

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

## 19<sup>th</sup> December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Hazel writes:

Sadly, a number of our community events were cancelled this week, but I did manage to keep in touch with the St Francis' pre-school, who I told the nativity story to. Here is a picture of their nativity advent calendar.

I also visited the Beavers at an outdoor event which they held. My photo of them singing Christmas songs around the fire was too dark to include in this pew sheet.



Our distribution of Christmas Foodbank hampers to families in the borough is happening this weekend. Here are the hampers all ready for delivery. This has obviously been a tough year for so

many people. May I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a New Year where we can look forward to better times.

Our **Christmas services** will be at the following times and places:

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.00am Family Carol service at St Francis'

4.00pm Carol service at St Mary's

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Christingle service at St Mary's

6.00pm Lighting the Lamps at St Francis'

11.15pm Midnight Communion at both churches

Christmas Day 10.00am Family Communion at St Francis'

Next **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December**, we will have a Holy Communion service at 10am in St. Mary's Church.

And on **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January** there will be a service of Holy Communion at 8.00 a.m. in St. Mary's Church and at 10.00 a.m. in St. Francis Church.

**Morning Prayer** is held this 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

at St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am. We will take a break for Christmas, returning to in-person Morning Prayer on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January**.

**Resources and updates for the week ahead** – This week our services will be livestreamed on YouTube at the following times:

- Carol service at St Francis' this Sunday **at 10am**
- Carol service at St Mary's this Sunday **at 4pm**
- Christingle service at St Mary's on Christmas Eve **at 4pm**
- Midnight Communion at St Mary's on Christmas Eve **at 11.15pm**.

The service on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January will also be livestreamed on YouTube at 10am. 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 over the Christmas period:

- The Church of England's national virtual services will be available on their website at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org).
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to today:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 -A service for 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent with the Chapel Choir of Methodist College, Belfast.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Sacred Trinity Church, Salford with Heartedge Manchester Choral Scholars.
  - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Katherine Jenkins looks forward to Christmas with favourite carols in Westminster Abbey.
- **Carols from Kings** is broadcast on BBC2 at 6.15pm on Christmas Eve and at 8.45am on Christmas Day. It is also on Radio 4 at 3pm on Christmas Eve and on Radio 3 at 1pm on Christmas Day.

**On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December:**

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org).
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 – South Sanctuary Gospel Choir celebrate with Mel Giedroyc reading favourites for Boxing Day.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford on the feast of St. Stephen.
  - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. –Daniel O'Donnell shares his journey of faith and his favourite hymns and carols.

**Coffee & Chat** will be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 2.30pm on Zoom and our next in person date is on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January in St Francis' Church. 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 the date, or would like the log-in details, please let Rowena know ([rowena.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:rowena.griff19@btinternet.com) or 8777 6112).

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>.

**Help a Hospice and save a tree:** send your Christmas greetings to all your friends in the congregation by putting a card on the Christmas Greetings board at the back of church at St. Francis. The money you save from not sending cards can be donated to Demelza House, our local Children's Hospice. Please complete a Gift Aid envelope if you are a taxpayer. Cheques should be made payable to Demelza House.

The **London Concert Chorus** will be performing together with a live band, Firefly, and special guest, Emma Hatton, from West End shows at St Francis' Church on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 7pm. This is a sing-along Christmas concert with tickets available at [www.torchentertainment.co.uk](http://www.torchentertainment.co.uk) or on 0333 666 3366.

**St. Mary's** will be putting together the Christingle bags in the hall at 2.15 p.m. on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Any help with this would be much appreciated.

**St. Mary's** could do with one or two extra volunteers to help with the Parish lunches on the first Wednesday of the month. If you feel that you might be able to help with this, could you please contact Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 or [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com). Thank you.

