

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

6th August 2023: Transfiguration of Our Lord

Hazel writes:

You may remember that I held a prayer event in June, recognising the centrality of prayer to my sabbatical and all that we do in the church – it's an important element of building up the **congregation**. We are going to be starting a new weekly prayer group on a Tuesday morning in September, praying for growth in the Church (that's our own united benefice, the churches in West Wickham, the national and the worldwide church). Prayer has long been a way for the church to prepare for a period of revival. Archbishop Justin Welby made it his first priority on taking office, saying: "There has never been a renewal of the spiritual life of the church – which means all Christians, you and me – without a renewal of prayer. That's why I've made it the highest priority of my ministry."

This week we have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Mary's Church and a joint service at 10am in St Francis' Church. There is also a **baptism service** at 2pm in St Mary's Church, when Kalli Graham will be baptised. All are welcome.

Next **Sunday 13th August**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and at 9.15am in St Mary's Church. There is then a Family Communion and Baptism service at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

Morning Prayer is held each week in St Francis' Church on Wednesday morning at 9.30am, followed by the church being **open for private prayer** from 10.30-11.30am. It is also held in St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – Each week our service is livestreamed on YouTube at 10am or before. All other files for this week have been combined and included in this pew sheet which will be sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line.

The **bereavement support group** meets this week on Wednesday 9th August at 2.30pm in the Hewitt Room, Emmanuel Church, The Grove. This is open to anyone who would like to talk about bereavement with others.

Marian Haydon's funeral is at 10am on Thursday 10th August in the Crematorium Chapel at Bluebell Cemetery, Old London Road, Halstead.

Messy Church is on Friday 11th August at 3.45pm in St Mary's. Please do tell friends

and neighbours with young families about this monthly activity which is continuing in the summer holidays.

Primrose Smith's funeral is at 11.15am on Tuesday 22nd August in St Mary's Church. More details to follow in due course.

Our next **lunchtime concert** is on Thursday 24th August at 12.45pm in St Francis' Church when we welcome Felicity Cliffe, conducting Orchestra Nouveau. Their concert last year was stunning, so do come and join us with your friends to hear some fabulous music. Tea and coffee available before the concert which begins at 12.45p.m.

Our **Community Garden** at St Francis' will be officially opened at an event on Saturday 2nd September from 10.30am – 12noon. The aim of the garden is to create a safe haven for people to socialise and "grow in friendship". This is a project where we are working together with St John's Church and clientele will come through the social prescribing officers in GP surgeries and in response to leaflets that are left in community areas. Do come along on 2nd September to find out more.

Our new group praying for growth of the Church will start to meet on Tuesday 5th September between 10-11am at 130, The Avenue. Please contact Jean Pogose for more information: (dennis.pogose@ntlworld.com or 8289-5996).

The Children's Society Coffee and Cake morning on 22nd July was once again a happy occasion and with the donations received after the service on the 23rd raised £429.40. With very many thanks to all those who made cakes and helped on the day.

Christine Morton

Paper copies of the **church magazines** and the Diocese of Southwark's **The Bridge** newspaper are now available in both of the churches.

We will continue to collect items for the **Bromley Homeless Starter Pack Scheme** for those starting out in a new home with nothing. Starter packs for families in need include cutlery, crockery, duvet covers (not duvets), pillow slips, tea towels, saucepans, frying pans, bath towel, toothbrushes, etc. Please continue to bring any excess items that you have in cupboards at home.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned vegetables, cold meat tins, desserts (e.g. sponge pudding, jelly, Angel Delight), coffee, ladies' deodorant and toothpaste. They have plenty of pasta, cereal and biscuits. Please do not bring any fresh or frozen food, or baby milk as the foodbank cannot pass this on. You can also donate financially here:

<https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>. Thank you for your continuing support.

If anyone would like a pedestal at either church in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special anniversary etc., please contact Merri Womack (8777 8772) for St Mary's (or there is a list to sign in the vestibule at St. Mary's) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The flowers on the platform at St. Francis have been requested by Ann Herbert and family for Mavis's 100th birthday on the 8th August. We all send Mavis our love and congratulations on this very special birthday.

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

Father in heaven,
whose Son Jesus Christ was
wonderfully transfigured
before chosen witnesses
upon the holy mountain,
and spoke of the exodus he
would accomplish at
Jerusalem:

give us strength so to hear
his voice and bear our
cross that in the world to
come we may see him as
he is; who is alive and
reigns with you, in the
unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading:

2 Peter 1: 16-19

¹⁶ For we did not follow
cleverly devised myths
when we made known to
you the power and coming
of our Lord Jesus Christ, but
we had been eyewitnesses
of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he
received honour and glory
from God the Father when
that voice was conveyed to
him by the Majestic Glory,
saying, 'This is my Son, my
Beloved, with whom I am
well pleased.' ¹⁸ We
ourselves heard this voice
come from heaven, while

we were with him on the
holy mountain.

