

# St Mary's Shortlands



## Parish Profile 2024



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## 1 Archdeacon's Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to be the next Vicar of St Mary's, Shortlands. This is an exciting time in the life of Rochester Diocese as we reflect on how we as a Diocese, and in different ways in each of our parishes, might Change and Serve and Grow so that God's Kingdom can be increased, and more people can come to know the love of Jesus.

St Mary's is a church with much to offer. You will see from this profile that the PCC have recently developed a mission plan. The next incumbent will have every opportunity to shape and develop this to enable the congregation to grow as followers of Jesus and to have a wider impact on their local community.

In the profile you will notice that the PCC have highlighted that there have been some recent challenges. We need a strong, collaborative missional leader, who is unafraid to challenge, when necessary, but who will always seek to love and care for this congregation and the wider community.

St Mary's is part of the Beckenham Deanery, in the London Borough of Bromley at the Western edge of the Diocese of Rochester. This is a great location with easy access to central London, and just a short walk, drive, or bus journey to Bromley, where all the shops you might need can be easily found.

Please be assured of my prayers as you discern whether you are the person the Holy Spirit is calling to join us in this next exciting stage of mission and ministry in Shortlands.

Ven. Allie Kerr,  
Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley.



## 2 St Mary's Shortlands

St. Mary's Church is located in an attractive part of the London Borough of Bromley with a large, detached vicarage. We are a Central Anglican church. Our Mission is **"Sharing the love of God"** and we place great value on being welcoming and inclusive to all. Our Vision develops our Mission in four key areas: **our heart for God; building fellowship and confidence; becoming a hub for activities, the go to place in the community for spiritual support and encouragement and, in time, becoming prophetic and challenging.**

You will see from this parish profile that there is a lot going on at St Mary's across the different areas of our Vision. This is described in some detail to give you a feel for our church, covering:

- **growing as disciples** - developing our heart for God through worship, learning and prayer;
- **building confidence and fellowship** - in our activities with children and families, pastoral care and social groups;
- **reaching out** - offering community activities and spiritual support and encouragement in Shortlands, including through our café and children's and youth activities.

We feel passionately that there is tremendous potential for St. Mary's to build on these activities and we have a strong sense that there is much more that God is calling us to be and to do. Looking ahead we feel that we need:

- **greater continuity** – after two long incumbencies of 21 and 12 years, we have had two incumbents who have only stayed for a comparatively short time - a cause of great sadness to us. Recently we have had an interim priest in charge who has been instrumental in facilitating the development of our Vision and Mission as a way forward. We are now looking for someone to be with us for the long term.
- **to reflect the demographic of our parish** - We are currently over- reliant on an ageing congregation. There is growing diversity within the parish and many young people and families, as well as a significant proportion of older people. We are keen to strengthen relationships with local schools and community organisations and work with our incumbent to reflect the diversity of the people in our area.



### 3 Our Vision and Mission and Strategic Objectives

We are looking for an incumbent who is inspired and enthused by our Vision and Mission, which is the result of extensive consultation in 2022 and was adopted at the beginning of 2023.

Our **Mission** is “**Sharing the Love of God**”.

Our **Vision** develops our Mission in four key areas. In summary:

- 1) **It starts with us and our heart for God:** *“love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength” Mark 12:30*
- 2) **Building confidence** so we are: *“willing to give the reason for the hope that we have” 1 Peter 3:15* **Building fellowship:** *“clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” Colossians 3:12*
- 3) **Reaching out to the community and becoming a hub for activities, the go to place for spiritual support and encouragement:** *“Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true” Ephesians 5:9*
- 4) **Prophetic and challenging:** *“You are the salt of the earth” Matthew 5:13*

We adopted our **Values** as part of our work in developing our Vision and Mission. Our Values are that we should be:

<b>Christ-centred</b>	<b>Inclusive and Flexible</b>	<b>Kind and Caring</b>
<b>Learning and Growing</b>	<b>Open and Nurturing</b>	<b>Welcoming and Valuing</b>

In our Vision and Mission statement we identified **Strategic Objectives** under each of the first three parts of our Vision.

#### **Our Heart for God. Focus on growing as disciples through:**

- **learning**
- **worship and sacrament**
- **prayer.**

#### **Building Confidence and Fellowship. Focus on:**

- **knowing each other better,**
- **supporting children and families**
- **providing pastoral support.**

#### **Hub of the Community - Focus on:**

- **community engagement,**
- **developing our mission to specific groups**
- **extending our outreach in response to needs**
- **buildings and environmental stewardship**
- **social justice and service.**

## 4 Where are we now with our Vision & Mission?

We have identified how our current and planned activities fit with our Strategic Objectives so that we can test what we are doing against our Vision and Mission, giving us a focus and a rationale for what we do.

In Section 7 we give summaries of our current activities by reference to our Vision and our Strategic Objectives.

While seeking to implement our Vision and Mission, we recognise that there have been issues and challenges in the life of our church. We have been listening. We have committed to our Values in our PCC code of conduct. We are continuing to work on embedding these and ensuring we have a healthy culture, as churches are being encouraged to do, taking account of the Church of England's "what good looks like" indicators.

We want to work together as a church community to carry forward our Vision and Mission, setting priorities rather than seeking to do everything at once, and reminding ourselves to try to discern what God wants us to be doing, rather than relying on our own initiative. We see huge potential for St Mary's if we can carry through our Vision and Mission, as it evolves over time. To do this though, we will need to harness our collective gifts, working together under the leadership of our incumbent

Our Vision and Mission reflects our current thinking. We are keen though for our new incumbent to build on this with their own insights to help us move forward and we are open to being taken in new directions. A copy of the full Vision and Mission is provided as an Appendix.



