Rule of Life which you try to live by, one which honours God and seeks the best for humanity? How do you inspire those around you? How do you mark your care for God's creation? You love your pets, but is it time to re-evaluate if you are doing the best by them?

One of Francis' prayers asks God 'to grant us the grace to do for You alone what we know You want us to do, and always to desire what pleases You.' That could be a good rule of life, a star to live by; could you make it yours?

Worship Diary

We offer a variety of services throughout the year. They are mostly on Sundays at 10.30 am 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!

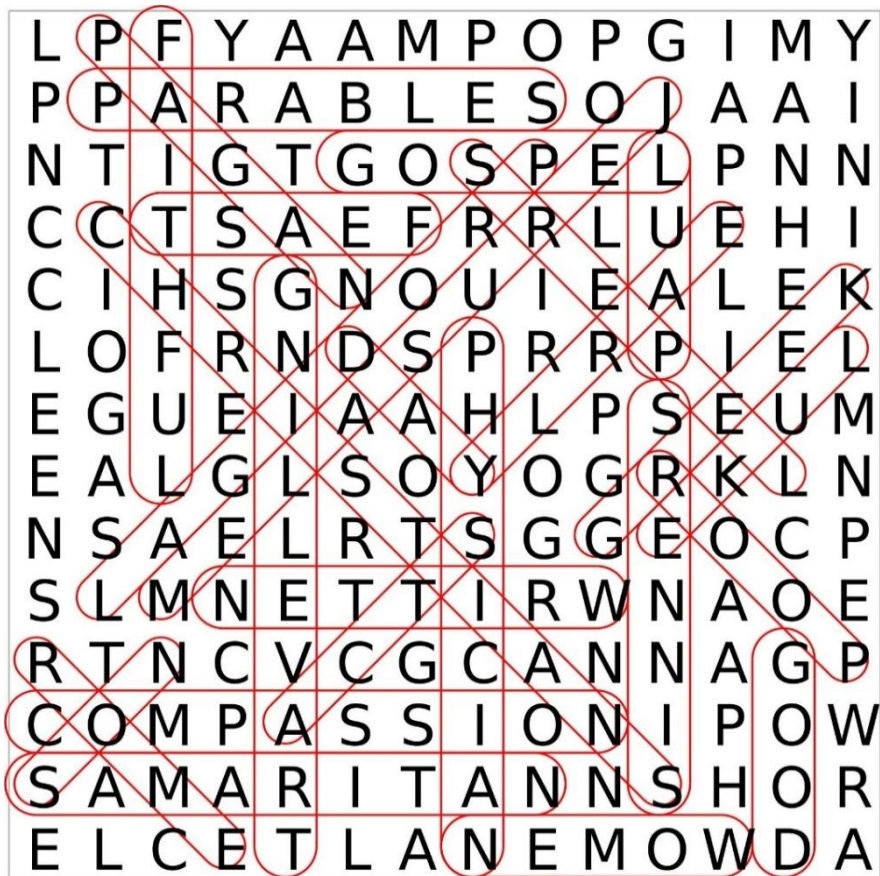
Our Sunday Club is a valued provision for our youngest members. They do not meet during school holidays.

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

Worship Services in October 2026

Sunday 4th October	Trinity 18, Creation Season Black History Month	10.30 am Parish Communion & Sunday Club
Sunday 11th October	Trinity 19 Harvest Festival	8.30 am BCP Communion, followed by breakfast 10.30 am Family Service – Harvest Festival
Thursday 15th October	Quiet Day	10,00 am – 3.00 pm
Sunday 18th October	Trinity 20	10.30 am Parish Communion & Sunday Club
Sunday 25th October	Trinity 21	10.30 am Parish Communion Peter Kettle visiting to launch Poverty & Hope appeal

WORD SEARCH SOLUTION



CARTOON CORNER

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 24:44-51, Luke 12:40-46

Jesus warned his disciples to be always ready for his return at the end of time by telling the story of two servants



SMILE LINES



God is here

When our minister and his wife visited our neighbour, her four-year-old daughter answered the door. "Mum!" she yelled toward the living room. "God's here, and He brought His

girlfriend."

