

## REGULAR SERVICES

### SUNDAY

- 8.00 am Holy Communion**  
1st & 3rd Sundays at St Mary's Church, The Avenue  
2nd Sundays at St Francis' Church  
*4th & 5th Sundays vary – See calendar for details*
- 10.45 am Parish Communion**  
Activities for- r younger children (aged 3+) and crèche facilities in church
- 10.45 am 2nd Sunday – Worship for All Ages (non-Eucharistic)**
- 10.00 am Last Sunday – Joint Communion Service**  
with St Mary's, held alternately at each church  
*See calendar for details*

### TUESDAY

- 8.00 am Morning Prayer at St Mary's**

### WEDNESDAY

- 9.30 am Morning Prayer**  
**10.45 am Holy Communion**

### THURSDAY

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer**

### FRIDAY

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at St Mary's**

### SATURDAY

- 9.00 am - 10.00 am Church open for quiet and prayer**

## DECEMBER 2019

### **Sunday 1 December – Advent Sunday**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion at St Mary's – Hazel O'Sullivan**  
Preacher: Ken Bryan
- 10.45 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan**  
Preacher: Brian Griffiths

### **Sunday 8 December – Advent 2**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford**
- 10.45 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford**

### **Saturday 14 December**

- 11.30 am to 3.30 pm Advent Quiet Day**

- 6.30 pm Scouts' Carols at St Mary's**

### **Sunday 15 December – Advent 3**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion at St Mary's – Hazel O'Sullivan**  
Preacher: Ken Bryan
- 10.45 am Worship for All Ages: Toy Service – Brian Griffiths**  
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

### **Sunday 22 December – Advent 4**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion at St Mary's – Hazel O'Sullivan**
- 10.45 am Holy Communion – Brian Griffiths/Hazel O'Sullivan**  
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan
- 6.00 pm Carol Service – Rowena Griffiths**  
Preacher: Richard Ford

### **Tuesday 24 December – Christmas Eve**

- 6.00 pm Lighting the Lamps – Hazel O'Sullivan**  
Preacher: Brian Griffiths
- 11.15 pm Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan**

### **Wednesday 25 December – Christmas Day**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion at St Mary's – Hazel O'Sullivan**  
Preacher: Richard Ford
- 10.00 am Joint Communion Service – Richard Ford**  
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

### **Sunday 29 December**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford**
- 10.00 am Joint Communion Service at St Mary's – Hazel O'Sullivan**

# JANUARY 2020

***There will be no service on Wednesday 1 January 2020***

## **Sunday 5 January – Epiphany**

8.00 am Holy Communion at **St Mary's** – Richard Ford  
10.45 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford  
Preacher: Brian Griffiths

## **Sunday 12 January – Epiphany 1**

8.00 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan  
10.45 am Worship for All Ages – Brian Griffiths  
Preacher: Ken Bryan

## **Sunday 19 January – Epiphany 2**

8.00 am Holy Communion at **St Mary's** – Hazel O'Sullivan  
10.45 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan/Brian Griffiths  
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

***Week of Prayer for Christian Unity***

## **Sunday 26 January – Epiphany 3**

8.00 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan  
10.00 am Joint Service at **St Mary's** – Richard Ford  
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan  
3.00 pm Healing Service – Lesley East  
Preacher: Rowena Griffiths

## **Every Wednesday**

10.45 am Holy Communion (except 1 January 2020)

## **Parish Prayer Cycle for December & January**

We pray for those who live in:

Sherwood Way; Silver Lane; Southcroft Avenue; Springfield Gardens; Stanford House, High Street; Station Road; Surrey Road; Sussex Road; Tudor Gardens; White House, Dixon Place; Wickham Court Road; Wickham Crescent; Wilmar Gardens, Woodland Way.

In our cycle of prayer for other churches in West Wickham, we pray for Emmanuel Church, who are currently in a period of interregnum. We pray for Rev Bryn Thomas, who is covering many of the services and pastoral support, and for Ian Moore the Secretary, who is facilitating much of the search for a new minister.

