THE CLARION

The Magazine of the Parish of St Mary The Boltons rooted in faith • open in thought • reaching out in service

February 2023

From the Vicar Keeping Lent at St Mary's

Lent starts on Wednesday 22 February, just three weeks away. Here at St Mary's we hope that our Lenten discipline will help us all to prepare to celebrate Easter with joy and energy.

Although the disciplines of Lent – prayer, study, almsgiving, penance – feel like solitary endeavours, observing Lent has always been a communal activity. It began as a season when people preparing

for baptism at Easter shared a time of fasting and instruction. In later years, people who had fallen away were encouraged to join them in acts of public penance. Eventually, the whole church community joined in the communal acts of penitence, renewal and mutual encouragement.

We invite everyone at St Mary's to keep a communal Lent this year. Our observance will begin at the Parish Pancake Party, at the Vicarage, on

Shrove Tuesday, 21 February, the day before the main event starting the season on Ash Wednesday, when we will celebrate the Eucharist combined with the traditional blessing and imposition of ashes. Services will be at 12 noon and at 7pm. We hope that everyone will do their best to join one of these services to make a good start to the season together.

There will be a Lent Discussion Group on Wednesday mornings at 10am. Together we will read Bishop Emma Ineson's new book, Failure: what Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up, which we hope will encourage us all to look at our

own failings as individuals and as a community, and to seek forgiveness.

If a daytime group is not possible for you, or you want something a bit more prayerful, why not consider joining the series on different kinds of Prayer Practices for Lent being offered by the Bishops of the Diocese of London, on Tuesday evenings. The sessions are via Zoom and can be accessed by telephone as well, and you can find information about the series elsewhere in this issue.

Giving alms is one Lent discipline that is explicitly for the good of others. Members of St Mary's will once again be asked to make a Lenten Offering for the Charitable Pot, to raise funds for the charities we are supporting this year. There is an article about this on page 4.

Even if you do not want to do something special for Lent, we are all called to be more faithful to the things we already do.
Why not commit to coming to

church more regularly; to arriving in good time and sitting quietly before the service; to looking at the readings beforehand in order to listen more attentively? Why not start joining in our weekday services of Morning and Evening Prayer? And think about logging into the Zoomed Lent Compline or Night Prayers on Wednesday nights.

You can find information about all these Lent suggestions on pages 4 and 5. In addition, please look out for the Lent Leaflet in church for final details, dates, times and venues. Remember also that none of this is to discourage you from 'giving



something up' for Lent: it may be good for your body and your soul to abstain from something you enjoy, but let us also remember and be encouraged by the idea of keeping a good Lent together, and let the 40 days be a time of deepening our attention to God.

Jenny Welsh, Vicar

Image: Ash Wednesday cross, public domain



This is my body, this is my blood

Last summer on holiday in Scotland, Philip and I were surprised to find ourselves in a local Episcopalian church receiving communion in both kinds – bread and wine – and using the 'Common Cup', that is, sharing the chalice from person to person. In some sense, for me it was like nothing had changed since before the pandemic started; the old muscle memory kicked in very easily.

At St Mary's we have become used to receiving in both kinds too, by the president's intincting the



Sunday morning light, 15 January 2023 Photo: Katrina Quinton

bread into the wine and placing it in our hands. When we began, we did not know how the congregation would respond. Would individuals balk at a slightly damp wafer on their hand and ask for 'no wine' instead; or would they decide that having the wine just is not that important; or would they clamour to go back to sharing the chalice as we did before 2020? What has been clear is that our congregation has received the intinction option without question, and with only one or two people declining the wine as they always did before.

The Common Cup, or the sharing of the chalice, is an ancient sign of the unity of the congregation around Christ's table. At the Last Supper, Jesus took the cup and shared it with his friends, and so we do the same. It reminds us that we are one fellowship, one household of God around the altar, that we belong to each other. It is a daring and subversive thought, in a world where we do not have much sense of belonging to anyone beyond our close kin. As Christians we declare in our worship together that we do belong to each other as God's household; we are kin, family. The Eucharist is where we dare to act out that kinship, in how we eat and drink the bread and wine gathered round the family table.

