

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

17th October 2021: Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

Hazel writes:

Coming out of all the restrictions which we have been operating under is proving difficult – every single change that's made needs to be considered carefully as to whether it will encourage or discourage people from engaging with what we do – and that's engaging in-person, on-line and on paper at home. All of the different ways by which we keep in touch and are fed spiritually do help to maintain our community, so we are currently continuing with our on-line provision, as well as the weekly emails and hand-deliveries that are made.

Next Sunday 24th October, we will have **Holy Communion services** at 8am in St Francis' church and at 10am in St. Mary's Church.

Morning Prayer is held in St Francis' Church on Wednesday mornings at 9.30am, followed by the church being **open for private prayer** from 10.30-11.30am. It is also held at St Mary's Church on Thursday mornings at 9am.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will be **livestreamed at 10am** on YouTube. All other files for this week have been combined and posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line. 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 service of songs, prayer and praise from Ely Cathedral.
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from the Chapel of Kings College, Cambridge.
 - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Brenda Edwards celebrates the black community's influence on the faith and music of the United Kingdom.

October is **Black History Month** and we will be showing a **film** Green Book, which won a BAFTA best picture award. The film is inspired by the true story of the world class classical and jazz pianist, Don Shirley and the friendship formed with his chauffeur following the adversity faced in their travels through the racially charged deep south of the US. Come to St. Mary's Church on Wednesday 20th October from 7.15 p.m. when refreshments will be available, to start the film at 7.30 p.m.

Coffee & Chat on Zoom is now held every first Thursday of the month. We also have a **Coffee & Chat in person** this Thursday - 21st October in St Francis' Church at 2.30pm. If you would like to come and meet others for a chat, please do join us. If you would like to do this, but cannot make this date, please let Rowena know (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com or 8777 6112).

On Saturday 23rd October there is a **COP26 Prayer Vigil at Southwark Cathedral** at 2pm. Hazel is going to walk there from West Wickham starting at 8am. It is an interesting walk through very contrasting parts of London and a variety of green spaces. If you would like to join her, you can do so at any of the following points:

- From West Wickham (starting at 7.30am) – 12.5 miles
- From Catford at 9.30am – 6.5 miles
- From Peckham Rye at 11.15am – 3 miles
- From Elephant Park at 1.15pm – 1.5 miles

Alternatively, come to Southwark Cathedral for 2pm and join in with the prayer vigil. You can get your tickets here: [Prayer Vigil for COP26 - The Diocese of Southwark \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/prayer-vigil-for-cop26-the-diocese-of-southwark).

Next Sunday, 24th October, there will be a service for **Churches Together in West Wickham** from 6pm at St Francis' Church when we will be reflecting on the work of the Bible Society. This will also be available on-line via Zoom and will be followed by a meeting where we will discuss plans for celebrating our wider community in 2022. Please do come and support this event either in-person or on-line. The on-line log-in details will be set out on a separate sheet to be sent round in hard copy and by email next week.

Our annual **Memorial Service** to remember loved ones who have died will be on Sunday 31st October at 3pm in St Mary's Church and also available on-line on our YouTube channel. If you would like the name of a loved one read out at the service, please write it clearly on a list in either of the churches, or send an email to Hazel at hazelos58@gmail.com.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they need bags for life, cooking sauce, toothbrushes, children's toothpaste, and hair conditioner. They are well-stocked with pasta, cereals and baked beans and please do not bring any fresh 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>.

Ann Dakin's funeral will be held on Wednesday, 20th October 2.15 p.m. Christ Church, Church Crookham, GU52 6LH 3.30 p.m. North Hants Golf Club GU51 1RF. If you wish to attend, please contact Elizabeth Bligh by Tuesday if possible on 020 8777 2009 or by email elizabeth.bligh@hotmail.com. Martin appreciates your prayers and the letters which he has received. If you would like to make a donation, please visit the funeral directors' website at <http://www.holmesfunerals.com/> and feel free to forward to anyone you know who has expressed an interest.

