New Year,
New You

Need some inspiration for your New Year’s resolution?

Miriam’s Story
“The hospice is just a wonderful place for rehabilitation.”

Meet Annette and Mandy who tell us about life at St Christopher’s

New Year, New You
Need some inspiration for your New Year’s resolution?
In October we celebrated the Hindu festival of lights with an array of activities. We enjoyed saris, candles, traditional decorations and sweets while learning more about the festival.

Children's Grief Awareness Week (16-22 November 2017) was a chance for us to come together to raise awareness about children in our community and across the UK who are grieving. On Tuesday 7 November, Candle Child Bereavement Service ran a young people's group centred on this year's theme, #YoureNotAlone.

In November, we also opened our first Christmas pop-up shop in Orpington. In the first week alone, we raised a phenomenal £2,268 for the hospice!

Our hospice lottery, known as the 5000 Club started in 2012 and now has 4,032 numbers in play – generating an income of £20,160 each month! It’s just £5 per month to join, and there’s a monthly top prize of £1,500. Sign up at www.stchristophers.org.uk/5000club

Since its launch in October our new community-led project has trained 17 volunteers and is in the process of matching them with people in the Crystal Palace area.

In October we provided 6,166 rehabilitation sessions, helping people to regain strength and independence.

In October we celebrated the diversity of our staff and volunteers and the communities we serve. We took to the streets of Brixton and Lewisham to let people know more about their local hospice.

We have 19 high street shops across south east London and welcome 12,000 customers each and every week. In the last year generous supporters donated 2.2 million pre-loved items. Without these donations, we wouldn’t have been able to raise £1 million to fund vital care services in our local communities.

It’s just £5 per month to join, and there’s a monthly top prize of £1,500.
PRESS COVERAGE ROUND UP

From September 2017, we were delighted that six short films about the hospice reached a global audience as they were released weekly on The Independent online. We also secured five articles in our local newspapers and online. Coverage focussed on promoting our Moonlight Walk and also our care, using the story of one of our patients, Shelagh Mcdonough, who took on the remarkable fundraising challenge of traveling around our five boroughs on her motorised scooter.

MESSAGE FROM OUR JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Welcome to our latest edition of Connections, the magazine with news and stories from St Christopher’s, your local hospice.

As we begin a new year it seems only fitting to reflect on the one just past; a year which was a particularly special one for St Christopher’s as we celebrated our 50th anniversary. It was filled with a number of standout moments – from a very special petal drop at Southwark Cathedral to commemorate the 55,000 patients cared for over the last 50 years to welcoming many people to our Remembrance Services to honour the lives of those no longer with us. Fifty years on we know there is still much to do and we hope we can count on your support to help us care for the growing numbers of people who need us.

We continue to strive towards our vision of a world in which all dying people and those close to them have access to the care and support they need, when and wherever they need it. One way we hope to achieve this is through investing in a new Learning Hub which will enable us to connect with people all around the world and provide new and innovative ways for people to learn about caring for dying people globally. You can read more about the work our Education Team are already doing to improve care internationally on page 6.

We do hope you enjoy this edition of Connections and would like to thank you for your unwavering support of St Christopher’s – we couldn’t do what we do without you.

EXTENDING OUR SERVICES

We have been selected as Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group’s preferred provider for end of life care in the community. From April 2018, we will provide care and support for those living with a terminal illness for the whole of Lewisham.
Chloe Bryant’s mum had terminal lung cancer and died at St Christopher’s on 20 April 2011. Here, Chloe tells us how she has since become involved with St Christopher’s Remembrance Services and how her talents have helped her to set up a unique business.

Chloe:
“My mum came to St Christopher’s in 2011 after being in and out of several hospitals where she wasn’t happy, we wanted her to stay at home, but she just couldn’t settle. We just didn’t know what to do for the best so it was such a relief when she arrived at St Christopher’s; she loved it there, and felt very comfortable and cared for. I feel like they brought mum back for her last few weeks so that we were able to spend time with her, and the support we got as a family was amazing.

About a year after mum died, we heard about the Remembrance Services held at the hospice and started to go along and dedicate a light for mum. I am quite a strong person and don’t tend to get very emotional, and over the years the services have helped me to grieve at my own pace.

