

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

15th January 2023: 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Hazel writes:

We had a ministry team meeting earlier this week when we discussed the possibility of changing some of the ways in which we run our Sunday morning communion services. Coming out of Covid has been much more difficult than implementing the original restrictions – getting the balance right between returning to previous traditions and enabling everyone to feel safe in the church buildings is challenging. We agreed the following:

- We will continue with the distribution of communion by the priest dipping the wafer in the wine, but will review whether to return to the common cup again at Easter. If we do, then those who do not want to share the cup can still receive communion in one kind only. Please do speak to Richard or me if you have a strong view one way or the other.
- On any livestream we will show what is happening in the church during communion with effect from next week – 22nd January. If you do not want to be seen on the livestream when receiving communion, please speak to myself, Richard or a warden on duty and we will bring communion to you instead of you walking to the front.
- Sharing the peace can now be done in closer proximity than we currently do, with a handshake or similar, but please be mindful of what each individual will feel comfortable with. Please do continue to include those on the livestream in this part of the service.
- With smaller numbers of people attending the services in the church buildings, it will help us to feel part of one community if we sit closer together. Please sit towards the front and in the middle of the buildings. This will also make it easier for you to sing along with the hymns.

Next **Sunday 22nd January**, we will have Holy Communion services at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 8am and 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.

Our next **women's event** is on Tuesday 17th January at 8pm in St Francis' Church. We will be using chocolate as an introduction to contemplative prayer and a brief reflection on Hazel's sabbatical, exploring how being more contemplative in life may help to be

less stressed. There will be an opportunity to try out a short meditation and find the benefit of some regular quiet time. All are welcome. Do bring a friend.

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.

Come to our **coffee morning** at St Francis Church Hall on Saturday 18th February 10.30-11.30am. There will be tea, coffee and cake and an introduction on how to do CPR and how to use our defibrillators in an emergency. Any funds raised will be donated to the British Heart Foundation.

Please contact Nicky (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) or Liz (stevlizbraemar52@sky.com or 8777-2745) if you would like to provide any cakes.

A **qualified and experienced carer** known to our pastoral care team has some free time when she could take on another client, including help with things such as: personal care; food preparation; shopping; assistance with walking; laundry, ironing and some cleaning. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from some more help around the home, do call Izabela on 07761 326618.

You can get a free life-saving **home safety check** from the London Fire Brigade who will visit your home and do a fire safety check, including providing a free smoke alarm if necessary. This is especially helpful if you have mobility issues, including the housebound. Please do let others know about this. You can get more detail at <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety-visits/>

We have a **new Archdeacon of Croydon**, Greg Prior. His service of welcome is being held on Saturday 18 February 2023, 3pm at Christ Church Purley. If anyone would like to attend, you can register (by 31st Jan) on Eventbrite here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/welcome-service-for-the-archdeacon-of-croydon-tickets-452907136437>. Do let Hazel know if you are going, so that we can share lifts where possible.

Churches Together in West Wickham are opening up **Warm Spaces** on five days each week (normally 9am-5pm) providing somewhere warm for people to meet in for free. If you could help with this for a couple of hours on a rota basis, please contact the following:

- For a Monday – Jon Hills (jon@wwsbc.org.uk or 020 8777 5705) at West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church

- For a Tuesday – Ian Hamlin (ianh2102@hotmail.com or 07543 561868) at Coney Hill Baptist Church
- For a Wednesday - Kate Dyer (katedyer41@hotmail.com or 07808 468591) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) at St Francis' Church
- For a Thursday – Laura MacBean (laura.macbean@googlemail.com) at West Wickham Methodist Church
- For a Friday – Pat Best (patbest@btinternet.com or 020 8464 7208) at Emmanuel United Reformed Church

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require milk (long life), coffee, sweets, cooking sauces, soup, rice, tinned potatoes and other vegetables. They are well stocked with pasta, 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 or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The sanctuary pedestal this week at St. Mary's has been provided by Margaret Bond in memory of Richard and has been arranged by Beryl.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl berylbolton@hotmail.com and items for the websites to brian.griff19@btinternet.com or Gifty office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk.

