

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

21st November: Christ the King

Hazel writes:

Today is sometimes called Stir Up Sunday. It's the day when Christmas puddings were traditionally made, as well as taking the name from the start of the post communion prayer on our readings sheet. Clearly it's a time to start looking forward to Christmas, so I do hope you'll enter into this spirit during the week and join us for the Christmas Market at St Mary's on Saturday.

Next Sunday 28th November is Advent Sunday, when 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 – Baptist minister Rev. Richard Littledale seeks out the heart of the Winter Garden
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Chapel of Keble College, Oxford.
 - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Girls Semi-final of Chorister of the Year.

Coffee & Chat on Zoom is now held every first Thursday of the month and in person on the third Thursday of the month in St Francis' Church, both 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 the date, or would like the log-in details, please let Rowena know (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>.

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. If anyone believes that we should re-publish individual articles as ones of interest in our own parish magazines, please let Hazel know.

The **St Mary's Christmas Market** is going ahead on 27th November, subject to government rules and regulations, with a different layout to take social distancing into account. The following stalls will be available this year: Bric-a-brac, Cakes & Preserves, Hampers, Bottle Tombola, Chocolates & Sweets Tombola, Books & Puzzles and Toys. Face painting will be available for both young and old. The Kitchen will be serving delicious soups, filled rolls and jacket potatoes with fillings. The Café will be in operation with tea/coffee and home-made cakes as well as the Irish Coffees. The Market does rely on your generous donations and will appreciate donations of chocolates, sweets, baked goods, bottles of any kind (alcoholic, non-alcoholic, etc). Monetary donations for the hampers will be most welcome and donations are now urgently needed for stocking the bottle, and chocolate and sweet tombolas.

Raffle tickets at £1 each for the cake and the hamper are now available from Beryl Bolton 8289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com

Tickets for the grand draw are available from Bob West 8776 0210.

Do contact Merri Womack directly if you would like to order an Advent ring this year. Her telephone number is 0208 777 8772.

Posters advertising the Market are available in the vestibule at St. Mary's please take one and display in a prominent position for the next week.

Matchbox Theatre are looking forward to welcoming you to their forthcoming production "ENGLAND EXPECTS" by their very own STEVE TOLMIE. Performances are on 2nd, 3rd and 4th December 8pm in St Francis Church Hall. Tickets are £8.50 children £6 and may be purchased online using debit/credit card at <http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-matchbox-theatre>

SATURDAY 4th DECEMBER BIG CHRISTMAS SING: REFRESHMENTS. We will need contributions of mince pies and biscuits, and there is a list at the back of church for you to sign if you can help in this way. Please bring your contributions to St Mary's or St Francis by Sunday 28th November (10am service at St. Mary's). It would be helpful if you could tick your name off the list when you have brought your donation. Donations, however small, towards other costs would also be appreciated and can be given to Kay

Mussard or Margaret Bond at St Mary's or Barbara Plummer at St Francis'. Any surplus will be given to Christian Aid.

Community lunches have started again at both St Mary's and St Francis'. The Christmas Community Lunches have always been lovely occasions and will be especially so this year. The lunch at **St. Mary's** will be on **Wednesday 8th December at 12.30 p.m.** and at **St Francis on SUNDAY 12TH DECEMBER at 12.30pm.** The cost of both is £10 and you need to book before the beginning of December. Please contact Beryl Bolton 8289 8097 for St Mary's and Barbara Goodchild on 8777 8782 for St Francis' as soon as possible if you wish to come as numbers will be restricted a little this year.

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 or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

There is a list to sign up in the vestibule at St. Marys.

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 the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory.

First Reading:

Revelation 1:4b-8

Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is coming; and from the seven spirits before his throne; ⁵ and from Jesus Christ. Jesus is the faithful witness. He is first among all who will be raised from death. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. Jesus is the one who loves us and has made us free from our sins with his blood sacrifice. ⁶ He made us his kingdom and priests who serve God his Father. To Jesus be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

⁷ Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, even those who pierced him. All peoples of the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen.

⁸ The Lord God says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the one who is, who always was, and who is coming. I am the All-Powerful."

Gospel Reading: John 18:33-37

³³ Then Pilate went back inside the palace. He called for Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
³⁴ Jesus said, "Is that your own question, or did other people tell you about me?"
³⁵ Pilate said, "I'm not a Jew! It was your own people and their leading priests who brought you before me. What have you done wrong?"

³⁶ Jesus said, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it did, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jewish leaders. No, my kingdom is not an earthly one."

³⁷ Pilate said, "So you are a king."
 Jesus answered, "You are right to say that I am a king. I was born for this: to tell people about the truth. That is why I came into the world. And everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me."

