

ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM
13th February 2022: 3rd Sunday before Lent/Racial Justice Sunday

Hazel writes:

Last week's theme of our support for the foodbank, the film during the week and today's theme of racial justice all focus on issues that Jesus set out in his manifesto, which was the gospel reading on 23rd January. For us as followers of Jesus, these are all issues that we too should be concerned about. Our Lent programme, which starts at the beginning of March will help us to explore more of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, as we focus on the Beatitudes – more details of the groups that will form for Lent will be given in next week's pew sheet.

Today, we have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St. Francis' Church and non-eucharistic services at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

Hymns at 9.15 a.m. in St. Mary's and 10.45 a.m. in St. Francis' are

Be thou my vision – Jesus Christ is waiting – Christ be our light –
God forgave my sin

Next **Sunday 20th February**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am and 9.15am in St. Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

Morning Prayer is held each week in St Francis' Church on Wednesday morning at 9.30am, followed by the church being **open for private prayer** from 10.30-11.30am. It is also held at St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Mary's at **9.15am** on Sunday. All other files for this week have been combined and posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line. Other worship and resources that you might want to listen to or look at on Sunday:

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at www.churchofengland.org.
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
 - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 - Purcell, Grayston Ives, Walker & William Lloyd Webber from Winchester Cathedral
 - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at **11.25 p.m.** – Katherine Jenkins meets Christians who show love and kindness to others.

Coffee & Chat is on the first Thursday of the month at 2.30pm on Zoom and our next in person date is this Thursday 17th February in St Francis' Church. If you would like to come and meet others for a chat, please do join us. If you would like to do this, but cannot make the date, or would like the log-in details, please let Rowena know (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com or 8777 6112).

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned hot and cold meat, tinned potatoes, tinned vegetables, long life fruit juice, tinned fish, chopped tomatoes, rice, custard, rice pudding. They are well stocked with pasta, cereals and baked beans. Please do not bring any fresh food, or baby milk as the foodbank cannot pass this on. You can also donate financially here <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>. Thank you for your continuing support.

As well as seeking new trustees, **Bromley Borough Foodbank** is looking to employ three staff members as Operations Co-ordinator, Warehouse and Logistics Manager and a Volunteer Co-ordinator. All details can be found at the following web address: www.cv-library.co.uk/list-jobs/406850/Bromley-Borough-Foodbank.

We have a spare **wheelchair and two walkers** available (free) to anyone who could use them. Please contact Caroline Povlson on 07711 212623 for more information.

Please note new date for an augmented St. Mary's Church Choir to present a concert on **Sunday afternoon 27th February at 3.30 p.m.** in aid of church funds, including Roger Jones' "Three Wise Camels" – an alternative story for Epiphany. Tickets at £7 each can be requested in advance – refreshments will be provided at the end. Please book via tickets@mussard.org.uk or 0208 650 8389. Geoff Mussard

We are now holding more in-person services in both churches on Sunday mornings, which we hope will create a much greater sense of regularity in our worship, with people able to feel safe in a space that they know well. As a consequence, we will be needing more volunteers to support these services. If you feel able to add any of the following roles to your schedule, please let the following people know:

- Welcomers at St Mary's - Beryl Bolton - berylbolton@hotmail.com
- Welcomers at St Francis' - Joan Burford – jandbburford@talktalk.net
- Readers at St Mary's - Kay Mussard - kay@mussard.org.uk
- Readers at St Francis' - Joan Burford - jandbburford@talktalk.net
- Intercessors at both churches - Hazel O'Sullivan - hazelos58@gmail.com
- Refreshments at St Mary's - Beryl Bolton - berylbolton@hotmail.com
- Refreshments at St Francis' - Marion Barry - whitelandm@yahoo.com

- Livestreaming and slides at St Mary's - Gifty Nortey
- office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk
- Livestreaming at St Francis' - Nichola Nightingale
- nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk

St Francis and St Mary's Arts events 2022: supporting mental health.

