

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

14<sup>th</sup> May 2023: 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter/Christian Aid Week

### Hazel writes:

Two events this week have illustrated both of our churches at their best and what is possible when we work together with others.

**Community and Congregation:** It was great to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III in our special joint service of Holy Communion, with a reception and lunch afterwards. Thanks to those who helped in decorating the space and in the catering.

**Compassion, Community and Commerce:** The fundraising concert at St Francis' organised by St John's raised well over £3,000 for the Christian Aid Emergency Appeal for Turkey and Syria. It showed what is possible for concerts at St Francis' and brought new people from our community into the church building. Thanks to those who helped in the set-up, take down and providing refreshments.

This week we have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St Francis' Church and non-eucharistic services for Christian Aid Week at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church. The St. Francis APCM follows the 10.45 a.m. service. Do come along and join us.

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May it is **Ascension Day** and there is a Deanery-wide service of Holy Communion being held at St George's Church in Shirley at 7.30pm.

Next **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May**, 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 in St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am.

**Resources and updates for the week ahead** – Each week our service is livestreamed on YouTube at 10am or before. All other files for this week have been combined and included in this pew sheet which will be sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line.

Our next **Women's Event** is on Tuesday May 16<sup>th</sup> at 8pm in St Mary's Church Hall. As this is during Christian Aid week, we will be doing a follow up from our service on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> with a discussion on the video and a fun, pea-themed quiz. We will also be sharing in pea soup and other refreshments during the evening.

This week sees the start of 11 days of prayer, known as **Thy Kingdom Come**. There are some booklets in the churches to help you in prayer during this time. Thy Kingdom Come ends on Pentecost Sunday when we will join with other churches in West Wickham for a service and the Churches Together AGM in West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church on Sunday 28th May at 6pm. As a follow up to this time, Hazel will be holding a **prayer event** on Sat 10th June from 10am to 12noon at St Mary's. This will be a time to explore different types of prayer as well as to get feedback on her sabbatical last November.

**Piano Recital and Afternoon Tea** – Saturday 20th May We are hosting a piano recital with Nicholas Austin followed by afternoon tea at St. Francis Church on Saturday 20th May. Timings are: 2.00 - 2.45 pm piano recital with Nicholas Austin and afternoon tea from 2.45 pm - 4.00 pm. Tickets are £6 and if you would like to come along, please email Nicky Nightingale on [nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) to reserve a ticket. Many thanks.

We are having a fundraising **film night** for Christian Aid on Tuesday 23rd May in St Mary's Church. Come and enjoy a comedy that points to God having a great sense of humour. Drinks and snacks will be available from 7.15pm and we will start the film at 7.30pm.

**Nina Tilling's funeral service** will be in St Francis' Church at 2.15pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May, with refreshments afterwards in the North Aisle.

Spring means a new season of **lunchtime concerts** to be held at St. Francis church. The first is a piano recital of varied music given by a newcomer to us, Kwanyee Chan, and I'm sure we can give her a warm welcome. She will be playing on Thursday 25th May, from 12.45 pm, and as usual tea and coffee will be available beforehand. Please note the date and bring along a friend!

**The Matchbox** is back and will be presenting *Amy's View* by David Hare on June 8th, 9th & 10th. *Amy's View* takes the audience on a tense and emotional journey between a strong mother and her loving daughter who finds herself caught between a mother she adores, but who also represents the past, and Dominic, the problematic love of her life and questionable symbol of the future. Throughout the play there is a running argument about the value of the arts which becomes inextricably bound up with marital relations, love, fidelity, and integrity. We recommend you use Ticket Source to book your tickets: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-matchbox-theatre>, although you can also telephone the box office (0845 6804568).

Rotary want help **making hats for babies** in Ukraine (please use cotton or acrylic, not wool). If you'd like more information, please email [babyhats@sent.com](mailto:babyhats@sent.com) (including links to possible knitting or crochet patterns).

From Wednesday April 5th **our Warm Space at St Francis'** will only be opening on the **1st Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-1pm**. Thank you to Marion and Theresa for volunteering to do this. If anyone else is willing and available to take on regularly opening the Warm Space on another Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-1pm please get in touch with Kate ([katedyer41@hotmail.com](mailto:katedyer41@hotmail.com) or 07808 468591) or with Marion Barry ([whitelandm@yahoo.com](mailto:whitelandm@yahoo.com) or 020 87771470).

**St. Mary's Garden Party** is on **Saturday 17th June**. Please would all gardeners start to sow seeds/cuttings etc. This would be much appreciated. Thanks.

