

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

7<sup>th</sup> May 2023: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter/Coronation of King Charles III

### Hazel writes:

We have enjoyed more activities this week which have helped us connect to Jesus and live the abundant life that he offers. Here they are noted under our Vision Group headings:

**Compassion:** The warm space at St Francis' and the community lunch at St Mary's on Wednesday saw people living on their own joining in with food and fellowship. These are both outreach opportunities that have the capacity to welcome more people.

**Community:** We saw a constant stream of people come to the Messy Church tent on Monday at the West Wickham Village Day, which we hosted with Emmanuel Church under the Churches Together banner.

**Congregation:** We celebrated Primrose Smith's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Wednesday at the St Mary's lunch.

This week we have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and a special joint service to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III at 10am in St Mary's Church. This will be followed by celebratory drinks and, for those who have booked a place, the Coronation Lunch will happen in the same place starting at 12noon.

Next **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May**, we will have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St Francis' Church and non-eucharistic services for Christian Aid Week at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and 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.

We have a **bereavement support group** meeting this week on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm in the Hewitt Room, Emmanuel Church, The Grove.

**Mike East's funeral service** will be on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 11am in St Francis' Church. More details to follow.

**Messy Church** is on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May at 3.45pm in St Mary's. Please do tell friends and neighbours with young families about this monthly activity after school on a Friday.

We are hosting a **fundraising concert** on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May in St Francis' Church. The show begins at 7.45pm and will feature performers from current West End shows raising money

for Christian Aid and their DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal. Doors open at 7pm. There will be a bar and a raffle with a chance to win two tickets to a West End show. Tickets at £15 from: <https://stjohnsww.churchsuite.com/events/msbi17vmc>.

We will be holding our monthly **Action Aid coffee morning** on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May (a week later than usual due to the coronation) between 10.30am and 11.30am at St Francis' Church.

**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.

**St Francis' APCM** will be held on Sunday 14 May following the service at 10.45am where the church wardens and members of the PCC will be elected. Please do join us as we look back at the past year at St Francis'.

We are having a fundraising **film night for Christian Aid** on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May in St Mary's Church. Come and enjoy a comedy that points to God having a great sense of humour. Drinks and snacks will be available from 7.15pm and we will start the film at 7.30pm.

Spring means a new season of **lunchtime concerts** to be held at St. Francis church. The first is a piano recital of varied music given by a newcomer to us, Kwanyee Chan, and I'm sure we can give her a warm welcome. She will be playing on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May, from 12.45 pm, and as usual tea and coffee will be available beforehand. Please note the date and bring along a friend!

**Thy Kingdom Come** is a worldwide prayer initiative for which we will have resources available in the churches very soon. It begins on Ascension Day, Thursday 18th May, when we will be joining with other churches in our deanery for a Communion service in St George's Church in Shirley at 7.30pm. It ends on Pentecost Sunday when we will join with other churches in West Wickham for a service and the Churches Together AGM in West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church on Sunday 28th May at 6pm.

Our next **Women's Event** is on Tuesday May 16<sup>th</sup> at 8pm in St Mary's Church Hall. As this is during Christian Aid week, we will be doing a follow up from our service on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> with a discussion on the video and a fun, pea-themed quiz. We will also be sharing in pea soup and other refreshments during the evening.

**Piano Recital and Afternoon Tea** – Saturday 20th May We are hosting a piano recital with Nicholas Austin followed by afternoon tea at St. Francis Church, Ravenswood Avenue, West Wickham on Saturday 20th May. Timings are: 2.00 - 2.45 pm piano recital with Nicholas Austin and afternoon tea from 2.45 pm - 4.00 pm. Tickets are £6 and if you would like to come along, please email Nicky Nightingale on nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk to reserve a ticket. Many thanks.

Rotary want help **making hats for babies** in Ukraine (please use cotton or acrylic, not wool). If you'd like more information, please email [babyhats@sent.com](mailto:babyhats@sent.com) (including links to possible knitting or crochet patterns).

From Wednesday April 5th **our Warm Space at St Francis'** will only be opening on the 1st Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-1pm. Thank you to Marion and Theresa for volunteering to do this. If anyone else is willing and available to take on regularly opening the Warm Space on another Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-1pm please get in touch with Kate ([katedyer41@hotmail.com](mailto:katedyer41@hotmail.com) or 07808 468591) or with Marion Barry ([whitelandm@yahoo.com](mailto:whitelandm@yahoo.com) or 020 87771470).

**St. Mary's Garden Party** is on Saturday 17th June. Please would all gardeners start to sow seeds/cuttings etc. This would be much appreciated. Thanks.