## 5 We are looking for an incumbent who reflects our Vision and Mission. Someone who:

### Has a heart for God

1. Seeks the will of God for their life, and for the church, through prayer and listening to God.
2. Demonstrates a living faith.
3. Is kind, supportive and thoughtful.

### Encourages and enables growth of disciples

4. Inspires in us a love of learning about God and a desire to build and deepen a relationship with God at all stages of the faith journey.
5. Is committed to nurturing the diversity of Anglican worship, music and discipleship within a central tradition.

### Builds fellowship and confidence

6. Is a confident and experienced leader who commands respect, discerns people's gifts and nurtures and deploys individuals to enable the church to thrive.
7. Empowers people to lead within the framework of our Vision and Mission.
8. Communicates effectively in preaching, leading worship and in the wider life of the church.

### Reaches out to others

9. Communicates Christianity to the community in a way that is attractive and authentic to all age groups.
10. Embraces and responds sensitively and flexibly to the needs and challenges of the community.
11. Is committed to encouraging diversity, welcoming all inclusively and equally.



## 6 Our Worship

### Overview

St Mary's has a central Anglican tradition with a robed choir and a wide range of services. We celebrate the diversity of Anglican worship and seek to give people of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to worship in ways that enable them to build their spiritual lives, reflecting the first part of our Vision: *"it starts with us and our heart for God."*

### Services

Day & time	Service	Average attendance
Sunday 10.30am	Family Holy Communion (CW)	75-80 adults and 4-8 children
Sunday 5.00pm	Come Holy Spirit (informal, 1st Sunday of the month)	New service - attendance has been between 3 and 10
Sunday 6.30pm	Choral Evensong (BCP) (3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month)	30-35 including choir
Sunday 6.30pm (once a term)	Informal Music Group service	35-45 including music group
Wednesday 10.00am	Said Holy Communion (CW)	15-20 adults
Every day (except Fridays) 9.00am or 9.30am	Said Morning Prayer (CW)	Said by the incumbent – for others to join if they wish
<b>Special Services</b>		
Sunday 10.30am	Mothering Sunday, Parish Picnic, Harvest, Remembrance	60+ children, 100-130 adults
Christmas season	Christingle	90 children, 120 adults
Advent Sunday and Sunday before Christmas 6.30pm	Carol Services	Nine Lessons and Carols – 130
Christmas Eve afternoon	Crib Service	90 children, 155 adults
Christmas Eve 11.30pm	Midnight Mass	85

### Special and Occasional services

We hold four parade services annually. These coincide with Mothering Sunday, the Parish Picnic, Harvest and Remembrance Sunday and are Services of the Word. These services, along with our Christmas services, are particularly well attended by the local community and we are looking to build on these in seeking to realise the third part of our Vision: *"reaching out to the community."*

There is a wide-ranging programme of other special and occasional services which take place throughout the year, including informal evening services led by the Music Group. There are opportunities to introduce new ways to worship, such as our Come Holy Spirit offering, and to experiment with different timing. In the past we have held a weekly 8.00am Sunday Said Holy Communion (BCP). We now hold a 9.00 am Sunday Said Holy Communion (CW) when a Service of the Word has been our Main Service.





## Baptisms, Confirmations, Weddings, Funerals/Committals

Service	2022	2023
Baptisms	11	21
Confirmations	0	6 young people and 1 adult confirmed, 1 child prepared for first communion.
Weddings	0	3 weddings, 1 wedding blessing
Funerals/Committals	14	9

## Music – Choir & Music Group

Music at St Mary's is under the care of our Director of Music and Organist, Claire Tillotson. Claire is supported by a member of the congregation who plays the organ and by visiting organists who play for Choral Evensong and other important services.

St Mary's has a 30-strong robed choir founded in choral traditions which regularly sings every Sunday morning and sings the Office of Choral Evensong once a month.

The choir provides music for services throughout the year including Advent Carols, Nine Lessons and Carols, Good Friday and Easter Day. The choir ranges in age from 6 to late 70s and meet weekly every Thursday to rehearse.

We are affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and the junior Choristers follow their award scheme.



The choir sings at Cathedrals during summer months and has been received warmly. These Cathedrals include: St Edmundsbury, Exeter, Bath Abbey, Peterborough, Southwark and Rochester. We are also invited annually to sing at the ABCD (Action in Bethlehem for Children with Disabilities) Carol Service at St George's Bloomsbury.



The St Mary's Music Group provides alternative music for worship. The group (which includes some members of the choir) currently consists of 6 instrumentalists and 6 singers and is overseen by Claire. The music group plays at least twice a term and sings and plays more contemporary music, seeking to reach those who respond to modern worship music. The group also creates and leads some more informal and contemplative evening services and sometimes also a morning service on Good Friday. Once a year the music group and choir combine to provide a Taize service which is a more reflective and welcoming choice of worship.



We also have occasional recitals which take place at the church to raise money for the church and charity. These have included a French horn, flute trio, barber shop group and we are looking forward to extending this in the future.

Claire works closely with St Mary's pre-school to support them when they sing at our Mothering Sunday service.

Music is flourishing at St Mary's and the future of music here is looking promising.