Pray for the organisations that benefitted from our harvest donations:

- For the Croydon Refugee Day Centre: that their Tuesday drop-in will continue to provide a friendly, safe meeting place offering practical assistance to all asylum seekers and refugees.
- For Nightwatch: that the volunteers, who are out every night in the centre of Croydon, are able to connect with homeless and other vulnerable people through the provision of food and other support and advice.

Pray for those who are not able to make plans for Christmas, especially those whose lives are victims of domestic abuse. Pray that gifts donated at our Toy Service this year will bring joy to children who are supported by Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid.

Pray for people who are in such desperate situations that they fall prey to the human trafficking network. Pray that victims might find healing, hope and justice and that perpetrators can be stopped, maybe through God speaking directly into their lives.



## *Dear Friends*

We sometimes think of Advent as a time of waiting: waiting for the new-born Christ-child to be remembered at Christmas, as well as waiting for that second coming of Christ. And this year, we have another wait during some of the Advent season – the wait for a new government to be formed.

What we'd like in our new government might be seen in the light of Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus - a Wonderful Counsellor (someone that you might go to for wise words); Mighty God (humbling oneself and recognising that no-one is greater than Him); Everlasting Father (who will protect and care for his people); Prince of Peace (peace in a divided nation will mean thinking of others before ourselves, so that our country is made a better place for all, not just a few people). I wonder if those who form the new government will be able to achieve all these aspirations.

Even if this is not the case, we'll still have those characteristics that we can put into practice in living our own lives in the light of our belief in Jesus as the Son of God. We can look to his words and actions as wisdom, we can worship him in all that we do and say, we can care for the weak and the helpless and we can live as peacemakers at all times. This is a tall order but one that we are called to aspire to as Christians believing in the one who was prophesied:

*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:6*

I wish you and your families a watchful Advent, a blessed Christmas and an aspirational New Year.

*Hazel*

## **Advent Course**

Christmas is so easily focussed on family celebrations and on the day itself, but there's a whole season that leads into this day. 'Walking Backwards to Christmas' is a book retelling of the Christmas story in reverse order, beginning with proud parents Joseph and Mary bringing Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem and following the story back to the prophecies of Isaiah and Moses. Over the following dates in Advent we will use this resource to look at four of these perspectives and bring a fresh light to the Christmas story. These sessions will all run from 2 to 3.30pm on Tuesdays at St Francis' church:

26 November  
3 December  
10 December  
17 December

## **Advent Quiet Day**

Whilst much of your Advent season may be taken up with the practical preparations for Christmas, please don't neglect your spiritual preparation. The quiet hour every Saturday morning from 9.00 am is useful for this purpose, but some like more structure to their quiet time of reflection. An opportunity for this will be provided on Saturday 14 December at St Francis' when prayer stations in the church will be set up between 11.30 am and 3.30 pm. Come along at any time.

## **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

In 2020 the theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is about how we can see God working through people and places which offer unusual kindness. Look out for the details of services based on this material.

*Hazel*

## **Healing Service**

Our next Healing Service will be on Sunday January 26 January at 3.00 pm in St Francis' Church. Please do join us for prayer, a quiet space to be with God and time to reflect on how Christ brings wholeness to our lives.

*Hazel*

## St Francis' Overseas Mission

This year St Francis donated one third of our mission giving (£400) to support the work of the Anglican Eye Clinic in Ghana, and the Convent of The Holy Spirit. Following my recent visit last May, I would like to share with you the difference this gift has made to the lives of one particular family.

Decosta is 27 years old and had been badly injured by falling rocks while working underground. This had resulted in the surgical removal of one of his eyes a few weeks before I met him.

In Ghana, the health and safety of workers is a huge problem as safety equipment and financial compensation is non-existent. However, to make matters worse such an incident is often regarded as a 'taboo' and as such Decosta was considered an outcast by his village. This meant that he would not be able to find work and support his wife and daughter or pay for his treatment.

The work of the mission hospital goes far beyond providing excellent medical care for all who are in need. Under Sr Abbas' leadership, her dedicated team of workers and of course the work of the Holy Spirit, the service provided is truly holistic and individualised.