Although the services are lovely, I find that they are about so much more than remembering mum; they are a chance for the family to all get together. We always go for a family meal before so it is really lovely to get a chance to see everyone and spend some quality time together.

I wanted to get more involved with St Christopher’s and as I love to sew and make things in my spare time, I spoke with the Fundraising Team about having a stall at one of the services. They suggested that the Christmas Festival might be a better match and we went from there.

Since 2014 I have had a stall selling bunting, children’s toys, bandanas for dogs, quilts and lots more. I have also started to make items for family members to buy that they can keep as a memento to remember a loved one. These items can be made with a choice of fabrics or a piece of clothing that belonged to the person. This all started because I wanted to give something back, but now I feel that we get just as much back as we put it. My Auntie Carol makes cakes for my stall and my dog Ruby is there on the day to model the doggy bandanas.

I am the kind of person that likes to find the positive in different situations, and I see this as one of those occasions. We lost our mum and, now, our family is involved with a lovely charity and I am helping to ease the grief of others through my handmade items that I make with love.

You can see all of Chloe’s bespoke items on her Facebook page here: www.facebook.com/pg/sewwithlive

At St Christopher’s, we offer many ways to remember loved ones throughout the year. From dedicating a leaf on our Tribute Tree to attending one of our Remembrance Services, you can honour the memory of those no longer with us in the way most suited to you. To find out more see our website www.stchristophers.org.uk/remembrance
This March we will be holding our first ever legacy awareness month. Legacies, also known as Gifts in Wills, are so important to everything St Christopher’s do - and a quarter of all the care we provide is made possible as a result of these generous donations.

Throughout March we will be running a number of activities to help demystify legacies, and answer any other questions that you might have along the way. Everyone is welcome to come along and learn more, without any obligation to leave St Christopher’s a legacy.

Activities include:

**“Planning for Peace of Mind”**
An afternoon of impartial advice, information and discussion around end of life plans, including expert talks from funeral advisors, solicitors and hospice staff.

**Tours of St Christopher’s Hospice**
If you would like to learn more about the hospice, and hear about some of the things legacies have helped us to achieve then please come along. Tours will be running at various times throughout Legacy Awareness Month.

**Will Week (19 to 23 March)**
During Will Week, a number of local solicitors kindly waive their fee to make or update Simple Wills for hospice supporters in return for a donation to St Christopher’s.

Although March is our Legacy Awareness Month, you are always very welcome to contact us at any time with any questions about leaving a gift in your Will, and we are always happy to offer a tour or just a chat.

For more information about legacy awareness month and details of the full programme of events, or if you have any questions about Gifts in Wills in general, please contact Helen Wheeler on 020 8786 4715 or at h.wheeler@stchristophers.org.uk

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**Sheila’s Story**

One of our supporters, Sheila Twitchett, has remembered St Christopher’s in her will so that in future others can receive the same care and support that she and her family benefitted from. Here, she shares her story:

“My mother was 87 when she came into St Christopher’s, where she spent the final two weeks of her life. Nothing was too much for the staff and she was extremely well cared for. I also felt very well supported. I was so grateful to be able to spend time with my mother, and was even able to stay overnight with my husband. It made a difficult situation so much easier.

I am so thankful for the care and support my mother and I received, which is why I have left a gift to St Christopher’s in my will.”

We are truly grateful to Sheila and to all of our loyal supporters who kindly remember us in their wills.

We rely heavily on generous supporters leaving legacies to the hospice - donations from wills cover a quarter of our running costs each and every year. Without these incredible gifts, we wouldn’t be able to provide support for people when they need it most. We give our heartfelt thanks to everybody who supports us in this way.
St Christopher’s vision is a world in which all dying people and those close to them have access to care and support, whenever and wherever they need it.

The key to this is through our Education and Training programme which is attended by clinicians locally, nationally and from around the world. However, health organisations in many of the countries where good end of life care is needed have too few resources to pay for travel to the UK for training. So, each year, St Christopher’s offers a bursary programme, which is generously funded by the Christian Wives Fellowship. The bursary offers an opportunity for clinicians who want to lead end of life care in their country to spend two weeks at the hospice gaining knowledge and skills that they can take back home with them to really make a difference.