### Junior Church

At St Mary's we are fortunate to have a congregation of all ages worshipping together. During term time each Sunday there is Junior Church for those aged 4 – 16 to learn more about God and the bible during the 10.30am Service. The young people leave after the first hymn and come back in to join for communion and the end of the service. There is also a crèche held in the hall at the same time for those with children under 4 to use if needed. Some Sundays the young people feedback what they have learnt that week to the rest of the congregation so they can hear what they were doing during the service. There is a strong team of volunteers who are on a termly rota and led by the Junior Church Coordinator. The team use Roots which follows the liturgy of the Gospel each week, meaning the young people are learning about the same passage as the congregation. Junior Church are also heavily involved in the parade services, taking it in turns with the Uniformed Organisations to lead the readings and the prayers at these services and they lay a wreath on Remembrance Sunday.



There is also a strong tradition of a Crib Service held on Christmas Eve each year.

In the past this has been a nativity however in recent years it has taken on a slightly different format, but one which still involves the young people and is more interactive for the congregation too. We have recently had six of our young people confirmed and this is something we would like to be able to offer to all young people who join our church in the years to come.



Our interim vicar leading WWDQ (“Wrestling With Difficult Questions”), a group she started for teenagers, taking place after the main 10.30 am service.

## Church Buildings and Grounds

In our worship we seek to show the love of God through the liturgy and the music as well as the spoken word. This is enhanced by the beauty of our church buildings and grounds.



St. Mary's church was completed in 1955, after the original church was damaged beyond repair in WW2, and we have recently celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone. The church is a significant building and featured in a book of the 60 most important post war churches in 1956.

The vision and faith of those involved is reflected in the boldness and scale of the church, but also in the beauty and simplicity of the design and the quality of the acoustics. Many of us have been inspired in our worship by the morning sunlight shining through the large east window, enhanced by the trees beyond. In the evening we have the joy of seeing sunsets through the west window, providing a sense of wonder at the beauty of God's creation.



The grounds and gardens, together with the memorial garden are a well-loved feature. We are conscious that our gardens can be both a community space and a source of spiritual renewal in support of our Vision and Mission. Increasingly we have been using these for community events and as a way of displaying our faith, through activities and displays at Christmas and Easter.



## 7 Activities and Groups

### Our heart for God

#### Learning

We recognise the need to grow our knowledge and understanding of our Christian faith and our relationship with God. This goes beyond the teaching available at our services and we encourage each other to get involved in small groups and to take advantage of the resources available for individual study.

#### *Small Groups*

We have three groups which meet regularly, either at the church or in homes (one via zoom) and run through most of the year. The groups are under the oversight of the incumbent but decide on their own study subjects and materials/sources. We also run a programme of groups during Lent, when all groups follow the same materials, offering an opportunity for those who do not attend groups throughout the year to get involved in a small group for a short period. Occasionally we have run similar groups in Advent.

Group members value these greatly as a source of spiritual encouragement and the opportunity to build friendship, pray together and provide mutual support. However, there is a sense, particularly among those who have put a lot of effort into leading the groups, that until recently, home groups have never been seen as a particular priority at St. Mary's and we are looking at ways to address this, since many of us have had previous experience of our faith being nourished and built up in the informal home group setting.

#### *Study resources*

Other study resources include retreat days, one in Advent and one in Lent, encouragement to subscribe to Bible reading notes and access to a small library at the back of church. The contents of the library are being reviewed and new titles are being added with a view to providing more interesting and engaging material. Occasionally we participate in courses and events organised by the Diocese and draw on the resources provided but recognise that we could take more advantage of these.

#### *Pilgrimage*

Our journey in faith, both as individuals and as a church, has been supported over the years at St. Mary's through pilgrimage and cultural holidays. These are parish and community events which welcome people from other churches and denominations as well as those who have no faith. Our many pilgrimages have included those to the Holy Land, Santiago de Compostela, Malta and Oberammergau and cultural visits to Krakow and Turkey. We hope that a future incumbent would see these as an opportunity to provide spiritual growth, fellowship and support to those who enjoy this expression of their faith.

#### Worship

In seeking to grow as disciples, we want to:

- ensure that our Liturgy reflects our rich heritage and meets diverse needs;
- embrace our vibrant musical offering: choral tradition, modern and other worship music;
- encourage wider participation in leading worship; and
- encourage our young people to create and deliver worship.

In 2023 we set up a service planning team, with a wide representation across the different areas involved, and have been experimenting with different types of worship and liturgy as we work through how best to achieve these objectives. We are hoping that our new incumbent will want to build on what we have started and be excited at the prospect of taking this forward.

## Prayer

Our prayer life is central to building our relationship with God and underpinning all we do as a church. There is strong sense of support from the prayers of individuals in the church community and the work of the pastoral team. While much of this is behind the scenes, there are several ways in which this can be seen:

- prayers for individuals in the weekly pastoral team meetings,
- monthly healing prayers in our main 10.30 service,
- the nature of the intercessions in our services,
- our prayer tree,
- prayer support through WhatsApp groups,
- an increasing focus on prayer in informal services as in “Come Holy Spirit.”

We are very conscious though that we tend to seek to achieve things through our own capabilities rather than being centred on God through prayer, and we have identified practical actions on prayer to help build our prayer life. We need encouragement and support to carry this through. As well as focussing on our own prayer life, this could include activity within the community, including restarting the annual prayer visiting we did in the parish pre-Covid.