Post Communion Prayer

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sermon – Hazel O’Sullivan

Today we think about Christ the King. In the reading from Revelation (v5), it says that Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

But in our gospel reading Jesus was on trial! It would be strange for a king to be on trial. And yet this is what Pilate and Jesus are discussing, as anyone who claimed to be a king was questioning the power structures that were already in place and that’s something that’s a real challenge in this world.

I wonder what it would be like if Jesus really was our king here today; if he was the one who determined how our society operated. One of the things that this might bring is for people to understand the truth about life and living. That’s what Jesus says is distinctive about his kingship – that all those who see him as king belong to the truth (v37).

Truth is something that seems to be in question today. You only have to think back to the US Presidential elections last year to wonder about truth and who was speaking it, as the accusations and counter-accusations were being thrown around left right and centre. And you’ll have heard much over the past years about fake news, which seems to have come to the fore. How do we know which ‘truth’ is true? Well, Jesus says, if we care for or belong to the truth, then we will hear his voice. So, if everyone was to follow Jesus’ guidance (his voice), then how would the world be different?

Well, I guess to start with individual countries would co-operate a lot more with each other, so that there was a greater equality in the world. Our own international aid payments would be increased and we’d work together with others on solving issues such as climate change and getting the whole world vaccinated, rather than looking after our own populations and thinking that the job’s done. And we’d look out a lot more for those with vulnerabilities. So, I guess, in the UK, the NHS backlog of cases simply wouldn’t exist, there’d be no need for foodbanks, there’d be low unemployment and there’d be enough housing for everyone in the country.

Some years ago in the early 1940s a previous Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, published a book: ‘Christianity and Social Order’, which set out some of the things that could make a real difference in the world at that time. This vision of a post-war society that reflected the innate dignity of each person created in the image of God was hugely influential on William Beveridge and led to the establishment of the Welfare State in 1945. Specifically, William Temple proposed a number of things to

close the gap between the comfort of the middle classes and the squalor experienced by those in poverty. This was to be done through decent housing near places of work; family allowances; a minimum wage sufficient for a family of four; milk and one good meal at school each day; education up to the age of 18; workers' representation on boards through unions; 2 days rest in 7 and paid annual holiday for every worker.

Many of these aspects of social justice were put in place following the end of WW2 – the last great upset of our social order. So now, after the Coronavirus pandemic, the most recent upset of our social order, I wonder if changes along these lines could help to make a positive difference to our society today:

Having each person recognised as a child of God would mean that there was much greater equality in our society. No-one would ever have to endure the kind of racism that we heard about Asim Rafiq suffering this week. We'd welcome refugees and encourage them to work in those jobs which are so hard to fill with people from our own population, rather than shipping them off to Albania to spend months, if not years, living in poor accommodation while their asylum application is processed. And finding suitable social care for elderly parents and other family members would be so much easier, or giving this care ourselves would be better supported.

I know that some of this will be seen as unrealistic and unachievable, but if we do not even imagine what God's kingdom here on earth would be like, with Jesus as King, then it will most certainly never be achieved. So, even if the divine nature that we carry within us, is somewhat defaced and much of the world isn't geared up to live in the way that Jesus would want, let's dream on and recognise that we have the capacity for holiness and love. This might enable our personal transformation into the image of Christ himself – the presence of God. That is our destiny. And our social life, so far as it is deliberately planned, should be ordered with that destiny in view.

Yes, we must be treated as we actually are, but always with a view to what in God's purposes we are destined to become.

Amen

Prayer Pointers

Now the Climate Change conference of Cop26 has finished continue to pray that the decisions made will be acted on in the months to come. Give thanks for the agreements that were made.

You might like to continue to use the following prayer,

Creator God, giver of life,

you sustain the earth and direct the nations.

In this time of climate crisis grant us clarity to hear the groaning of creation and the cries of the poor;

challenge us to change our lifestyles;

guide our leaders to take courageous action;

enable your church to be a beacon of hope;

and foster within us a renewed vision of your purposes for your world. Amen

Continue to pray for Afghanistan, particularly in the light of the recent ISIS attacks.

Pray that all those needing food and medical aid and other assistance will receive it, especially those in isolated communities. Pray for the safety of all aid personnel.

Pray for the Leaders and People of the Sudan after the recent Coup.

Pray that the current conflict in NE Africa will be resolved

Pray for all who have lost their lives through acts of violence

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

Pray for all the preparations for the Big Sing and St Mary's Christmas market.

Pray for those who will be baptised at St Francis this Sunday, for Elisha and daughter Siena that it will be a joyful and meaningful service for all.