Collect

Eternal Lord,
our beginning and our
end:
bring us with the whole
creation to your glory,
hidden through past
ages
and made known
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

1 Corinthians 1: 1-9

Paul, called to be an
apostle of Christ Jesus
by the will of God, and
our brother
Sosthenes,² To the
church of God that is in
Corinth, to those who
are sanctified in Christ
Jesus, called to be
saints, together with all
those who in every
place call on the name
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
both their Lord and
ours: ³ Grace to you and
peace from God our
Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ. ⁴ I give
thanks to my God
always for you because

of the grace of God that
has been given you in
Christ Jesus, ⁵ for in
every way you have
been enriched in him, in
speech and knowledge
of every kind— ⁶ just as
the testimony of Christ
has been strengthened
among you— ⁷ so that
you are not lacking in
any spiritual gift as you
wait for the
revealing of our Lord
Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will
also strengthen you to
the end, so that you
may be blameless on
the day of our Lord
Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is
faithful; by him you
were called into the
fellowship of his Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel Reading

John 1: 29-42

²⁹ The next day John saw
Jesus coming towards
him and declared, ‘Here
is the Lamb of God who
takes away the sin of
the world! ³⁰ This is he
of whom I said, “After
me comes a man who
ranks ahead of me
because he was before
me.” ³¹ I myself did not
know him; but I came
baptizing with water for
this reason, that he
might be revealed to
Israel.’ ³² And John
testified, ‘I saw the Spirit
descending from heaven
like a dove, and it
remained on him. ³³ I
myself did not know
him, but the one who
sent me to baptize with
water said to me, “He
on whom you see the
Spirit descend and
remain is the one who
baptizes with the Holy
Spirit.” ³⁴ And I myself
have seen and have

testified that this is the Son of God.’³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, ‘Look, here is the Lamb of God!’³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which translated means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’³⁹ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him,

‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated Anointed).⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas’ (which is translated Peter).

Post Communion Prayer

God of glory,
 you nourish us with
 your Word who is the
 bread of life: fill us with
 your Holy Spirit that
 through us the light of
 your glory
 may shine in all the
 world.
 We ask this in the name
 of Jesus Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION – Ken Bryan

This morning both our epistle and our gospel talk about calling. Andrew was called and then called his brother Simon, and in the epistle, Paul talks of his calling as well as that of Sosthenes and others who he says are called to be saints plus all in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ.

What do we know about Andrew? Yes, he was a disciple, one of the first to join Jesus but he is not one of the ‘high profile’ disciples who are always mentioned as being with Jesus at decisive moments in his ministry. We actually know almost nothing about him. He was from Bethsaida and was a fisherman with his brother Simon. He was a follower of John the Baptist before he was pointed to Jesus. Later he introduced the little boy with five loaves and two fish to Jesus, saying ‘what are they among so many?’ His last mention is at the Passover when some Greeks came up wanting to see Jesus. Andrew and Philip tell Jesus of the request.

So, Andrew has been there all the time: a willing and no doubt trusted disciple who is shown to be a witness and missionary to bring others to Jesus.

Today as we all know we live very much in a ‘follow me’ culture. Whether it is on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or one of the many other ways you can follow someone and see what their impact on the world is by following their account and seeing how many likes they have and how many other people are following them. To follow someone just because lots of other people do is not the best of ideas.

Many also look to the so-called influencers to see what is happening to the ‘happening people’, be it someone very rich, or a TV or film star, or a sports star. Our own lives are so different from these that we can end up disappointed with who we are and feel disconnected with the real world around us.

And yet in our gospel we are led along a lake shore near Galilee, following an unknown rabbi who was walking and calling some relatively unknown people to follow him and journey with him. When choosing his small group of disciples, he did not seek the most holy, or the most powerful, or even the most intellectual. And these two disciples did not check out who he was. There was no Google or Wikipedia to give them chapter and verse of his life but with a comment from John the Baptist and a call from Jesus, they followed him. They left their jobs and their families and followed him from a known past into an unknown future.

Little did they dream of how thoroughly he would overturn the world of their understanding and bring in a future so different from the one that they might have imagined. The disciples had no clue of the journeys they were to undertake, of the routes that they would travel, the challenges that they would face and the destination that it was all leading to. Whatever they saw or heard at that moment of calling it was enough for them to leave everything they knew behind and to follow him.