¹⁹ So we have the prophetic
message more fully
confirmed. You will do well
to be attentive to this as to
a lamp shining in a dark
place, until the day dawns
and the morning star rises
in your hearts.

Gospel Reading:

Luke 9: 28-36

²⁸ Now about eight days
after these sayings Jesus
took with him Peter and
John and James, and went
up on the mountain to
pray. ²⁹ And while he was
praying, the appearance of
his face changed, and his
clothes became dazzling
white.

³⁰ Suddenly they saw two
men, Moses and Elijah,
talking to him. ³¹ They
appeared in glory and were
speaking of his departure,
which he was about to
accomplish at
Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and
his companions were
weighed down with sleep;
but since they had stayed
awake, they saw his glory
and the two men who stood

with him. ³³ Just as they
were leaving him, Peter said
to Jesus, 'Master, it is good
for us to be here; let us
make three dwellings, one
for you, one for Moses, and
one for Elijah'—not
knowing what he said.

³⁴ While he was saying this,
a cloud came and
overshadowed them; and
they were terrified as they
entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then
from the cloud came a voice
that said, 'This is my Son,
my Chosen; listen to
him!' ³⁶ When the voice had
spoken, Jesus was found
alone. And they kept silent
and in those days told no
one any of the things they
had seen.

Post Communion Prayer

Holy God, we see your
glory in the face of Jesus
Christ: may we who are
partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and
deed, that all the world
may know his power to
change and save.
This we ask through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

I wonder, what do you do to prepare for significant events? It may involve making a diary entry, purchasing some tickets, menu planning, a restaurant booking – that kind of thing. My daughter Olivia has been visiting over the past two days with her boyfriend Harry. I’ve met him before in Liverpool, but it’s the first time he’s visited us here. I did a spot of cleaning earlier in the week to prepare, but I also prayed to help me get God’s perspective on this meeting which, you never know, could be a key moment in our lives.

In our gospel reading we hear how Jesus went through a prayerful mountain-top experience to prepare himself for a key moment in his life – his death and resurrection. We know that this is what he was preparing for as, in v31, we hear that Moses and Elijah were speaking to him about his departure (his death). The fact that it was Moses and Elijah that he was with is symbolic of the law and the prophets. They were helping Jesus to prepare for where the law and the prophets were leading. They were giving him reassurance that this was the right path to take.

And at this time Jesus also took the three disciples he was closest to with him, maybe because he wanted witnesses of this – God approving of this next step in his life. This was a real turning point for him. Peter, John, and James saw Jesus transfigured and appearing with Moses and Elijah, and so they recognised him as the Messiah.

But remember, those three disciples saw Jesus in his glory when the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes were dazzling white, only because they were awake. They had been feeling sleepy but they stayed awake. This wasn’t like that other prayerful experience for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane where they’d gone to sleep. I wonder if we miss some of those opportunities that we get to meet with Jesus at significant moments and fail to see something of his glory because we are not fully awake.

Two things that might close our minds to Jesus are the following:

- Firstly, prejudice. It may be that we’ve thought through an event and have an idea of how things are going to work out and so we don’t notice (or maybe we actively reject) something that doesn’t conform to our way of thinking. The disciples definitely didn’t know that the Transfiguration was going to happen, but they noticed it when it did. They weren’t just at the top of the mountain thinking that this was simply a time for Jesus to pray, so they could get some shut-eye.

During the week I was walking down the road one day on my way home and I saw someone that I know vaguely: she's not a member of a church, but I did have a conversation with her once about spiritual matters. I could have waved and gone on my way – she was obviously going somewhere with a grand-daughter, and I was needing to get home to prepare for the next meeting. However, something made me walk over the road and talk to them both and we had a very special conversation about the benefits of doing things more slowly: I wonder if this was a message from Jesus.

- The second thing that might make us miss an opportunity to meet with Jesus is lethargy. Taking ourselves out of the world and prayerfully thinking through some things takes time and we may be afraid to face our doubts and our questions. I wonder if you put anything off, whether you procrastinate, or sometimes pass by on opportunities. I definitely do, and it means I sometimes miss out on stuff. Now, I don't know what these opportunities are because I didn't spot them, but I do know that they exist. Taking time out each day for prayer can be difficult as there's always something else that could be done, but maybe we need to either find energy to fit more into our day or re-prioritise and lose something to prayer.

