

St Mary's Church Newsletter

April 2019



St. Mary's Church
Battersea Church Road
London, SW11 3NA
Tel: 020 7228 9648
Website: www.stmarysbattersea.org.uk

Articles always welcome: editor@stmarysbattersea.org.uk

Read online and sign up to receive the newsletter by email at <http://www.stmarysbattersea.org.uk>

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The Life and Vision of our Church

By Canon Simon Butler | April 2019



The Life and Vision of Our Church:

What have we achieved?

From time to time it's good to take stock of what we are doing as a church and what we are managing to achieve. Although our faith is timeless and Jesus Christ is "the same, yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), the mission of the Church in every place will need to be different in order that we respond to the people, the needs and the challenges of the Good News of Jesus in a particular place.

At St Mary's, like many other churches, we now have a Mission Action Plan, a five-year rolling vision and strategy that is our way of expressing how we are seeking to live out the Gospel and make the Good News of Jesus known in our community. Our Mission Action Plan is this:

The vision of St Mary's Battersea is to be a community which is growing together with God:

a community of *Christ's disciples*, faithful and enquiring;

a community of *love*, hospitable and nurturing;

and a community of *difference*, inclusive and transforming.

We express that in five key pieces of work:

- Forming Christ's Disciples
- Tending God's People
- Pursuing the Common Good
- Stewarding God's Treasure
- Nurturing Time and Talents

It won't be long now before we have to have a good look at the period 2020-2025. But that Mission Action Plan also gets broken down into shorter timescales, so we can set about turning that 'big picture' into something more manageable. This is a key part of the work of the Parochial Church Council, to which we shall be electing new people at our Annual Meeting on Sunday 28th April.

We thought members of St Mary's might like to see more of what we have planned and how much we have achieved: it is, in the main, an encouraging thing to do.

On the next link in the Monthly Newsletter, you will see our implementation plan for the past two years, the list of activities we've set out to do under each of the five bullet points. To each of these has been attached what is called a RAG Rating (Red, Amber, Green), with Red indicating little success and Green indicating completion of the task. This will give you a really good picture of what we have done, what we have managed only to achieve in part or remains incomplete, and areas where we've had little success or have had to change our plans.

In the main, this shows that St Mary's has managed to achieve most of what it set out to do, particularly in areas of staffing and financial stewardship, but what it doesn't show is the work that was done on FaithWorks 18, which included the very successful *Summer in the Square* and other events like *Hymns & Pimms*. The Church Council are broadly encouraged by all of this. Having key staff in place and having done such good work on financial management puts us in a good place to expand and grow our work in the coming years.

For your information, we have also included the current Implementation Plan for 2019-20, which will take us up to the review of the Mission Action Plan. This will give you a good idea of what is coming up at St Mary's and the extent and scope of our vision for action and growth.

We hope you enjoy reading these documents. Even if they are a bit 'dry' we see much that excites us about the coming year or so. We hope they will excite you too.

Simon Butler

On behalf of the Church Council

Come and Find out More at
St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting
During and After the Parish Eucharist
Sunday 28th April 2019 at 11am and following.

Implementation Plan 2017-18

By Canon Simon Butler | April 2019

Please click to download this PDF of the Implementation Plan 2017-18

[Implementation Plan 2017-18 RAG Rated](#)

Implementation Plan 2019-20

By Canon Simon Butler | April 2019

Please click to download the PDF of Implementation Plan 2019-20

[MAP Implementation Plan 2019-20](#)

Forthcoming Building Works at St Mary

By Canon Simon Butler | April 2019



This year is a year of refurbishment of the Church building. It's been about twenty years now since the church was redecorated and there are significant signs of wear and tear. So, as part of a wider programme of work, we shall be doing the following later in the year:

- Relighting the Church. This major investment is to improve the quality of the lighting in church, which is now obsolescent. There are particular challenges for the choir in the chancel that we wish to resolve and the advent of LED lighting will bring both improvements in safety and energy efficiency. The final details are awaiting approval, but we intend to interview a contractor in early May, with a view to beginning the work as soon as Thomas's Kindergarten begin their summer holidays in the second week of July. The work will take about 8 to 10 weeks.
- Refurbishing the Pews. The Church Council took the decision to retain the existing pews last year and they now need to be reconditioned. As well as that, we have agreed that pew runner cushions will be added to improve the level of comfort. The pew refurbishment will also create two spaces for wheelchair users.
- New Coffee Station. There will be a brand new coffee point at the back of the church in the area currently used as something of a dumping ground. This will provide simple kitchen facilities, on-demand boiling water, a servery and storage for refreshment items.
- Resanding and resealing the floor. The floor will be improved and areas where woodblocks are loose will be attended to.
- The church will be redecorated throughout - including the vestries and vestibules in the same colours as currently are in place. The donor boards on the gallery front do not need attention.

