

## ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM

### 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021: Mothering Sunday

#### Hazel writes:

After the on-line service finishes this week, the flowers which were blessed during the service, will be available for distribution outside both church buildings from 11am. We will have celebrated caring for each other, so if you know of someone who is on their own or has family some distance away and will therefore not be able to see them this Mothering Sunday, do come and collect a bunch of daffodils for them to show God's care for all.

Next Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> March there will be an on-line **service of Holy Communion** which will premiere at 10am.

St Francis' Church will be **open for private prayer** on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March from 10.30-11.30am. There may be some music played from 11am, but otherwise, this will be a quiet time.

**Resources and updates for the week ahead** – This week our service will premiere at 10am and will be available to view afterwards. All other files 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](http://www.churchofengland.org).
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 – A service led by Rev. Cheryl Meban and Helen Wornock.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from the Chapel of Kings College, Cambridge.
  - On BBC 1: Sunday Worship at 11.15 a.m. - Rev. Kate Bottley introduces a church service to celebrate Mothering Sunday.
  - Songs of Praise **on BBC2 at 1.15 p.m.** – Brenda Edwards visits a church in Stockport finding new ways to celebrate Mothering Sunday.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they need UHT Milk, Tinned Potatoes, Tinned Vegetables (particularly carrots), Long life Fruit juice, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Fish, Tinned Cold meat, Toilet Rolls. Please do not bring any fresh food, as the foodbank cannot pass this on. The Foodbank has been incredibly

heartened by the generosity of Bromley Borough residents over the last year. They are always grateful for donations but are currently preparing to downsize the warehouse and so would be very thankful for financial giving instead during this current crisis. If this is something you would like to do, you can donate money here:

<https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>. Thank you for your continuing support.

We are currently compiling the magazines for April/May. If you have any stories to be included in either of the church magazines (for example what Christmas at home was like, how children have felt going back to school, poetry you've written, jokes, favourite verses, etc.), please send these to Gifty Northey ([office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk](mailto:office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk)) for St Mary's and Margaret Green ([magletitiagreen@hotmail.com](mailto:magletitiagreen@hotmail.com)) for St Francis'.

As we look to support our community as we come out of lockdown, I am grateful to those who have knitted or crocheted some more forget-me-nots for our **bereavement support bags**. These will be especially helpful in the months ahead. If you would like a bag to give to someone that you know who has lost a loved one, do let me know. *Hazel*

After Easter both of our churches will hold their annual meetings, when we will report on the year past and look forward to the year ahead. We will be looking for **new PCC members** in both churches and want to include more people in guiding and shaping what we do. If you'd like a greater insight to how our churches run, do talk to one of the current members about the role and consider whether it's something you'd be interested in taking on.

The **census** is taking place on 21 March 2021. It's a survey that happens every 10 years and gives a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. It helps plan and fund public services, like transport, education and healthcare. We have been asked by the Census Engagement Manager in Bromley to promote awareness of the census which everyone should complete. You can find out more at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk).

**Christian Aid Week** this year is from 10-16<sup>th</sup> May and focusses on Climate Justice. We will not have a door-to-door collection, but (physical and virtual) envelopes can be given to friends and neighbours and there will be a collection point noted. We will focus on Christian Aid at our service on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May. Carol Hubbard has stepped down as our representative at St Mary's and Anita Curtis from St Francis' will be unable to co-ordinate our efforts this year. If we are to contribute to Churches Together in West Wickham in this respect and record how much we raise, we will need to have someone else as our representative. If anyone is interested in finding out more (and the role need include

only those aspects which someone is able to take on), please contact either Anita Curtis on 8777-5973 ([john.curtis23@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.curtis23@ntlworld.com)) or Hazel.

**Macmillan Coffee Morning.** We have received an acknowledgement for the £621 we raised in September for Macmillan. They expressed their thanks to all who were involved in raising this amazing amount. **If there is anyone who would like to organise the event in September 2021 please let me know. Merri Womack 8777 8772.**

Each week our “**coffee/tea & chat**” on Thursday at 2.30 pm is an opportunity to share with others. It is just 40 minutes and you don’t need to commit to joining each week. Please let Rowena ([rowena.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:rowena.griff19@btinternet.com) /020 8777 6112) know if you would like the log-in details.

