

PARISH NEWSLETTER

St Mary's Mortlake with Christ Church & All Saints East Sheen

Then & Now: a point of view

An interview with Revd Olwen Williamson, retired curate and priest in the team.



WWW.MORTLAKEPARISH.ORG.UK

When did you come to live in East Sheen and work at Christ Church?

I came to live in East Sheen in 1972 when I married. I became churchwarden of Christ Church 1982-1984 (when I resigned to have another baby!). We then lived in Los Angeles, California 1990-1992 where I trained as a Stephen Minister (pastoral ministry) at St. Francis Episcopal Church, Palos Verdes. When we returned to East Sheen I became a SPA (Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary) from 1994 – 2002. In 2003 I was ordained as a deacon and in 2004 as a priest.

Why did you decide to become a priest?

That decision is really taken by others through a process of discernment after I said 'yes' to the call I heard. As background, my father was a Lay Reader in the Church of Ireland and when I was a child he used to take me with him to churches all over Cork, so I was steeped in church life but had no thought of being a priest then, as women could not be at that time. When John Binns asked me to be churchwarden of Christ Church, I felt physically sick, but soon found I absolutely loved being churchwarden.

After we returned from California a couple of people asked me if I had ever thought of being ordained.

A daft idea I thought at the time, but, like Mary, I "pondered these things in my heart", until one day I went to a Mystery Play at the Barbican with a group from the Parish. I was late and had to sit up in the gods on my own. Just before the interval Mary, sitting alone on the dark stage, went into labour and cried to God, "Take this cup away from me!" and then a door at the side of the stage opened, light streamed in and a man entered carrying the naked and bloody body of her adult son. I found myself in tears and realised that, like Mary, I was arguing with God to "take this cup away from me".

It was shortly after on a Parish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land that I finally told Paul Kennington, "The time has come." And he understood what I meant.

I offered myself for ordination on return from that pilgrimage.

How many Rectors have you seen come and go and did they have very different ways of managing the Parish?

Five: Bernard Jacob, Ian Cundy, Bruce Saunders, Peggy Jackson and Ann Nickson. From 1994, when I became a SPA, I attended staff meetings along with the clergy, so I have observed the inner workings of the Parish and experienced different styles of management.

Some rectors had quite a lot of central control which meant doing quite a lot together as a team but never with clashing dates between the churches. Others loosened central control and allowed the individual churches more autonomy which can mean a loss of teamwork across the Parish.

Something I found useful was when the clergy team had awaydays at the convent, which was in Ham at that time. We had a facilitator and I found that her questions and the exercises she gave us were very helpful in gaining insight and understanding of where other members of the team were coming from and how they felt. She reminded us that whatever was going on in that room was going on outside in the parish!

Looking forward, what do you think might be helpful for us as a Parish?

People can seem anxious for the future because of ageing congregations. This seems to me to be an inward way of looking at the situation. Thinking that it all depends on us or the new incumbent to 'wave a magic wand' and all will be OK seems to show a lack of trust in God. That does not mean that we sit back and do nothing. We are meant to be people of HOPE. In his sermon on Maundy Thursday, bishop Christopher spoke that following prayer and thinking, our Diocese has decided to value and prioritise in our common life: joy, justice, hope, love, community, humility, hospitality.

Anxiety is not on this list!



Called and Commissioned

Introducing the team of Parish & Church Wardens, may they be blessed in their ministry, as they bless us!



Brenda Morris & Kate Woodhouse
Parish Wardens

Parish Wardens tend to be more in the background (and less hardworking) than churchwardens but turn up in all three churches at services, consultative groups and events to act as a link across the parish. **Brenda Morris** moved into the parish in the 1960s and is heavily involved at Christ Church and well known in the community. **Kate Woodhouse** has worshipped at St Mary's for many years, and is closely involved with the Mortlake Community Association and Mortlake Hall. They are involved with parish groups like Community Ventures, the Sunday Lunch Scheme, Messy Church, and the choir. The parish wardens are currently in charge of the parish and are looking forward to doing more across the parish and to welcoming a new Team Rector to join Alex and Jonathan.

Ginny Waterkeyn, Sarah Coggins & Anita Larsen
St Mary's churchwardens



Ginny Waterkeyn has been attending St Mary's for 30 years and has been a churchwarden for the past 3. "Serving as a churchwarden keeps me very busy, particularly during the current vacancy, but it is also an honour and great fun. I regard St Mary's as my second family and hugely value the faith, fellowship and friendship I find there".

Sarah Coggins has been a churchwarden at St Mary's for three years and a duty warden for thirty two years. St Mary's is definitely her happy place! She loves being retired but also loved her job which was in adult mental health. "Job sharing church warden with Ginny works well, at least I think it does and hopefully she thinks so too!"

Anxiety is not on this list because anxiousness reduces our capacity for joy and our commitment to justice. It eats away at our hope and coarsens our love. Anxiety undermines community. An anxious person is, paradoxically, not humble, and an anxious Church cannot be hospitable.

If we are not hopeful and joyful about the good news of Jesus Christ, how can we expect others to want to join us? Maybe we need to fall deeper in love with God, and allow God to love us to enable us to love and serve our neighbour better.

I have found Parish retreats and pilgrimages encouraging. Maybe time for a deepening of our spiritual life is needed to help us.

Which brings me to the use of our buildings. In the Parish where I worship in Ireland, one of the churches was closed in recent years. There are still 3 churches in the Parish served by 1 rector! Parishioners fought tooth and nail to try to stop it closing. I could see that if the building had been serving the local community, it might have survived but parishioners in a minority church in the Irish republic tend to be inward looking as they see their numbers diminishing.