We are looking to increase the number of in-person services held in both churches in 2022 on Sunday mornings, which we hope will create a much greater sense of regularity in our worship, with people able to feel safe in a space that they know well. As a consequence, we will be needing more volunteers to support these services. If you feel able to add any of the following roles to your schedule, please let the following people know:

Welcomers at St Mary's - Beryl Bolton - [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com)

Welcomers at St Francis' - Joan Burford – [jandbburford@talktalk.net](mailto:jandbburford@talktalk.net)

Readers at St Mary's - Kay Mussard - [kay@mussard.org.uk](mailto:kay@mussard.org.uk)

Readers at St Francis' - Joan Burford - [jandbburford@talktalk.net](mailto:jandbburford@talktalk.net)

Intercessors at both churches - Hazel O'Sullivan - [hazelos58@gmail.com](mailto:hazelos58@gmail.com)

Refreshments at St Mary's - Beryl Bolton - [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com)

Refreshments at St Francis' - Marion Barry - [whitelandm@yahoo.com](mailto:whitelandm@yahoo.com)

Livestreaming and slides at St Mary's - Gifty Northey - [office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk](mailto:office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk)

Livestreaming at St Francis' - Nichola Nightingale - [nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk)

It has been some time now since we have had hard copies of **The Bridge**, the monthly publication on news in the Diocese of Southwark. Here is a link to the place where electronic copies are available: [southwark.anglican.org/thebridge](http://southwark.anglican.org/thebridge). If anyone believes that we should re-publish individual articles as ones of interest in our own parish magazine, please let Hazel know.

### **St Francis and St Mary's Arts events 2022: supporting mental health.**

As you may know, we cancelled plans for a Festival of Arts in 2020 due to the pandemic. Instead, we would like to have two arts weekends this year, linking these to how the Arts can have a positive influence on people's mental health, which will be so important in 2022:

- The first would be a Visual Arts weekend and might include a photography exhibition, film night and art exhibitions and will be 9-10<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- Then a Written Word weekend will be 24-25<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and might include a book exhibition, poetry and other readings.

This is all in the very early planning stage and we would like many people to contribute ideas, plan and organise these events. If you would like to get involved please contact any of us: Ken ([kennethabryan@aol.com](mailto:kennethabryan@aol.com)), Kay ([kay@mussard.org.uk](mailto:kay@mussard.org.uk)), Debbie ([debadams64@icloud.com](mailto:debadams64@icloud.com)), Tim ([tim.shingler@ntlworld.com](mailto:tim.shingler@ntlworld.com)), Nicky ([nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk)) and Kate ([katedyer41@hotmail.com](mailto:katedyer41@hotmail.com)).

Please continue to bring furnishings – sticks and dry leaves – for our **Messy Church Bug Hotel at St Mary's** so that the bugs 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.

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](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

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

**Collect**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**First Reading:**

**Mic. 5: 2-5a**

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD in the majesty of the name

of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;<sup>5</sup> and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

**Gospel Reading**

**Luke 1: 39-45**

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,<sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.<sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit<sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of

your womb.<sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?'<sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy.<sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

**Post Communion Prayer**

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Collect**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in  
wonder at heaven  
touching earth: accept  
our heartfelt praise as we  
worship you,  
our Saviour and our  
eternal God.

**First Reading:****Isaiah 52: 7-10**

How beautiful upon the  
mountains are the feet of  
the messenger who  
announces peace, who  
brings good news, who  
announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, 'Your  
God reigns.'<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your  
sentinels lift up their  
voices, together they sing  
for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the LORD to  
Zion.<sup>9</sup> Break forth  
together into singing, you  
ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the LORD has  
comforted his people, he  
has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup> The LORD has bared his  
holy arm before the eyes  
of all the nations; and all

the ends of the earth shall  
see the salvation of our  
God.

**Gospel Reading:****John 1: 1-14**

In the beginning was the  
Word, and the Word was  
with God, and the Word  
was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the  
beginning with God.<sup>3</sup> All  
things came into being  
through him, and without  
him not one thing came  
into being. What has  
come into being<sup>4</sup> in him  
was life, and the life was  
the light of all  
people.<sup>5</sup> The light shines  
in the darkness, and the  
darkness did not  
overcome it.<sup>6</sup> There was a  
man sent from God,  
whose name was  
John.<sup>7</sup> He came as a  
witness to testify to the  
light, so that all might  
believe through him.<sup>8</sup> He  
himself was not the light,  
but he came to testify to  
the light.<sup>9</sup> The true light,  
which enlightens  
everyone, was coming  
into the world.<sup>10</sup> He was in  
the world, and the world

came into being through  
him; yet the world did not  
know him.<sup>11</sup> He came to  
what was his own and his  
own people did not  
accept him.<sup>12</sup> But to all  
who received him, who  
believed in his name, he  
gave power to become  
children of God,<sup>13</sup> who  
were born, not of blood  
or of the will of the flesh  
or of the will of man, but  
of God.<sup>14</sup> And the Word  
became flesh and lived  
among us, and we have  
seen his glory, the glory as  
of a father's only son, full  
of grace and truth.