We are planning (subject to PCC approval) to **re-open the church buildings for public worship during Holy Week.** The services will follow the same pattern as before with an 8am and 10am service on a Sunday (with the exception of Easter Sunday, when we will have a 9.15am and 10.45am service) as well as other services during Holy Week, so that we can mark that time in a way which was not possible last year. The restrictions associated with social distancing, wearing a face mask and no singing or socialising indoors will continue to be in place. There will continue to be an on-line provision of our Sunday services for the foreseeable future and during Holy Week Churches Together in West Wickham will provide a daily bible reading, reflection and prayer.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl [bbolton@ntlworld.com](mailto:bbolton@ntlworld.com) and items for the websites to [brian.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:brian.griff19@btinternet.com) or Gifty [office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk](mailto:office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk)

**Collect**

God of love,  
passionate and strong,  
tender and careful:  
watch over us and hold us  
all the days of our life;  
through Jesus Christ our  
Lord.

**Opening Prayer**

Wherever we are, we live in  
God`s family.

When our families are  
broken by circumstances  
and pain, he reaches out to  
hold us in his arms - piece  
by piece, he makes us  
whole again, and in his love-  
filled hands we are  
transformed.

So, Lord help us to build  
relationships, in all the  
corners of our hearts.  
To be like you, to love like  
you, to heal brokenness and  
restore wholeness in  
families worldwide. Amen.

**Bible Reading: Exodus 2:1-10**

There were at this time a  
Hebrew fellow and girl of  
the tribe of Levi who  
married and had a family,  
and a baby son was born to  
them. When the baby`s  
mother saw that he was an

unusually beautiful baby,  
she hid him at home for  
three months. Then, when  
she could no longer hide  
him, she made a little boat  
from papyrus reeds,  
waterproofed it with tar,  
put the baby in it, and laid it  
among the reeds along the  
river`s edge. The baby`s  
sister watched from a  
distance to see what would  
happen to him.

Well, this is what  
happened: A princess, one  
of Pharaoh`s daughters,  
came down to bathe in the  
river, and as she and her  
maids were walking along  
the riverbank, she spied the  
little boat among the reeds  
and sent one of the maids  
to bring it to her. When she  
opened it, there was a  
baby! And he was crying.  
This touched her heart. "He  
must be one of the Hebrew  
children!" she said.

Then the baby`s sister  
approached the princess  
and asked her, "Shall I go  
and find one of the Hebrew  
women to nurse the baby  
for you?"

"Yes, do!" the princess  
replied. So the little girl  
rushed home and called her  
mother!

"Take this child home and  
nurse him for me," the  
princess instructed the  
baby`s mother, "and I will  
pay you well!" So she took  
him home and nursed him.

Later, when he was older,  
she brought him back to the  
princess and he became her  
son. She named him Moses  
(meaning "to draw out")  
because she had drawn him  
out of the water.

**Closing Prayer**

God of compassion, whose  
Son Jesus Christ, the child of  
Mary, shared the life of a  
home in Nazareth, and on  
the cross drew the whole  
human family to himself:  
strengthen us in our daily  
living, that in joy and  
sorrow we may know the  
power of your presence to  
bind us together and to  
heal; through Jesus Christ  
our Lord, who is alive and  
reigns with you, in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit, one God,  
now and forever. Amen.

## Sermon: Mothering Sunday - Brian Griffiths

*This is a summarised version in bullet point format of two talks that will be included in the on-line service on Sunday morning.*