With all of that in mind, and wanting not just to 'go back to normal' but to celebrate the Eucharist well together, the PCC has decided that it is time to restore the practice of sharing the chalice once again, in line with most Church of England churches.

We recognise that some people in the congregation will feel unable to take the chalice in this way, for all sorts of reasons; and it has always been the case that some people decline to take the chalice. It is sufficient to receive only the bread and indicate 'no wine' when approached, or simply move away from the altar rail after receiving.

We plan to start again at the end of this month, on the first Sunday in Lent, 26 February, at both the 8am and the 10.30am services. Meanwhile, if you have thoughts or questions about sharing the chalice, please do contact the Vicar. *Jenny Welsh, Vicar*

Getting serious about climate change

During Advent a small group studied the Archbishop of York's Advent book Sleepers Wake; Getting serious about climate change. It was a challenging read, not because the text was complex or hard to understand – in fact it is written in very straightforward language – but the content is challenging.

The opening section makes the point that if we are to get serious about climate change we need to start by looking back to see how much damage human beings have wrought on the climate in a very short space of time. Then we need to accept that it is our actions that have caused the damage, and then if we want to put this right there needs to be a brutally honest repentance. This is quite some challenge, and the book reminded us as well that 'spirituality is the integration of our beliefs, values and actions'. Somehow, if we are to take climate change issues seriously, we need to integrate our approach to it into our beliefs. But how?

There was less guidance on this challenge. Rather, this being an Advent book, the challenge was phrased in terms of what we would bring to the crib at Christmas. After all, the wise men, at least according to Matthew, had brought gold,



frankincense and myrrh. Will an offering of a gift help us take climate change seriously, or give us a paradigm to follow in tackling it? Somehow I could not come to that conclusion. A gift feels like greenwash, a token act that does not address the real issue.

Thinking along these lines, I did eventually conclude that the answer to the crib question was more obvious than I had originally thought - the gift we bring to the crib is the same that we bring to the altar week by week at the Eucharist - namely ourselves, our souls and bodies, alert and alive, on active service in building the Kingdom of God on earth. We need to bring the same to the task of tackling climate change. If our task as Christians is to love our God and our neighbour as ourselves, then the task of tackling climate is to be approached in the same way. An overarching vision of how a zero future in the garden of Eden will be is matched by an understanding that to achieve the future we need to be engaged in all manner of small ways of building it, using all the gifts we have been given.

Towards the end of the book there was a somewhat depressing the reminder from Proverbs 29, that 'where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he'. This was meant as encouragement to engage with our democratic institutions to ensure action on climate change is taken up by policy makers. For me there was more inspiration to be found in the quote from an 18th century inscription on an un-named Sussex church: 'a vision without a task is but a dream, a task without a vision is drudgery, but a vision and a task is the hope of the world'. Though I soon realised that George Herbert's 17th century hymn works just as well. 'Teach me my God and King in all things thee to see, and what I do in anything to do it as for thee'. Including tackling climate change. Leo Fraser-Mackenzie

Image: https://wrwa.gov.uk/

Charity Committee: Looking Back and Looking Forward

When we lost our September Fair last year because of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Charity Committee was not at all optimistic about the sum we would raise for our 2022 charities. Then came Clair Gordon's offer to organise an indoor mini-fair, which she did on Saturday, 19 November. It was a little crowded as all the stalls and activities were at the front of the church, but everyone did brisk business. It was not an event for small children, but the magnificent saxophone quartet playing in front of the church under a gazebo I hasten to add - certainly attracted the adults. It has not yet been possible to arrive at a figure for the money that was generated, but it is expected to be at least £9,000. A large thank you therefore to Clair for all her work that made this Fair possible and to everyone who in any way contributed to its success.

