

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

18th June 2023: 2nd Sunday after Trinity

Hazel writes:

We had a wonderful **community** feel to the Garden Party at St Mary's on Saturday and the lunchtime concert on Thursday had a **commercial** benefit by showing what a great space St Francis' Church is for recitals, as well as offering a music student an opportunity to perform in front of an audience – a blessing for all involved. Do join us at our next date on Thursday 13th July.

This week we have Holy Communion services at 8am and 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

Next **Sunday 25th June**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church, 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 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.

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.

There is a Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for **Pat Allegacone** on Wednesday 21st June at 3pm in St Francis' Church with refreshments following the service in the North Aisle of the church.

Theo Jacques, from our Messy Church congregation is being **baptised** on Saturday 24th June at 1pm in St Mary's Church. All are welcome at the service.

The **Hayes Symphony Orchestra** have a concert at St Francis' on Saturday 24th June at 7.30 p.m. The theme of this concert is British Sounds with pieces by Coleridge-Taylor, the 'London' Symphony by Haydn and Vaughan Williams' 5th Symphony. You can get tickets here: <https://hayes.makingmusicplatform.com/Summer23> or on the door.

We have a **Comedy Night** at St Francis' Church Hall on Friday 7th July. Doors open at 7pm with a bar available. The evening will be hosted by Carly Smallman, and will feature other guests, Stefano Paoloni and Alyssa Kyria. You can get tickets from

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis-of-assisi>. All profits will be in aid of local charities (including Bromley Foodbank).

A **St Francis of Assisi Exhibition at the National Gallery** presents the art and imagery of St Francis from the 13th century to today and examines how his spiritual radicalism, his commitment to the poor, his love of God and nature, as well as his striving for peace between enemies and openness to dialogue with other religions, make him a figure of enormous relevance to our times. We are planning to go as a group to view this exhibition on Saturday 8th July, gathering at West Wickham Station in time for the 10.17am to Charing Cross, then an hour and a half in the gallery and lunch for those who wish in the crypt cafe at St Martin's in the Field at 12.45pm. Although the exhibition is free, it is advisable to book. I've already made a group booking, so if you'd like to join the group, let me know: Richard Ford (020 8289 2432 or richard.ford73@gmail.com).

Our next **Women's Group** meeting is at St Francis on Tuesday 18th July at 8 p.m. We are focussing on homelessness. Anne Horner-Tree will speak about the Bromley Homeless Starter Pack Scheme which provides household items for those made homeless, (e.g., on coming out of prison, or returning from hospital and finding accommodation is taken back by the landlord and the contents disposed of - this really happens). Brian Griffiths will also speak about the experience of some from St Mary's and St Francis' in travelling weekly to London with sandwiches and soup for the homeless on the streets. Please bring along suitable items for donation (e.g., cutlery, crockery, duvet covers (not duvets), pillow slips, tea towels, saucepans, frying pans, bath towel, toothbrush, etc.) Come along and find out more and we will continue to collect in the weeks to come.

Thank you to all who contributed to this year's **Christian Aid Week collection**, in whatever way. At **St Mary's** £808 was donated, which, with Gift Aid, totals £922, a splendid sum. Many thanks, too, to Tony Ivey who coordinated our activities.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned vegetables, cold meat tins, desserts (e.g. sponge pudding, jelly, Angel Delight), coffee, ladies' deodorant and toothpaste. They have plenty of pasta, cereal 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'.

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

Faithful Creator,
whose mercy never fails:
deepen our faithfulness to
you and to your living
Word, Jesus Christ our
Lord.

First Reading:**Romans 5: 1-8**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone

might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Gospel Reading:**Matthew 9: 35-38, 10: 1-8**

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his

brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

Post Communion Prayer

Loving Father, we thank you for feeding us at the supper of your Son: sustain us with your Spirit, that we may serve you here on earth until our joy is complete in heaven, and we share in the eternal banquet with Jesus Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION – Ken Bryan

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild. How often have you heard that saying? Well here in Matthew's gospel we have none of it. Here we have a bold, active Jesus, letting people know what he thinks and telling his disciples to do the things that he has been doing. He is a leader and one that these ordinary men respect so much that they are willing to follow him away from family and the work that they know best.

Jesus is bold enough to go to different towns where he is only known by reputation and to talk to large gatherings.

And is his message quietly given? Not a bit of it. He proclaims the good news of the kingdom. That is the first thing he wants to do, and to enforce in their minds who he is he cures many people with different diseases and sicknesses.

As their leader he calls his disciples together and tells them what he wants them to do. He is confident in what he has done and in what he can instruct them to do. He gives them authority, which he has been given by God and he now passes that authority on to them to cast out demons and cure disease and sickness as they had been watching him do.

Here the disciples are named to say exactly who has been given this authority. How important are names to define us and set us apart but also to identify us when we do good or bad. As we see when the name of Judas is associated with his dreadful deed of betraying Jesus.

We know that our names are significant to us and if people get our name wrong it means something to us. And we try to get other people's name right when we speak to them.

They are given instructions at this initial time to go just to the Jews and avoid the Gentiles and Samaritans. He first came to 'his' people and it was they that rejected him and had him crucified, so fulfilling **Psalm 118 v22** - *'The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone'*.