- In order to fully understand the bible reading from Exodus, we need to go back to the Book of Genesis and the story of how Joseph (he of the coat of many colours) came to be a top official in the Egyptian court and how his family came to settle in Egypt. The people of Israel grew strong and numerous in the land. Unfortunately, a new Pharaoh came to power in Egypt and new nothing of Joseph. This new Pharaoh was concerned that the Hebrews were becoming too powerful and that they might turn against the Egyptians or side with their enemies in the future. So, he enforced slavery on the Hebrews to crush their spirits.
- Still Pharaoh was afraid of the power of the Hebrews, so he ordered the midwives helping the women giving birth to kill the baby boys but let the baby girls live. The midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, bravely defied this order using the excuse that the Hebrew women were giving birth too quickly – before they arrived. So, Pharaoh ordered every new-born Hebrew baby boy to be thrown into the River Nile.
- There is quite a parallel here with what happened around the birth of Jesus. We remember how Herod ordered his soldiers to kill every baby boy under two years old – the Holy Innocents – because there was a threat to his power and authority. It's also worth noting how Egypt was a place of danger for infant boys at the time of Moses and yet it was a place of safety for the infant Jesus.
- Moses was born into a time of chaos and cruelty. His mother hid him for three months and then decided to make a wicker basket, place Moses in it and float the basket in the reeds at the edge of the river. Pharaoh's daughter discovers Moses in the basket as he was crying so she lifts him out and takes pity on this young child. Moses' sister was watching this at a distance and asks Pharaoh's daughter if she needs someone to nurse Moses. She goes and fetches Moses' mother. So Moses is brought up in the Egyptian palace – adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Pharaoh's daughter chooses the name Moses for the child as it means 'brought up' – he was brought up out of the water.
- Even in that difficult time Moses' family found a way to cope. No-one can deny that since last Mothering Sunday we have had a difficult year. Yet, we have found ways to cope and get through the pandemic. Different people have had to take on new roles, especially in parenting, home schooling, child-care. We have

had to 'bubble up'. We have had to use new technology to keep in touch with family and friends.

- This is not an entirely new concept – for many immigrant children sent to this country when mothers and fathers stayed behind, aunties and uncles have had to take on the roles of mother and father.
- So, what have we done in St Mary's and St Francis' to overcome the difficulties of the past year? How have we cared for each other? We have realised that each and every one of us has a role to play in caring – keeping our congregation together. The parish has been divided up into groups and people assigned to keep in touch with each group. The 'Coffee and Chat' started some months ago on Thursday afternoons over 'Zoom' and this has been a literal lifeline for those shielding or housebound during the pandemic. This is for both St Mary's and St Francis' and it is a great opportunity to socialise with each other and maybe get to know members from the other congregation better.
- On the day when we remember how people care for each other and when we see an example from the Bible of how different people took on varied roles in caring and nurturing Moses, let us thank God for all those who have shown us care during this most difficult of years. We especially thank God for the way our congregation has been kept together and the loving care that we have shown each other. Let us pray that this caring will continue long after the lockdowns end and the pandemic is over.

### **Prayer Pointers**

Lord on this Special Day as we celebrate Mothering Sunday, we remember those who also nurture and care for others.

We give thanks for all Mothers around the world. We are grateful that you chose to give us life through them, and that they received the gift of life from you and gave it to us. Thank you for the sacrifices they have made as we honour and remember them today.

We give thanks for Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Sisters and Brothers, and all those during this difficult time who have been part of support bubbles nurturing and caring for families and children.

We give thanks for all carers and medical staff who care for the lonely, sick and dying during the pandemic. May they be strengthened and protected by your love.

We give thanks for teachers and school support staff for working under difficult circumstances and adapting to new ways of teaching through remote learning, while continuing to provide support and care for vulnerable children in schools. As most children return to school this week, we pray that teachers and pupils will feel safe, cared for and supported in this environment.

We give thanks for all who volunteer to care for those in need in our communities through charitable organisations, such as foodbanks, bereavement groups and befriending services and the essential delivery of food during the pandemic. We especially give thanks for all the volunteers and support staff working in vaccination centres, hospitals and GP surgeries.

Lord God we give thanks for the support and care of our church family during this challenging time. May we all continue to grow together in faith and look forward to a positive future with renewed energy and hope.

Father God, we remember those as we celebrate Mothering Sunday who are separated from their own families: the lonely, the sick and those who live with families in challenging circumstances. We pray for those who have never known their mothers or who have a difficult relationship with their mothers. May they be blessed and comforted by your love.

Lord we especially pray for mothers in other countries who raise their children in places where there is war, famine, terrorism and great uncertainty increased by the global pandemic, meaning they lack the basic resources and live in poverty. We pray for Mothers who have had to flee conflict to a different country, or who live far from their homes and their relatives where there is a greater reliance on extended families for support and care.

We remember those who mourn the loss of their mothers and pray that they will be comforted and surrounded by your love at this difficult time.

**Holy Father, thank you for being a nurturing God who loves us unconditionally and for teaching us to care, love and support others in our families and communities during this challenging time.**

**Amen**