**Post Communion Prayer**

God our Father,  
whose Word has come  
among us in the Holy  
Child of Bethlehem: may  
the light of faith illumine  
our hearts and shine in  
our words and deeds;  
through him who is Christ  
the Lord.

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**Collect**

God in Trinity,  
eternal unity of perfect  
love: gather the nations to  
be one family, and draw us  
into your holy life  
through the birth of  
Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus  
Christ.

**First Reading:**

**Col. 3: 12-17**

<sup>12</sup> As God's chosen ones,  
holy and beloved, clothe  
yourselves with  
compassion, kindness,  
humility, meekness, and  
patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with one  
another and, if anyone has  
a complaint against  
another, forgive each other;  
just as the Lord has forgiven  
you, so you also must  
forgive. <sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe  
yourselves with love,  
which binds everything  
together in perfect  
harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the  
peace of Christ rule in your  
hearts, to which indeed you  
were called in the one  
body. And be  
thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of  
Christ dwell in you richly;  
teach and admonish one  
another in all wisdom; and  
with gratitude in your  
hearts sing psalms, hymns,

and spiritual songs to God.  
<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in  
word or deed, do  
everything in the name of  
the Lord Jesus, giving  
thanks to God the Father  
through him.

**Gospel Reading:**

**Luke 2: 41- 52**

<sup>41</sup> Now every year his  
parents went to Jerusalem  
for the festival of the  
Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when he  
was twelve years old,  
they went up as usual for  
the festival. <sup>43</sup> When the  
festival was ended and they  
started to return, the boy  
Jesus stayed behind in  
Jerusalem, but his parents  
did not know it. <sup>44</sup> Assuming  
that he was in the group of  
travellers, they went a day's  
journey. Then they started  
to look for him among their  
relatives and  
friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did  
not find him, they returned  
to Jerusalem to search for  
him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they  
found him in the temple,  
sitting among the teachers,  
listening to them and asking  
them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all  
who heard him were  
amazed at his

understanding and his  
answers. <sup>48</sup> When his  
parents saw him they were  
astonished; and his mother  
said to him, 'Child, why  
have you treated us like  
this? Look, your father and I  
have been searching for you  
in great anxiety.' <sup>49</sup> He said  
to them, 'Why were you  
searching for me? Did you  
not know that I must be in  
my Father's house?' <sup>50</sup> But  
they did not understand  
what he said to  
them. <sup>51</sup> Then he went  
down with them and came  
to Nazareth and was  
obedient to them. His  
mother treasured all these  
things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And  
Jesus increased in wisdom  
and in years, and in divine  
and human favour.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Heavenly Father, whose  
blessed Son shared at  
Nazareth the life  
of an earthly home: help  
your Church to live as one  
family, united in love and  
obedience, and bring us all  
at last to our home in  
heaven; through Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

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**Collect**

Creator of the heavens,  
who led the Magi by a star  
to worship the Christ-child:  
guide and sustain us, that we  
may find our journey's end in  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**First Reading: Eph.3: 1-12**

