

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

5th July 2020: Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Hazel writes:

We are now able to open our church buildings for public worship. The guidance for this has only just been issued and the summer is likely to be a period when we will move step-by-step towards being able to worship in a way that we feel comfortable with, with changes happening regularly as the guidance changes and we find new ways of operating.

We will be putting in place everything necessary to make this a safe activity for everyone and currently the plan is to open one of the buildings on Sunday 19th July. More details will follow in due course.

In the meantime the bishops in the Diocese of Southwark have written to say that they are grateful for the way in which we have all sustained our worshipping lives in whatever form that has been. They recognise that all those involved in its development will need a break in the summer and this is an important reason why we will not be rushing into finding a sustainable model for worship immediately. My thanks go particularly to the ministry team and church wardens for their support, which will continue to be needed throughout the next few months.

Our plans for a **new audio-visual system** at St Mary's have now been approved by the diocese. The PCC will discuss plans for installation at their next meeting on Wednesday 8th July. If you pledged an amount to be put towards this project or would like to make a donation now, please would you be in touch with Bob West robandlinwest@tiscali.co.uk or 020 8776 0210 to arrange payment.

Do join in today with the **celebration of the NHS** which was formed on 5th July 1948 – 72 years ago. There will be a final ‘clap’ at 5pm and here are some pictures of blue bows outside and inside our homes.



We have also had messages of family and friends and members of the congregations who are involved in the NHS and have created this Word Art from their details:



We are suggesting that you might make a donation in recognition of all that we have to be grateful for at this time. Many charities are finding it tough at this time, including St Christopher's who work closely with the NHS in caring for those near the end of their life. Many in our two congregations have links with this charity, including Sarah Coverdale who remembers seeing how Dame Cicely Saunders, the founder of the hospice and the wider hospice movement, communicated with patients and their families so that each one felt affirmed with a sense of their own unique worth. Here is a link to their donations page: <https://www.stchristophers.org.uk/donate>.

The churches are **open for private prayer** during July 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

The spaces are very safe with sanitiser and social distancing measures in place and are supervised, so that these measures can be appropriately maintained.

Please do continue to bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage if you cannot get them to other places. Currently they need cold meat, custard, rice pudding, tinned potatoes and squash, as well as baby wipes, toiletries and liquid/powder for dish & clothes washing.

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 on the power of music in troubled times;
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Sheffield Cathedral;
 - On BBC 1: Sunday morning live at 10.45am and Songs of Praise at 1.15pm to mark the birthday of the NHS.

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 /020 8777 6112) know if you would like the log-in details.

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

Opening prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our
neighbour, and to care for
those in need as if we were
caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give
us strength to comfort the
fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.

Amen.

Reading: Ecclesiasticus**38:1-8**

HONOUR physicians for
their services, for the Lord
created them; for their gift
of healing comes from the
Most High, and they are
rewarded by the king. The
skill of physicians makes
them distinguished, and in
the presence of the great
they are admired. The Lord
created medicines out of
the earth, and the sensible
will not despise them. Was
not water made sweet with
a tree in order that its
power might be known?

And he gave skill to human
beings that he might be
glorified in his marvellous
works. By them the
physician heals and takes
away pain; the pharmacist
makes a mixture from
them. God's works will
never be finished; and from
him health spreads over all
the earth.

Gospel: Luke 6:6-10

ON another Sabbath Jesus
entered the synagogue and
taught, and there was a
man there whose right
hand was withered. The
scribes and the Pharisees
watched him to see
whether he would cure on
the Sabbath, so that they
might find an accusation
against him. Even though
he knew what they were
thinking, he said to the man
who had the withered
hand, 'Come and stand
here.' He got up and stood
there. Then Jesus said to
them, 'I ask you, is it lawful
to do good or to do harm
on the Sabbath, to save life
or to destroy it?'