## Building confidence and fellowship

The second part of our Vision focuses on how we work and grow together, as we build our confidence as a Christian community, and our fellowship with each other, prepared to show our faith through words and action.

## Children and families

We identified support for children and families as a key strategic objective under this part of our Vision. Our junior church activities are described in Section 6 above. Our hope is for these to grow with more families joining our church community. Our toddler group, pre-school, Tea Time Together (TTT), youth club and uniformed organisations are described below. TTT and the youth club are exciting new initiatives which have received an encouraging reception in the community. Recently we have trialled a group for parents, responding to a need for parents to have an opportunity to meet and discuss issues and concerns.

## Pastoral care

### *Pastoral Team Overview*

At present there are 7 in the pastoral team, two of whom are licenced pastoral assistants. The team meets for prayers and discussion most Monday afternoons.

The pastoral team offers support through visiting or communicating with the elderly, housebound, disabled or sick of the parish. Part of the team take Home Communion to the housebound. Bereavement visiting and assistance at Baptism Services are also part of the role. Listening support to pre-school parents and staff and support to the Toddler Group and Junior Church is offered.

The pastoral team participate in the monthly healing prayers which take place during the Sunday services for those requiring prayers for themselves or a loved one.

### *Durham House*

As part of St. Mary’s outreach, we conduct an informal, monthly service at a local supported living facility. It follows the church calendar, includes hymns, prayers, bible readings and reflections. In addition, we also organise occasional sing-alongs and a Christmas carol service for them.

### *Mobility Group*

There is a weekly, enthusiastic and supportive mobility class for both church and community seniors. It involves exercise and balance activities which are rounded off with tea, cake and conversation, all of which are accompanied by lots of laughter.



### *Craft and Chatter*

A small but dedicated and talented group of crafters meets weekly. It provides companionship and support to both church and community members alike. The items produced are for Easter and Christmas sales and also to support charities, for example knitted blankets for Eastern Europe and hats for seafarers.

### *Flower team*



Flowers have always been very much a part of St Mary's with a weekly pedestal by the pulpit, a smaller arrangement in the chapel, and sometimes small arrangements in the porch. The festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest are a time when the whole team comes together, with a very wide age range of people enjoying decorating the church for the special occasions.



### *Social & Groups*

#### *Social Groups*

St Mary's has several groups which organise ad hoc social events, such as meals out, walks and theatre outings. These include the 2Ws (Widows and Widowers) for older people, a ladies' group and a men's group.

#### *The Society of The Friends of St Mary's Shortlands – The Friends*

The Society was formed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1955, the day the newly built church was consecrated by the then Bishop of Rochester. The inspiration to found it came from the then incumbent and one of the objects of the Society was to provide additional funds for the parish and 'to promote a fellowship of all those who have the good of St Mary's at heart'.

In 1961 the Society adopted a constitution which enabled it to become a charity registered with the



Charity Commission meaning any funds built up did not contribute to the Diocesan Quota. Over time the money raised supported the costs of providing the Friends' Room, the rebuilding fund for the church plus regular gifts to the Vicar's Discretionary Fund. The main purposes of the Friends are to: organise social events for the church community and raise funds for "those little extras" that the church cannot always afford.

They also support the Annual Chorister Award, renamed the Paul Baker Award. The recipient is chosen by the Director of Music. Criteria include: good attendance, progress and setting a good example to other junior choristers.

Since its inception the Friends have supported the purchase of, amongst other things, the Christmas tree, prayer books, cassocks for the choir, mulled wine and mince pies and tools to support the upkeep of the church and its grounds by volunteers. As well as fund raising, the Friends' aim is always to have fun, organising a range of social events to facilitate fellowship, encourage engagement and are always keen to welcome new members.



### Reaching out – offering spiritual support and encouragement

Our community engagement has grown over the past couple of years and this is continuing as we seek to realise the third part of our Vision to be the spiritual hub of our community. This includes the establishment of our Café and the setting up of Tea Time Together and our Youth Club, responding to needs we identified in the community. These activities, and the Baby and Toddler group, are prime examples of how we have been able to make use of the increased flexibility created by the reordering of the church (see Section 9). There is much more to do though, and we are keen to work with a new incumbent to identify and respond to needs in the community as they arise and follow through on the other aspects of our vision.

#### Café

St Mary's Community Café, on Wednesday mornings, clearly fulfils a need in the community to bring people together. It started as a trial, during Covid 19 as soon as restrictions allowed, never expecting the impact it would have.



Many people who first came had nobody to talk to during Covid, so the Café met that need. One regular said, “It has been a life saver for me. I lost my husband, and the Café has given me a new lease of life.” Another said, “It has meant a great deal to me. I have made a lot of friends and they have made me feel welcome especially as I’m not a churchgoer.” The general consensus from our attendees is that the Community Café is a warm and welcoming place for everyone and offers friendship and kindness, in addition to delicious homemade cakes, tea and coffee.



The St Mary’s Community Café is very much open to the community, and we welcome all visitors as well as people from the church who enjoy the warmth and conviviality shared. The vicar and members of the pastoral team are usually on hand for anyone who needs a deeper conversation.

During winter we offered it as a warm space, but our regulars come every week and we have a thriving community, averaging 45 a week. Many people who visit come back and have also become part of the warmth of the Café.

It is just what it says - a Community Café open to all whether they are church goers or not. It is now tradition to celebrate milestone birthdays for Café guests and we have also hosted fundraisers for worthy causes such as Macmillan Cancer which we now do annually as well as Christian Aid and a one-off fundraiser for JusB a local Charity. We have been able to extend our services to other church events such as Plant Sales, fundraising concerts, and Charity Bridge afternoons to raise funds for the church.