This is the reason that I Paul  
am a prisoner for Christ Jesus  
for the sake of you  
Gentiles— <sup>2</sup>for surely you have  
already heard of the  
commission of God's grace that  
was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>and  
how the mystery was made  
known to me by revelation, as I  
wrote above in a few words, <sup>4</sup>a  
reading of which will enable  
you to perceive my  
understanding of the mystery  
of Christ. <sup>5</sup>In former  
generations this mystery was  
not made known to  
humankind, as it has now been  
revealed to his holy apostles  
and prophets by the  
Spirit: <sup>6</sup>that is, the Gentiles  
have become fellow-heirs,  
members of the same body,  
and sharers in the promise in  
Christ Jesus through the  
gospel.<sup>7</sup> Of this gospel I have  
become a servant according to  
the gift of God's grace that was  
given to me by the working of  
his power. <sup>8</sup>Although I am the  
very least of all the saints, this  
grace was given to me to bring  
to the Gentiles the news of the  
boundless riches of  
Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make everyone  
see what is the plan of the

mystery hidden for ages in God  
who created all things; <sup>10</sup>so  
that through the church the  
wisdom of God in its rich  
variety might now be made  
known to the rulers and  
authorities in the heavenly  
places. <sup>11</sup>This was in  
accordance with the eternal  
purpose that he has carried out  
in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in  
whom we have  
access to God in boldness and  
confidence through faith in  
him.

**Gospel Reading:**

**Matthew 2: 1-12**

In the time of King Herod, after  
Jesus was born in Bethlehem of  
Judea, wise men from the East  
came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking,  
'Where is the child who has  
been born king of the Jews?  
For we observed his star at its  
rising, and have come to pay  
him homage.'<sup>3</sup> When King  
Herod heard this, he was  
frightened, and all Jerusalem  
with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together  
all the chief priests and scribes  
of the people, he inquired of  
them where the Messiah was  
to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, 'In  
Bethlehem of Judea; for so it  
has been written by the  
prophet: <sup>6</sup>"And you,  
Bethlehem, in the land of  
Judah, are by no means least  
among the rulers of Judah; for  
from you shall come a  
ruler who is to shepherd my  
people Israel.'" <sup>7</sup>Then Herod  
secretly called for the wise men

and learned from them the  
exact time when the star had  
appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them  
to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and  
search diligently for the child;  
and when you have found him,  
bring me word so that I may  
also go and pay him  
homage.'<sup>9</sup> When they had  
heard the king, they set out;  
and there, ahead of them,  
went the star that they had  
seen at its rising, until it  
stopped over the place where  
the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw  
that the star had stopped, they  
were overwhelmed with  
joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house,  
they saw the child with Mary  
his mother; and they knelt  
down and paid him homage.  
Then, opening their treasure-  
chests, they offered him gifts of  
gold, frankincense, and  
myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been  
warned in a dream not to  
return to Herod, they left for  
their own country by another  
road.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Lord God, the bright  
splendour whom the nations  
seek: may we who with the  
wise men have been drawn by  
your light discern the glory of  
your presence in your Son,  
the Word made flesh, Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

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## Thought for Christmas: What if there was no Christmas? - Hazel O'Sullivan

Well, here we are again, with uncertainty about what's going to happen at Christmas because of the virus. Last year many said that Boris had cancelled Christmas with the last-minute change of rules about how many people you were allowed to mix with. And all of this has got me thinking. What would it be like if there really was no Christmas?

Well, to start with, it's become clear that Christmas is an important time for many retail and hospitality businesses. For some, more than half of their annual income results from Christmas spending. If there was no Christmas, then this would mean that some people would be out of work.

However, the effect of Christmas is more than financial.

Just think. There wouldn't be any gift-giving or receiving. There'd be no trees and other Christmas decorations. There'd be no Christmas parties (sorry, 'gatherings'). There'd be no Santa on our cards or in the grottos. All of these things help to gather friends and family to do things together.

But of course, life would still go on without these aspects of Christmas wouldn't it – we discovered that last year. Christmas is more than chestnuts roasting on an open fire or sleigh bells ringing in the snow.

So, when I ask the question: what would it be like if there really was no Christmas, what I'm really asking is what would it be like if Jesus had never been born? How would that affect the world?

To do this I want to start with thinking about boats. You can tell the size of a boat by the size of the wake that it leaves. When a cruise liner passes by, a huge wake creates a wave some distance from where it passed. However, a small sailboat might leave no sign at all near to where it passed by after just a minute. The same can be thought about any man or woman: how big a change have they made to the world at the end of their life? For some, the impact will have been huge, while for others, very few people will have noticed their impact.

If we think about it in these terms, what impact did Jesus have on the world? What did he leave to show that he'd been there, like any boat leaves a wake in the water?

