

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

14th June 2020: First Sunday after Trinity

Hazel writes:

You will have heard on the news that churches will be able to **open for private prayer** from Monday 15th June, assuming that all government tests continue to be met. At the time of drafting this pew sheet, I have not heard whether this is the case, but we have been working on making it possible, once this confirmation is received. The plan is for the churches to be open at the following times:

- Mondays – St Mary's from 10.30am to 12noon
- Tuesdays – St Mary's from 2 to 3.30pm
- Wednesdays – St Francis' from 2 to 3.30pm
- Thursdays – St Francis' from 10.30am to 12noon
- Fridays – St Mary's from 9 to 10.30am
- Saturdays – St Francis' from 9 to 10.30am

If we do open then in this coming week, it will **only be on Thursday and Friday** at the places and times set out above. Thereafter we will need two volunteers to be at each session in order to supervise seating, the use of candles and books in the church and to clean at the end. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Beryl at St Mary's on 020 8289 8097/ bbolton@ntlworld.com or Joan at St Francis' on 020 8777 2034/jandbburford@talktalk.net

There is an **on-line 24-hour retreat** happening with Royal Foundation of St Katherine's – a retreat centre in East London from the evening of Friday 19th June. More details are available here: <https://events.rfsk.org/events/postponed-until-further-notihttps-www-eventbrite-co-uk-e-the-city-is-my-monastery-a-24-hour-retreat-with-the-royal-foundation-of-st-katharine-with-richard-tickets-106758314994e-staysunday-open-refle/>

Resources and updates for the week ahead – An audio file of the sermon and a video of the service have been posted to the websites for today. All other files have been combined together and posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line. Please tell someone if you know of somebody who is not accessing this material.

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 – a mass for the feast of Corpus Christi;
- On BBC 1: Sunday Worship at 10.45am from Manchester; Sunday morning stories at 11.15am on generosity and compassion; and Songs of Praise at 1.15pm on worship in the great outdoors.

Today's sermon is about Jesus' invitation to us to step out onto the choppy waters of faith.

Does this image speak more of faith or doubt? A question for reflection this week is: what are you afraid of?



Messy Church at Home followed the same theme as today's service. There are some more activities and thoughts for reflection in a document accessible from the front page of the websites and you can watch our service on-line at

<https://www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham>

Are you missing seeing your friends from Church? We have set up a Zoom "coffee/tea & chat" for each Thursday at 2.30 pm. This will be an informal meeting for anyone who wants to meet, chat and catch up with their friends. We hope to meet regularly for just 40 minutes each week, but you don't need to commit to joining each week. The log-in details have already been circulated, but please let me know if you do not have this information. Rowena

We have now started to tidy up the entrances to our buildings. If you would like to **help with some weeding** in the church gardens, please contact Julie Bailey on 020 8777 1064 for St Francis' garden or Stephen Howe on 020 8249 0315 / aireyowe@virginmedia.com for St Mary's, who will be happy to co-ordinate all contributions.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Hazel and items for the websites to brian.griff19@btinternet.com.

Collect

God of truth,
help us to keep your law
of love and to walk in
ways of wisdom,
that we may find true
life in Jesus Christ your
Son.

**Reading: Matthew
14:22-33**

²² Right away, Jesus made his disciples get into a boat and start back across the lake.^[d] But he stayed until he had sent the crowds away. ²³ Then he went up on a mountain where he could be alone and pray. Later that evening, he was still there.

²⁴ By this time the boat was a long way from the shore. It was going against the wind and was being tossed around by the waves. ²⁵ A little while before morning, Jesus came walking on the water toward his

disciples. ²⁶ When they saw him, they thought he was a ghost. They were terrified and started screaming.

²⁷ At once, Jesus said to them, "Don't worry! I am Jesus. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ Peter replied, "Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come on!" Jesus said. Peter then got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward him.

³⁰ But when Peter saw how strong the wind was, he was afraid and started sinking. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

³¹ Right away, Jesus reached out his hand. He helped Peter up and said, "You surely don't have much faith. Why do you doubt?"

³² When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ The men in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, "You really are the Son of God!"

Sending out prayer

Peter only knew life as a fisherman. But he got out of the boat and followed you, Lord. Help us to hear your voice, get out of our boats and follow you. In the week ahead, may the world and its problems decrease as you increase in our lives. Keep us focused on your way, looking ahead and trusting you.

Talk – 14th June – Brian Griffiths

Safety or Adventure? Safe in the Boat or Risking All on the Choppy Waters?

A few weeks ago, Bob and Linda West from St Mary's sent me a photograph of this church being built – it was built in 1954 – and as soon as I saw this photograph which you can see has got the roof trusses in, the scaffolding is up but there's no roof



covering – this photograph reminded me of an upturned boat. I thought “That’s a boat upside down in a boat builder’s yard.” You can see it when you come into the church and many churches are deliberately built in this way. The word for boat in Latin is ‘navicula’ and that’s where we get the name for the main aisle in a church – the main aisle in a church is the ‘nave’ because it’s the central part of this upturned boat that we worship in. When we are inside St Mary’s

it does actually look as if we are in a boat that is upside down – that we are safe in this boat – especially if you look at the far end there, at the end where the altar is you can see that is the stern of the boat – that is where we move forward – that is where we look.