The Café is staffed by volunteers and all our baked goods are also made by volunteers who are made up of members of the church and people from within the community. Quite a few volunteers do both jobs of serving and baking and also offer warmth and welcome to all.

## **Children and Youth (Toddlers; Pre-school; Tea Time Together; Youth Club; Uniformed groups)**

### ***Baby and Toddler group***

The Baby and Toddler group meets on a Thursday in term time, when there is one session in the morning and one in the afternoon.



It uses the back of the church as a venue. These groups are very popular in the community, and they currently attract at least 60 children.

A special service for the group is held at the end of every term with a party in the summer term. The crafts are based on the liturgical year.



### *Pre-School*

St Mary's Pre-School is held in the church hall each weekday morning during term time. Up to 36 children attend each session and there are 7 staff who all hold early years qualifications. The Pre-School Committee includes 3 people who are appointed by the PCC. The Pre-School runs as a separate organisation, which is financially independent, but is ultimately the responsibility of the PCC who are the trustees of the Pre-School. Previous incumbents have chaired the Pre-School committee, and it would be expected that they would be a vital member of the team. Its accounts are included in the annual church accounts. It was graded 'Good' at its last Ofsted inspection (January 2024).



### Tea Time Together

Tea Time Together started in September 2021 and is held on the second Sunday of every month (excluding April, August, and December).



This is a session held for the community, specifically for families with children aged 2 – 8 although all ages are welcome.

The sessions follow a theme each month with an interactive song, story, arts and crafts and games around this theme. In the first year we looked at the Fruits of The Spirit.

Since then, the theme has followed important liturgical events such as Epiphany, Advent and Remembrance and also stories from the Bible such as the Plagues, Moses and the Ten Commandments.

Tea Time Together has proven to be popular with the community with a good number attending each month who are not regular members of our congregation, however since coming to the sessions some attendees have started coming more regularly to services for important Christian festivals and on Sunday mornings.



This is led by Rachel Tillotson (Junior Church Coordinator) with a team of volunteers and refreshments provided by the Community Café.

### Youth Club

Also held on the second Sunday of every month (after Tea Time Together) and led by Rachel Tillotson is Shortlands Youth Club.



This is a social youth club which started in May 2022, for those in the community who are in Yr6 and up (11+).

Those who come have the opportunity to play table tennis, air hockey, video games, board games, arts and crafts and in the summer months outdoor games too such as football, swing ball and with the slidey trays.

There are free snacks on offer for the young people to enjoy but most importantly it is a safe space they can come to once a month to be with friends and other people their age. There is a strong team of volunteers who help set up and pack away each month and make sure the young people are safe whilst with us.



The club is well attended each month (average 30 people) and the majority of the young people who come are not members of the church, however we have seen some of them attending services since the club started, especially around Christmas and Easter.

## Uniformed Groups



St Mary's is fortunate to have a strong representation of uniformed groups for both Scouting & Girlguiding: Beavers, Cubs (2 units), Scouts, Rainbows, Brownies (2 units) and Guides (2 units). They meet on church premises during term time and enjoy a wide range of activities led by a team of dedicated leaders.



Four Parade Services are held each year in which the young people participate. Units run stalls at the Church Christmas Fair and at the Parish Picnic. The Guides have for many years helped out clearing dead leaves in church grounds on the morning after their Christmas sleepover, and in recent years have made the Mothering Sunday posies and Christingles.



## Communications

St Mary's has a church website [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk), this is regularly updated and includes details of services and the weekly pew paper.



Our church newsletter, SPAN, is produced 11 times a year by a small team of lay members and the vicar, it is delivered free of charge to every home in the parish. It aims to feature a mix of activities at St Mary's and community news. It is published on the church website. The weekly pew paper contains notices and update. Last year we started a monthly newsletter for the congregation, including advance notices and longer items of news, but we have paused production of this.



Our Facebook page has over 700 followers, and seeks to provide real time, more informal updates about St Mary's. During the pandemic we began streaming services via Facebook to large numbers, with up to 50-80 viewers remaining online for the whole service. Online numbers reduced substantially after the end of lockdowns, but the streaming of Sunday services remains particularly important for congregation members with access issues. We have also livestreamed funerals, something that has been welcomed by those who could not attend in person

**St Mary's Shortlands - Church of England**  
 Page · Religious organisation  
 764 followers · 5 following  
 Welcome to the facebook page for St. Mary's Shortlands! [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)  
 "Like" this page  
[stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://stmarysshortlands.org.uk)  
 39 Kingswood Rd, Bromley, United Kingdom  
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A new system was installed to livestream services, and this means that the facility is there for good quality video. There is a pressing need for more volunteers to run the streaming and audio-visual system. A detailed social media policy is in place, overseen by the PCC, and we subscribe to music copyright licenses suitable for online services.

There is a large TV screen in church which gives the congregation and visitors up to date information. There are two large notice boards in the church grounds for people walking past, and a portable stand to help indicate that the church is open.