In September, we welcomed five bursary students (pictured) to St Christopher’s including: GPs, Nurses and Pharmacists from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. The group joined our well-established Multi-Professional Week programme, which brings together clinicians from around the world to explore the principles of palliative care and how the multi-professional team must work together to best meet the needs of their patients. The diverse situations and cultures that the week’s attendees bring, provide the foundation to explore how they can apply the principles they learn to their own settings.

In their second week the bursary students spend time shadowing St Christopher’s clinical staff to see how the knowledge acquired during Multi-Professional week is used in practice.

St Christopher’s will continue to work with clinicians from across the globe to work towards a world in which good end of life care is available for everyone. It is because of this vision, that we are building a world-class Learning Hub that will provide the technology and resources needed to further expand our education programme.

To find out more about this exciting campaign and how you can get involved, see www.stchristophers.org.uk/learninghubcampaign

I realised that there is no difference in the suffering of patients and their families between Bangladesh and the UK or in other countries of the world, apart from the language and style of the expression.

Fazle-Noor Biswas - St Christopher’s bursary student, 2017
Miriam’s story...  

Miriam Howe is 77 and lives in Croydon. She came to St Christopher’s for rehabilitation and has made really positive progress.

Miriam suffers from a number of incurable conditions including Sojerns Syndrome - a chronic inflammatory autoimmune disease.

Last March Miriam became very ill and was taken into Croydon University Hospital, where she stayed for several weeks. During that time, she was fitted with a Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) - a tube which feeds food directly into her stomach. Miriam was told that it would be dangerous for her to eat as she had pneumonia and was very unwell.

“While in hospital I was told that if I didn’t sit in this chair for so many hours a day I would become bedbound. This news made me very upset, but I happened to get friendly with a nurse at the hospital who used to work on the Inpatient Unit at St Christopher’s and she asked if I would be interested in doing rehabilitation at the hospice. By that time I couldn’t walk and in my mind the thought of going home unable to walk was dreadful. Anyway I said yes to St Christopher’s and here I am.”

During her time on the Inpatient Unit, Miriam made incredible progress. On discharge home, she was able to walk the length of a corridor, go up and down a flight of stairs, administer all of her own medication and feed via the PEG. Miriam also practised making her own bed and washing and dressing herself while on the ward in preparation for going home.

Kate, one of the Physiotherapists working with Miriam said: “As a patient Miriam’s pretty inspirational because she’s definitely really motivated and always keen to try to improve herself as much as she can physically. She always says it’s down to us, but she’s the one who has actually put in the hard work every day.”

Miriam added: “My dad died at St Christopher’s, so I already knew that it was a lovely place, but I never knew that they offered rehabilitation and I don’t think a lot of people do. I’m so pleased to be walking again. If it wasn’t for St Christopher’s I couldn’t have done it and I would still be bedbound now, not preparing to go home where I can live with some independence and pride in myself. As I said, the staff have been wonderful.”

The hospice is just a wonderful place for rehabilitation. They do everything they can for you. I can’t thank them enough.

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New Year, New You!

DIY Fundraising

Fundraising may seem intimidating, but we make it simple. We have a friendly Fundraising Team ready to help if you have any questions, want advice on running your own event or if you just want to brainstorm ideas. We are here for you!

Celebrate a Milestone
If you are celebrating a milestone birthday or anniversary, why don’t you ask friends and family to donate instead of a gift?

New Challenge
Take part in a muddy obstacle event or jump out of a plane and get sponsored for braving a new challenge.

Gaming Fundraising
Fundraise by hosting a 24-hour gaming marathon by yourself or with friends.

Brew and Bake
Host your very own tea party in aid of St Christopher’s. After all, who doesn’t love a brew?

To get involved, please contact the team at events@stchristophers.org.uk
GIVE THE GIFT OF TIME

Our volunteers are a vital part of the hospice – we couldn’t do all we do without them. Have you considered sharing your skills? We are always looking for new volunteers to help us extend our services further.