**St. Mary's** are needing someone to take over **hall bookings** from Jackie Greatorex as she wishes to retire from the post after 13 years. If you think you might be able to help with this, please get in touch with Jackie on [jackiegreatorex@googlemail.com](mailto:jackiegreatorex@googlemail.com) as soon as possible to find out more what is required. Jackie is still prepared to do any purchasing for the hall but needs to hand over the administration of all hall bookings. This is 95% of the time a home based position working with the computer. There is a team of volunteers to do locking and unlocking of the hall. Please give this serious thought as this is a very important position for our church as the hall provides much needed finances.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require squash/cordial, cooking sauce, cold meat tins, canned tomatoes, UHT fruit juice, desserts and washing up liquid. They have plenty of cereal, tea and biscuits. Please do not bring any fresh or frozen 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.

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](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.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**

Risen Christ,  
by the lakeside you  
renewed your call to  
your disciples: help  
your Church to obey  
your command  
and draw the nations to  
the fire of your love,  
to the glory of God the  
Father.

**First Reading:**

**Joel 1:10-12, 2:18-19,  
26-29**

The fields are  
devastated, the ground  
mourns;  
for the grain is  
destroyed, the wine  
dries up, the oil fails.

<sup>11</sup> Be dismayed, you  
farmers, wail, you vine-  
dressers, over the wheat  
and the barley;  
for the crops of the field  
are ruined.

<sup>12</sup> The vine withers, the  
fig tree droops.  
Pomegranate, palm, and  
apple— all the trees of  
the field are dried up;

surely, joy withers  
away among the people.

Then the LORD became  
jealous for his land, and  
had pity on his people.

<sup>19</sup> In response to his  
people the LORD said: I  
am sending you grain,  
wine, and oil, and you  
will be satisfied; and I  
will no more make you a  
mockery among the  
nations.

<sup>26</sup> You shall eat in plenty  
and be satisfied, and  
praise the name of  
the LORD your God,  
who has dealt  
wondrously with you.  
And my people shall  
never again be put to  
shame.

<sup>27</sup> You shall know that I  
am in the midst of  
Israel,  
and that I, the LORD, am  
your God and there is  
no other.

And my people shall

never again be put to  
shame.

<sup>28</sup> Then afterwards I will  
pour out my spirit on all  
flesh;  
your sons and your  
daughters shall  
prophesy, your old men  
shall dream dreams, and  
your young men shall  
see visions.

<sup>29</sup> Even on the male and  
female slaves, in those  
days, I will pour out my  
spirit.

**Gospel Reading:**

**John 6: 25-27, 32-35,  
44-51**

<sup>25</sup> When they found him  
on the other side of the  
lake, they said to him,  
'Rabbi, when did you  
come here?' <sup>26</sup> Jesus  
answered them, 'Very  
truly, I tell you, you are  
looking for me, not  
because you saw signs,  
but because you ate  
your fill of the  
loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not work

for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.'

<sup>32</sup> Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' <sup>34</sup> They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

<sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. <sup>47</sup> Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

### **Post Communion Prayer**

God our Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ  
gives the water of  
eternal life: may we  
thirst for you,  
the spring of life and  
source of goodness,  
through him who is  
alive and reigns, now  
and for ever.

## REFLECTION – Ken Bryan

Today marks the beginning of Christian Aid week. Here is one story of how people can be helped by Christian Aid. It is about Esther Saizi and her family who live on a small farm in Malawi, which is a country in south-east Africa.

When Esther's husband died she struggled. She took a long time to recover but did with the help of people from the local church who came to pray with her together with her neighbours and friends who cheered her up.

She has two grown up daughters and two small grandsons Nespo and baby Emmanuel. In 2019 she joined a project called the Nandolo Farmers Association. Esther grows on her farm something I had never heard of before and that is pigeon peas.

Pigeon peas are a darker green than garden peas and are less sweet and more starchy. They are really a small bean, and they turn a brown colour when cooked. But they are very nutritious, and their high potassium content helps with blood pressure, prevents anaemia, and helps heart conditions.

The Farmer's Association working with Christian Aid helped Esther to increase her harvest which was then sold collectively. They have also helped them to secure a fairer price for their crop by by-passing the unscrupulous middlemen.

The farmers wanted to develop their bread making using their pigeon peas. They were helped to buy a simple wood-burning bread oven and soon their delicious bread buns were snapped up by young and old alike.

The women have now even produced a simple pigeon pea recipe book.

This means that Esther has money to help send Nespo to school and to buy the tools that her daughter, Ziwone, needed to become what she always wanted to be - a carpenter.