Decosta was employed by Sr Abba in the convent as a security officer and could not believe that he was so fortunate. Usually, in such cases the patient would only be fitted with a clear glass shell to replace the loss of an eye due to the huge cost of an artificial eye. However, I am delighted to share the recent news from Sr Abba that Decosta has now been fitted with an excellent prosthetic eye which required three visits to an eye hospital in Accra, five hours away. I have permission to display his recent photo on the church noticeboard. I am not going to tell you which eye and wonder if you will be able to guess??

Arrangements are in also in place to find local accommodation for Decosta and work for his wife with his year old daughter Regina. Please remember Decosta and his family in your prayers as he begins his new life in Jachie, Ghana and also the continued work of the clinic

(recently awarded hospital status). There are so many other amazing stories which I experienced during my visit too but space here does not allow!

*Gill Taylor-Ingle*

## Website: [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk)

Now that we are thinking about buying Christmas presents for our family and friends, if you buy on-line, please consider buying via 'easyfundraising'. By using the website, easyfundraising, to make any on-line purchases, our Church will get a commission on your purchases without you paying any more than you would have by going direct to the supplier.

We appreciate that some of you do not have access to the Internet at home, but suggest that you may be able to solicit the help of other Church members or use the computers at the Library.

The procedure is:

1. Login in to: [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)
2. Select our page – St. Francis of Assisi, West Wickham.
3. Select the supplier you want.
4. Continue with your purchase as you would normally.

No record of your transaction is retained by easyfundraising as you have paid your supplier direct. Your supplier pays the commission to easyfundraising, who pay it to us quarterly. Needless to say, the website can be used for other purchases throughout the year, not just for Christmas presents!

*David Wada  
Hon Treasurer*



**Joseph the Carpenter**  
**Sermon Preached on Fathers' Day at St Francis' & St Mary's**

Come back in time with me to a carpenter's shop in a town called Nazareth. The carpenter's name is Joseph.

Welcome to my workshop. I've always been a carpenter – learned my trade from my father. He taught me well – measure twice, cut once – the golden rule for all carpenters. I've always had a lot of trade through this shop – making doors, windows, chairs, tables – you name it and I'll make it. The money's not huge, but it's enough to keep a family on.

My life changed when I met Mary. She really was a beautiful young girl. We had so much in common – the same values, the same dream and even the same sense of humour. It was inevitable we would get engaged. All was going well – we were both so looking forward to our wedding day and setting up home together. Then everything changed. Mary told me she was pregnant. I was so angry – the father must have been someone else in the village. What a disgrace – the village gossips had a field day. Mary tried to tell me that a messenger from God had visited her and that her child would be his son. Like I would believe that!!

But then I had a dream – God's messenger spoke to me. It was no daydream – this was for real. I'd always tried to do what's right in life – obey all the religious rules and festivals – but God speaking direct to me? I was told that Mary's baby really was God's son. I was even given his name – Jesus – and that I was not to be afraid to marry Mary. It was such a vivid dream – so real – how could I ignore it? So, we got married and just when Mary was due to give birth, the Romans decided on a tax census. So off we went to Bethlehem my home town. Such a long journey down south. But I was sure God was protecting us. The birth itself was special – shepherds turned up from the hills to worship our baby with strange tales of angels singing in the heavens announcing his birth. Later, some very important and influential men from way out in Persia came to visit with the weirdest gifts – gold, frankincense and myrrh. The gold I could understand – but frankincense and myrrh?

We went to the temple in Jerusalem where two old people had waited years and years to see Jesus. They were so happy when they saw us. Jesus really was special. Then, another dream – another messenger from God – who told me to take Mary and Jesus all the way to Egypt. Here we go again, I thought - another long, difficult journey. Turns out we got out just in time to avoid Herod's cruel soldiers. Somehow, our Jesus was a threat to the king. Strange really, Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt to safety and yet, here we are, our little family, going to Egypt to find safety. We found ourselves migrants in a strange land.