Jesus turned to them not because they had the right words or rituals but because they turned to him. He then calls them into a relationship. 'Come and see' he said and with that invited them into his movement, not into an organisation. He invites them into a friendship. He wants them to listen actively to his words and to follow what he does. He invites them to see first before they say and then to follow and to serve, to proclaim the good news. So, Andrew returned to find his brother, Simon, to tell him what he had seen.

Andrew knew that if he brought his brother into the presence of Jesus he too could be transformed by Christ. Jesus came with a ministry of loving service and asked all people to follow in his way that leads to justice and peace.

It is interesting to see that Andrew and the other disciple were looking for the Messiah and yet at the same time Jesus is looking for followers.

So, if we go looking for Jesus to understand who he is and wish to follow him we can be sure that he is actually looking for us at the same time. An amazing thought, isn't it?

Paul was also called. He was looking for the followers of Jesus when Jesus met him on the Damascus road.

From then on, he became the most fervent of followers. It is quite clear where his heart lies and where his focus is. After all, in each of the first nine verses of his letter to the church in Corinth he mentions Jesus Christ. When we are excited about something or someone it can become the centre of our conversation. Our enthusiasm can spill over into everything we say and to everyone we meet. We want them to know how we are feeling, and we would like them to be as excited too. And so it was with Paul. He wanted everyone to feel as he did, to experience the complete change in life that following Jesus can bring. He wanted to encourage them to continue in faith in Jesus and to serve him and using their spiritual gifts to serve those around them.

So here is a challenge for me and for us all. Do we show our excitement at being followers of Jesus? Will we talk enthusiastically about our faith not only in church or with like-minded people but with those outside the church? Who will we bring to see Jesus, like Andrew brought his brother, who turned out to be the person who Jesus built his church upon? What would have happened if that opportunity had been missed?

At this time when the church is celebrating lay ministries what do we think is our calling?

There are many roles in the church to which people are called, some of which are authorised or licenced by the Diocese. But that doesn't mean that only those people who put themselves forward for these roles are called to serve. Very good if you do feel called and please follow that calling up with Hazel or Richard. But there are so many day-to-day things that we are called to do for God that we should keep praying and keep seeking his guidance, following Jesus as the centre of our lives.

Might our calling be one which is not high profile but perhaps of coming alongside people in need; of a prayer ministry; of calling for justice in the world; of advocating for someone or for championing a cause for the environment or for those who cannot speak for themselves.

If we are to serve God we will be guided to do the right thing, to say the right thing and be in the right place at the right time. If we look for Jesus, we will find him there calling us.

I want to close with a final prayer that we have been given by the diocese:

Loving God, whose son called Andrew to be a witness and an apostle; give us the confidence to bring others to see Jesus, to follow him and then go and tell others, that the light of Christ may shine in our lives.

Amen

Prayer Pointers

In the gospel reading on Sunday Jesus invites two of John the Baptist's disciples to 'Come and See.' Pray that we might also invite people outside our congregations to 'Come and See' – to see the love and peace that Jesus offers for themselves. Pray for opportunities to share our faith with others.

In the Southwark Diocesan Prayer Cycle, pray for ministers and congregations in the churches of East Lewisham Deanery and for The Revd Bridget Shepherd, Area Dean.

Pray for all those who are struggling with decisions as to whether to go on strike or work. For union leaders, those on the front line, politicians and all involved in deciding what is right and affordable and just and fair.

Pray for countries around the world where political unrest seems to be escalating more and more. Pray that those in power use it well and honestly. Hold before God the continuing war in Ukraine and for a just and peaceable solution.

Continue to pray for all those working in the NHS especially those who work under extreme pressure in the Ambulance Service and in Accident and Emergency Departments.

Pray for all who live in substandard housing conditions especially those who live in unfit social and rented housing in our city. Pray for all who work with those struggling to find decent places to live and for those working with young homeless people.

For the ill and the suffering whose pain overwhelms them, physical or mental. In our congregations pray for these by name – Mark Outten , Vicky Pearce, Mike East, Pat Allegacone, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Karen Plummer and Mary Sanders – and those known to God alone.

Hold before God all those who have died in the faith of Christ crucified. Pray especially for Tony Goodchild and for Barbara and Tony's family, and for Barbara Plummer and for Katie and Barbara's family. Thank God for their examples of faithful service over many years in St Francis'. May they hear Jesus saying 'Well done, good and faithful servants. Enter into the joy of your master.'