We plan to commence the non-lighting aspects of the project as soon as possible after the relighting begins. Some parts, though will necessarily have to wait until the relighting is finished. We therefore

anticipate that the church will be partly-scaffolded for much of the autumn. We will still be able to use the church at weekends, but we expect the church will be out of use during the week from September to November. We are planning to finish the work for the beginning of Advent.

The entire project is costed in the region of £300-350,000, which we will pay for from the former Fabric Trust funds, which are now part of the PCC's assets. The intention is then to rebuild that fund over the coming years to form a pot for the next major capital project.

Details of the entire work can be obtained from the Parish Office.

Canon Simon Butler

Chair of the Parochial Church Council

Holy Week Programme

By Canon Simon Butler | April 2019



[Click here to download the Holy Week Programme 2019](#)

What do you dream for the future of St Mary's Church?

By Aaron Kennedy | April 2019



I wonder, what do you dream for the future of St Mary's Church? I also wonder what God's dreams for the future of St Mary's are. How might things be different for us, in the future that God dreams for us.

Part of my job description, but more importantly, part of my sense of vocation - the thing I believe God is calling me to facilitate in Battersea, is a holistic coming together of spirituality, theology and action in the life of the church. The word for this is simply the Kingdom of God - in which mercy,

justice and peace flow like a mighty river. This the New Creation that Jesus came to establish, in which *the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.* (Is. 11.6)

Does the idea of St Mary's becoming the spiritual home to a wider variety of people, from different ethnic and economic backgrounds, appeal to you? Would you like to develop your leadership gifts and skills, and see others empowered to take leading roles too? Would you like to see St Mary's become a more socially and (small 'p') politically engaged church? Are there issues of social justice you would like to see St Mary's engage with, and help to bring about real change in? Would you like to see St Mary's become a more tightly knit community, with deeper relationships between its members, and with other community groups? Would you like to see more people worship at St Mary's, and our congregation grow? Would you like to see us embody more authentically the Christian story, so that more people come to faith?

I know that I want to see all of the above come true, and more particularly, I want to see an end to knife crime; I want to see an end to isolation, despair, powerlessness; and I want to see flourishing, peaceful, and purposeful communities around Battersea. And I believe that such new life, such freedom and liberation, is at the heart of the Gospel that Jesus came to proclaim to the world, through his life, death and resurrection. And I would love to see us become a little bolder, and a little more intentional, in our desire to see God's Kingdom of mercy, justice and peace come about in Battersea.

It is my conviction that community organising can assist us powerfully in the further building of God's Kingdom here in Battersea, and beyond. To that end, St Mary's is in the process of enrolling on the Centre for Theology and Community's *Congregational Development Programme*. This is an action-learning community, which meets monthly from September this year for the following 9 months; the meetings involve learning about the method of community organising and sharing experiences of putting it into practice throughout the previous month. The idea is that this creates a really powerful learning environment, and what we learn there we'll feed back into the life of St Mary's, so that in time, with God's grace, we'll see his Kingdom of justice, mercy and peace come among us more and more visibly.

However, I need a lay person to accompany me over the course of the 9 month-long programme. We are therefore inviting anyone with a desire to serve the priorities of God's Kingdom here in Battersea, who is available for the full duration of the programme, and committed to St Mary's for the foreseeable future, to get in touch for more information. Please speak to me as soon as possible, or email aaron@stmarysbattersea.org.uk for more details.

Reverend Aaron Kennedy

Associate Vicar

Palm Sunday Concert

By James Potter | April 2019

**Free Palm Sunday Concert
Sunday 14th April at 6pm**

Membra Jesu Nostrī
(The Limbs of our Jesus)
By Dieterich Buxtehude

**The Choir & Choral Scholars of
St Mary's Battersea
Director: James Potter**

Thames Foreshore Clean-up - Battersea Riverside

By Libby Bradshaw | April 2019



Thames Foreshore Clean-up - Battersea Riverside

Saturday 13th April 11-4pm

Have you ever looked out over the wall of the churchyard and looked at the foreshore at low tide? If you have you would probably agree - what a mess! Rubbish, driftwood, plastic bottles and all sorts of items get washed up on the tide and litter our foreshore. Well here's your chance to help.

