

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

22nd January 2023: 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Hazel writes:

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs from 18th to 25th January and this year we are doing a pulpit swap with Hope Church who have been meeting in the church hall at St Francis' since October last year. My sermon will be given there (as well as at 8am and in St Mary's), and Rev. Colin Potter will preach at St Francis'.

Next **Sunday 29th January**, we will have Holy Communion services for Candlemas at 8am and 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.

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.

Valentine's Ploughman's Lunch is on Saturday 11th February 12.30 p.m. in St. Mary's Church Hall organised by the men of St. Marys. There is a list to sign up in the vestibule at St. Mary's, or you can book your place through Beryl Bolton 0208 289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com. You will need to indicate whether you wish for tomato or mushroom soup and whether you wish for ham, pate or cheese with your ploughman's. The cost is £10 and all profits will be for church funds. There will also be a raffle. Numbers will be limited to 40, so book early to avoid disappointment.

Tony Goodchild's funeral service is on Tuesday 31st January at 12.30pm in St Francis' Church, with refreshments immediately afterwards in the North Aisle.

Barbara Plummer's funeral service is on Tuesday 14th February at 11.15am in St Francis' Church. If you would like to go to the reception afterwards at Club Langley, please let Kay Mussard know for catering purposes: kay@mussard.org.uk or 8650 8389.

We have a **new Archdeacon of Croydon**, Greg Prior. His service of welcome is being held on Saturday 18 February 2023, 3pm at Christ Church Purley. If anyone would like to attend, you can register (by 31st Jan) on Eventbrite here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/welcome-service-for-the-archdeacon-of-croydon->

[tickets-452907136437](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety-visits/). Do let Hazel know if you are going, so that we can share lifts where possible.

Come to our **coffee morning** at St Francis Church Hall on Saturday 18th February 10.30-11.30am. There will be tea, coffee and cake and an introduction on how to do CPR and how to use our defibrillators in an emergency. Any funds raised will be donated to the British Heart Foundation. Please contact Nicky (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) or Liz (stevelizbraemar52@sky.com or 8777-2745) if you would like to provide any cakes.

We are slightly changing how we run our **Sunday morning communion services** to get an appropriate balance between returning to previous traditions and enabling everyone to feel safe in the church buildings:

- We will continue to distribute communion by the priest dipping the wafer in the wine but will review whether to return to the common cup at Easter. If we do, then those who do not want to share the cup can still receive communion in one kind only. Please do speak to Richard or Hazel if you have a strong view one way or the other.
- On any livestream we will show what is happening in the church during communion. If you do not want to be seen on the livestream when receiving communion, please speak to Hazel, Richard or a warden on duty and we will bring communion to you.
- Sharing the peace can now be done in closer proximity, with a handshake or similar, but please be mindful of what each individual will feel comfortable with.
- With smaller numbers of people attending the services in the church buildings, it will help us to feel part of one community if we sit closer together. Please sit towards the front and in the middle of the buildings. This will also make it easier for you to sing along with the hymns.

A **qualified and experienced carer** known to our pastoral care team has some free time when she could take on another client, including help with things such as: personal care; food preparation; shopping; assistance with walking; laundry, ironing and some cleaning. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from some more help around the home, do call Izabela on 07761 326618.

You can get a free life-saving **home safety check** from the London Fire Brigade who will visit your home and do a fire safety check, including providing a free smoke alarm if necessary. This is especially helpful if you have mobility issues, including the housebound. Please do let others know about this. You can get more detail at <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety-visits/>

Churches Together in West Wickham are opening up **Warm Spaces** on five days each week (normally 9am-5pm) providing somewhere warm for people to meet in for free. If you could help with this for a couple of hours on a rota basis, please contact the following:

- For a Monday – Jon Hills (jon@wwsbc.org.uk or 020 8777 5705) at West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church.
- For a Tuesday – Ian Hamlin (ianh2102@hotmail.com or 07543 561868) at Coney Hill Baptist Church.
- For a Wednesday - Kate Dyer (katedyer41@hotmail.com or 07808 468591) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) at St Francis' Church.
- For a Thursday – Laura MacBean (laura.macbean@googlemail.com) at West Wickham Methodist Church.
- For a Friday – Pat Best (patbest@btinternet.com or 020 8464 7208) at Emmanuel United Reformed Church.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require milk (long life), coffee, sweets, cooking sauces, soup, rice, tinned potatoes and other vegetables. They are well stocked with pasta, cereal, tea 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 sanctuary pedestal at St. Mary's has been donated and arranged by Beryl for Tony's family's birthdays.