As you may know, we cancelled plans for a Festival of Arts in 2020 due to the pandemic. Instead, we would like to have two arts weekends this year, linking these to how the Arts can have a positive influence on people's mental health, which will be so important in 2022:

- The first will be a Visual Arts weekend and might include a photography exhibition, film night and art exhibitions and will be 9-10th July 2022.
- Then a Written Word weekend will be 24-25th September 2022 and might include a book exhibition, poetry and other readings.

This is all in the very early planning stage and we would like many people to contribute ideas, plan and organise these events. If you would like to get involved please contact any of us: Ken (kennethabryan@aol.com), Kay (kay@mussard.org.uk), Debbie (debadams64@icloud.com), Tim (tim.shingler@ntlworld.com), Nicky (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) and Kate (katedyer41@hotmail.com).

There are currently local **volunteer opportunities** available. A separate sheet is included with this pew sheet with all the details.

If anyone would like a pedestal at either church in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special anniversary etc., please contact Merri Womack (8777 8772) for St Mary's (or there is a list to sign in the vestibule at St. Mary's) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The flowers at St. Mary's this week have been provided by Joan Baker in memory of Peter and Chris and have been arranged by Merri.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl berylbolton@hotmail.com and items for the websites to brian.griff19@btinternet.com or Gifty office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk.



churches
together
in West Wickham

Serving our community

As we come out of the pandemic, more community services are looking to improve how they serve our locality. Here are three varied opportunities to help in the community:

1. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED to drive elderly Bencurtis residents to the West Wickham shops in one of the Bencurtis minibuses. We're looking for drivers who can give up one morning (or more) a week to take shoppers to Sainsbury's at 10.00 a.m. & pick them up again at 11.30 to return them home. An ideal way to serve folk in our local community! Drivers need to have a clean driving licence, to provide character references & be willing to be DBS checked. Ideally, they need to be under 70 years of age, as drivers over 70 will need to complete a DVLA driving assessment. The Friends of Glebe Housing Association/Bencurtis will cover insurance costs. Further details from Geoff Larcombe (Tel: 020 8777 5114 ; Mobile: 07954 707755 ; email: g.d.larcombe@gmail.com).

2. School Governor roles

Compass Academy Trust is looking to recruit local volunteer school governors within our family of schools (Marian Vian, Unicorn and Wickham Common & Oak Lodge). Local governors do not have to be specialists in education; instead, much of the role is the inquisitiveness to question and analyse; and the willingness to learn. You will be expected to get to know the school through visits, attending events and meeting the staff and students. You also need enthusiasm, commitment and a little spare time.

The local governors work with school leaders to deliver the best education for pupils at our schools and ensure they are nurtured and cared for in a safe environment. We look at a diverse range of matters - from deciding what kind of schools we want to be and thinking about how we want to get there; to setting school priorities and ensuring they are delivered. The Local Governing Body meets every term, currently virtually, to discuss these matters and in turn are accountable to the Board of Trustees. To help local governors in their role you will receive:

- Induction training – to welcome and introduce you to the role of Local Governing Body
- An ongoing programme of training.
- Support and guidance from other members of your governing board (such as a 'buddy')

THE TRUST ACTIVELY ENCOURAGES VOLUNTEERS FROM A BAME BACKGROUND.

If you would be interested in having an informal chat to find out more about how you can contribute to governance, please email your details to:

governance@compassacademytrust.org. Joyce Munro, Governance Manager, will be glad to contact you to arrange an informal conversation.

3. Bromley Borough Foodbank (BBF) is recruiting new Trustees

At BBF, we've been helping those facing food poverty in our local community for over 10 years. It's a big job and it requires lots of volunteers in a wide variety of roles. One of those roles is as a Trustee: we have five and are looking to recruit two more. We hope that one of them might have HR experience, but don't let that stop you applying if you have other attributes that might interest us. For instance, we could learn a lot from a Trustee who has been helped by BBF or another Foodbank.

What you would do as a Trustee:

- As a team: you would sit on our "Trustee Board", which provides strategic direction and oversight for all BBF activities and works to ensure that BBF is properly run.
- At an individual level: you would also be asked to take responsibility for particular aspects of BBF's operations, getting to know what is happening and providing guidance and support in those areas.
- Time commitment: the Trustee Board meets every other month, with one awayday and some training each year in addition to the AGM. The time commitment for your individual responsibilities as a Trustee would be tailored to fit your circumstances.