Book the date

Our new curate was very eager to please. When I asked if I could have a church service when I eventually die, he responded with enthusiasm. "Of course," he said, grabbing his date book. "What day do you want?"

The cow and the Bible

A religious farmer lost his Bible out in the field. A few days later he went to answer a noise at his door. Standing there was a cow, with his Bible in its mouth. The farmer raised his eyes to heaven and thanked the Lord for this miracle. "It's not really," said the cow. "Your name was written inside."

Shampoo

Why I didn't realise this sooner? It's the shampoo I use in the shower that is my problem. When I wash my hair, the shampoo runs down my whole body, and printed very clearly on the shampoo label is this warning: 'FOR EXTRA VOLUME AND BODY.' No wonder I have been gaining weight.

Genesis for Cats

On the first day of Creation, God created the cat.

On the second day, God created man to serve the cat.

On the third day, God created all the animals of the earth to serve as food for the cat.

On the fourth day, God created honest toil so that man could labour for the good of the cat.

On the fifth day, God created expensive furniture so that the cat would have objects whereon to sharpen its claws.

On the sixth day, God created veterinary science to keep the cat healthy and the man broke.

On the seventh day, God tried to rest, but the litterbox needed changing.

Music

The symphony musicians had little confidence in the man brought in to be their new conductor. Their fears were realized at the very first rehearsal. The cymbalist, realising that the conductor did not know what he was doing, angrily clashed his instruments together during a delicate, soft passage. The music stopped. The conductor, highly agitated, looked angrily around the orchestra, demanding, "Who did that? Who did that?"



Others

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?

Broad

Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.

The glass

To the optimist, the glass is half full. To the pessimist, the glass is half empty. To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

Accident

As my five-year-old son and I were heading to McDonald's one day, we passed a car accident. Usually when we see something terrible like that, we say a prayer for whoever might be hurt, so I pointed and said to my son, "We should pray."

From the back seat I heard his earnest voice: "Dear God, please don't let those cars block the entrance to McDonald's."

Dreams

Realise your dream! Unless it's the one where you're at work in your underwear during a fire drill.

There are three religious truths:

- a. Jews do not recognise Jesus as the Messiah.
- b. Protestants do not recognise the Pope as the leader of the Christian faith.
- c. Baptists and Methodists do not recognise each other in the off license.

Stories

As part of his talk at a banquet, our minister told some jokes and a few funny stories.

Since he planned to use the same anecdotes at a meeting the next day, he asked reporters covering the event not to include them in their articles. Reading the paper the following morning, he noticed that one well-meaning cub reporter had ended his story on the banquet with the observation: "The minister told a number of stories that cannot be published."

Sticks

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf.

The Perfect Minister

When looking for a new minister, it may be helpful to bear the following in mind:

The Perfect Minister preaches exactly 10 minutes. He condemns sin roundly but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8 am until midnight and is also the church handyman.



The Perfect Minister lives on a very small salary, wears good clothes, drives a good car, buys good books, and donates £30 a week to the church. He is 29 years old and has 40 years' worth of experience. Above all, he is handsome.

The Perfect Minister has a burning desire to work with teenagers, and he spends most of his time with the senior citizens. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humour that keeps him seriously dedicated to his church. He makes 15 home visits a day and is always in his office to be on hand when needed.

The Perfect Minister always has time for all our church meetings. And he is always busy evangelising the unchurched. He also spends hours preparing couples for their weddings, hours preparing parents for their baby's baptism, and hours visiting the bereaved. But his life is dedicated to solitude, prayer and meditation.

The Perfect Minister is always in the next town over! So, if you think that our minister does not measure up, it has been suggested that we simply send this notice to six other churches who would like to try a new minister. The idea is that we bundle up our minister and send him to the church at the top of our list. If everyone cooperates, in one week we will receive 1,643 new ministers. One of them should be perfect.

Have faith in this plan. One church broke the chain and got its old minister back in less than three months.

Sides

It was my wedding day, and no one was happier than my mother. But as she approached the church doors, an usher asked, "Which side are you on?"

"Oh, no," she said, dismayed. "Are they fighting already?"