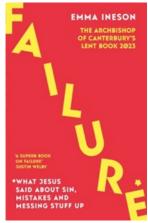
When we had to cancel the September Fair, the PCC accepted our recommendation to roll over all our 2022 charities to become our 2023 charities so that we minimised the financial impact on them. This meant we did not need to ask you to suggest new charities for the current year. Our focus now is to concentrate on raising as much as we can during this year. Later this month Lent begins and with it our annual Lent Offering appeal. This has become an important contributor to the Charitable Pot. The appeal is primarily to members of our congregations, but it need not cost anyone any money. Lent is traditionally a period of fasting and self-denial, which is marked by giving up something you enjoy. This could be chocolate, shop bought sandwiches, glasses of wine, that extra coffee when you are out, the expensive cakes and pastries you rather like. Perhaps it could be one or two fewer meals out: indeed anything that you decide to go without during Lent. The choice is up to you. Your reward is an entirely painless means of making your Lent Offering. You simply keep all money you are not spending and this becomes your Offering. We shall be launching the appeal on Sunday, 19 February, the last Sunday before Lent, when we shall be giving everyone a Lent Offering reminder card. This year Lent itself lasts from Ash

Wednesday on 22 February until Saturday 8 April. We ask that you present your Offering no later than the end of April. For now, thinking caps on please as you decide what to give up this year. Anthony Williams on behalf of the Charity Committee

Lent Study Group

We will use the new book by Bishop Emma Ineson, Failure: What Jesus Said About Sin, Mistakes and Messing Stuff up (SPCK Publishing 2022, £9.99)

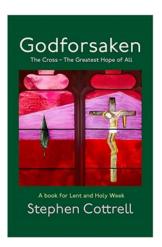
Bishop Emma Ineson is the new Bishop of Kensington, and her book is about what it means to fail. She explores questions of success and failure; sin, guilt and human nature; how the Church fails; and she offers a 'theology of failure' embracing the greatest failure of all, which is the Cross.



The book is an easy read, but not necessarily an easy topic, and will make for a fruitful discussion series as we move through this season of self-examination and preparation to walk with Jesus to Good Friday and beyond.

Sessions will take place in person on Wednesday mornings in Lent, beginning on Wednesday I March at 10am. We may meet in church or will be pleased to meet in someone's home if that is possible. Please let the Vicar know if you would like to join. The book is available to order from Church House Bookshop or other good booksellers, or the Vicar can order a copy for you.

Another new book that has come to our attention is Godforsaken. The Cross - the Greatest Hope of All by the Right Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York. The cover features an image (with permission) of our own Craigie Aitchison Crucifixion window. The book was well



reviewed in the *Church Times*, where it is described as a beautiful and compelling exploration of the dark, suffering side of the Passion, reflecting on Jesus' words from the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' If anyone reads it and would like to write a review for the March *Clarion*, do let us know.

Jenny Welsh, Vicar

Kensington Area News

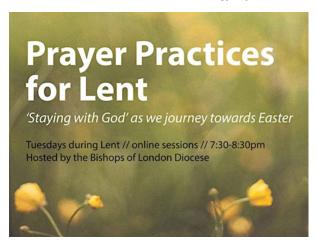
Episcopal Vacancy The Rt Revd Emma Ineson will be joining the Kensington Area Team from 19 February 2023 as the new Bishop of Kensington. Please pray for Bishop Emma and her husband, Mat, as they prepare their move to Twickenham.



There will be a service of welcome at St Barnabas Kensington at 3pm on Sunday, 19th February, to which all are welcome.



Prayer Practices for Lent For Lent 2023, the Bishops of London Diocese are hosting five online sessions exploring ancient ways of Christian prayer that are still relevant today and can help us spend time in the presence of God. The evening will be opened and closed with a short liturgy by one of



our Bishops. The prayer practice will be introduced and we will have a go at the practice together. A time of optional sharing will be offered at the end for those who wish to reflect on the practice with others. The sessions will be recorded, so you can also watch them afterwards.

Everyone is welcome. You can attend some or all sessions. Sessions take place on Tuesday evenings during Lent, from 7.30-8.30pm on the following dates:

28th February, The Examen
7th March, Lectio Divina
14th March, Centring Prayer
21st March, Imaginative Contemplation
28th March, Visio Divina (Praying with Pictures)

For more information and to register, please visit https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/prayer-practices-for-lent-tickets-486773862727.

Images: Diocese of London

Exploring the Christian Faith: Confirmation 2023

This year it is hoped that we will be able to present candidates for confirmation here at St Mary's on Sunday II June, the feast of St Barnabas, at the 10.30am Eucharist. The confirming bishop will be the Right Reverend Emma Ineson, our new Bishop of Kensington.