Well, it's clear what he didn't leave – there's no photo, painting or sculpture that was made while he was alive or very soon after his death, so we don't really know whether he was tall

or short; fat or thin. We can't go and visit his childhood home, in the same way that we can see where William Shakespeare grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon. And there are no memoirs or other books that he wrote – not a single word written in his own hand.

So, in some ways, his life was like a sailboat. He came into the world almost unnoticed in a frontier village on the edge of the Roman Empire and he left virtually nothing behind. And yet, the wake that was created by his life was big enough to cover the whole world with a tidal wave several miles high.

In the book, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe", the author CS Lewis talks about a land where it was always winter and never Christmas. Maybe this is what the world would be like without Jesus. What would a constant metaphorical winter look like?

If we think back to the time when Jesus was born, we know that it was dangerous to be born into this ancient world. Life was cheap. Jesus questioned the way that the world operated at the time, and he taught his followers to take on his alternative view of life – one where everyone is precious. Jesus saw life as a sacred gift, and this is now foundational to the way in which our society is structured. Christ's life was characterised by care for the least in society – the sick, the elderly, widows, orphans, lepers. It is only because of Christ that there is concern for the weakest. In a world without Christmas, it would always be the strong who would win. I wonder what that would mean for people like the Rohingya refugees driven from their homes by violence against minorities – they might know no care for them at all.

This care for the weak has been created because Jesus' life gave us a revelation of God, and this made a huge difference to the world. Without God taking on human flesh and being born in that stable, we would not know him, and we'd have no chance of being saved. There'd be no good news at all. As a result of Jesus living among us as God's son, however, we know God as approachable, and we can be intimate with him.

What would it be like if there really was no Christmas? Well, there'd be no reason to celebrate because we wouldn't know God. Without Jesus, life would be very cheap. The world would be a very different place.

At our Christmas services we give thanks for Christ's birth, and we show our appreciation, not just by worshipping God in carols, but also by following Jesus and showing some concern for the weak by giving financially to a charity. At the carol services the money collected in buckets on the way out will go to:

- (at St Francis): Welcare, who work with parents, children or families locally to help them through the significant difficulties that they are experiencing.
- (at St Mary's): Crisis, who help people directly out of homelessness and campaign for the changes needed to solve it altogether.

Please do give some consideration to what the world might be like if that birth hadn't happened and contribute to the charity, to give an indication of the positive impact that Jesus Christ has had on your life, through the type of society that we live in today. That's truly something to give thanks for.

Amen.

### **Prayer Pointers**

As the numbers of people with the Omicron variant of Covid increases, pray for wisdom for politicians, medical experts and others who have the responsibility of deciding what measures should be taken to contain the pandemic. Pray that everyone will take seriously the advice given. Pray that people offered the booster dose of the vaccine in this country will take the opportunity to have it.

Thank God that we have the NHS and pray for all who work for it.

Pray for the people of Afghanistan and the Yemen, and other areas in the world which are facing potential humanitarian disasters whether due to conflict, crop failure or natural disaster, that the aid organisations will have the resources to make a difference and their personnel will be able to work in safety. Pray that the many appeals for money and equipment that are made, particularly at this time of the year, will not fall on deaf ears.

In this country pray for The Salvation Army, Crisis, the Trussell Trust and other Food Banks, Welcare and other agencies who work extra hard at this time of the year.

Pray that this Saturday's delivery of Bromley Food Bank "hampers" will take place safely.

Pray for the people of Kentucky as they clear up the damage caused by the recent tornadoes. Pray for those who have lost their lives, those who were injured, those who have lost their homes. Pray for all those affected by the accident in Australia involving an unsecured bouncy castle: for the children who died or were injured, their families and friends and the community.

Pray that, as Christmas is celebrated once again, the message of the angels will be heard loud and clear above the commercialism. Pray for all our Christmas services beginning with our two Carol Services this Sunday.

For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce, Julie Bailey, Carole Hubbard, Robert Davis and Linda Keynes. Thank God that Brian Griffiths' surgery went well and continue to pray for a good recovery.

Pray for all who find this time of year difficult.