Scammer

I got a call from a scammer who said, "I've got all of your passwords."

I said, "Great. What are they? I'll grab a pen."

Doors

My granddad always said, "When one door closes, another door opens." Lovely man. Terrible joiner.

Pastors

What do they call pastors in Germany?

German Shepherds.

Miscellaneous observations on daily life

- At my age I have given up on health foods; I need all the preservatives I can get.
- Ever feel like life is a car wash and you're on a bicycle?
- It's good to have self-confidence. It's even better to have a reason for it.
- You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.
- Blessed are the flexible people, for they don't mind when the demands of family and work ties them in knots.
- If God had wanted us to fly, He would have given us tickets. (Mel Brooks)
- My favourite childhood memory is having energy.



- My mind is like an internet browser. At least 19 open tabs, three of them are frozen and I have no clue where the music is coming from.
- It's weird being the same age as old people.
- I like to make a shopping list. I like to guess what's in it when I get to the store and discover I left it at home.

Bats on the wing

Two bats went for their midnight feed. After an hour or so, one bat got tired of looking and went home with no blood. Later the other bat came back, with blood dripping from its mouth. The first bat said enviously, "Where did you get all that blood from?"

The second bat replied "Follow me. I'll show you." He led the first one to a cave and said: "You see that wall over there?"

The hungry bat excitedly says, "Yes!"

The other bat said, "I didn't."



...if you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this sermon...

SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS AND THANKS

Grace Café - A Place of Welcome



Come and Join Us!

If you are looking for a friendly space to enjoy a drink, a slice of delicious homemade cake, and some great company, our doors are wide open. Our regular sessions run:

- **When:** Every Wednesday morning
- **Time:** 10:00 am – 12:00 noon
- **Where:** St Mary's Church, 61 College Road, BR1 3QG
- **Cost:** Free admission, all are warmly welcome!



Group basic awareness Safeguarding training

An Essential Shared Commitment



active presence reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that St Mary's remains a protective, supportive, and trusted sanctuary for everyone.

A huge and sincere **thank you** to all our dedicated church volunteers who came together on Monday 7th September to participate in our group Safeguarding Training session. We are deeply grateful for your time, focus, and vigilance. Your

If you were unable to join the face-to-face group session, or if your current training certification is due to expire shortly, please kindly complete the basic awareness module online at your earliest convenience via the Church of England portal at safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org. Thank you for your proactive cooperation in keeping our church community safe.

Friends of Kent Churches 'Ride and Stride'

Community Spirit in Motion

A massive and heartfelt **thank you** to every single person who stepped up to support the annual Ride and Stride event on Saturday 12th September. We are delighted to announce that our parish raised a splendid **£505** to be sent to the Friends of Kent Churches! This wonderful total is an increase on last year's fundraising. Whether you dusted off your bicycle to visit neighbouring parishes, sponsored our participants, or generously gave up your Saturday to keep



St Mary's open and welcoming for the community, your efforts made a spectacular difference.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to Peter and Frances Boyden for their long day out in Maidstone visiting an impressive 11 churches. We also thank John Beale for masterfully organising our successful involvement with the **London Open**

House initiative, which brought a wonderful influx of new visitors and generous community donations. If you filled out a sponsorship pledge for the Boydens or any other participant, please hand your funds directly to Chris Soper, who is currently collecting all donations.



Mothers' Union

Autumn Fellowship and Focus



A delightful **thank you** to all the members and friends who joined us on **Thursday 10th September** for a wonderful games morning in the front room of Church House to start our autumn schedule with fun and laughter. We also extend

our deepest thanks to **Irene Hurley** from Holy

Trinity, Lamorbey, Sidcup, for visiting our Knit and Knatter group on

Thursday 17th

September. Her eye-

opening talk on how their

branch actively supports the *Rise Up* programme gave us fantastic inspiration for our own local outreach inspired and guided as we look for practical ways to play our part

in supporting vital community initiatives.



Prayer Breakfast with Talk



A wonderful **thank you** to everyone who joined us for our very first monthly bring and share Prayer Breakfast and talk at the church on Saturday 12th September. Special thanks go to **Maria** for sharing such a thoughtful and inspiring, talk about caring for the soil in our gardens.