Christine Harley's funeral will be held on Friday 22nd October 2.15 p.m. at St. Mary's followed by committal at Beckenham Crematorium at 3.30 p.m. A celebration of her life will follow at Wickham Park Sports Club, 228 – 230 Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham BR4 0AU. Donations to St. Christopher's Hospice via Killicks or the family.

Thanks to all those who have contributed stories about '**God with Us**' for the magazines and our special service in July. If you have any further stories to share, please do send them to Hazel (with a request for anonymisation if you'd prefer), so that we can continue to share these in different ways.

Please continue to bring furnishings – sticks and dry leaves – for our new Messy Church **Bug Hotel** at St Mary's, so that the bugs to feel at home. If you want to walk with a purpose, please do collect some of these on your travels, bring them to St Mary's and put them into the Bug Hotel, or leave them beside it and someone from Messy Church will put them into the structure.

Our **bereavement support bags** will be especially helpful in the months ahead. If you would like a bag to give to someone that you know who has lost a loved one, do take one from the back of either of the churches.

Our Link Parish, St. Andrew's in Gweru has another new priest, Rev. Fr. Meso Sabastian. Zimbabwe has just come out of its third lockdown and the churches are only open to people who are fully vaccinated (up to a maximum of 100 people), with everyone else receiving audio sermons. Fr. Sebastian asks for energy and protection while they bring God's presence to parishioners during these trying times.

The flowers in St Francis this week are for Marion Barry's brother and have been arranged by Annie Norris.

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 Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) for St

Francis'. There are now vacancies at St. Marys and St. Francis, so please get in touch if you would like a pedestal. There is a list to sign in the vestibule at St. Marys.

If you are able to spare time to prepare onions for pickling to sell at the Christmas Market please come to 44 Pickhurst Mead, Annette's home on Wednesday 20th October at 10am. Tea, coffee and tissues will be provided but if possible bring your own knife.

Jars for pickled onions are needed at St. Marys. If anyone has any large one and a half to two-pound jars with good fitting lids could they please leave them in the vestibule or ring Ann on 8464 1609 and she would be willing to collect them. Also required 1lb jars for marmalade. Thank you

There are some jars of blackcurrant jam labelled 2010 in St. Mary's vestibule. Is anyone able to let Gifty know where these have come from? Thank you.

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

God, our light and our salvation: illuminate our lives, that we may see your goodness in the land of the living, and looking on your beauty, may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

Isaiah 53: 4-12

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own

way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes

his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Gospel Reading:**Mark 10: 35-45**

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.³⁷ They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"³⁹ "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been

prepared."⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Post Communion Prayer

God our Father, whose Son, the light unfailing, has come from heaven to deliver the world from the darkness of ignorance: let these holy mysteries open the eyes of our understanding that we may know the way of life, and walk in it without stumbling; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sermon – Ken Bryan

Isn't it amazing that we worship an almighty God, all seeing and all knowing who sent his Son into our world not to lord it over everyone but to become a servant for all.

In our gospel we have Jesus telling James and John and all his disciples something that they find hard to understand. Their preconceptions of a Messiah must be turned upside down. He has not come to be a powerful lord, as the rest of the world would expect of a leader, but he is to be a servant even as humble as a slave as modern translations have it.

The disciples would have known their scripture and may have made the link between what Jesus was saying to them and what Isaiah had written some seven hundred years before. But it probably was not until after Jesus' crucifixion and later that they came to realise the link with the Old Testament scripture.

Their teaching had probably told them that the passage in Isaiah was about the transgressions of the Jews and their need to turn back to God rather than about an individual.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the new Christians began to see that the predictions of a Messiah in the Old Testament were about Jesus and that he was not what had been expected but was as Isaiah had predicted. And the gospel and epistle writers make many references to this.

Isaiah predicted that the Servant of the Lord would be disfigured by suffering and rejected by many. Jesus was struck, spat on, mocked, and blasphemed as it says in Mark 15: 'And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him'.