**St. Mary's** need someone to take over **hall bookings** from Jackie Greatorex as she wishes to retire from the post after 13 years. If you think you might be able to help with this, please get in touch with Jackie on [jackiegreatorex@googlemail.com](mailto:jackiegreatorex@googlemail.com) as soon as possible to find out more what is required. Jackie is still prepared to do any purchasing for the hall but needs to hand over the administration of all hall bookings. This is 95% of the time a home-based position working with the computer. There is a team of volunteers to do locking and unlocking of the hall. Please give this serious thought as this is a very important position for our church as the hall provides much needed finances.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require squash/cordial, cooking sauce, hot and cold meat tins, canned tomatoes, UHT fruit juice and washing up liquid. 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](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The flowers in the sanctuary at St. Marys have been arranged by Wendy Carvalho for the Coronation of King Charles III.

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**

Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, bless our Sovereign Lord, King Charles, and all who are in authority under him; that they may order all things in wisdom and equity, righteousness and peace, to the honour of your name, and the good of your Church and people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**First Reading:****Isaiah 40: 12-17, 25-31**

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup> Who has directed the spirit of the LORD, or as his counsellor has

instructed him?

<sup>14</sup> Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

<sup>15</sup> Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.

<sup>16</sup> Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering.

<sup>17</sup> All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

<sup>25</sup> To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God'?

<sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

<sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint and strengthens

the powerless.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

<sup>31</sup> but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

**Gospel Reading:**

**Luke 22: 24-30**

<sup>24</sup> A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup> But he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors.

<sup>26</sup> But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the

youngest, and the leader like one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

<sup>28</sup> 'You are those who have stood by me in my trials; <sup>29</sup> and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by your governance, that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## REFLECTION – Richard Ford

*For obvious reasons this sermon was written before the Coronation. It may be that by Sunday there will be some changes.*

You may recall that in 2016, the Bible Society, HOPE and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity published a book to celebrate the then Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday entitled "The Servant Queen and the King she serves." In the chapter entitled "Working in Service," we learned that in her 90<sup>th</sup> year, she still had a working week of more than 40 hours, including a weekly meeting with the prime minister of the day – which can't always have been a bundle of laughs! Important, too, and no doubt sometimes physically demanding was her schedule of visits, some of which featured in news programmes, but many of which were to quite ordinary places to celebrate good work of all kinds by quite ordinary people.

In her Christmas broadcast of 2012, she said in words which echo today's gospel:

This is the time of year when we remember that God sent his only Son "to serve, not to be served." He restored love and service to the centre of our lives in the person of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer this Christmas Day that his example and teaching will continue to bring people together to give the best of themselves in the service of others."

In our gospel reading we heard Jesus tell his disciples, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them." Now, of course, our unwritten, but effectively binding Constitution prevents our monarchs from doing that without creating a constitutional crisis, but what an example Queen Elizabeth set of not lording it over others, not only in her life of service, but in her readiness to declare her faith publicly – two lessons in practical Christianity from which we all can learn.

And this is the context in which our current monarch, King Charles III, grew up. So often children will rebel against conditions in which they are brought up, and royal families are not immune from this characteristic, as can be seen the behaviour of one of the King's sons – although the tragic circumstances of his early life and the unenviable position of the "spare," give him some leeway in this, but he could learn from his Aunt Anne's example in this role.

But King Charles appears to have embraced his mother's example. I don't know how many of you listened to last week's "Any Questions" on Radio 4, but one questioner asked, "Should everyone be glued to the TV on May 6<sup>th</sup> or should they find something else to do?" After all but the fourth speaker, David Lammy, the Labour Shadow Foreign

Secretary, had spoken warmly in favour of the Coronation, the chair turned to David Lammy, clearly hoping for a dissenting voice, only to be taken aback by what he had to say. He referred to his experience of living in Tottenham, the constituency for which he is the MP, in 2011, the year of the Tottenham riots.

Following the riots, Teresa May, the Home Secretary, David Cameron, the Prime Minister, Ed Milliband, Leader of the Opposition, and Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, all asked to come to Tottenham. They did so, but never came back! Prince Charles, on the other hand, came back five times and involved the Prince's Trust and the Prince's Foundation, so helping Tottenham recover from the disaster of the riots. In David Lammy's opinion, this demonstration of his commitment indicates he has the making of a good king.

In passing, it's worth noting, whilst not directly relevant to King Charles, but as an example of service, the role played by the Duke of Edinburgh, and also, as an example of what the Royal Family can do for the nation, the impact of his award scheme. The Duke of Edinburgh Award has been, since its inception in 1956, an inspiration to millions of young people, not just in this country, but around the world.