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 all mercy,
 your Son proclaimed
 good news to the poor,
 release to the captives,
 and freedom to the
 oppressed:
 anoint us with your
 Holy Spirit and set all
 your people free to
 praise you in Christ our
 Lord.

First Reading:

1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you,
 brothers and sisters, by
 the name of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, that all of
 you should be in
 agreement and that
 there should be no
 divisions among you,
 but that you should be
 united in the same mind
 and the same purpose.

¹¹ For it has been
 reported to me by
 Chloe's people that
 there are quarrels
 among you, my brothers

and sisters. ¹² What I
 mean is that each of you
 says, 'I belong to Paul',
 or 'I belong to Apollos',
 or 'I belong to Cephas',
 or 'I belong to
 Christ.' ¹³ Has Christ
 been divided? Was Paul
 crucified for you? Or
 were you baptized in
 the name of Paul?

¹⁴ I thank God that I
 baptized none of you
 except Crispus and
 Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one
 can say that you were
 baptized in my
 name. ¹⁶ (I did baptize
 also the household of
 Stephanas; beyond that,
 I do not know whether I
 baptized anyone else.)

¹⁷ For Christ did not send
 me to baptize but to
 proclaim the gospel, and
 not with eloquent
 wisdom, so that the
 cross of Christ might not
 be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the message

about the cross is
 foolishness to those
 who are perishing, but
 to us who are being
 saved it is the power of
 God.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4: 12-23

¹² Now when
 Jesus heard that John
 had been arrested, he
 withdrew to
 Galilee. ¹³ He left
 Nazareth and made his
 home in Capernaum by
 the lake, in the territory
 of Zebulun and
 Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what
 had been spoken
 through the prophet
 Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ 'Land of Zebulun, land
 of Naphtali, on the
 road by the sea, across
 the Jordan, Galilee of
 the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in
 darkness have seen a
 great light,
 and for those who sat in

the region and shadow of death light has dawned.'

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. ¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.'

²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.

²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Post Communion Prayer
Almighty Father,
whose Son our Saviour
Jesus Christ is the light
of the world:
may your people,
illuminated by your word
and sacraments,
shine with the radiance
of his glory,
that he may be known,
worshipped, and
obeyed to the ends of
the earth;
for he is alive and
reigns, now and for
ever.

REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

Last week in John’s gospel we heard how fishermen were made disciples of Jesus when John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to his own disciples (including Andrew) and then Andrew went and called his brother, Simon Peter. This week, we get a different perspective from Matthew’s gospel where Jesus walks along the beach at the Sea of Galilee and calls these two brothers together – there was no passing the message on from one to the other.

I wonder why he choose this place – the beach at the sea of Galilee - to call his disciples.

We’re given a clue at the very start where Matthew sets the scene with the story of Jesus coming to live in Capernaum in order to fulfil one of Isaiah’s prophecies – ‘the people who sat in darkness, have seen a great light’.

Fishermen work at night – they bring in their catch to sell it on early in the morning, so that the catch stays fresh. In Capernaum being a fisherman was seen as a pretty ordinary life - they made enough to get by, but not we’re not talking about huge profits. The town itself was a place where there was a good market for fish because there were well-established connections with other communities that brought in soldiers, merchants transporting goods and pilgrims, and good soil in the surrounding countryside made it a densely populated area, so there was always a healthy market for fresh fish. But this was a tough life – not only do fishermen work by night, but the Sea of Galilee was subject to terrifying storms. Later in their time with Jesus, the fishermen disciples think they’re going to drown when they’re out at sea with Jesus in a storm – they know something about the risks associated with being out there at night.

So, Jesus offers these ordinary people the chance not only to change what they are catching, but an opportunity for a complete lifestyle change, including when and where they are working. No longer will they be out at night, but they’ll be out during the day. No longer will they be out at sea, but they’ll be working on land, except of course those few boat trips across the lake.

