

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

31st October 2021: All Saints

Hazel writes:

This week and next are very important for our planet with COP26 happening in Glasgow. Please do pray for the meeting daily – there is a suggested prayer included in our prayer pointers. If you would like to see the prayer vigil that some of us attended at Southwark Cathedral last week, the recording is here: <https://southwark.anglican.org/news-events/news/latest-news/prayer-vigil-cop/>.

There will be no pew sheet next week for Sunday 7th November when we will have **Holy Communion services** at 8am in St Mary's church and at 10am in St. Francis' Church.

On Sunday 14th November it is Remembrance Sunday and there will be a service of **Holy Communion** at 8am in St. Francis' Church, followed by non-eucharistic services including an **Act of Remembrance** at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' 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. The **Memorial Service** will also be livestreamed at 3pm. 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 – Drop, drop slow tears - lament and longing in environmental crisis as COP26 begins.
 - **On BBC 2:** Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Katherine Jenkins visits Blackpool to discover the Christian traditions of All Hallows Eve.

And on the 7th November

- 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 – from Glasgow University Chapel – a service for COP26 tracing our deep spiritual connection with the earth.
- Choral Evensong on Radio 3 at 3.00 p.m. from the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford.
- On BBC 1 Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. –Claire Mcollom and Yolanda Brown meet Christians taking climate action for COP26.

Or annual **Memorial Service** to remember loved ones who have died will take place today at 3pm in St Mary's Church and will be 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. If you are going to watch the service on YouTube, here is a link to the service sheet which will enable you to sing along with the hymns and join in with the responses: [In Loving Memory \(d3hgriq6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](https://d3hgriq6yacptf.cloudfront.net). You might want to have a tealight or other candle ready for the moment when we light candles in the church.

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>.

We are hoping to go ahead with the **Christmas Market on 27th November** subject to government rules and regulations.

This year's Market will have a different layout as we must 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 not have the usual full menu and 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.

Do contact Merri Womack directly if you would like to order an Advent ring this year.

Matchbox Theatre are looking forward to welcoming you back to their forthcoming production "ENGLAND EXPECTS" by our very own STEVE TOLMIE.

> Performances will be on 2nd, 3rd and 4th December 8pm in St Francis Church Hall - and we look forward to seeing you there. Tickets are £8.50; children £6. Tickets may be purchased online using debit/credit card at -

> [https:// www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-matchbox-theatre](https://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 at St Mary's or Barbara Plummer at St Francis. Any surplus will be given to Christian Aid.

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.

There are two **floral displays** at St. Francis this week, the porch display has been provided by Mavis Page-Wood in memory of her husband Alan and the platform display has been provided by Lynda Marsh in memory of her mother, Margaret Marsh whose first

anniversary of her passing is 30th October. Both displays have been arranged by Lesley East and Joan Burford.

The sanctuary pedestal at St. Mary's has been provided by Gifty in memory of her sister and has been arranged by Annette.

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. Mary's 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. Mary's.

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 of holiness, your glory is proclaimed in every age: as we rejoice in the faith of your saints, inspire us to follow their example with boldness and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

Revelation 21: 1-6a

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” ⁵He who was seated on the throne said, “I am

making everything new!”

Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

⁶He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

Gospel Reading:

John 11: 32-44

³²When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴“Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. ³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁶Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

³⁹“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the

dead man, “by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.” ⁴⁰Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Post Communion Prayer

God, the source of all holiness and giver of all good things: may we who have shared at this table as strangers and pilgrims here on earth be welcomed with all your saints to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Collect

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

Jonah 3: 1-5,10

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."³ Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. ¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Second reading

Hebrews 9: 24-28

²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Gospel Reading:

Mark 1: 14-20

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the

good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Post Communion Prayer

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope: bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

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Sermon – Richard Ford

Sermon: All Saints' Day 2015 – Rev. 21. 1-6a; John 11.32-44

Some years ago, there was a TV ad that began, “What is a mum?”

The ad then referred to a number of motherly qualities, such as patience and understanding, but by the time the ad had finished, the viewer was left in no doubt that the perfect mum was a mum who used Persil in her washing machine.

You could ask the same question about saints – what is a saint?

Sometimes we use the word to describe someone whom we think of as being particularly good or someone who puts up with things that we might find it difficult to deal with as, for example, someone who shows great patience in looking after an awkward and sick relative.

So we describe them as a “perfect saint.”

But when we first think about saints, we tend to think of the big ones –

those who have “St” in front of their names and a particular day dedicated to them, such as those who gave their life for their faith, for example, the patron saint of this country, St George, or those who wrote a gospel, like Mark, or those who lived a holy and inspirational life, such as one of our patron saints, St Francis of Assisi, who abandoned a life of luxury for a life devoted to Christianity and founded the Franciscan order of monks.

But the intention of “All Saints’ Day” is to recognise all those saints who have no day named after them.

And, indeed, many would go beyond that, for the early church referred to all their members as saints, and in that sense all of us gathered here this morning might be referred to as saints.

So regard yourselves as duly “sainted.” The challenge is now to live up to it.