Long story short – another dream! God tells me to take Mary and Jesus back here to Nazareth. Life was just one long journey after another. So, we ended up back where we started – back to doing what I knew best – working in this carpenter's shop. Just as my father taught me, so I began to teach Jesus the basics of woodwork. He was a good learner – picked it up really well – but I always knew that his mind was elsewhere.

Mary and I always observed all the traditional religious festivals – often travelling to Jerusalem to celebrate. Once, when Jesus was 12 years old, we were coming home from the festival – gone at least a day's journey – when we realised Jesus wasn't with our crowd of pilgrims. In a blind panic we rushed back to the city and there he was sitting and debating with the rabbis. You just don't do that at 12 years old. They seemed impressed with him, but I was really, really angry. So, I tore him off a strip. He just dismissed me with 'Don't you know – I should be about my father's business?' Hang on. This is my business – planes, chisels, mallets, rules, drill, nails, hammers, wood. For goodness sake – wood was my business. What's he mean 'My father's business?' Long journeys always give me space and time to think. So on that trek back to Nazareth, I calmed down, I thought about what he said and, of course, the reality is 'He's got two fathers – God and me!' That's so difficult to get my head around and yet, maybe that's true of all of us – we all have two fathers.

Anyway, we crafted away in this workshop together and built up a good reputation for quality work done on time. Business was good. I lost count of how many chairs we mended and how many homes in Nazareth had new doors courtesy of Joseph and Son carpenters!

Then, all of a sudden, he's gone. Gone to do his father's business – to preach, teach, tell people about a new better world. Funny thing is – my guess is wood will still have something to do with it. This workshop feels empty without him here – and that's the hardest thing of all – letting him go.

You know, I really miss him. I don't know what'll happen to him now. He seems to be going around winding up the religious leaders. Some people say he's a revolutionary – others a new prophet – but Mary and I know the truth – he's the Messiah – he's the Son of God. How it will all work out neither of us know, but one thing I am sure of is that God will always be with him. After all, he's his father – what could go wrong? And that's my prayer for him - that God will surround him with his love. Maybe that's the best thing us fathers can do for their children – pray for them all the time.

Ah well – all this musing and reflecting is slowing me down. No work, no money eh? Must get on – let's see if this new leg fits the stool. Thanks for listening to my story. And remember – keep on praying for your children – no matter what.

*Brian Griffiths*



**Bishop Jonathan writes . . . .**

I'm writing this in a hotel room in Beit Sahour, just outside Bethlehem, during the Diocesan youth pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It's a great privilege to be here and to spend time with 20 amazing young people from across the Diocese (and of course some wonderful fellow leaders). I'd like to share with you just one of the experiences of the last few days. Together we walked the Via Dolorosa, the sorrowful path from the site of Pilate's temple to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, the place of Jesus' tomb, and we used the 14 stations of the Cross that are marked out on street corners and walls along the route.

In our reflections, surrounded by the noise and bustle of the Old City, we were not in an isolated spiritual bubble. We were part of the busy and sometimes tense atmosphere which is normal in Jerusalem, and I at least was reminded of the busy and sometimes tense streets of south London — and even East Surrey too, especially for young people. So as we prayed along the steps of Jesus' journey, we prayed for peace and justice for our city and communities. We prayed that we might not turn away from human suffering as Jesus' disciples ran from him. We prayed that we might not collude with injustice in the way that the powers of Jerusalem collaborated in getting rid of this troublesome peasant preacher. We prayed for those who were falling under the weight of their troubles as Jesus fell beneath his cross — falling into drug-taking and drug crime, into violence and despair. Above all we prayed that the death of Jesus might be the means of new and resurrection life for ourselves, for our communities and for our city.