[Thames 21](#) is organising a clean-up in our area on **Saturday 13th April** in which we can all be involved. Members of the South London Branch of the Inland Waterways Association are planning to help as are members of Aaron's **Battersea Community Organisations Group**.



Thames 21 is a charity which has committed itself to cleaning up the river and identifying some of the rubbish that is washed up. They are counting the number of single-use plastic bottles washed up over a period of time and will then use this important data to campaign against/challenge mainstream production of plastic products. S0.....

Are you looking for a fun day out to help your local river and make St Mary's look tidier for Easter? All ages are welcome but under 16's need to be with an adult. There will be the opportunity to get involved in litter collecting, bottle counting, river dipping and muddy play, something for all to enjoy!

Thames 21 hopes to gather an active group of volunteers to lead in monthly clean ups of the foreshore at Old Swan Wharf. With their support, they hope this group of volunteers will collect data on the main plastic offenders being washed up with the returning tide. They will also be counting the number of single-use plastic drinking bottles washed up every fortnight.

Please come and help for all or part of the day. You are not committing yourself to anything further!

There is a sign-up sheet on the notice board at the back of church or just contact me to say when you can come. Thank you.

Libby
libby.bradshaw@ursa.me.uk '

Living without Enemies

By Aaron Kennedy | April 2019



On the evening of the 5th February David Britten, our Parish Manager, and I attended the home of [Lejean Richards](#), a 19 years old man, stabbed to death outside his home. We were able to do very little for the family other than simply

be with them in their grief, which was so fresh and raw.

I can't speak for David, but I faced a series of different emotions that night. First, a temptation to do something, to find ways to be more active with my help. Then I recognised another familiar feeling settling in, that of powerlessness. What could I do, what could we do, against the intractable, persistent complex of problems around knife crime? In my despair I turned to prayer, silently asking God to come into this darkest of moments; and as I prayed I thought again of the desolation of the cross on which Jesus died, and remembered that God has been there, he knows the darkness of murder, grief and loss. I remembered again that God was, and is, present with us, grieving with us, and holding us through the pain, willing us to persist until the dawn, and the new light of resurrection breaks through.

I think many of us go through a similar series of emotions, with fear, and uncertainty about how to act, preventing us from taking action. But is it always the case that "action" is what is needed?

Sam Wells' book [Living Without Enemies](#) is about his experience of ministering in Durham, North Carolina, alongside others wrestling with the horrendous reality of gun crime in that city. He identifies four distinct types of social engagement, from working for people effected by gun crime through pressuring government for changes in gun laws, to working with those people to alleviate their problems - an example of which is the community organising work we do at St Mary's and through Battersea Community Organising Group. Then there is being for, a style of engaging in which you are for someone or something from a distance, but have no real engagement - many of us will have things we are for but have little opportunity, time or energy, to do more to support - the war in Syria, for example. The final type of engagement, however, is being with, which is a type of engagement that recognises that "doing something" is not always appropriate. For many of us this is something we often under value, and only consider doing when all other options are removed, for example, we'll sit with someone on their death bed because there is absolutely nothing else we can do for them.

However, the experience of the Durham group is that simply being with someone is not only beautiful, but powerful, particularly when that person is facing bereavement through violence. One wants to do something powerful and effective to help, but the opposite of violence is love. The group discovered that so much of what they did to support people in such need seemed to come from a place of love, but actually involved living with enemies, whether those enemies were the perpetrators of the violence, or the government who failed to change the gun laws appropriately.

As Christians we are called to love others as God loves them, and we know through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, that God's love seeks the reconciliation of all things in himself. It is a love that includes the holiest soul, and the lowliest sinner, and everyone in between, because God does not live with enemies.

The Durham group also learned that simply being with people in their problems and pain is important, because it put at the heart of their work not the attempt to provide an immediate solution which would make them feel better, but the love that builds community. After many different forms of action, they came to acknowledge that it is not always possible, or appropriate, to take action. And any

action that is taken without first addressing the lack of community, the absence of love, is built on a shaky foundation.