I see something for us to learn from that and bishop Christopher's message. I believe that people are willing and happy to engage when they see the church working for others rather than for ourselves.

My concern is for young people living around here who work very long hours. How do we help provide some sabbath rest for them? It may not be conventional church on Sunday morning. Maybe there are opportunities here to ask those who cross our threshold what might be helpful for them. Jesus knew what he was doing choosing fishermen! It is for all of us to be as aware as people who fish, to spot potential in new people who come to our churches (without pouncing on them!) and let clergy know. The clergy can't do it all. We all need to encourage and nurture God's gifts in others.

From my own experience, it is when we are asked to become part of something that we may get drawn in. If Bernard Jacob had not spotted me with a baby on a rug at my feet arranging flowers in St Mary's for a flower festival and had he not told the flower team at Christ Church about it, I might not be what I am today!

Anita Larsen has been in the St Mary's congregation since 2011 and was churchwarden from 2015 to 2019, re-elected in 2023. She is also a member of the serving team. "I love and greatly appreciate the warmth and fellowship at St Mary's, which has been such an important part of re-discovering and deepening my faith after a long lapse."

Dilys Zeegen & Sharika Fernando-Ewing
Christ Church churchwardens



Dilys Zeegen has been coming to Christ Church for 48 yrs since she moved to Sheen in 1976. She was in charge of the church dusting for about 20 years until Teba was employed. She has been in charge of the Flowers in Christ Church with Robin for 17 years; and is now part of the Community Ventures team and helps with Holiday at Home.

Sharika Fernando-Ewing can often be found rowing on the Thames or singing in the church choir at Christ Church. She was married this year and is a newly elected churchwarden. She is looking forward to working with Dilys and the team at Christ Church, albeit a little daunted at what the role entails...



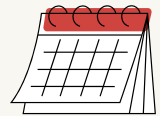
Jan Wright & Bob Mann
All Saints churchwardens



Jan Wright is about to enter her third year as churchwarden at All Saints: "It has been an immensely pleasurable thing to do for a fully supportive congregation and the other church and parish wardens with whom I have worshipped and worked in various teams for 37 years. I have learnt so much more about the Christian year and liturgy from Fr Alex, who is so grateful for anything his CWs do. I recently celebrated my 50th reunion of starting nurse training and was reminded that on the first day we were told: always smile. always listen and always think of how to give the best of yourself. Words of wisdom I still use."

Bob Mann was previously churchwarden at All Saints from 2007-2011 and has been treasurer since 2012. His wife Ruth is parish safeguarding officer. Bob and Ruth have two boys, both of whom were baptised at All Saints and now have three granddaughters. He is chairman of four private equity backed technology companies that specialise in ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and Cybersecurity.

PARISH DIARY *Save the date*



Venues for events are listed: SM - St Mary's, CC - Christ Church, AS - All Saints

Whether or not you attend church you are welcome to join in these community events either as a guest or a volunteer.

Sleep Out to end homelessness over-night Fri 4th Oct
sleep out in person or sleep out remotely (at home)!
www.glassdoor.org.uk/sleep-out

Sunday Lunch Scheme Sun 21st July - CC Hall
Offering Sunday lunch to those in need, from 12:30.
Volunteers and help welcome, please speak to Kate Woodhouse

Fauré's Requiem at All Saints
Sun 7th July 7pm AS
Choir, conducted by James Cryer, Julian Thomas, organ, with reflective readings by Roger Allam and Rebecca Saire. Tickets £10 on the door. Proceeds for the choir fund.

Choral Evensong - come, sing, pray & celebrate!
Sun 21st July 5pm CC
A BCP evensong and choir end of term at Christ Church

GLASSDOOR



PARISH CONTACTS



PARISH OFFICE

Administrator Cheri Crump

Please call for an appointment.

Address: St. Mary the Virgin Church,
Mortlake High Street, SW14 8JA.

Tel: 020 8876 1630

Email: office@mortlakeparish.org.uk

Website: www.mortlakeparish.org.uk



a verse to rehearse...

“ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. ”

Acts 2 .4.

St Mary's

Team Rector *in vacancy.*

Wardens Ginny Waterkeyn

Sarah Coggins

Anita Larsen

Assistant Curate Revd Matthew Watts

Director of Music Christopher Hughes

website

The churchwardens are in charge of St Mary's during the vacancy

thewaterkeyns@blueyonder.co.uk

sarahjcoggins@gmail.com

anita.smwarden@gmail.com

(currently stepped back from ministry)

hughesonkeys@gmail.com.

www.stmarymortlake.org.uk

Christ Church

Team Vicar Revd Jonathan Haynes

PTO Priest Revd Olwen Williamson

Reader Paul Russenberger

SPA Deirdre Munro

Wardens Dilys Zeegen &

Sharika Fernando-Ewing

Director of Music Tom Coxhead

Community Hall Mireille Stanton

Bookings

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All Saints

Team Vicar Revd Alex Barrow

Assistant Curate Revd Sylvia Collins-Mayo

PTO Priest Revd Peter King TD BEM

Reader William Arnold

Wardens Jan Wright &

Bob Mann

Director of Music James Cryer

Hall Bookings Mike Stewart

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PCC

Secretary Cheri Crump

Parish Treasurer Jon Blythe

Parish Warden Brenda Morris

Parish Warden Kate Woodhouse

Safeguarding Ruth Mann

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c/o The Parish Office

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS, FUNERALS AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

Please speak to the vicar of the church where you anticipate having the service.

See contacts above