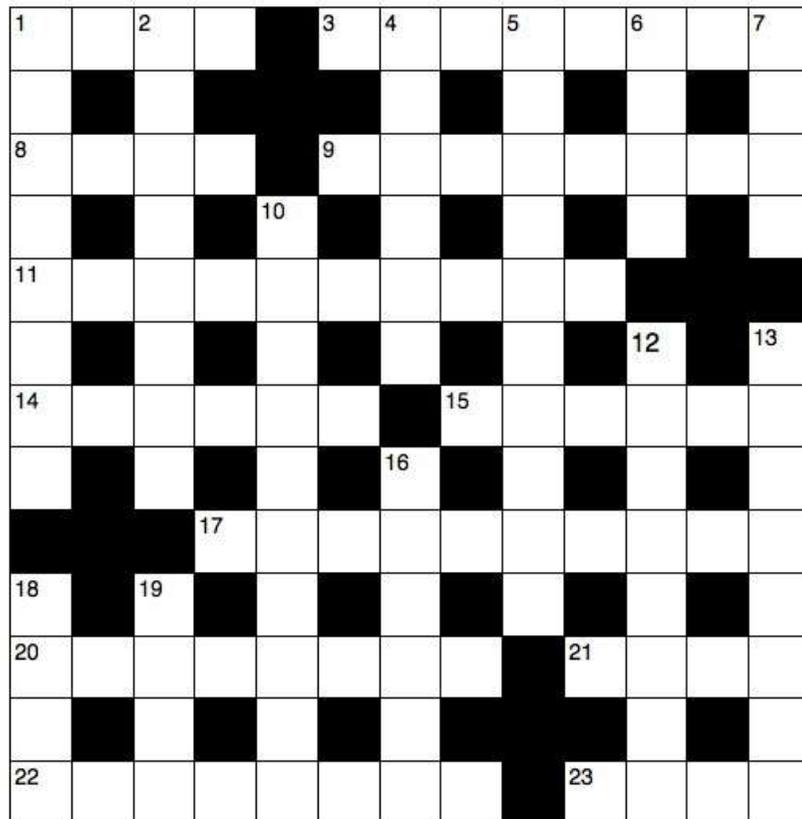
We are here as pilgrims, not as tourists. A tourist comes to look, and probably take a photo, but isn't really "here". The idea is to come back with happy memories, but definitely not to be challenged or changed. We pilgrims are here to learn more about what it means to be Christian disciples, to walk in the way of the cross. We do not try to forget where we have come from, our cares and responsibilities and hopes back home. On the contrary, we bring all of those things into

the pilgrimage seeking God's guidance and wisdom. We will all, I hope, come back from the Holy Land different from how we were when we set out, and better equipped for our Christian lives. In pilgrimage, the journeying back is as important as the journeying out.

Not all of us can make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land but we are all pilgrims. Following in the way of Christ is a lesson we can learn in any and every place, because the whole Christian life is a pilgrimage, and it is as one body travelling together that we seek our true home country in the kingdom of God.

✠Jonathan Croydon

### Bible Crossword for December/January



### Clues

#### **Across**

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)
- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag) (8)
- 23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

#### **Down**

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
- 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

**Solutions to October/November Crossword**

	B	A	R	T	H	O	L	O	M	E	W	
J		L		O		V		N		M		M
E	V	I	L	O	N	E		A	D	O	R	E
H		V		K		R	A	N		T		L
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P	I	T	Y		N		T		W	I	D	E
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A	L	A	R	M		P	A	R	T	A	K	E
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**December/January Magazine**