After looking around at all
of them, he said to him,
'Stretch out your hand.' He
did so, and his hand was
restored.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily
bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.
Lead us not into
temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power, and the glory
are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 2020

CELEBRATING THE NHS

Heavenly Father, help us to listen to your Word with understanding, to receive it with faith and to obey it with courage, for Jesus Christ's sake

AMEN

Come back with me if you will to a minute before midnight on July 4th 1948. In a small hospital – The Amman Valley Hospital – in West Wales, a lady named Edna May Rees has been in labour for 18 hours. Edna had six children before, and she knew the midwives were usually telling you to push. But instead of urging Edna to push, the midwives were saying ‘Hold on, Edna! Hold on!’ Then the clock ticked past midnight. ‘Push,’ they said, ‘now you can push!’” And so at a minute past midnight on July 5th 1948, Aneira was born – the very first baby to be born into the National Health Service. She was named Aneira after Aneurin Bevan, the Minister of Health at the time the NHS came into being. At that moment, health care in the UK changed forever.

Aneira dedicated herself to the NHS all her working life and she became a mental health nurse. Aneira’s daughter is a paramedic. Two of her aunts were matrons and two of her sisters were nurses. The NHS saved Aneira’s life when she had anaphylactic shock and they saved the life of her son when he had a brain haemorrhage. Aneira has written a book about her memories of the NHS. Appropriately it’s titled “Hold on Edna!”

I discovered that 2020 is the ‘Year of the Nurse’. Much will be retold this year about Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole – two pioneers of nursing. Florence Nightingale was sent to the Crimean War front in the 1850’s to manage and train nurses caring for the wounded and was known as the ‘Lady with the Lamp’ making her night-time ward rounds. In 1860 Florence founded the first secular school of nursing at St Thomas’ Hospital. Mary Seacole was a British-Jamaican nurse who wanted so much to nurse on the front line in Crimea that she made several applications and was even turned down by Florence Nightingale. In the end Mary travelled to the Crimea on her own expenses and set up ‘The British Hotel’ to be a ‘comfortable quarters for sick and convalescent officers’. Florence Nightingale acknowledged good reports of Mary Seacole, but for some reason she didn’t want her nurses associating with her.

You might have detected a bit of a Welsh theme at the beginning of this talk. So continuing in that vein - did you know that there was a ‘Welsh Florence Nightingale’? Her name was Betsi Cadwaladr. In her 60’s Betsi trained to become a nurse, volunteered for the military nursing service, and was posted to a hospital in Scutari run by Nightingale. There were frequent clashes between Betsi and Florence. Florence stuck rigidly to the rules whereas Betsi often sidestepped the rules to help wounded soldiers more effectively not least in making conditions more hygienic. In the end Betsi moved to another hospital nearer the front line in Balaclava where she battled to get supplies through. Florence visited Betsi twice in Balaclava and eventually

acknowledged that Betsi was doing wonderful work as her methods brought about change in the treatment of the wounded soldiers. And now if ever you need treatment on the NHS in North Wales you will be treated by The Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board named in honour of the Welsh Florence Nightingale.

Nursing today bears no relation to what those pioneers started in the Crimea or even what it was like at the birth of the NHS in 1948. However, the basic principles have not changed at all. As the poster for the 2020 Year of the Nurse says: "Midwives and nurses are with you at each step of life. They see you into the world and care for you as you leave it, helping you to stay healthy and support you if you are sick". There is so much to give thanks for – for our health service and particularly this year for our nurses who have been on the front line of the battle against Covid19 - nurses on the front line yet again.

Back in April, Boris Johnson, on his release from hospital after his own battle with Covid19 praised the NHS. He described it as 'unconquerable' and 'the beating heart of this country'. Significantly the two nurses who treated him were Jenny McGee from New Zealand and Luis Pitarma from Portugal. These two show how much the NHS relies on doctors and nurses from other countries. The Prime Minister said that they embodied the caring and sacrifice of NHS staff on the front lines of the pandemic. He said 'That is how I know, that across this country, 24 hours a day, for every second, for every hour, there are hundreds of thousands of NHS staff who are acting with the same care and thought and precision as Jenny and Luis.' 24 hours a day, every day – the NHS is there for all of us caring, skilled and compassionate.