By volunteering your time, skills or experience you will know you are helping dying people in your local community have access to care and support, whenever and wherever they need it.

You’ll also be joining an enthusiastic team and getting more involved in your local community. Here are a few of our current roles to whet your appetite...

**Shop volunteer**
Do you have a flair for customer service? We have 19 high street shops who need you to join our friendly team to help raise around £1 million for St Christopher’s each year.

**Speaking Ambassador**
Are you a confident speaker who could represent St Christopher’s and help build community links across our catchment?

**Drivers and Driver Companions**
Could you join our team of volunteer drivers and companions accompanying patients to the hospice?

**Compassionate Neighbours**
Could you offer companionship to someone in need? Compassionate Neighbours is a network of trained volunteers who are willing to offer their time, companionship and support to people living in their community who are coping with serious illness.

For all our volunteering roles, please see: [www.stchristophers.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities/](http://www.stchristophers.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities/)

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**1-2-3 Challenge**
Then look no further! The 1-2-3 Challenge is an all-encompassing programme that offers the best benefits for both your organisation and the hospice: you can engage your staff and raise your profile all while changing the lives of our patients and their families. It’s also lots of fun!

The league for 2018/19 starts in April and offers something for everyone, from the adrenaline-fuelled to the social butterfly, get active, organise socially or come and volunteer to earn points and compete for the Corporate Champion Cup.

For more information, contact Leo Thon on 020 8768 4570 or l.thon@stchristophers.org.uk

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**Open Gardens Festival**
Do you have a garden - large or small - that you would like to proudly showcase for a day from May to September? Everything that our participants do during the festival raises vital funds for your local hospice - and we’ll support you every step of the way.

Contact Tracy Blackmore on 020 8768 4573 or t.blackmore@stchristophers.org.uk for more information.

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**Unwanted Christmas gifts?**
Donate your pre-loved goods and help change lives. Quality donations are always welcome at our 19 charity shops across south east London. Your generous donations will help us to provide care for people in your local area. A collection for large furniture items can be arranged by calling 020 8768 4571. Thank you.
AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNETTE AND MANDY

Annette Broughton is a Deputy Ward Manager and Mandy Fox is a Healthcare Assistant and they both work on City Ward at St Christopher’s. Here they tell us about their roles...

Q WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR ROLE?

"My role is very busy, but I always make time to spend with each patient. A simple chat or a few smiles go a long way in making a person feel happier. This is especially important if a patient doesn’t have regular visitors."

Q WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR STAND OUT MOMENTS FROM WORKING AT ST CHRISTOPHER’S?

"Seeing the joy of our patients when we achieve their goals. We have managed to arrange weddings and organise a trip back to New Zealand. It is very humbling to be a part of these achievements."

Q WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING OUTSIDE OF THE HOSPICE?

"I enjoy days out and going to the cinema with my family and friends. I also try to exercise at least twice a week."
Talking to patients and their families and getting to know them. I love learning about their life, what they like and don’t like and what is important to them. These conversations are so important as they build up a picture of the whole person and allow me to care for them more effectively.

As this has been my first year at St Christopher’s and I am completely new to this role, my whole experience has stood out! Being part of an amazing team that provide such expert care to both patients and families has been an outstanding experience for me.

Outside of the hospice I enjoy spending time with my children and grandchildren and travelling as much as I can.
Debbie’s story...

Debbie Slaughter, 59 from Bromley, kindly took the time to tell us about why she supports St Christopher’s. Her daughter, Jenny, died at the hospice in 2013 aged 27.

Jenny had stage four melanoma and her condition worsened very quickly. She stayed at St Christopher’s for around six weeks and in that time the hospice became a home from home. I had known St Christopher’s before as my mum had benefitted from respite care there and so when Jenny was referred to the hospice, I felt an overwhelming feeling of relief.

We were so welcomed and looked after. I stayed with her all the time and we were even able to bring the dog in to visit. She was always treated as an individual and not just another person in a bed. She was never spoken over or about and was able to make her own decisions right up until the very end. That’s so important.