What we are looking for in our Trustees

- A blend of different skills and experience: we want people from different backgrounds with a wide range of talents to bring to bear in their Trustee role.
- A willingness to learn: we don't require Trustees to have previous experience of being a trustee or to understand the legal responsibilities and liabilities it entails; we can help you learn about them and the other aspects of your role as a Trustee.
- Diversity: we would like our Trustee Board to reflect the ethnic, gender and other diversity of our clients and the staff and volunteers who work for us.
- Supportive of our ethos: we require each of our Trustees to be supportive of our collective Trustee Board responsibility to maintain BBF's Christian identity and ethos.
- Commitment: to be a Trustee you need to be committed to BBF and its aims, to devote the necessary time and effort to fulfil your responsibilities and to work well as part of a cheerful and dynamic team.

Interested? please contact Simon Lees, Chair of Trustees, at

accounts@bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk or 07768 175377

Collect

Eternal God, whose Son went among the crowds and brought healing with his touch: help us to show his love, in your Church as we gather together, and by our lives as they are transformed into the image of Christ our Lord.

First Reading:**Deuteronomy 10:17-19**

¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, ¹⁸ who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. ¹⁹ You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Gospel Reading: Mark 7:24-30

²⁴ From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵ but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁸ But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'

²⁹ Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' ³⁰ So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father,
who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life,
that those who come to him should never hunger:
draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom,
where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

Over the past couple of years, we’ve had a number of sessions on inclusivity, the first of which was to do with race, as it was at the time of the Black Lives Matter protests in May 2020. However, these sessions are only part of what being an inclusive church is. Each of the topics need to become an integral part of our culture. So, let’s see where we are on our culture in relation to race.

Well, if we look at culture in our wider society, last year, we celebrated England being inclusive and our national football team working well together. Then three penalties were missed, and racism was obvious on social media.

Did we cover this in our churches? – we might have had a note in the prayer pointers and intercessions, but nothing more.

How about the culture in the wider church?

In 2020, Augustine Tanner-Ihm, an ordinand in the Church of England, won a competition with his sermon on theology and race, which you’d think was a good thing – that this was the topic which was highlighted by the competition. However, the exclusion that he had recently experienced did not show the church in a very inclusive light.

Here's a link to the full video of his sermon: www.youtube.com/watch?v=16n-caBhFIQ&t=276s

And it’s still unusual to see black faces in leadership in the church: last month two more UK Minority Ethnic (UKME) bishops were consecrated, but that still brings the total to just 7 (out of 111 – 6%). You might say that is representative of our congregations where 7% are UKME. However, both these statistics are not reflective of the whole UK population, where 14% are UKME. I wonder if this acts as a barrier to more minority ethnic people joining our churches.

General Synod met earlier this week and received an update on a report on racism – “From Lament to Action” – which was published in 2021. Lord Boateng, Chair of the Archbishops’ Commission on Racial Justice, told General Synod members that it was ‘chilling’, ‘wounding’ and a ‘scandal’ that there had been no action on a long list of recommendations over the years to tackle racial injustice in the Church of England.

The theme this year for Racial Justice Sunday is: What’s it got to do with me? We might say that, although there are racial justice issues in the wider church and in specific churches, in our church, we welcome everyone. Yes, we may be welcoming on the face

of things, but let's ask ourselves, why is this the first time we've had a Racial Justice Sunday? Let's look a bit more deeply at why inaction on racial justice is wrong and what's this got to do with me?

Our reading from Deuteronomy shows us that God has a preference for the vulnerable and the stranger (or anyone from a minority background). This is not because they are less, but because God wants us all to be equal in his kingdom. It is not about us going out to help those who are vulnerable or part of a minority, but about including them in our community. And this isn't a matter of saying 'Your welcome here', but more about finding those who are missing from our community, getting to know them and including them, maybe by changing what we do as a community.

