

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

28th February 2021: Second Sunday of Lent

Hazel writes:

Now that we have the government road map for the easing of restrictions, it is clear that we can have hope of being able to gather together in larger groups in person, but we know it is still a long road. I envisage that we will be able to give you additional details on opening the church buildings next week.

Next Sunday, 7th March there will be a **service of Holy Communion** on Zoom at 10am. An invitation with all the log-in details will be sent with next week's pew sheet.

St Francis' Church will **NOT** be open on Wednesday 3rd March as we have a funeral there this week.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – A video of the service will be livestreamed at 10am and will be available to view afterwards. All other files 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 – the Archbishop of Wales leads a service marking St. David's Day
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Chapel of Kings College, London.
 - On BBC 1: Sunday Worship at 11.15 a.m. Rev. Kate Bottley leads a service from St. Martins in Maidstone
 - Songs of Praise **on BBC2 at 1.15 p.m.** Sean Fletcher explores Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire ahead of St. David's Day.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they need UHT Milk, Tinned Potatoes, Tinned Vegetables (particularly carrots), Long life Fruit juice, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Fish, Tinned Cold meat, Toilet Rolls. Please do not bring any fresh food, as the foodbank cannot pass this on. Thank you for your continuing support.

Our **bereavement support gift bags** have proved very helpful for those who are recently bereaved and we are looking for some more knitted or crocheted forget-me-nots to include. This could be your Lent action for the week. There are patterns included on

page 3 of this pew sheet. If you make any, please deliver them to the vicarage, so that we can include them in the bags that we send out.

Each week our “**coffee/tea & chat**” on Thursday at 2.30 pm is an opportunity to share with others. It is just 40 minutes and you don’t need to commit to joining each week. Please let Rowena (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com /020 8777 6112) know if you would like the log-in details.

The **World Day of Prayer** is on Friday 5th March. St John’s will be hosting a Churches Together service at 10.30am on that day on Zoom. If you intend to join the service, please have a pebble available which you can hold. More details are included in the invitation sent with this pew sheet.

Macmillan Coffee Morning. We have received an apology and a belated acknowledgement for the £621 we raised in September for Macmillan. They expressed their thanks to all who were involved in raising this amazing amount. If there is anyone who would like to organise the event in September 2021 please let me know. Merri Womack 8777 8772.

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

Forget-me-not knitting and crochet patterns

If you crochet, here's a pattern you could use, requiring small scraps of white and pale blue double knit wool, a suitable crochet hook ideally 3.5mm(E4), a yellow button and a needle:

- Using white yarn, ch 4, ss to into the first stitch to form a tiny ring.
- Row 1: ch 3 (counts as 1 trb) work 9 trb into the centre of the ring. ss into the top of the 3ch to join. (10 sts)
- Row 2: Change to blue yarn. Join in any stitch, * in next st work (htrb, 2 trb, dtrb, 2 trb, htrb). ss in next st. repeat from * 4 more times. Work final ss back in the same st that you joined your blue yarn.
- Sew in end, sew a yellow button in the centre.

Stitches: ch – chain; ss - slip stitch; htrb - half treble; trb – treble; dtrb - double treble



If you knit, here's a pattern, based on Dementia Oxfordshire's pattern.

You will need blue and yellow yarn of the same weight, knitting needles suitable for the weight of your yarn and a large sewing needle:

- Cast on 40 stitches and knit one row.
- Knit the first stitch in the second row.
- Cast off 6 stitches (pass the red stitch over the yellow stitch in photo 1 below to cast off the first stitch).
- After casting off the 6 stitches, you should be left with two stitches on the needle and a loop between them.
- * Knit one stitch, cast off 6 stitches. Repeat from * to end. By the end of the row, your work should look like photo 2.
- Cut the end of the blue yarn, and thread the sewing needle with it.
- Transfer all the stitches from the knitting needle to the sewing needle.
- Pass the needle through the first stitch again to create a loop and pull tight.
- Weave in both ends of blue yarn. You should have something that looks like photo 4.
- Thread the needle with a length of yellow yarn.
- Sew a stitch from between each flower petal into the centre of the flower and from the middle of each petal into the centre of the flower.
- Weave in both ends of the yellow yarn.



Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call 2021

Week 2 – Kingston Episcopal area:

Wandsworth Food Bank

The Wandsworth Food Bank provides emergency food, support and advice to people across the Borough of Wandsworth who have been pulled into poverty and hardship and who are referred in crisis. It is part of the Trussell Trust nationwide network of food banks, which together campaign to end destitution.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the need has more than doubled as an increasing number of local households have been swept into severe hardship by the loss of jobs or of working hours, or illness. This has been exacerbated by benefit payments that do not cover the cost of essentials such as rent and food.