Everyone just seems to know what you need. A physiotherapist came to see her, and she was given massages in her room on the ward. I remember one day getting whisked away for a massage too; to think someone cared and looked after me as well meant so much. Everyone is geared to making end of life as positive as it can be. I don’t know what we’d have done without St Christopher’s.

Jenny’s son, William, was two at the time. He’s now six and he remembers so much. I have memories of William coming to the hospice to see his mum and him loving the garden and all the fish.

We’ve taken part in two Fun Walks and two Bluebell Walks and raised around £12,000. That’s such a testament to Jenny and it means that other families can receive the same support. Jenny had even taken part in the walk herself previously with friends. The walks are extremely emotional days but there’s a sense of comradery with other people who really understand what
you’re going through. William did the Fun Walk earlier this year – he walked the whole 11 miles which was just amazing.

The first time we took part, we had a team of about ten people made up of myself, my husband, some of my work friends and Jenny’s friends. Now, every time we’re taking part, I put a notice up at work; Cook in Petts Wood, where I am Assistant Manager, with a little story about how the hospice helped my family, and asking people to sponsor us.

The team at Cook are always happy to help the local community, and we regularly donate cakes to sell at St Christopher’s events. We are a real family company and St Christopher’s is such an important charity to so many in the local area.

The Bluebell Walk is a beautiful walk in the countryside. There’s always an absolutely brilliant atmosphere; there’s tears, laughter; all emotions! I find it very cathartic – a time to talk about the person you’ve lost and a chance to talk to other people and hear their stories. You realise that you’re not alone.

If you would like to take part in this year’s Bluebell Walk on Sunday 29 April, please register at www.stchristophers.org.uk/bluebellwalk

Thank you to Mandy and Beverley!

We have held a small champagne reception in Keston Park for five years, however for our 50th Anniversary two of our loyal supporters, Mandy Love and Beverley Joiner, offered to help run it on a much larger and impressive scale! Their hard work and dedication paid off with this special anniversary evening raising an incredible £56,000!

Guests enjoyed a champagne reception and food from three international food stations. A live band plus a DJ were there to ensure the evening went with a swing. Mandy and Beverley sold the majority of the tickets to their friends, so the usual 100 guests grew to over 300!

Thank you also to Clair Collins and Rachel Moore who ran a very successful balloon raffle which made £6,000, to Nigel Humpriss our auctioneer, to Laithwaites staff for running the bar and also Julia France who gave a very moving speech about how St Christopher’s helped her family when her 23-year-old daughter Sadie Rance was dying.

Mandy and Beverley have been valued supporters since 2009 and 2011 and in addition to this spectacular event, they have supported St Christopher’s in so many ways; hosting evenings at local restaurants to raise funds, working on our reception, volunteering at events, and making gorgeous cakes and pickles to sell.

From everyone at St Christopher’s, we would like to say a big thank you!

Along with Mandy and Beverley this event would not have been possible without our main sponsors Skillcrown Homes and The Purelake Group and our other contributing sponsors, JDM Estate Agents, Residential Creations Ltd, Benwood Electrical Ltd, Ratcliffe & Brown wines & spirits, Deco Design & Build Co Ltd, JDM Scaffolding Ltd, ECS Systems, The Marketing Practise, Streetley Properties, Masters Group UK, Chamber Furniture, The Bridge Group and 7 Hotel Diner. This valuable support ensured that every penny raised went directly to St Christopher’s.
Our year in numbers 2017

13,108 home visits
5,855 total likes on Facebook

We provided care and support for people across 5 London boroughs

Number of people we provided care and support for: 6,500
Number of staff: 581
Number of volunteers: 1,150

Total cost each year to run our services: £21m
The number of pounds we need to fundraise every year is: £15m

Number of rehab sessions delivered: 6,166
Number of inpatient beds: 757
Number of items donated to our shops: 2.2m
Number of counties we've worked with: 30

Number of people who came to our education sessions: Over 2,000
Number of families and children who received bereavement support: 2,129
Number of patients who stayed in our inpatient beds: 2,129

74% of our patients died in a place of their choice
97% of people who said they were treated with dignity and respect

One quote that made us feel warm and fuzzy:
"St Christopher's makes such a difference to my life. Coming here helps me to realise I am not alone, they're like a second family."
Since May 2017, Lilian has been working in her new role as In-Reach Nurse at Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) in Orpington. Lilian works with a range of agencies and organisations to enable patients at the end of their life to go home safely with a care package that supports them in the right way. Here, she explains why the project is so important.