And in times of disasters such as the recent devastating Cyclone Freddy which lasted for thirty-four days causing extensive flooding and damage, Christian Aid was there helping them get back on their feet; repairing damage, bringing new seed and getting the farms productive again and they will continue to be with them when needed.

There are echoes of the struggle that farmers have in the Old Testament passage from Joel when he talks of 'The fields are devastated, the ground mourns; for the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil fails. Be dismayed, you farmers, wail, you vine-dressers, over the wheat and the barley; for the crops of the field are ruined. Yet 'in

response to his people the LORD said: You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the LORD your God.'

These could be also talking about our current climate crisis and all the problems that come out of that with floods and droughts. They are called to not let fear win but turn to God. This passage reminds us that God created the world for good and we steward and serve creation and each other. We can give thanks in our prayers for them. It is a practical way in which we can remind Esther and the communities she represents that they are not alone. We stand with them and commit ourselves to work for the world that God wants. That is the hope that unites us and to which we bear witness.

In our reading from John's gospel the crowd have come from being part of the 5,000 who were fed on the hillside. They have seen the sign and concentrated on that. Jesus is saying that the feeding is not an end in itself. They should look beyond that as to why they were fed and by whom. Jesus reminded them that the Israelites had been fed with manna from heaven during their years in the wilderness with Moses and then entered the promised land. But he said that was pointing towards the new gift that God was going to give them, the new food that the Son of Man will give them, which is Jesus himself. They must now understand that the feeding was a sign pointing to Jesus and there is no need of further signs. They must now believe in the one sent by God. If they do, they will be fed spiritually and will not need to be fed again to receive eternal life. That eternal life which is the new life that is beginning with the coming of Jesus.

Jesus breaks into our world now when we love each other, when we share our bread, when we put the needs of the world ahead of our temporal wants. We must stand with Jesus and by our actions prove our love for him, for our earth and for all who live on it.

Esther's story is one of transformation and hope. Her story reflects how she coped with bereavement, how she faced overwhelming challenges and how her faith gives her the courage to hope. She says: 'When my husband passed away, it was a difficult period because I was heartbroken by his passing. Eventually as I knelt down and prayed to God, I knew that he was with him, and I had to move forward.'

As Esther came to terms with her grief after 39 years of a happy marriage, she experienced the transformative love of God in practical and tangible ways. She was helped in her sadness by the comforting support of her community and the financial protection she got from being a member of the farming collective set up by Christian Aid. The resilience of her pigeon pea crop reflects her faith and persistence.

In every generation and in every place, people are called to take practical action to join with God to build a better world. Esther and her family are part of that. We too are called to join that work and through our prayers, gifts and actions to support the work of Christian Aid. When we do we become part of that transformation.

## **Prayer Pointers**

***Prayer for Christian Aid Week:*** In all we do let us show the love of Jesus. Let us treat everyone with dignity. Let us stand up for equality. Let us fight for justice. May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we, and those who experience poverty may overflow with hope.

In the Southwark Diocesan Prayer Cycle, pray for the congregation of The Ascension, Pollards Hill – their Vicar, Jenny Thomas and their Curate, Pamela Stevenson. Pray for all giving and collecting for the work of Christian Aid this week.

Pray for all in our community who give and reach out to others of all ages: in youth groups, luncheon clubs, sports activities, visiting the lonely and many, many other ways. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that our communities will unite, see less crime and grow abundantly richer in you.

Pray for all the nations of your world. Pray for Sudan, where thousands of people are undertaking long, dangerous journeys in a bid to flee to neighbouring countries. Pray for Afghanistan where the hospitals lack the necessary equipment and medical supplies. Pray for peace in Ukraine.

This week is Mental Health Awareness week. Many at this moment in time are stressed, anxious about jobs and making ends meet with the spiralling costs of food and bills. But for some the emotional pressure can have a detrimental effect on their physical health and impact their way of life. Pray these people will reach out for professional help and that the stigma some still experience with mental health and behavioural health problems finally be abolished.

Pray for those who are in particular need of your comfort and sustaining love right now. Pray for those who are ill, in sadness or in confusion. In our congregations pray for these by name – Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Joan Mountain and James Pitt-Payne – and those known to God alone.



Hold before God all those who have died. Pray especially for Peter & Nina Tilling, Robbie Georgel, Pam Faull, George Verwer and Mike East and their families. Remember also Martin Rees who died suddenly on Friday and pray for his wife, Kati, sons Daniel and Nathan and sister, Sarah.