Join Our Next Prayer Breakfast is scheduled for **Saturday 10th October** from 9:00 am to 10:00 am at the church. We look forward to seeing you there!

Highlights from the Parish Registers: Weddings

Paul and Lerato's Special Day



A heartfelt **thank you** to all our church members, stewards, flower arrangers, and friends who gathered in the pews on Saturday 19th September to celebrate this truly beautiful occasion. Thank you all for wrapping the happy couple and their families in your practical support, presence, and warmest best wishes, making it a wonderful day to remember for our

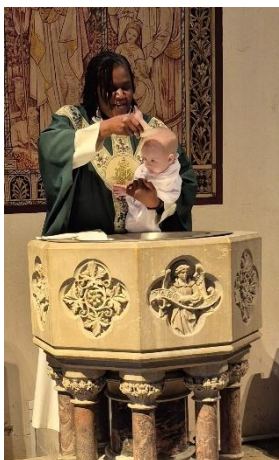
community.

We pray for Paul and Lerato as they step forward into this exciting new chapter of life together. We ask that God will bless them abundantly, grant them lifelong joy, and guide them with His grace, strengthening their marriage day by day as they build their future together. **Amen.**



Highlights from the Parish Registers: Baptisms

Welcoming George into the Flock



A warm **thank you** to our wonderful sidesmen, choir, and church family who came together on Sunday 27th September to create such a beautifully welcoming service for George's Holy Baptism. It is always a profound privilege for our congregation to host these milestone moments, opening our doors and our hearts to the community.





We pray for George and his family as they celebrate this beautiful milestone. We ask that he will grow deeply in the knowledge of God's love, shielded by grace and surrounded continually by the warmth and support of our parish community as he begins his lifelong journey of faith.

Messy Vintage Launch



A Wonderful New Ministry Begins

A huge **thank you** to everyone who supported and joined us for the official grand launch of our new **BRF Messy Vintage** outreach project on Monday 28th September. We were absolutely delighted to welcome **Councillor Dr. Sunil Gupta, the Deputy Mayor of Bromley**, council representatives, and diocesan representatives who attended

to mark the opening of this special community initiative.

Join Our Upcoming Sessions

You are warmly invited to join us as our regular monthly gatherings begin! The group meets on the **3rd Monday of each month** from **2:15 pm to 3:45 pm** at the church building on **61 College Road, Bromley BR1 3QG**.

Our upcoming seasonal themes for the autumn and winter terms are:

- **Monday 19th October:** Harvest Festival
- **Monday 16th November:** Memories
- **Monday 21st December:** Christmas





Enquiries: For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the organisers directly via email at admin@stmarys-bromley.org.uk.

Parish Primary School Voices



A very big **thank you** to the children, teachers, and staff from our Parish primary school who sang at the Messy Vintage launch. The church building was filled with joy and beautiful music as the children sang. We look forward to their singing again during the upcoming **St Mary's Bromley Annual Black History Month Community Concert**.

JOIN US THIS SATURDAY!

Don't miss this incredible celebration of **Black History Month**, focusing on unity, diversity, culture, and music. Come and support our choirs

alongside many other fantastic performers:

Event: St Mary's Bromley Annual Community Concert: Music Extravaganza!

When: This Saturday, 3rd October 2026

Time: 4:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Where: St Mary's Church, College Road, Bromley, BR1 3QG

Suggested Donation: £10 (Children - FREE!)

Enquiries: Please contact Clem at events@stmarys-bromley.org.uk for more details.



St Mary's Church, Bromley



*We are all called to be saints
through Christ*

Quiet Day

Led by Paul Stevens



Thursday 15th October 2026



10.00 am – 3.00 pm



St Mary's Church, Bromley.
BR1 3QG



TIME FOR PRAYER

Quiet times • Scripture • Reflection
Spiritual guidance • Fellowship

"...be still, and know that I am God.."

PSALM 46:10



Refreshments and lunch provided.

If you would like to attend, please sign up at church
or email admin@stmarys-bromley.org

All are welcome.

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