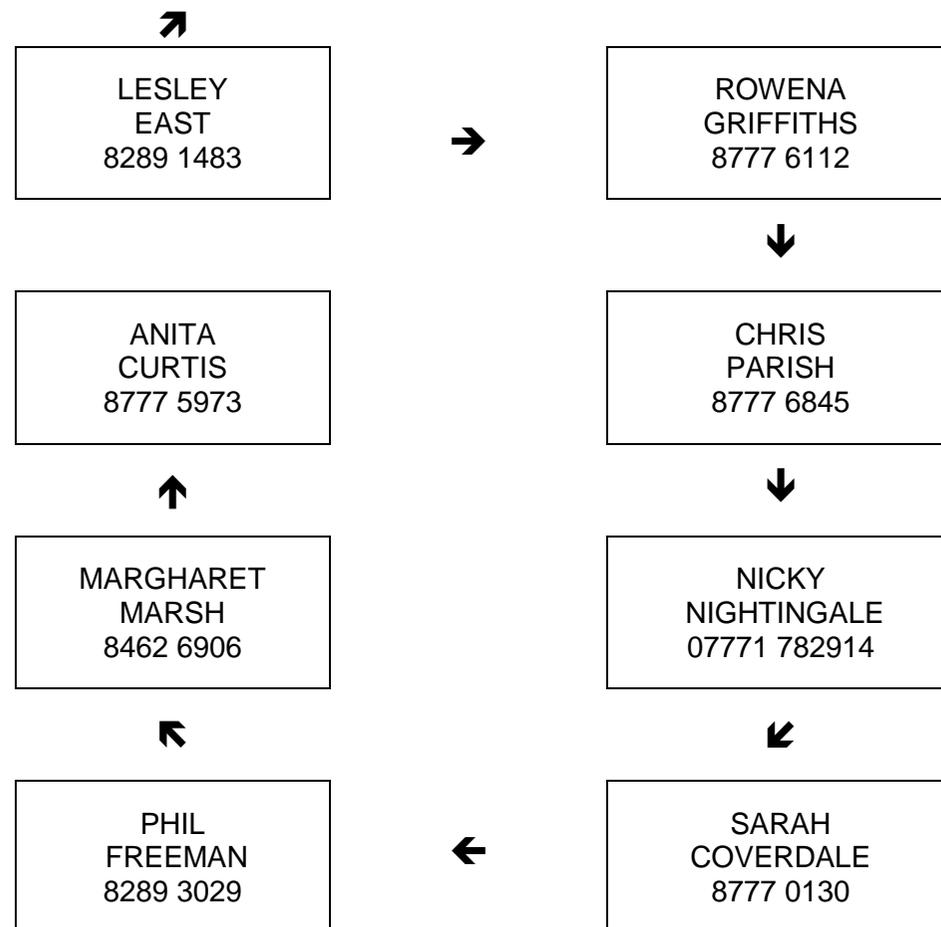
Items for inclusion in the next magazine are needed by Sunday 12 January 2020 please, or contact Margaret Green to make alternative arrangements via:

Tel: 8777 4450 or email: [magletitiagreen@hotmail.com](mailto:magletitiagreen@hotmail.com)



**ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI  
PRAYER SUPPORT CHAIN**

HAZEL  
O'SULLIVAN



*WOULD YOU LIKE PRAYER SUPPORT? IF SO, PLEASE CONTACT LESLEY AND SHE WILL PASS THE MESSAGE ON*

JOINT SERVICES IN 2020	
January	26 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's
February	23 <sup>rd</sup> – Joint Service at St Francis'
March	29 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's (Passion Sunday)
April	26 <sup>th</sup> – <b>All-Ages:</b> Joint St George's Day Service at St Francis'
May	31 <sup>st</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's - Pentecost
June	28 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Francis'
July	5 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's 12 <sup>th</sup> – <b>All-Ages:</b> Breakfast and Joint Service with uniformed organisations at St Francis 26 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's
August	30 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's
September	27 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Francis'
October	25 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's (Bible Sunday)
November	29 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Francis' (Advent Sunday)
December	25 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Francis' (Christmas Day) 27 <sup>th</sup> – Joint Service at St Mary's (St John the Evangelist)



### In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan;  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid-winter  
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him  
Nor earth sustain,  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When He comes to reign:  
In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty —  
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom Cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for Him, whom Angels  
Fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.

Angels and Archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Thronged the air;  
But only His Mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the Beloved  
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am? —  
If I were a Shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part, —  
Yet what I can I give Him, —  
Give my heart.

*Christina Rossetti*



## **ST FRANCIS' PRE-SCHOOL HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL**

Our pre-school is registered for 24 children  
between 2 and 5 years.

Contact: Gillian Smith  
Tel: 020 8464 3062  
Email: [gsmith0001@aol.com](mailto:gsmith0001@aol.com)  
URL: <http://strancispreschool.uk.com>