## 8 External Deanery & Links

### Deanery Synod

St. Mary's is one of eight parishes, consisting of twelve churches, which form the Beckenham Deanery. The Deanery encompasses the full range of churchmanship and is geographically distributed from St. Mary's at one end, to the edge of Crystal Palace (and of the Diocese) at the other. St. Mary's has three representatives on Deanery Synod, one of whom is a Deanery Standing Committee member and two who are Rochester Diocesan Synod members. As a member of the Deanery, the incumbent is well supported by the Deanery Chapter and the Area Dean. The clergy are expected to attend Deanery Synod and Chapter Meetings.

The churches work together in outreach events and projects which supports 'Called Together,' our shared vision across the Diocese to Grow disciples, Enrich communities and Resource one another in our mission and ministry. St Mary's fully engages and supports this, for example, hosting the Deanery Confirmation Service and one of our LLM's leading a Deanery Pilgrimage to Oberammergau in 2022

### Churches Together in Beckenham (CTiB)

CTiB is an active group which organises a range of joint activities. Over recent years St Mary's has maintained links with CTiB through participation in their regular meetings of clergy and lay representatives. These occur four or five times a year, with representation from most churches in Beckenham and they provide an opportunity to plan and pray together and to share fellowship and news. A small number of church members participate in CTiB and related activities, including the Good Friday Walk of Witness, services, and activities in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, CTiB Lent groups in 2023, services for the World Day of Prayer and some joint fund-raising activities for Christian Aid. However, we feel we are missing out on opportunities and would like to improve our link with CTiB.

### Douai

St Mary's has, since 1995, been twinned with the Parish of St Francis of Assisi in Douai, northern France. With the strapline "United in Christ – Unis en Jésus-Christ", this is a remarkable ecumenical achievement where Catholics and Anglicans not only share faith and friendship but also celebrate the Eucharist together. Each year a 2-day trip with overnight home hospitality is enjoyed, one year in Shortlands and the next in Douai. For many years the English and French Guides also participated in these visits which gave the girls a great experience of international friendship and another culture. But sadly the French rules changed and this Guide link is no longer possible. In 2022, with a delay of two years due to Covid, we celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our "Jumelage Oecuménique" which everyone hopes will last for many years to come.



### Mission beyond the Parish

St Mary's has a strong tradition of giving. We support 12 charities every year, some on a one-off basis, some every few years, and a few annually. Currently we give most of the charities a set amount per annum (depending on income) added to which are extra donations made by individuals.

Administration of this programme is one of its strengths. The Chair is a member of the congregation who works with the incumbent, and nominations are invited from anyone in the congregation or parish. A committee meets every autumn to decide on the charities for the following year. This annual meeting is open to all, and everyone who attends has a say in what is chosen.

Many of the charities supported over the years have been causes holding special importance to individuals in the congregation. Those who nominate a charity agree to become the liaison person with the charity itself and put up a display at the back of church. This helps spread the word about the charity's work to the congregation and visitors alike.

### Support for local initiatives

St Mary's supports the **Bromley Borough Foodbank**, run by the Trussell Trust, and there is a donation point for food items in the church porch. This is well-supported, and items are delivered to the Foodbank by a team of helpers. There is also a collection point for basic household items for the **Bromley Homeless Shelter**. They use the donated items in starter packs for people moving into their own accommodation.

### Fair Trade

St Mary's Shortlands has been a registered Fair Trade Church for 18 years. We have a couple of well supported Fair Trade stalls each month, one on a Sunday after the services and another at the Wednesday café.

This is a good time to engage in conversations about fair trade with people.

When we serve refreshments as much of these as possible, are fair traded ingredients. We hold several activities in Fair Trade fortnight, a big brew coffee morning, sometimes a raffle, and activities with the junior church.

Being a Fair-Trade Church has become very much a part of St Mary's and is always very well supported.





## 9 The Buildings and the Future Generations Project

### The Buildings

The original St Mary's Church was built in the mid-1800s. However, during the Second World War it was very badly damaged when hit by a mine and a V2. After the war the building was demolished, rebuilt, and reconsecrated in 1955. We have given an overview of how our church buildings support our worship in Section 6 above. We outline below the work done recently on reordering the church, in the context of our Vision and Mission.

The Hall, a brick building with a flat felt roof, was added in the 1960's. It is extensively used but is now urgently in need of attention. One of the challenges is that the whole complex is built on a significant slope, on London Clay.

The Scout Hut, behind the Hall, is a wooden, prefabricated hut which was built in 1973 and is well past its "sell by date".



### Future Generations Project

#### Background

Over the last 10+ years we have investigated the development of the whole site, including the Church. While we looked at various potential schemes, a major concern with previous whole site proposals was the sheer scale and cost of the development proposed by the architects concerned.

#### Reordering of the Church

We have refocused our efforts, setting up the Future Generations Project (FGP) and looking at how we can best use our buildings and grounds to support our Vision and Mission, acting as good stewards.

Progress has been made in reordering the Church:

- a. Some pews have been removed at the back of the nave, giving flexibility both for worship and social activities and
- b. A temporary café facility has been installed in the north west corner of the nave.
- c. An AV system has been installed, together with two large mobile screens allowing live streaming and quality audio visual within the church.

This progress has been key in enabling many of the activities described in this profile. We are looking at how we can continue to make best use of the flexibility we now have, in consultation with the DAC.

The view of the PCC is that for the time being, the work done to date on the Church in fact meets our needs in the context of the first two parts of our Vision and Mission, subject to dealing with outstanding issues relating to the servery, the heaters at the back of the church and necessary retrospective faculties.