Isaiah said this person would come from humble beginnings. Jesus grew up in the city of Nazareth which was not considered to be an important place, as John writes in chapter 1: Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'

Isaiah said that the Servant would bear our sins and suffer in our place. As it says in 1 Peter 2 'He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed'.

Isaiah said that he would be wounded for our transgressions taking our punishment upon himself. In John 10 Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep".

Isaiah said that despite being oppressed and afflicted he would not open his mouth. Jesus did not defend himself before the Sanhedrin, Pontius Pilate, or Herod, as written in Matthew 26 and 27 and in Luke 23.

Isaiah even said that he would die and his tomb would be with the rich, and Matthew 27 says 'So Joseph of Arimathea took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb'. Joseph being a rich man who was a member of the ruling Council.

And finally, Isaiah said that even though he has been buried he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days. This surely points to his resurrection.

So what did it mean for the disciples and what does it mean for us? They were told by Jesus to stop looking to the world's way of judging people. Stop trying to see where they were in the pecking order and stop comparing themselves with others. And primarily to stop thinking about themselves first and foremost.

They try to follow Jesus' example and they want to follow him through thick and thin, but they are challenged as was Peter when at the last supper he said he would follow Jesus and not desert him saying 'even though I must die with you, I will not deny you'. Yet he ends up denying Jesus trying to save face in front of others until the cock crows and he feels his shame and shallowness at a deep promise broken.

For us who are all like sheep who have strayed away at times we know we have a path to follow that has been given us by Jesus and his example. He was wounded and paid the ultimate price by his sacrifice on the cross for us and for our sins.

The first thing for us to do is admit we are sinners and to repent, to turn away from our sins and turn to Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Then all of our sins, past and present are dealt with. By trusting in Jesus, the power of God cleanses and changes us.

The message of Isaiah 53, is that we have a God who is wounded for us and who is wounded with us, making him the ultimate wounded healer.

One of the most effective ways we can demonstrate the love of Christ is being present with someone in their woundedness, listening to them, and allowing them to be sure they are understood. Christ is counting on us to be his listening ears, his loving heart, and his understanding presence. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

The suffering that Isaiah mentions can be seen in people today who are seen to be outsiders because of physical or mental conditions who are rejected by many and are made to feel inferior or of little worth. Society pushes them to the margins. But Jesus took on this mantle and embraces them as children of God and it is for us not to dismiss them or count them unworthy but to share in their pain and hold them up as fellow human beings. Giving them dignity and encouraging their own self-worth.

There are so many areas of our life where we are called to show Christ's love in our troubled world. And it doesn't always come easily answering the call to servant-hood which Jesus places before us now. Wherever we go, the world will push us to be about something different, but we must hold on to what we know is right and hold on to the example of Jesus our servant king.

So let us have the joy of knowing that we have a God who loves us so much that he sent his son our saviour to die for us and give thanks that if we repent, our sins can be forgiven.

Amen

Prayer Pointers

As the Climate Change conference of Cop26 draws closer may those who attend take on board the seriousness of the effects of global warming and be prepared to make hard decisions about the future wellbeing of our planet. Pray for all who will be walking to Southwark Cathedral and for the Prayer Vigil on the 23rd.

Pray for the Living in Love and Faith Course for those who lead the groups and those who attend.

Pray for Zimbabwe as she emerges from her third lockdown, for St Andrews' Gweru our link parish and her new priest Rev Fr Meso Sabastian who asks for energy and protection while they bring God's presence to parishioners during these trying times.

Continue to pray Afghanistan, for her Leaders, that they rule with justice, integrity and impartiality and for her people as they continue to adjust to a new regime. Pray for those fleeing from the new regime that they will be kept safe, and for them and all refugees that wherever they find themselves they will be safe and welcomed. Pray that the Country will receive the Aid it needs.

For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce, Julie Bailey, Carole Hubbard, Conor Owlett and Robert Davis – and those unknown to us but known to God alone.

Pray for Christine Harley, and Ann Dakin who died recently and whose funerals will be this week, may they rest in peace and rise in glory and we pray for their families and friends as they mourn their passing. Pray for all who have lost their lives through violence.