In this reading the Israelites are told to remember what it was like when they were in Egypt. I wonder when it was that you last moved house. Can you remember what it was like to have increased alertness to what it means to be accepted in a place? You might have wanted to find a church where you were welcome. You might have tried to meet all your neighbours to find out what you might have in common with them. If you haven't moved home, or you've only gone a short distance, imagine what it would be like if you were experiencing a completely different culture, where you weren't surrounded by any of your own family members.

As Christians, we are asked by God to welcome the stranger, to celebrate our diversity and to highlight where someone is not being included or is being disadvantaged. This is known as the three R's of Racial Justice:

- **Remembering:** the importance of Racial Justice.
- **Reflecting:** on human diversity and thanking God for it.
- **Responding:** to end injustice, racism and ignorance, through action and prayer.

Racial justice is not about not being racist. Without the last of those three Rs, we have a silence and this equates to an acceptance of a situation, whether that be that there are others who are racist who will hurt people in a minority, or that we are happy to retain a lack of knowledge about what's happening ourselves. Instead, racial justice is about actively countering and opposing anything in our culture that prevents another from being understood and accepted.

So, what does racial justice have to do with me? As a Christian, it has everything to do with me. Wherever there is an injustice, we need to be highlighting this and doing something to reveal it and transform the situation. Rather than not being racist we

need to be anti-racist. Last year the Diocese of Southwark adopted an anti-racism charter. Here is a link to where you can find an electronic copy: www.southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/faith-in-action/justice-peace-and-integrity-of-creation/antiracism/. Do read it, so that you too can gain more of an idea of why racial justice is important to each one of us as Christians and what we can do about it.

A table is an important image for our faith – it's one of hospitality, a place of friendship and of welcome. So, the image of a table where children are eating and dogs are underneath the table, eating any crumbs that are dropped, is one that we can readily understand as an image where those thought of as dogs are most definitely not as welcome as those sitting at the table.

In our gospel reading the Syrophenician woman had heard something about Jesus and, even though he didn't want to be bothered, there must have been something about what she'd heard of Jesus that made her feel she could approach him and talk to him. I wonder what that was. I think it was something about him being prepared to listen to her and, when his error was pointed out, accepting that he wasn't acting appropriately.

To begin with, Jesus was being racist. He wasn't welcoming the woman because she was different to those that he was ministering to. However, Jesus was prepared to listen to the woman and change what he thought and his behaviour when he understood more about the impact which he was having on her.

Are we prepared to listen? Are we prepared to accommodate others who are maybe looking for something a bit different to what we would normally be providing? This is not a welcome on our terms, but on the terms of the person being welcomed. Is ours a community where everyone feels able to pitch in?

Is church a matter of being a community where worship is done in our way, where God is clearly white (and probably male) or are we able to talk to others who do not share our theology or our way of doing things, and so break down the dividing wall which means that they may not even think of coming into the place where we are because they feel they wouldn't be listened to.

Christ is for all. This is radical theology, because it requires us to actively look for those who are currently excluded and go out and listen to them to find out what it is that they are searching for.

I'd like to finish with a quote from the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family.

Prayer Pointers

Pray that through the teaching of Jesus, we may be blessed to be Jesus to each other within our church fellowship, to our friends and relatives, and to our local community. Thank God for those who, through their words and their hands have been like Jesus to us during times of difficulty.

As we think about Valentine's Day this week, pray for all those we know who are in loving relationships – those who have committed themselves to each other in love and tenderness. Pray for those in abusive relationships, deprived of love by those around them.

Pray for all who govern and guide. For the government of our country today. Pray that politicians may unite to lead us forward through the economic and health consequences of the pandemic.

Pray for all who are in need of your hand at this time. For those in hospital, and all waiting treatment caught up in the NHS backlog of appointments and operations. Those mourning loved ones.

For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce, Carole Hubbard, and Robert Davis. For all recovering and convalescing from treatment - that they may have patience and be ready to accept help from others as they heal.

God of justice, who rejoices in your creation and the beauty of our diversity, give us a passion to live well, with respect for all, with delight in difference, with commitment to inclusion, and with hope for our future in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Prayer written by Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark Cathedral for Racial Justice Sunday)