#### The Hall

The state of the hall has now become our primary focus, given the extent of deterioration and the importance of the hall to the church and community. With the high cost involved for repair or replacement, decisions on the hall are a major outstanding issue. We would expect any plans we develop, for the hall

development, to take account of potential future development of the whole site. We are now in the process of appointing architects to advise on options.

In focusing on rebuilding the hall we believe that this will give us what is needed to support our Vision and Mission, in particular the third and fourth parts of our Vision.

## **Fabric**

In 2022 a Fabric Committee was re-established as a sub-committee of the PCC. The Vicar, a churchwarden and the treasurer are members, together with the head of the maintenance team and another member of the team. The committee has recently drafted a prioritised maintenance plan based on the 2022 Quinquennial Inspection.

St Mary's is fortunate to have an active maintenance team who take responsibility for looking after the buildings – the church, church house and the hall - and grounds. As well as carrying out regular maintenance jobs, the team also meet with external contractors to obtain estimates for work and then oversee the jobs, as approved by the PCC.

## 10 The Team and Governance

St Mary's is blessed with a wide range of staff and volunteers. We have actively sought to develop vocations and in recent years we have sent 2 ordinands to train as well as supporting four LLMs through training. We are seeking a strong collaborative leader who will nurture and release the gifts of our congregation.

### Employees

There are four employees that are paid by the PCC:

- **Parish Administrator** - provides administrative support to the parish including office administration and support duties to the incumbent – 325 hours per quarter
- **Cleaner – Emma Parker** - maintains cleanliness of hall, room and office complex – hours dependent on number and nature of bookings
- **Director of Music – Claire Tillotson** - encompasses all aspects of music at St. Mary's, including oversight of all choirs, music group and any other associated music groups of the future – 52 hours per quarter. Claire is supported by honorary assistant organist Adrian Lambourne
- **Junior Church Coordinator – Rachel Tillotson** - leads the teams that provide Junior Church, Tea Time Together and Youth Group activities - 54 hours per quarter

### Ministry team

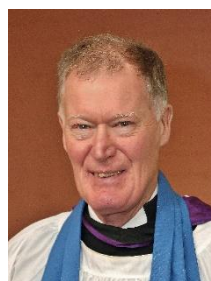
- The ministry team currently includes: **three Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs)**:



**Catherine Bingham**



**Ann-Marie Jefferys**



**David Jefferys**

- **two Licensed Pastoral Assistants (PAs)**:



**Sue Harrison and Deborah Speller**

- together with the other members of the pastoral team:



**Susie Shelton, Jan Boam, Glo Sherman, Kay Coleman and Sue Slaney**

**The Director of Music**



**Claire Tillotson**

**The Junior Church Coordinator**



**Rachel Tillotson**

- We are also very fortunate to have **Rev Jane Peters (PTO minister)** as a member of our congregation: Rev Jane provides support in presiding at services, is a member of the ministry team and has an active funeral ministry.



**Volunteers**

We have many volunteers in activities such as the following, many of which are described above:

AV desk operation	Flowers	Mobility Classes	SPAN (parish newsletter) production and distribution
Choir	Friends of St Mary's Social Activities	Pastoral care	
Community Café	Furniture Movers	Refreshments	Tea Time Together
Craft and Chatter	Gardening and Maintenance	Sanctuary team	Toddlers
Deputy Wardens	Junior Church	Sidespersons	Uniformed Leaders (Guides and Scouts)
Fair Trade	Music Group		Youth Group

**Safeguarding**

Our Safeguarding Officer is Pauline Lambourne, with support from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. DBS checks are monitored by the Lead Recruiter – Robin Hogg.

**Committees**

The main committee, to which all the others report, is the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Officers are elected each year, at the APCM, with additional members and Deanery Representatives being elected for a three-year term on a staggered/rolling basis.

**Current Officers are:**

**Church Wardens**



**Glo Sherman**



**Robin Hogg**

**Secretary**



**Jay Sharma**

**Treasurer**



**Tim Dawson**

- The sub-committees are:
  - Children and Youth
  - Fabric
  - Friends
  - Future Generations Project
  - Mission beyond the Parish
  - Parish Links – Douai Jumelage
  - Standing and Finance

## 11 Finances

St Mary's finances are in reasonable condition. Our normal annual income equals our normal annual expenditure. Our general reserve is in line with Charities Act requirements. Stewardship income represents 60% of our income derived primarily from our Standing Order scheme. We also have an envelope giving scheme and collections in services. Recently we have installed a Give a Little card reader in Church that can take donations anytime. We have also now introduced a QR code on the weekly pew paper to allow greater flexibility for giving. Another 10% of our income comes from other church activities such as fees for special services etc. The remaining 30% of our income is from hiring our premises. Our Parish Share accounts for 40% of our costs, salaries and office costs around 25%, utilities 15% and maintenance the remaining 20%.

Over the years we have built up three "restricted" reserves. A repair fund for the Church and one for the Hall. We have also established a "Future Generations Fund" to support the Future Generations Project. This fund is focused on how we make the Church site more flexible and available to both the congregation and the community now and into the future.

We currently have a Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer. The former handles most of the day-to-day finance, with the support of the office staff. The Deputy Treasurer handles the payroll and associated activities, including pensions (Peoples Pension). We use QuickBooks online as our accounting system.

## 12 The Parish

Shortlands is an affluent, leafy suburb located between Beckenham and Bromley with good rail links to central London. The parish of St Mary's is mainly residential with no other churches or public halls. There is a library on Shortlands Road and a small row of shops by the railway station, just outside the parish.