This is repeated in **Matthew 21 v22**. The Jews, the chosen people, are given the message of the coming of the kingdom of God here on earth first. Many received it but many more chose to ignore or reject it.

And how many times in the Old Testament do we read of the Jews rejecting God and turning to the Baals and other gods? Despite the wise Moses and so many of the prophets.

In the book of Judges, we have **Judges 3:7** *'The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and worshipping the Baals'*. Then a few chapters later in **Judges 10:10** *'So the Israelites cried to the Lord, saying, 'We have sinned against you, because we have abandoned our God and have worshipped the Baals.'*

And this was to happen time and time again. They listened to prophets but then in time forgot what they had said to them.

Jesus sends his disciples to what he calls the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This has echoes of the words in **Jeremiah 50 v6** *'My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains; from mountain to hill they have gone, they have forgotten their fold'*.

Jesus is saying that the leadership has led them away from the right path. And later when Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep, he says that the shepherd goes after the one that is lost, bringing it back to re-join the ninety-nine.

Now they are sent out with further instruction to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come near. They are to heal the sick and also to raise the dead. Maybe that is not only the literal dead but also those who are dead to the word of God.

Jesus tells them that the harvest is great but the labourers are few. He is saying that here may only be a few of them but their task is important because there are many people who need to hear the message. Jesus is sending out his small band of followers who are going to make a world of difference when Jesus is no longer with them.

He has given them authority and I believe at our baptism we also are given that authority, each one of us.

We are the labourers of today. Do we seriously believe that? Are we going to take on that mantle and look for opportunities to tell of our faith in a risen Jesus and to say how it has changed our life? If we are nervous about doing this, we must be confident. People can't argue with your testimony because it is how you feel. We don't have to see them converted but our words will have affected them, and it is then up to them to make the next step. God may well have put us in their path and given us the opportunity to be a witness for Jesus.

I was struck in the reading at Jesus being able to see that the crowd he was addressing was full of people who were harassed and helpless. Not just sitting quietly listening to him.

If we look around at friends and neighbours today do we not see many who are harassed and helpless? A feeling that they are not in control of their lives. Jobs are more precarious with companies struggling. Although some are doing well others are having to take jobs with a low income that doesn't match their outgoings and maybe take on a second job as well to make ends meet.

The cost of things in the shops is going up alarmingly, making decisions difficult as to what to buy. Then there is the enormous increase in the cost of energy. In many cases it has become a decision of eat or heat. The current warm spell is helping with a reduced use of energy but even standing charges have risen and need to be paid.

Rents are increasing to make even having a roof over your head a challenge. Let alone the underlying uncertainty that the pandemic brought and is still having its effect on mental health, and the war in Ukraine makes it a very unsettling time. And the crime rate doesn't help peoples' equanimity.

So, people feel harassed and in so many of the situations feel helpless.

When Jesus saw that the crowd felt harassed and helpless, he didn't shy away from them but boldly proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God. He told his disciples that they should do the same and be confident in preaching that the kingdom of heaven has come near.

So, for us it is to do the same. I know this feels uncomfortable and we all feel that we are not knowledgeable enough when talking about our faith but bit by bit with conversations with those we meet, we can find the words that need to be said at any given time.

God is here and wants the best for us. This does not mean we will not face difficulties and we can't say to others that all will be plain sailing but a trust in God is the start of a relationship with him that will change your life.

Talk to people first and then, when appropriate, tell of the good news of the gospel that God loves us, sent his Son to die for our sins, and has left us with the Holy Spirit to guide us.

After that you may be able to heal a sick person and even cast out the demons of anxiety, fears and worries. Suggest to them to put them to the Lord.

We have received God's grace freely so we should share that with others freely.

Bold Jesus wants active followers who will bring in his harvest. **Amen**

Prayer Pointers

Pray that through our words and actions on our daily frontlines, people may see Jesus. May we tell the story of Jesus through the example of our lives as well as our words.

In the Southwark Diocesan Prayer Cycle, pray for the Battersea Deanery – for the Area Dean, Simon Butler, and the Lay Chair Peter Wolstenholme.

On Father's Day, pray for God's blessing on all fathers. Pray that they may be good role models and loving towards their families. Pray that they may have patience and grace to handle difficult situations in a loving way.

Pray for the victims of the incident on Monday in Nottingham. Pray for the families mourning the loss of their loved ones and for the police investigation team.

Hold before God places in the world where there is conflict. Pray especially for the people of Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, Turkey and Afghanistan.

After a turbulent week in politics, pray for Members of Parliament - that they will make wise decisions for the good of their constituents and that they will be able to cope with the stresses and strains of public office. Pray that good and just decisions will be made and that the tone of debate is measured and constructive.

Pray for those who are ill, in sadness, in confusion and those whose faith is being severely tested. In our congregations pray for these by name – Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Joan Mountain, James Pitt-Payne, Jack Bramwell and Sue Jones – and those known to God alone.

Hold before God all those who have died. Pray especially for Daniel Grainger, Pat Allegacone and Martin Rees and their families.

Offer our own personal prayers and thanksgivings - all those things that worry us; those situations we feel helpless in; those decisions that burden us; those losses that overwhelm us, and all that we are thankful for.