Our Old Testament reading today speaks of healing as a gift from God. 'Honour physicians for their services, for their gift of healing comes from the Most High'. For physicians also read, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, pharmacists, laboratory staff, radiologists, GP's, GP receptionists, dentists, chiropodists, and all other healthcare professionals too many to name who work to keep us healthy and support us when we are ill. One special group I should mention are our NHS hospital chaplains. They have had an incredibly difficult task in the Covid19 crisis. Jacqueline Dean who is a Lay Reader in Reigate Deanery is a hospital chaplain at the East Surrey Hospital in Redhill. In the Diocesan Hearts on Fire Blog, she writes, "I have so many memories from the last intense weeks. Holding the phone to a patient's ear, while their loved one said goodbye, or so their Minister could pray with them. Quietly reading Compline to a priest who was reaching the end of his life. Offering prayers, as life support ended or just sitting quietly holding a patient's hand." This is where faith, hope and compassion meet head on.

Our reading concludes 'God's works will never be finished; and from him health spreads over all the earth'. Health and healing are gifts from God and today, especially today when we face this pandemic across the world, we thank God for all those who

have been given the gift of healing and who give that gift 365 days a year in our Health Service.

Healing in the Bible is always seen as a free gift. Jesus gave freely of the gift of healing. Our lesson from Luke today tells of how Jesus healed on the Sabbath – the Jewish sacred day when no work was allowed – not even healing. Jesus challenged his accusers ‘I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to destroy it.’ So he healed reminding us that healing has no time limits. Jesus was there for the man with the withered hand just as the NHS offers healing for us around the clock.

The NHS is a caring organisation. It’s a beacon to all of us demonstrating that the whole of society and particularly Christians need to be carers for those who need that healing touch – whether that’s companionship to help with loneliness, a listening ear for those with mental health difficulties, food and clothing for the homeless or friendship offered to refugees. We may not have the gifts of physical healing – we may not be doctors or nurses – but we all can work together to heal society. We have all been given the free gift of care and love and compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves. Whether we use that gift or not is up to us – we can heal relationships and we can heal our community – it’s all in our hands as followers of the greatest healer – Jesus Christ.

I want to finish with a poem about hands written by Michael Rosen for the 60th anniversary of the NHS. It’s about caring and compassion from cradle to grave – the whole ethos of our NHS. Here it is:

***These are the hands that touch us first, feel your head, find the pulse
and make your bed.***

***These are the hands that tap your back, test the skin, hold your arm,
wheel the bin, change the bulb, fix the drip, pour the jug
replace your hip.***

***These are the hands that fill the bath, mop the floor, flick the switch,
soothe the sore, burn the swabs, give us a jab, throw out sharps,
design the lab.***

***And these are the hands that stop the leaks, empty the pan,
wipe the pipes, carry the can, clamp the veins, make the cast, log the dose
And touch us last.***

Prayer Pointers

For a renewed vision for our two churches of St Mary and St Francis. May we learn to work together in harmony and with our local community to further the Kingdom of Heaven here in West Wickham. May we not be afraid to take risks and step out in faith.

On the 72nd anniversary of the NHS we give thanks for all who dedicate their lives to healing. For all those who tend and support us when we are ill – all who work in our local hospitals, GP's, pharmacists and clinics. For all those training to use God's gift of healing in the NHS.

Continue to pray for our Government as lockdown eases and more people go back to work. For all MP's and ministers as they make decisions to help our economy recover. May all their decisions be wise and for the good of all.

For all those who have lost their jobs as more businesses in the past week have closed or entered administration. For all who work with the unemployed to help them find new work especially those in our local Job Centre in Bromley and for all who work to help people in debt – especially for Christians against Poverty.

For all those who have relatives and close friends in hospital who are not able to visit them because of Covid19 restrictions. May they have faith in those treating them and may they know the peace of God that passes all understanding.

And finally, a **poem for the NHS** from Jane Smith:

Seventy two years ago
The NHS was formed.
To look after us
From the moment
We are born.

Throughout our lives
The NHS is there.
With doctors, nurses
Cleaners, porters
Ready to care.

Let us not forget
The volunteers too
And all the admin staff

Who keep things
Running smooth.

Day and night
The door is always open
To diagnose
Give advice
And mend what is broken.

The NHS in recent times
Has struggled to manage
With all the extra work
Caused by the
Coronavirus challenge.

But the staff have carried
on
Risking their lives.
Working tirelessly
To ensure
That their patient survives.

Happy Birthday NHS
Is what we want to say.
Thank you to the team
Who care for us
From the cradle to the
grave.