During the first lockdown in March 2020, the Wandsworth Food Bank provided emergency food and essential supplies to 1,200 individual households, seven in 10 of whom had never had to use its services before. In November and December, Wandsworth Food Bank provided nearly 300 seven-day emergency food supplies a week to local people and families. Four in 10 of these are for children, three-quarters of whom are primary school age or younger.

Wandsworth Food Bank also runs an advice project in partnership with Citizens Advice Wandsworth and this saw a similar huge spike in need in 2020. The service provides expert advice and undertakes casework to try to help people resolve the problems causing crisis and hardship, including problems related to housing, benefits, employment, domestic violence, and rights of refugees and asylum seekers. It is a vital part of the provision offered by the Wandsworth Food Bank.

One older lady was helped after a bill to fix her boiler left her without enough income for food. She lives alone, has a very low income and severe long-term health problems. In addition, she had just come out of hospital. The Food Bank Advice Project looked for extra financial support for her.

She says: "My boiler had gone and I had no heating or hot water, and I thought, 'I've got to fix it'. But when you get an unexpected cost like that — £150 — when you're living hand to mouth anyway, it's so hard. I didn't know what to do. The food bank helped me out so much. I'm completely overwhelmed by everything they have done for me, it's making me emotional. I'm so touched that there are so many kind people out there. The food they brought is just fantastic, and their support has taken so much pressure off me. I want to say a big thank you to all the people who have donated, and all the team and volunteers who put it together for people."

Norwood & Brixton Food Bank

It is not just at the Wandsworth Food Bank that people are grateful for the help and support they are being given. One of the clients at the Norwood & Brixton Food Bank, who was referred by Thames Reach, says: “I just wanted to thank the volunteers personally for their kindness and generosity, and to let them know how touched I was to receive the urgently needed help and support. They really did help me out of a dire situation and I cannot thank them enough for the work they do for myself and others.”

The Norwood & Brixton Food Bank started more than nine years ago and was originally based at St Luke, West Norwood. It is also part of the Trussell Trust network. The project has gradually expanded as the need has grown, working also from St Paul’s Brixton and Beacon Church, Brixton (when it was possible). Gradually, those involved in the food bank came to realise that food poverty was a symptom of other underlying need and they developed a signposting and advice service to offer to clients alongside the provision of food.

When COVID-19 hit, the food bank quickly realised that face-to-face sessions were no longer possible and it moved to a completely new model of operation from the beginning of the first lockdown. This necessitated reorganising the warehouse to allow for social distancing and, following the generous loan of vehicles from a local firm, the distribution of food is now done by vans.

Further generosity from local community and individuals has allowed the creation of a Lambeth-wide food bank warehouse, and the Norwood & Brixton Food Bank has managed to integrate the stock from Waterloo and Vauxhall food banks within its newly expanded and fitted-out warehouse. It has implemented a new stock control system and facilitated a much broader geographical spread for its delivery service. The food bank is now delivering 80 to 100 food parcels a day — over a tonne of food. This is five times more than before lockdown and a remarkable tribute to the dedicated and professional project leads who coordinated and managed the whole process on behalf of the participating food banks.

The food banks we are supporting run on the faith and generosity of all those who donate and volunteer. Please pray for them and consider what you can give to help to ensure that this wonderful life-giving and life-changing work can continue.

**You can donate through the Bishop of Southwark’s Lent Call:
southwark.anglican.org/lentcall**

Collect

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent, may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading: Psalm 69: 1-4a

¹ Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. ² I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. ³ I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. ⁴ More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; many are those who would destroy me, my enemies who accuse me falsely. What I did not steal must I now restore?

Gospel: John 19: 1-16

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³ They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. ⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am

bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' ⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' ⁶ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' ⁷ The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.' ⁸ Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹ He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' ¹¹ Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' ¹² From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this

man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.' ¹³ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' ¹⁵ They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' ¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Bible reading from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Sermon: Pontius Pilate – Richard Ford

So what do we know about Pontius Pilate, other than what we read in the gospels?

When Herod the Great, who was ruler in Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth and responsible for the slaughter of the boy babies in Bethlehem, but little more than a puppet king under the Romans, died, his kingdom was divided between his three sons, the youngest of whom, Archelaus, became ruler of Judea. He ruled for 10 years before being sent into exile by the Romans for misgovernment.

His replacement was a Roman official, a governor, and it was to this role that Pilate was appointed in AD26. As procurator, Pilate answered directly to the Emperor, Tiberius. The criteria for such an appointment included being an experienced and effective soldier and administrator.