Today’s reading is the miracle of Jesus walking on the water. The thing is he made the disciples get into the boat. He’d been teaching people, he’d fed the five thousand, and now he wants to go away because he’s tired – he wants to go away and pray by himself on the hillside. So he sends the disciples away in the boat. It’s not that uncommon in Galilee to have a storm on the lake because the lake is surrounded by mountains – the winds come down from the mountains – and they stir up the waves and it’s not unusual to be really tossed about on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples experience this and they’re frightened. Even though they were experienced fishermen and even though they were inside the boat they were scared stiff of this wind and the boat being battered by the waves. About four in the morning, Jesus comes to them – and he comes to them unusually and, frighteningly for them, walking on the water. Peter asked Jesus to command him to walk towards him and Jesus says “Come! Come to me!” Peter steps out of



the boat and so long as he focuses on Jesus – so long as he’s looking Jesus in the eyes he walks on water. He is part of the miracle. When he focuses on the storm – on the wind and the waves and the boat being bobbed up and down – that’s when he begins to sink. However, the great thing is that when he begins to sink, Jesus reaches out and he rescues him. Peter and Jesus get back in the boat and the storm dies down.



Now, we’ve been forced out of our boats – we’ve been forced out of our churches – our ‘safety zone’ because of this Coronavirus crisis that we are going through at the minute. Now I wonder how do we feel about that? Are we enjoying the experience? Are we enjoying the adventure? Are we just

testing the water? As you can see in the picture – one foot in and one foot out of the

water. There’s a picture of somebody on the seaside there on the sand and doing what we normally do – run to the water, put a foot in and we run away because it’s far too cold.

Are we afraid to take that leap of faith? Are we not enjoying the experience of being out of the boat? Are we desperate to get back



into the boat – to the safety and familiarity of what we’ve always known?

In my last sermon at St Francis, I posed the question of what needs to be lost if we are to move forward after lockdown. I had some feedback from one of the home groups. This is what they said – amongst other things they said two things – “We’ve got to stop being comfortable in our ‘bubbles’ and we need to overcome the danger of the fear of taking the next step.” So what that means is, in essence, that if we want to do great things we’ve got to get out of the boat.

Here’s a little story: Two penguins are walking on the ice. One is reading a bible and says to the other one, “What am I missing here? We’re always walking on water!” We too often walk on water, but we don’t realise it. When we step out in faith, we navigate the storms of life. When we step out in faith we are actually walking on water, but we probably don’t ever realise it. However, too many of us are just content to stay in the boat – because it’s safe there, it’s familiar there, it’s comfortable in the boat. When we go through the storms of life we wait for Jesus to come back in the boat, just as he did in that story we heard today – to come back in the boat to rescue and to calm our storm. But Jesus says “Come” – he says “Come, step out onto the choppy waters of faith. Take a risk for me”. So it’s fine – just like Peter, it’s fine as long

as we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. If we begin to sink, if we begin to focus on the storm like Peter did, then the great thing is that Jesus comes, reaches out his hand and lifts us up. He holds us up.



In the boat we find doubt, we find fear and we often find disappointment. When we are outside the boat, we discover the presence of God, his very presence, we discover the grace of God, and we discover new

opportunities to serve him – **only** when we get out of the boat. We also find that what we are unable to do in the boat, we are more than capable of outside the boat.

So, a final prayer to sum all this up. Let us pray:

Jesus calls us to leave the safety of our boats and to walk forward towards him in faith. And, when the wind and waves threaten to overwhelm us, we remember his words – Don't be afraid: Take Courage: I am here. So let us go forward in faith to follow where Jesus leads, confident that his love and presence go with us.

Amen.

Hymn of response – Do not be afraid

A recording with lyrics can be found using the following link:

<https://youtu.be/STwyHuUwEUI>

Prayers of confession and intercession

Lord Jesus,
we are sorry for the times
we do not put our trust in you.
We are sorry that sometimes
we focus on the problems
in the deep water in front of us,
instead of trusting you to keep us afloat.
Forgive us, Lord, and help us trust in you. **Amen.**

Lord God, we come before you to pray for all those people for whom taking risks is a way of life.

Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.

We pray for our health and emergency services – all NHS staff, paramedics, the police, the fire service – all who daily face difficult situations as they seek to help to protect us and make our world a safer and more peaceful place.

Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.

We pray for people who work in troubled areas – the armed forces in war zones, those who bring humanitarian aid into refugee communities and areas of natural disaster, and many more.

Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.

We pray for people who take risks in your name, Lord Jesus – those who take your word where it is most needed – and for people who grapple with faith and doubt.

Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe. Amen.

Further prayer pointers

A prayer in the midst of racial tension across the world:

God of all, who loves each of us for who we are, to whom each life matters, who counts the hairs on our head who knows when a sparrow falls; teach us to love as you love; to respect, to honour, to care and to protect each of our sisters and brothers, that your embracing, including kingdom may come now and your love be known by all, always. Amen.

(Andrew Nunn – Dean of Southwark Cathedral)

For students facing the decisions about their futures and for all lecturers and teachers in colleges and universities as they adapt to new ways of tutoring and the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

We give thanks for all NHS professionals who have shown such commitment, dedication and skill in the Covid 19 crisis, especially our local GP's, pharmacists and hospital staff.

We give thanks for all in our two churches who have continued to keep in touch with, and help those who are vulnerable, lonely and finding lockdown difficult. May that spirit of community and service continue to be blessed and bear much fruit.

We look forward to the day when we can go back into our churches to worship together as a gathered community. May we not be afraid to get out of our boats, take a step of faith and learn to serve God anew, inspired and energised by the Spirit. May we, like Peter, be part of the miracle.