As we as a church consider our response to the knife crime, and other forms of violence, on our streets, we will no doubt feel powerless, overwhelmed by the scale of the problem, and at a loss as to what to do; but let us be inspired by God's example, who sent his Son to be one of us, and to suffer with us. Through his death, he has restored our life. We are not alone, and the most powerful thing we can do for our broken and suffering world is get alongside folk and simply be with them, extending the all-embracing love of God to them. That is the firm foundation on which all our work can be built.

If you are interested in being part of a prayer vigil network, which will gather at the site of violent crimes to pray silently with candles held aloft as a symbol of our love, please talk to Aaron.

Glass Door April 2019

By Libby Bradshaw | April 2019



GLASS DOOR

20 years supporting Homeless People

Have you been clearing out your wardrobe this Lent? Have you got a whole load of toiletries piling up and would you like to help someone who has none? This year Glass Door, London's largest emergency winter night shelter, is celebrating 20 years of caring for homeless people in London.

Their night shelters have been open during the winter months and several of our local churches have covered one night per week. Although the shelters will be closing shortly Glass Door provides advice, food, showers and laundry facilities from drop-in day centres all year round to those experiencing homelessness.

How can we help?

For several years now I have been collecting clothing, towels, sleeping bags, bags and backpacks etc and delivered these to GlassDoor. Many members of St Mary's have been bringing contributions to church for me to pass on to the charity and letters of thanks have been put on the noticeboard at the back of church. Help is appreciated all the year round either by financial contribution, fundraising activities or 'in-kind' donations.

In-Kind Donations: Due to the generosity of many people they currently have enough of, and no space to store, many of the usual items of clothing. However, I am happy to collect these and deliver them when they are ready. Currently they do need the following:

Items for the clothing bank:

New underwear (especially boxers and women's underwear)

Work boots (men's size 7-11),

Miscellaneous:

Oyster cards (even without any funds on them).

Toiletries of all kinds, particularly men's **razors**

Cutlery and teaspoons

These items can be brought to church on Sundays or between 10.00 and 12.00 on weekdays. If you have items that are difficult for you to take to church please let me know at libby.bradshaw@ursa.me.uk or on 07956 655037.