I’m sure that Jesus would have regarded Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus as saints for the way in which they opened their house to him and looked after him.

So it’s not surprising that we find Jesus behaving in the way in which he does in today’s gospel.

Not surprising to us, perhaps, but surprising to those who first read John's gospel, for to them the idea that the God, whom John claims Jesus to be, could feel human emotions and be moved to tears would have been difficult to accept. For them a deity had to be above such things. So the fact that the writer of the gospel twice refers to Jesus being deeply moved and once records him as weeping is strong evidence that we are here dealing with historical truth.

But what else does Jesus' open show of emotion tell us?

First, it tells us that Jesus can understand the human grief that all of us will experience at some time. We're not here this morning to worship a god who is distant from human experience and human feeling. The God whom we worship can, in Jesus, come alongside us in our grief and empathise with us.

We're now embarking on the time in the church's year when the focus is on remembrance.

Today we celebrate All Saints Day, when we particularly remember those in whose life the Church as a whole has seen the grace of God powerfully at work, followed by All Souls' Day, the day when we remember those close to us who have died, those who gave us birth or nurtured us in our faith. This afternoon we shall be holding a memorial service at St Mary's at which those both long and recently bereaved will be remembering their loved ones. Then in a couple of weeks we shall be remembering those who have given their lives on the battlefield.

All this grief and sorrow Jesus can identify with, for as Isaiah prophesied, he is "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

But there may be another reason why Jesus is deeply moved at Lazarus' death and the grief all around him. Jesus has stopped off on his way to Jerusalem, where he knows that he faces his own agonising death. Perhaps Jesus is here also grieving for his own death. That he would have willingly avoided dying on the cross is clear from his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, where he fervently requests, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me."

But his death is necessary if the world is to be saved.

In relation to evil, Jesus dies the death that is rightly ours, and thus conquers the ultimate force of evil – death - and so frees us from being enslaved by sin. We still may

not lead perfect lives, but when we ultimately face God's judgement, we can claim the forgiveness that Jesus has won for us on the cross.

For Jesus and for us, death is not the end. Jesus' resurrection is the proof that there is a new and better life beyond death. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't mourn the death of those we love. Jesus in weeping for the death of Lazarus, shows us that sorrow and grief are an important part of being fully human. But they are only a part. Jesus, in his own resurrection and in raising Lazarus from death, shows us that beyond death there is a more glorious life to be lived.

As Walsam How put it in the hymn with which we began our service:

But lo there breaks a yet more glorious day;
the saints triumphant rise in bright array.

Some 25 years ago I was summoned in the middle of the night to join my mother in a hospital in Ashford, where my father was very seriously ill. It took me over an hour to get there and shortly after I arrived, my father died. An hour or so later, as I drove my mother home on that August morning, my eyes streaming with the tears which I was unable to control, we drove into the most glorious sunrise. There was an end that day and there was a new beginning.

I think that one of the ways in which Jesus comes alongside us in our grief is to give us a glimpse of what lies beyond death, a glimpse of that new beginning.

Our reading this morning from Revelation is saying something similar, when John writes how, in his vision, he "saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a voice from the throne (that is God's voice) saying: See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

The "first things" refer to our current situation, in which we are blessed indeed if we never experience mourning and crying and pain.

But the promise is that that will, in the fullness of time, pass away and God will come to dwell once more amongst us, just as he did in the person of Jesus.

But this time things will be different. This time God will bring with him, as it were, the new Jerusalem, which symbolises the new earth to replace the first earth that has passed away.

Now all this is expressed in God-given poetic and visionary language, trying to create an image of the future which God has planned for us, and we have to take from it what we can, within the limitations of our human imagination.

None of us knows exactly what lies beyond our physical death.

But in what Jesus says to his disciples and in the physical reality of his resurrection and in this vision granted to the writer of Revelation, it is clear that we won't be disembodied spirits floating on a cloud and playing a harp. Rather we shall have a physical body and be living in a physical world, a physical world similar in beauty, in splendour and in diversity to this world, but one from which all that is ugly, evil and destructive has been removed, including death.

And that, surely, is something for us saints to rejoice in and to look forward to. Amen

Prayer Pointers

With the Climate Change conference of Cop26 taking place shortly 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 that all parties will listen to each other.

We are asked to use the following prayer throughout the Conference –

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

Sunday 31 October is designated the Day of Prayer for the Media: Pray for all who work in Media

The following prayer is suggested by the Diocese:-

Word of God,

whose truth will set us free,

we ask your blessing on all who work in the media.

May they be seekers after truth,

unafraid of those who seek power by manipulation.

May they inform us sincerely,

educate us engagingly,

and entertain us joyfully.

And so may our media be a life-enhancing presence

in a world that needs good news. Amen.

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 that the ongoing negotiations between the Taliban and the Aid Agencies will ensure that Aid gets to the people who need it most.

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

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

Pray for Conor Owlett, Anne Hunter, Christine Harley and Ann Dakin who have died recently, may they rest in peace and rise in glory and pray for their families and friends as they mourn their passing.