But back to today's Gospel. Towards the end Jesus refers to conferring a kingdom on his disciples, so that they "may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." There have been those who, in the midst of the cost-of-living crisis, have been critical of the cost of the Coronation.

Such carping is reminiscent of the account in John's Gospel of the critical response of Judas Iscariot to Mary's anointing Jesus with a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume, saying it could have "been sold and the money given to the poor." Jesus rebukes Judas, reminding him that, "You will always have the poor amongst you." In saying this, Jesus is not suggesting that the poor are not in need of help, but rather that there is need for balance in our actions. There is space for both meeting the needs of the poor and for the occasional extravagant gesture.

And Jesus was not above having a good time himself and participating in religious festivals, for that is what the Coronation is – a religious festival. His first miracle graced a wedding, and on more than one occasion he went to Jerusalem to participate in religious festivals such as the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7).

Israel was an occupied country, controlled by the Romans, and there was not a great deal for the Jews to celebrate, nor a great deal of spare cash for many of its inhabitants, so those opportunities for feasting and celebrating – family events, such as



weddings, and religious festivals - were eagerly seized upon when the opportunity came.

Likewise today, the restraints of the our economic crisis make the pageantry of the Coronation, the street parties and the Coronation Lunch which some of us shall be enjoying later today all the more welcome and enjoyable.

Feasting or banqueting is often used to symbolise life in the world to come, as in the Heavenly or Messianic Banquet. In Matthew's Gospel, for instance, Jesus is recorded as saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son." (Matthew 22.2). This image or symbol goes back to the prophet Isaiah, who in looking forward to the age to come, which Christians recognise as the Second Coming, wrote:

On this mountain (Mount Zion) the Lord almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all the peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest wines. (Isaiah 25.6)

Today's reading from Isaiah was written to encourage the Israelites when they were in exile in Babylon and begins by spelling out the "otherness" of God, how infinitely superior he is to us his, his creatures, and how far he is beyond our understanding, as summarised in verse 17:

Before him (God) all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

But it is this very "otherness," this superiority, which gives the Israelites hope, for it means that they can trust in their God to bring their exile to an end and restore to them their country and its capital, Jerusalem. But it also serves as a warning to their leaders, and to a monarch today, that their future very much lies in the hands of the Almighty.

And there is further hope in the closing verses of that reading, where Isaiah records how "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

On May Day, there were demonstrations and riots in France at the President's legislation to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64. Charles was 73 when he came to the throne, and there was a report in Monday's paper that many more people in this country are continuing working into their seventies, and that doesn't include those who continue working in a voluntary capacity. No doubt both the king and many of his

subjects will be praying that they will “soar on wings like eagles, that they will run and not grow weary” as they continue to serve those around them.

But let our Gospel reading, which records some of Jesus’ comments on the night of the Last Supper, have the last word, for it was on this night that Jesus was preparing for the ultimate act of service, laying down his life to reconcile humankind to God. I don’t think that it is too fanciful to say that for King Charles, his Coronation also marks the end of his preparations for living a life of service to his country, and one which we pray will, like his mother’s, be an example to the rest of that country.

Amen.

### **Prayer Pointers**

#### ***A Prayer in Coronation Week (from the United Reformed Church)***

Eternal God, you order and govern our world and all that is therein, bless, we pray, Charles and Camilla as they are crowned and anointed, that amid the pomp and ritual, they may feel your loving presence, that they may fulfil the roles prescribed for them, and that we may, in this kingdom, be better governed, and always reminded of your eternal Kingdom which is to come.

**Amen.**

Pray for all who minister to us in St Francis’ and St Mary’s that they may serve with humility to build us up in faith and fellowship.

In the Southwark Diocesan Prayer Cycle, pray for the congregation of St Mark, Mitcham – their Vicar, Nigel Stone and their Reader, Belinda Nortley.

Hold before God the struggling health service. Pray for all doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals who care for the sick and for patients whose appointments and procedures have been postponed. Pray that issues may be settled so that all will find their needs met and lives saved.

Pray for God’s hand on the situation in Sudan and on all those trying to flee. Pray that they may have strength and courage. Pray too for all those trapped in their homes unable to venture out safely that they may be kept safe. Pray too for the people of Ukraine.

Pray for those who are in particular need of your comfort and sustaining love right now. Pray for those who are ill, in sadness or in confusion. In our congregations pray for these by name – Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Joan Mountain and James Pitt-Payne – and those known to God alone.

Hold before God all those who have died. Pray especially for Peter Tilling, Nina Tilling, Robbie Georgel, Pam Faull, George Verwer and Mike East and their families. Hold before God those for whom it is a time of anniversary and those for whom the pain never seems to get any better.