Thank you

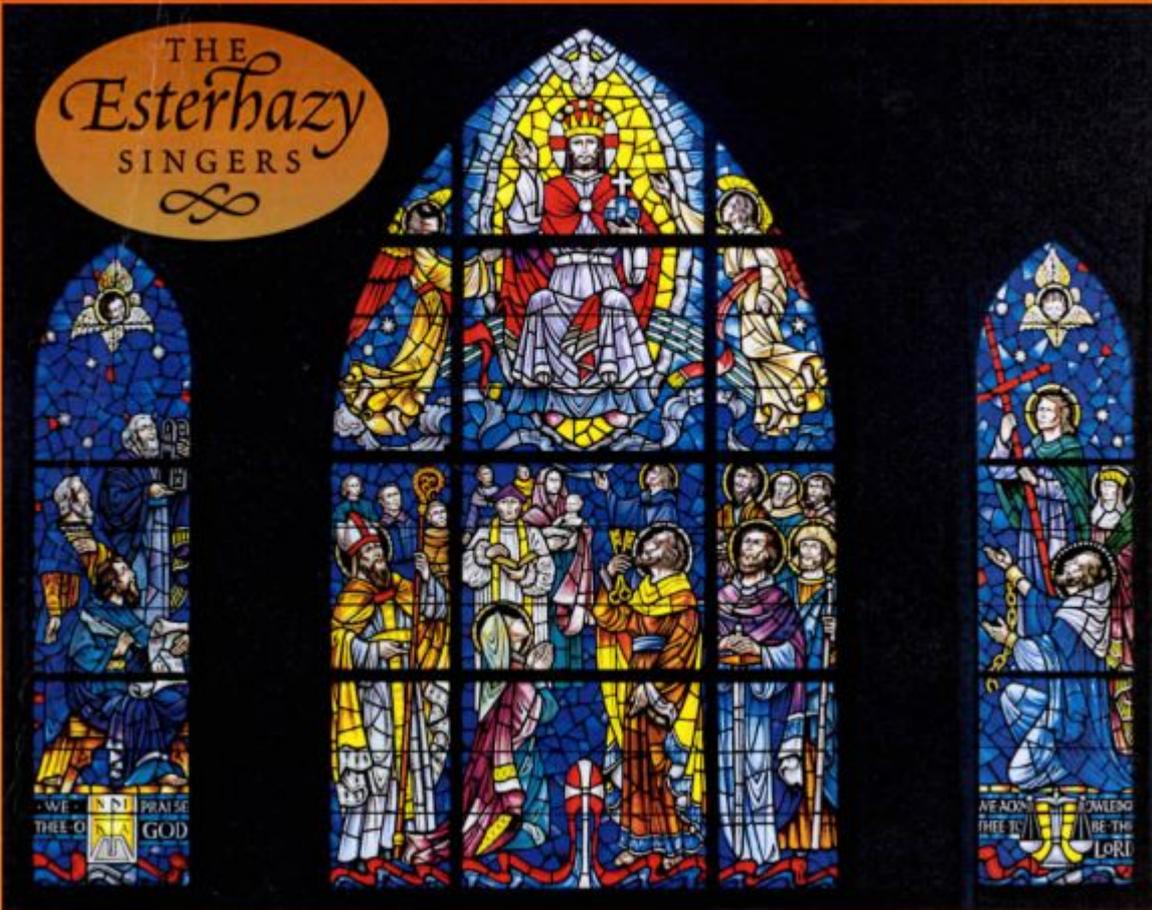
Libby Bradshaw

Concert in Memory of Peter Blumer

By Newsletter Admin | April 2019

This concert which will be held at Holy Trinity Sloane Square on 10th April in memory of Peter Blumer.

THE
Esterhazy
SINGERS
∞



“With cheerful notes...”

Haydn’s Te Deum No 2

Handel’s Chandos Anthems 9&11

Andrea Brown conducts the Esterhazy Singers

Organist: Oliver Lallemand

Wed, 10th April 2019, 19:45 Holy Trinity Church,

Sloane Square, SW1X 9BZ

Tickets: £15 (incl interval drink) students half price

online booking: www.esterhazysingers.com

telephone 07958 688422

God Is Love, God Never Criticises Us

By Gladys Ikeme | April 2019

God Is Love, God Never Criticises Us, However Bad We Feel We Are

All things bright and beautiful,

All creatures great and small;

All things wise and wonderful

The Lord God made them all. (Cecil Frances Alexander)

God is love - there is no doubt about it - hence he made us all in his own image (Genesis 1:26). He made the whole world and said that it was good (Genesis 1:31).

Love will always triumph over evil. God loves us all the time. We must find the purpose that God has for our lives and start living our best today.

The Bible tells us to love God with all our heart and mind (Deuteronomy 6:4 and Matthew 22:37). We owe God this when we remember all God has done and is still doing in our lives. God is righteous and is the Light of the World. We are created by him and for him. Through him we live an harmonious life.

There's always one question I have in my mind. It is, "Why do some people criticise others?" Perhaps we feel that we are the best and want to put others down. We should remember that everyone has a different journey in life, so we should not judge others. Jesus tells us clearly not to judge as we will then be judged by the same standard (Matthew 7:1).

How will we feel if we are judged? We are all children of God and given different gifts. We can never be all the same. It is better to learn to appreciate others. Look for the good things to compliment. We should never put others down just to please ourselves. We should never make others feel unwanted or worthless. God is on his throne watching us, and he does not condemn. Instead he shows mercy like a wonderful father.

There is a better way than judging criticising or correcting someone in an embarrassing way. I suggest that we try to do good deeds for others. Always bless and pray positively for others. Our lives will change by doing that. If we send out good things we will get good things back one way or another. We might not see it at first, but good will be there. When you have dark days, people will be compassionate. They will remember your good deeds.

Take a lesson from Job, who never said evil things about God even when he was being tested with terrible situations. We should never mock others or criticize them if they do not have what we think they should have. It may be our turn tomorrow to be without.

When was it that God said that poor or ill or destitute people offend him or that we should look down on them? In fact, God is especially concerned about people in need (see Exodus 22:21-24, Deuteronomy 10:18, Psalm 68:5, Psalm 82:3, Isaiah 1:17, and James 1:27 as some examples). We should not mock those in need with our words or by our actions. If we do, we should kneel down and beg forgiveness. Hearts have been broken by what people have been told. We will be judged by the same standard that we judge others. When we die, we are all on a level playing field and we all stand individually before God. Boasting about what possessions we have will do us no good ultimately.

If we have to mention something to a sister or a brother, let it be constructive and not destructive. We must learn to live in the bonds of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

May God bless you all!

Gladys Ikeme

(Child of God)