At their confirmation, candidates are brought into a fuller relationship with Christ and the Church as the confirmed. Please encourage them to consider Bishop lays hands, anoints and prays for them to receive the Holy Spirit anew, and as they renew their baptism promises, and make a new commitment to Christ. For many of us it was also the rite that makes it possible for us to receive communion with the rest of the congregation. It is an important moment in a person's growth in faith, a kind of completion of the work begun at their baptism, as they take a full part in the life of the family of God.



At St Mary's we are glad to prepare adults, teenagers and older children (year 5 and over) for confirmation. Preparation involves learning about the basics of the Christian faith, to do with who God is; what Jesus' life, death and resurrection are all about; how to read the Bible; the importance of prayer; becoming a confident follower of Jesus, and the importance of being part of the Church. The preparation takes place over the course of about 6 sessions or so, either individually, or preferably in groups according to age.

Perhaps you have not been confirmed yet, and think that the time is now right for you to commit yourself to this step. Maybe you have not been baptised yet, and would like to explore what that means for you. Or perhaps you are just interested in renewing your understanding of what it means for you to be a Christian. Please speak to the Vicar about this next step in your life of faith.

Perhaps your children are now old enough to be taking this step. If we can gather a group together for preparation they can learn together. Children in year 5 and above are welcome.

Sessions will begin at the end of April for both adults and youngsters, and the timetable will be set once I know how many people are keen to be involved.

Do please let me know if you would like to be confirmed.

Jenny Welsh

Image: Dove window, St Mary The Boltons

Parish Pancake Party

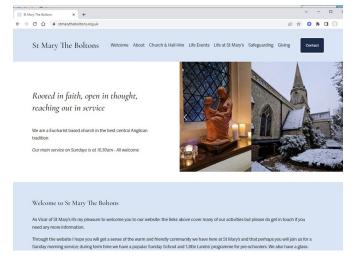
We will have a parish pancake party on Shove Tuesday (21 February), at the Vicarage, 5pm -8pm. We hope you will join us for a pre-Lenten gathering.; families and young children are of course very welcome! If possible, please let the Vicar know if you can come, for catering purposes.



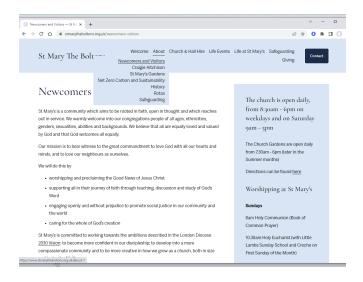
Photo: BBC Food

New Website Launched

Shortly before Christmas, we launched our newly updated website for St Mary The Boltons. As you may recall, in 2021 we began the process of revamping our website, so we are pleased that it is



now finally up and running. We are very grateful to Akros Designs, who helped us to design and build the new website for us, using Squarespace. The website address has not changed, and is still www.stmarytheboltons.org.uk. If you have any comments or suggestions for improvements, do be in contact with the Parish Office.



Loft Insulation

As part of the work at St Mary's to reduce our carbon footprint, as well as the costs of energy use, we have been working on ways to make the buildings more efficient to heat.

With this in mind, over the Christmas period, we arranged for insulation to be installed on the sloping roofs of the loft above the hall. Following advice, we opted for a single layer of wool insulation with the PIR reflective boards installed above this, helping to reflect the heat back down to the usable rooms in the hall.

In order for this to be possible, a great deal of clearing and sorting of the contents of the loft needed to be done, so before the contractors arrived, the loft first needed to be emptied, then sorted, and finally those items which we decided to keep needed to be returned to the newly-insulated loft. The window of time to fit all of this in was fairly tight around the nursery terms. We are very grateful to all those in our congregation who helped in this effort, and made it all possible.

During the sorting we have made some interesting discoveries, including details of past fundraising activities (a barrel organ being taken around Kensington in the 1950s to encourage church attendance, for example, or a 'new American



barbeque of a pig on a spit', provoking much discussion in the local press), as well as 'Operation Restoration', fundraising for the church in the 1950s, which included a performance at the Scala Theatre. We were also interested to discover further details and reports of various works and reordering projects which have taken place at St



Mary's over the years. Of course, we also discovered parts of redundant woodwork from the church, so we are working on ways to rehome these where possible.

We are pleased to report that during the cold periods in January, the hall users have reported that the hall feels warmer and needs less heating, so we are glad to be enjoying the benefits of this work already.