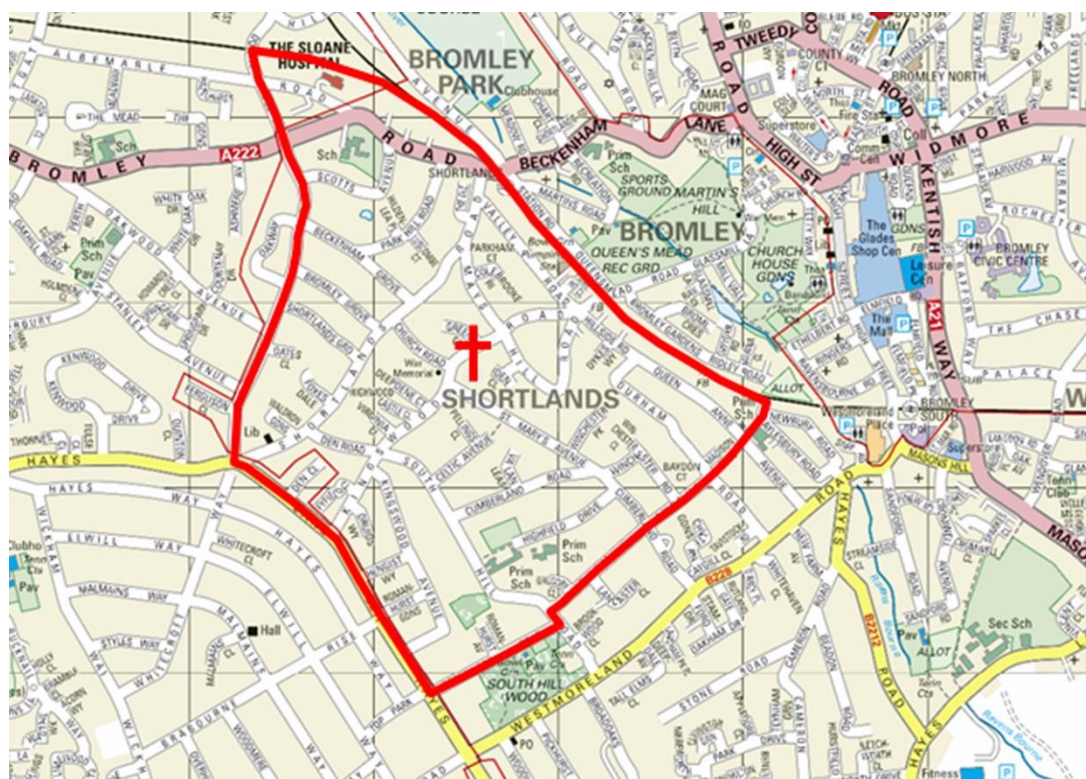
There are currently 167 people on the electoral roll, 93 of whom live outside the parish.

The population of the parish is approximately 8,000, with an above average (for the Diocese) proportion of older residents aged 65 or over. The housing stock is mainly owner occupied (95% for Shortlands ward) with a mix of house type and size and some flats/apartments.

There are two state primary schools in the parish, Highfield Infant and Junior and the Harris Primary Academy, with which the church has some links. Both schools have recently held services and concerts in the church building. There is also an independent Catholic School, Bishop Challoner, within the parish.

The parish includes several retirement housing complexes. Members of the pastoral team regularly lead services at Durham House, which is a supported living facility.

St. Mary's has strong links with community organisations such as the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Shortlands Residents' Association and maintains a close relationship with the Shortlands Ward Councillors and our local Member of Parliament.



## 13 The Vicarage – living in the area

The Vicarage is a large, detached house next to the north side of the Church. On the first floor it has 4 large bedrooms, one en-suite and a family bathroom. On the ground floor it has a dining room, sitting room, kitchen, utility room and a study/office. It has a double garage.. It has a large garden with a climbing frame

Shortlands is part of the London Borough of Bromley. Bromley is very fortunate in having lots of green space. There is the Rec at the bottom of Kingswood Road and over the railway line, a big park with a children’s play area. We also have South Hill Woods and Kingswood Glen both within 10 minutes’ walk of the Vicarage. Slightly further afield are Bromley Common, Hayes Common and West Wickham Common. The latter is owned by the City of London and was bought by them to provide an open space for the city “Workers” to enjoy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Shortlands Village, at the bottom of the hill from the Church, has a small number of shops but Bromley Town centre is only 20 minutes’ walk from the Vicarage and has lots of shops, supermarkets and restaurants. Shortlands station is in the village where trains to London, 20 - 30 minute journey, depart.





## 14 How to apply

If you believe God might be calling you to join us in sharing the love of God with the people of Shortlands and to play your unique part in building the Kingdom of God as Vicar of St Mary's we'd love to hear from you. Application details are available on the Diocese of Rochester website at [www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org)

## 15 In conclusion....

We hope that you will be excited by this parish profile and feel that there are both opportunities and challenges that mean that you can be a real force for good at St Mary's.

You would not be expected to do this on your own. You will have seen from the governance section of this profile that we have many people involved and they are keen to share the workload and to use and develop their gifts.

We want someone who will embrace what we have and where we are, someone with the experience to lead us, someone we will love and grow with, as we build on our existing activities at St Mary's and in the community.

Our commitment to you is that we will give you our full support.



## Appendix - Copy of our full Vision and Mission and Strategic Objectives



20230103 St Mary's Vision and Mission\_as approved Jan 23 PCC.pdf