“The project is a collaborative approach between St Christopher’s, PRUH, Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group and St Christopher’s Personal Care Team.

The main objective of this project is to make the transition from hospital to home as stress-free as possible for all patients and their families. Part of my role is to hold meetings with the family where I can gather information about the current situation as well as listening to their concerns.

This can be a very distressing time and I am often asked lots of questions about a range of issues. I try to give clarity to families and patients; I may refer them to community organisations such as Age UK for support around house cleaning or to the District Nurses for training to administer medicines. I strive to join up all of the agencies and health professionals involved in the care package, so that the communication between them and the patient is as seamless as possible.

My investment is in each patient; they are individuals and so they need to be treated as such. I treat them with dignity and also help them to feel empowered to make decisions about how they wished to be cared for.

I had a patient recently who had kidney failure and was on regular dialysis. His specialist had advised him that the treatment was no longer working and that he would be much more comfortable being cared for at home. I met with his specialist and also his niece which enabled me to be fully aware of what he was being advised.

He was so used to his routine and reliant on the medications, that it took a two hour conversation with him until he was able to see how his situation could be improved. He was then able to take the decision to return home without dialysis, where he died peacefully a few weeks later.

Without a project like this, he wouldn’t have had the correct support in order to make that decision safely.”

Lilian O’Brien has worked with St Christopher’s since November 1995. She has worked as a staff nurse across all the wards as well as in the community and Personal Care Team.
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

For a full list of diary dates please visit our website at www.stchristophers.org.uk/events/calendar

JANUARY

Saturday 13 at 6.30pm, Saturday 20 at 3pm/7.30pm, Sunday 21 at 3pm,
Saturday 27 at 3pm/7.30pm

ROBIN HOOD & THE BABES IN THE WOOD
St George's Hall, 25-27 Albemarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HZ
Adults £10, Children £8
All proceeds shared by St Christopher's and The Demelza Children's Hospice

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FRIDAY 13 APRIL, 7PM
RACE NIGHT AT THE WARREN
The Warren, Croydon Road, London, BR2 7AL
£3 or £25 for a table of 10
All funds raised will be donated to St Christopher's
www.stchristophers.org.uk/event/race-night-warren/

Saturday 14 April, 7pm
AN EVENING OF FINE DINING AND DANCING AT THE WARREN
The Warren, Croydon Road, London, BR2 7AL
The evening will include dinner, an Elvis impersonator, a disco and a raffle. Tickets £25
For more information or to book a ticket please contact Gemma Oake on 020 8462 1266 or email enquiries@mpthewarren.com
All funds raised will be donated to St Christopher's.

MARCH

LEGACY AWARENESS MONTH
Throughout March we will be running activities that will help demystify legacies, and answer any other questions that you might have along the way.
For more details, contact Helen Wheeler on 020 8786 4715 or h.wheeler@stchristophers.org.uk

APRIL

Sunday 1 April
EASTER DAY
Put together a classic and fun Easter Egg Hunt in your garden or even in your office for kids and adults alike. Or you can coordinate a Decorated Easter Egg Competition - you can ask for small donations as ticket entries.

APRIL

Thursday 5 April
START OF 1-2-3 CHALLENGE 2018-19 SEASON
For more information visit www.stchristophers.org.uk/fundraising/corporate/engage or call Leo on 020 8768 4570.

St Christopher’s BLUEBELL WALK
Sunday 29 April
9am-2pm

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VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON
If you were lucky enough to get a place in the ballot we would love you to join our #Run4StC team.
Contact Remi on 020 8768 4577 or r.knight@stchristophers.org.uk

BLUEBELL WALK
Three, five, seven or nine mile walk in the beautiful Kent countryside.
It's £5 to register with under 11’s going free. Register by Wednesday 7 February for your free Bluebell Walk t-shirt. www.stchristophers.org.uk/bluebellwalk and 020 8768 4575.

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