As part of the wider 'Pathway to Net Zero' project, we are discussing with our architect what actions might be possible to improve the insulation and draught-proofing at the west end of the church and in the Vicar's office, so we hope to build on the success of insulating the loft to make the church warmer and more efficient to heat.

Jane Ellard

Images: sorting the contents of the loft in progress; newly installed loft insulation

A Time to Decide: How do we Live in Love and Faith

Last month Leo Fraser-Mackenzie contributed an article about the question of same sex relationships, and the anticipated report from the House of Bishops on the Living in Love and Faith process.

That report has now been published and will be presented for debate at General Synod in February.



Amazingly, this report has caught the attention of the nation's mainstream and tabloid press and was even discussed in Parliament.

The Bishops have themselves admitted they are as divided as the rest of the Church on these issues. They do however declare two extraordinary things: firstly that they are deeply sorry and repent for the ways in which the Church of England has treated LGBTQI+ people, both those who belong to the Church, and those who do not; and for failing to love them as God loves them. Second, they affirm publicly and unequivocally that LGBTQI+ people are welcome and valued, and that they commit themselves. They urge the churches in their care to welcome same-sex couples unreservedly and joyfully.

The significance of these two statements should not be underestimated. The Church's teachings on these matters have never been so closely examined or discussed by the people on the inside; nor have their differences of faithfully held opinion been so openly shared. Neither has the sense of penitence for the Church's division and failure ever been so movingly expressed. As a result of these discussions, the Bishops have said that parish clergy should be free to bless and pray for same sex couples who come to church, after they are married civilly, or entered a civil partnership. It may come as a surprise that clergy have been forbidden to do this in church law up until now. A collection of prayers and blessings has now been drafted for clergy to use as they wish, and should their conscience allow it. In addition there is a commitment to look again at the status of whether

gay and lesbian clergy can be married, or whether married LGBT people may be ordained. Again, it is hard to realise that this is a seismic shift for the Church of England, particularly in a parish like ours where this kind of inclusiveness is part of our Christian identity.

It is not a *fait accompli*, however. Nothing changes until General Synod meets to debate and approve both the report and the collection of prayers. Some people feel that these measures do not go far enough and others believe they go entirely too far. For my part, I look forward to the time when same sex couples can marry in church, but I will be glad when I can offer a blessing on their relationships meanwhile.

I hope you will join me in praying for the Church of England, for our General Synod, and for our bishops as we move through this process. Pray too for the people who are most distressed by the issues, on both sides of the debate. If you want to see the Bishop's Report, there are paper copies in the Office, or they can be accessed via the Church of England website: https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/draft-prayers-thanksgiving-dedication-and-gods-blessing-same-sex. Jenny Welsh



From the Deanery



Join us, a new choir, at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square (SW1X 9BZ) for 45 minutes of singing accompanied by a light lunch.

Sing your old favourite tunes—The Beatles, Queen, Songs from the Shows, Folk Songs and best-loved Hymns.

All ages welcome. No charge, no audition. One-off drop-ins welcome. Just turn up! Or email Max at music@sloanechurch.org for more information or to register attendance.

Sunday School Nativity

We were delighted to be able to have a nativity play from the children during the Sunday service on Advent 2. Many thanks to all those who took part, and to Rosie, Clair and Candice for masterminding the whole thing. Particular thanks must go to Baby Lily Lockwood for her starring role as the baby Jesus, and to her parents for lending her to us for the nativity.

Silent Prayer in Church

The Silent Prayer meetings continue in church on the second Wednesday of each month, I lam to 12 noon.

The next dates are:

8 February

8 March

12 April

A group of people gather to sit together in silence for some 40 minutes. No spoken prayers are said, just the tinkle of a bell at the beginning, end, and half-way through. Being silent for a little while is an invitation to listen to what is happening inside. In our liturgies we are used to address God in praise and song, but listening to the inner 'still small voice' may take some more attention. Doing it with other people forms a creative power that can be felt and can be powerful. Letting go of the need to be busy even for a little time is not only relaxing, but will eventually lead us to the truth of our selves that seems to be the big task of all our lives. There is no need to join anything, book or apologise; just come if and when you can.