But Pilate had a number of weaknesses, including a lack of respect for the Jews and their religion. Generally Rome treated the Jews carefully – they were the only nation in the Roman Empire not required to serve in the Roman Army. They also meticulously observed the second commandment: *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”*

When a Roman Governor travelled anywhere on official business, he took with him his armed guard, and their standards, which included an image of the emperor. Governors in Judea previous to Pilate had these images removed out of respect for the Jews, but not Pilate. He had marched into Jerusalem with his standards still carrying the imperial image.

When a crowd of Jews objected, Pilate threatened them with death. The crowd all bared their throats and invited him to go ahead. Pilate gave in, fearful of how the Emperor would respond to such a slaughter.

Not long after, Pilate decided that Jerusalem would benefit from an improved water supply and built an aqueduct to provide it. Whilst this was a sensible project, he made the mistake of using money from the Temple Treasury to pay for it, again infuriating the Jews.

Then a few years after Jesus' death, Pilate found himself having to deal with an incident in Samaria. An imposter drew a crowd to Mount Gerizim, the Samaritans' Holy Mountain, claiming that he would reveal to them some sacred vessels belonging to Moses that were hidden there. What made the event problematical for Pilate was that

some in the crowd were armed. Pilate ordered in his troops and a massacre took place. The Samaritans complained to Pilate's immediate superior and he was recalled to Rome in disgrace. Whilst Pilate was on his way to face Emperor Tiberius, Tiberius died. And that is the last we hear of the historical Pilate.

And it is this background information that we need to have in mind as we listen to Pilate's justification of himself in the meditation we heard earlier.

And really his claim in Stephen Cottrell's meditation, based on Matthew's Gospel, that he is innocent of Jesus' blood doesn't hold water, even though he has made a public demonstration of washing his hands of the matter, a Jewish custom derived from a passage in Deuteronomy for dealing with a murder for which no guilty party has come forward. The elders of the town closest to where the body is found are required to sacrifice a heifer and proclaim over it as they wash their hands, words which include: "O Lord, and do not hold your people guilty of the blood of an innocent man."

True, Pilate doesn't shed Jesus' blood and he doesn't witness the execution, but he gives the orders for it to be carried out, knowing that Jesus is innocent of the accusations made against him. In our reading from John, we heard Pilate say, "I find no charge against him." And in Mark's gospel, we're told that Pilate "realised that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over."

And Jesus himself, in his exchanges with Pilate makes it clear that Pilate cannot wriggle out of his part in bringing about Jesus' death, for when Pilate says to him, "Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?"¹¹ Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.'

It is generally accepted that Jesus is referring to God in his reference to Pilate's power having been given to him from above, because God is ultimately in control of all things, and that, although it is Pilate who signs the death warrant, the greater guilt belongs to the High Priest, Caiaphas, who hands Jesus over to him. But note that if the greater guilt belongs to Caiaphas, the implication is that there is still guilt applying to Pilate.

And this I think is why Pilate tries at least four times to release Jesus.

Luke, in his gospel, tells us that when the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate and accused him of stirring up the people by "teaching throughout all, Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem," Pilate seized on the place-name Galilee, and immediately referred Jesus

to King Herod, under whose jurisdiction was that part of Palestine. Although Herod treated Jesus with contempt, he didn't find him guilty and sent him back to Pilate, who then used Herod's response as justification for his own decision, saying, "I have examined him in your presence and have not found him guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod ... Indeed he has done nothing to deserve death." Luke then tells us that Pilate went on to say, "I will therefore have him flogged and release him."

This flogging was Pilate's third attempt to avoid imposing the death penalty, but we might well ask, if Jesus was innocent, why Pilate had him flogged. Almost certainly it was because he wanted to keep on the right side of the Jewish authorities. Earlier on, I referred to a couple of occasions when Pilate had mismanaged his relations with the Jews – his insistence on the soldiers carrying their standards into Jerusalem and his raid on the Temple treasury. The last thing he wanted was for the Jews to complain about him to the Emperor.

And to be flogged was not to be let off lightly. The implement the soldiers used was a cat-o'-nine tails, with bits of metal and bone inserted into the lengths of leather. In the hands of an expert, these would cut into the flesh and even the muscle and could take out an eye. Men were known to die from the flogging alone. But even this did not satisfy Jesus' accusers.

Pilate's fourth attempt to save Jesus' life is referred to in all four gospels. Pilate invokes the tradition of marking Passover by releasing one of those held prisoner by the Governor and offers the people the choice between the rebel, Barabbas, and Jesus. And so Barabbas becomes the first sinner – we're told by Mark that he was a murderer, as well as a rebel – to receive new life through Jesus going to the cross in his place.

And when this attempt to spare Jesus' life fails, Pilate gives in to the crowd, but why?