So, these are two things which can make us fail to see something because we're not fully awake – prejudice and lethargy. There are also some things that can help to waken us up. I came up with the following two:

- The first is sorrow. In Morning Prayer this week, we had a passage from Jeremiah which told of a time when the people of Jerusalem were about to be exiled to Babylon, but God gave Jeremiah a prophecy that he would forgive their sins and restore the fortunes of the land and the city in the future. Reading the passage Jane Smith was reminded of a time when she'd been feeling sad and very 'down', but when she read this passage, God spoke to her saying "In the coming days, these promises will be fulfilled. I will bring you restoration, and you will bring me praise." I've included the poem that Jane wrote when she was reminded of this time when she met with God, at the end of this reflection. This illustrates how we might be more awake to the potential for God's glory to shine into our lives in times of sorrow.
- The second thing that can wake us up is a clear sense of need. If something has to be done, it will be done. When there's a deadline looming, things happen so much more quickly. Or if there's someone you personally know who's in real

need of some help, then that help is more likely to be forthcoming than if you hear about a charitable organisation's work to meet a similar need either second or third hand.

So, we need to stay awake to spot those opportunities for meeting with Jesus. Being open minded and willing to make an effort will help us to stay awake and times of sorrow or need can make us more aware of where Jesus is acting in our lives.

However, this isn't a matter of being so fully awake that we launch straight into action as soon as we get an idea about something that needs to be done. Peter's response to seeing Jesus' glory was to suggest building three dwellings at the top of the mountain for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Peter wanted to do something, rather than to be with Jesus. Sometimes what's needed is to savour a moment, to reflect on it and pray, spending some time allowing the morning star (Jesus) to rise in your heart.

This process may take quite a lot of time. When the disciples came down from the mountain, they kept silent and told no-one about what they'd seen. It wasn't until after Jesus' death and resurrection that all this made sense. And for you too, it might not be until after something more happens that your meeting with Jesus really begins to make sense.

In Peter's letter he was talking about the transfiguration. He was telling those he was writing to about something that he had actually experienced, not something someone else had done, or a story that he'd been told. But it was something from some time before. So, as well as staying awake to be able to recognise new opportunities to meet with Jesus now, maybe it would be worthwhile recalling times from the past when you remember meeting with Jesus and to reflect on the way in which God's glory was revealed in that meeting. It may be that it makes so much more sense to you now than it did back when it happened.

In telling others about Jesus, we don't need to explain the Bible, or introduce any theological material. Just like Peter did in his letter, tell people about your own experiences of meeting with Jesus. And if you don't have any of those, well stay awake by being open minded and willing to make an effort to spot those times where Jesus is acting in your life.

In my prayer time this week I didn't have any major revelation about Olivia's relationship with Harry, but I'll keep my mind open and watch out for what God might be saying, and for other opportunities to meet with Jesus.

PROMISES FROM GOD by Jane Smith

In the book of Jeremiah
Chapter thirty-three
I find some precious promises
That God gave to me.
Many years ago
Feeling sad and very 'down'
I hung on to these promises
Of who I could become.

My life felt desolate
Like a desert, very dry.
There seemed to be no hope
And I wondered why?
Why had life turned out this way,
Why was I in despair?
It wasn't God who had changed,
He was always there.

His Word says "Call to Me
And I will answer You"
And that is what I did.
Gradually I realised
He could heal me and restore
Help me find joy again,
Peace, and so much more.

Reading all the promises,
My heart it skipped a beat.
Out of desolation
New life would come to me.
From the book of Jeremiah
God spoke to me and said
"In the coming days
These promises will be fulfilled.
I will bring you restoration
And you will bring Me praise."

It didn't happen overnight
But hope was stirred in me.
How my life was then
It wouldn't always be.
Such precious promises

God wanted me to know.
The truth He revealed to me
All those years ago.

Prayer Pointers

Thank you for being a God of hospitality who loves it when we come and talk to you. Forgive us for the times when we rush into your presence and don't pause to listen to what you have to say to us.

Help us never to be too busy for others, never too wrapped up in our own needs to ignore the needs of those around us.

Lord Jesus, we think for a moment of some of the people we have met this week and reflect on whether there was a moment of meeting with you: our friends that we've spent time with; our colleagues at work; shopkeepers; health workers; anyone we've been with. We are sorry for any occasions when we could have made ourselves more ready to spend time with them or listen and show we care but we did not.

For all children, teachers and other school staff currently on summer holidays. We thank you for opportunities for rest and recreation.

For summer camps and missions that bring the good news of your love to thousands of children. We thank you for all those who have given time and energy to work on the camps and missions and at festivals over the summer.

For all those affected by heat, fires, floods and famines. For our governments and the decisions and hard choices they need to make between economy and climate change.

For our farmers whose crop yields are being affected by our current spell of poor weather.

For all who are suffering because of war, thinking especially of Ukraine.

For refugees and all those who travel to try and find a better life for themselves or their families. For anyone who is a victim of trafficking and exploitation.

For those in pain and anguish, physical and mental and those who care for them.

Remember especially Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Joan Mountain, James Pitt-Payne, Jack Bramwell, Sue Jones, Brian Griffiths and Tina Hamilton.

For those who have recently lost loved ones, remembering especially the families of Marian Haydon and Primrose Smith. Hold before God those for whom it is a time of anniversary and those for whom the pain never seems to get any better.