Cyclamen in St Mary's Garden Photo: J. Ellard

Services and Events

Wednesday I February

12noon Funeral of Jeremy Bullmore3.45pm Sunday School on Wednesday

Friday 3 February

10am Second Half Club

Sunday 5 February 3rd Sunday before Lent

8am Holy Eucharist (BCP)

10.30am Holy Eucharist

with Little Lambs Sunday School

Readings: Isaiah 58.1-9a

Matthew 5.13-20

Wednesday 8 February

I I am Silent Prayer

3.45pm Sunday School on Wednesday (NB –

no meeting on 15 February due to

Half Term Break)

Friday 10 February

10am Second Half Club

(NB no session on 17 February,

due to Half Term Break)

Sunday 12 February 2nd Sunday before Lent

8am Holy Eucharist (BCP)

10.30am Holy Eucharist Readings: Genesis 1.1-2.3

Matthew 6.25-end

Preacher The Reverend Philip Welsh

12.30pm Baptism of Eveline and

Delphine Mayou

Wednesday 15 February

I Iam St Teresa's Nursing Home Service

Sunday 19 February Sunday next before Lent

8am Holy Eucharist (BCP)

10.30am Holy EucharistReadings Exodus 24. 12-end

Matthew 17.1-9

Tuesday 21 February Shrove Tuesday

5 - 8pm Parish Pancake party at the vicarage

Wednesday 22 February Ash Wednesday

I2noon Holy Eucharist

with imposition of Ashes

Ellesmere House Service 2pm

3.45pm Sunday School on Wednesday

Choral Eucharist 7_{pm}

with Imposition of ashes

Friday 24 February

10am Second Half Club

Sunday 26 February Lent I

8am Holy Eucharist (BCP) 10.30am Sung Holy Eucharist

with Come and Sing Choir

Genesis 2.15-17, 3.1-7 Readings

Matthew 4.1-11

12 noon Lent Bring and Share Lunch

Wednesday I March

3.45 Sunday School on Wednesday

Sunday 5 March Lent 2

8am Holy Eucharist (BCP) 10.30am Sung Holy Eucharist Genesis 12.1-4a Readings:

John 3.1-17

Year's Mind February

Ivy Rogers

Gerald Conrad

Edward Lidderdale

Christopher Morse

Mary Pilkington

Peter Hamilton-Davies

Robert Hannay

June Brudenell

Thomas Spicer

Anthony Clives

Rachel Broster

Storm Larkins

Gwyneth George

Thomas Barclay

Anjoli Fernando-Kleinsorge

Bella Callan

David Hancock

Roderick Owen

Heather Allen

Simon Perkins

Lily Dwight

Lynette Hopper

Gary Marshfield

Derek Pilkington

Iris Warwick

Madeline Habgood

Kinbarra Morse



St Mary's Garden Photo: Edwina Sassoon

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Verger/Caretaker

David Ireton 020 7244 8998 07881 865 386 (Day off Wednesday)

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Director of Music

John Ward boltonsmusic@gmail.com

St Mary's Church Bank Details

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PCC of St Mary with St Peter & St Jude Account number: 80692190

Sort code: 20-80-14

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children@stmarytheboltons.org.uk

Safeguarding at St Mary's

The St Mary The Boltons' Safeguarding Officer is Clair Gordon. Her role is to help us to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. She is the first point of contact for children, adults at risk and other members of the congregation regarding suspicions of abuse and other safeguarding concerns. If you have any concerns, please contact Clair on 07850 944 834. In the event of Clair not being available, Rosie Meckiff Mengel may be contacted at 07905 245652. Alternatively, speak to Sheryl Kent, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: 020 7932 1224 Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) helpline: 0845 120 4550 Family Lives: 0808 800 222 (Previously Parentline)

Childline: 0800 1111.

Children's Champion

The St Mary The Boltons' Children's Champions are Chris and Katie Fowkes. Their role is to ensure that the voices and needs of the children and young people are heard and reflected in parish life. They can be contacted via: children@stmarytheboltons.org.uk.



There is a Hearing Loop in operation at St Mary
The Boltons

Contributions for the March Clarion should be sent to the Parish Office by 20 February, please.

The PCC of St Mary with St Peter & St Jude, West Brompton is a Registered Charity, No 1133073