We've already seen that the incidents with the army standards and the aqueduct have left Pilate feeling insecure in his relations with the Jewish authorities, who now play on that feeling of insecurity. Their attempts to have Jesus crucified on their charge of blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, having failed to move Pilate, they play their trump card. When Pilate tries this last time to set Jesus free, John tells us that the Jews kept shouting: "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

Effectively, the Jews are saying that if you fail to put Jesus to death, we'll report to the Emperor that you spared the life of a man who claimed to be the King of the Jews, even though, we the Jewish leaders, who recognise no king but Caesar, handed him over to you.

And as Pilate well knew, Emperors don't take kindly to rivals. With his track record of upsetting the Jews, Pilate knew that he was in a difficult position. A stronger man than he might have called the Jew's bluff, but he wasn't prepared to take the risk of being recalled to Rome to give an account of his actions.

He'd already shown that he was prepared to have an innocent man flogged and tortured by his soldiers, if it was in his interests to do so. Now he was prepared to capitulate completely in order to avoid any threat to his position as Governor. But to avoid losing face completely, he goes through the charade of hand-washing, claiming both in Matthew's account and in Stephen Cottrell's meditation, that he is not responsible for Jesus' death.

And what does this have to say to us.

First, of course, it reminds us, as we relive Jesus' trial, of just what was the cost of our salvation.

That Simon of Cyrene had to be summoned to help Jesus carry the cross on which he was to be hung to the place of execution, with the soldiers taking the longest route possible, so as to ensure that the maximum number of people could be deterred from messing with the Romans, tells us just how much the flogging must have taken out of Jesus. And Jesus underwent all this, together with the crucifixion itself, on our behalf.

But perhaps more significantly, in relation to Pilate, it encourages us to avoid doing things that might one day return to haunt us. Had not Pilate alienated the Jews over the images on the Roman standards and his raids on the Temple treasury, he might have been able to stand up to the threats of the crowd. Indeed had he been of greater integrity, he might have been prepared to spare the life of an innocent victim, at whatever cost to himself.

And that's the challenge to us: in our dealings with our fellows, do we have the courage to stand up for the truth, even when it may have consequences for ourselves?

Have you ever, walked away from a car accident in which you were not directly involved in order to avoid being used as a witness?

Have you ever changed the subject in a conversation, rather than have to admit to some indiscretion in the past?

Have you, and this will apply more to younger people, ever posted something on the internet that in later years might be a cause of acute embarrassment, at the very least. And would you then deny responsibility for it?

And if the answer to this, or similar questions, is yes, do you then have the right to condemn Pilate?

Amen.

Prayer Pointers

Remembering how Pontius Pilate asked the searching question 'What is Truth?', pray for those who sit in judgement in courts, tribunals and enquiries as they seek to find the truth. May justice be fair and proportionate. Pray that the real truth may be exposed not hidden away. Pray for all those who campaign for justice on behalf of the abused, the poor, the voiceless and the marginalised in society. Pray that we as the church may not be afraid to raise our voices on their behalf and not wash our hands of issues as Pilate did.

Pray that as Christ's body here in West Wickham we may demonstrate a distinct and radically different way of life. Pray that we may not simply follow the crowd as Pilate did – afraid to stand up for our faith and lifestyle. May we be salt and light to our community especially in these difficult times. May we be uplifting, effective witnesses for the Gospel of our Lord.

Pray for teachers and pupils as they prepare to return to school after lockdown on March 8th. Pray for governmental education ministers as they devise policies and procedures to help students catch up and achieve fair examination grades at the end of the school year. We lift everyone in our local school communities up to God asking for a blessing on them and all their families and carers.

News of violent crime continues to dominate the headlines in London. We continue to pray for an end to bloodshed on our streets – for an end to gang warfare and drug crime. Pray for the police who have to investigate these crimes and for the families of the victims.

Pray for all those who are ill and for those who have had surgery or treatment recently –especially for Geoffrey Smith and John Godfrey. Jesus taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for Him. In this time of anxiety during the covid crisis, pray for all health workers that they may be granted the strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and the love of God.

We give thanks for all those who now see face to face the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. Pray for those whose earthly life has come to an end, especially for Samuel Akadi (whose funeral takes place next week), Dennis Barcoo and Margaret Taylor. May they now experience your greater glory. We pray for those who mourn the recent death of those they've loved, especially Samuel's mother, Jane, his fiancée, Amy and his young son Isaac and for Darren and Mark Barcoo mourning the death of their father, Dennis.

Prayer during Lent written by Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark Cathedral.

God of the wilderness, God of our wilderness, guide us through the harsh places, sit with us in the dry places, shield us when the heat burns, feed us when hunger bites, warm us when the cold chills, and lead us on the path to your oasis of love.