Jesus is breaking the mould here. Normally a rabbi would be chosen by those who wanted to become his disciples more in the way that John showed it happening. But by searching for people who already have a vocation and calling them as disciples, Jesus is doing something different, something radical. He’s offering people who are fixed on a

particular path a very different life. So, why would they follow him and give up what they'd become accustomed to?

Well, maybe there's something about the way that he gave the disciples his invitation. Remember, these were very ordinary lives.

Jesus' invitation was to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near". This was a radical message. The word 'repent' is translated from the Greek word, *metanoia*, which means to change your mind, to reconsider. Jesus is suggesting that there's an opportunity here to reconsider what they were doing in life and to experience something different. Rather than leading an ordinary life, they can lead an extraordinary one by following him. And the kingdom of heaven? Well, these were men who knew their scripture, so they'd know that this was something good that was being promised by Jesus. Clearly, they didn't really understand what was being asked of them when Jesus said they'd 'fish for people', but there was a promise there of something better. It was going to be tough – leaving family and a reasonably comfortable way of life. But the benefits in terms of their experience would be great – they would see lives changed for the better, not just earning enough to get by for themselves.

Jesus had come to that place on the beach at the Sea of Galilee to enable the people who sat in darkness to see a great light – the drudgery of an ordinary life was turned into an exciting one.

Another reason why he chose fishermen might have been that they were used to working together with others. They would understand something about not being able to do a job alone. These were the first disciples that he chose, and they would need to include others with different skills, such as Matthew the tax collector.

How does all of this relate to us?

We are also called to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of heaven. We are asked to help others to change their minds. I hinted at this last month when I preached after my sabbatical. *Metanoia* – changing your mind – is something that John the Baptist told others to do and now here, Jesus is saying the same thing. And then, at the end of his life, this was the instruction that he gave to his disciples – go and make more disciples (those who have had their minds changed). We are asked to do this today – to change the minds of others, so that they too understand the good news of Jesus. This is not intended to be a difficult message to give: it's good news.

However, this world does sometimes make it a difficult message to give. There's a great emphasis in the western world on success being about having a comfortable life with a good career, with that life being judged by the size of your home, or the car that you drive, or the physical attractiveness of your partner. And the media is so focussed on one side winning against another, whether that's through reality shows, including competitions such as Bake-off, or the news being focussed on stories of conflict, whether that be workers against the employers, or Ukraine against Russia. It seems that there always has to be a winner and a loser.

In God's kingdom though, there are no losers. We are all winners, but that's not winners on the same terms as this world measures us. This is what we have in common as Christians. No matter where it is that we worship, we all have that purpose to change someone's mind, so that they can see the good news of Jesus, where winning is no longer about having a better life than someone else in materialistic terms, but it's about having a more fulfilling life together with others, by helping those in need and by telling the stories of Jesus.

This was Jesus' message when he called his disciples to 'repent' or to change their way of thinking about life, as well as Paul's message when he told the Corinthians to stop dividing themselves into different factions. He was telling them to stop any quarrelling and aligning themselves with particular leaders and, instead, see themselves as equal disciples of Christ.

This is what Churches Together is all about – having a more fulfilling life together with others, living as disciples of Christ. It's only with Jesus at the heart of what we do that we will be able to work together to help those in need and to tell them the good news of Jesus. This is what we are celebrating in this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

We are very blessed in West Wickham to have such a strong Churches Together network, with nine churches working together, most recently and visibly in the Warm Spaces initiative, which gives a safe place for those looking for company, warmth and refreshment during the week.

Some may say it's not good to have so many churches in a small place like West Wickham, but I think it gives us opportunities such as this. In the same way as Jesus gathered a varied group of people with different skills to work together, so we're not competing with each other, but supporting each other, as well as helping those in need.

As well as the Warm Spaces, at Christmas we held the Big Christmas Sing as Churches Together in West Wickham and raised over £1,200 for Christian Aid – an ecumenical organisation that has long been supported by many of the churches. This is an annual event that many people from different churches get involved in.

Other events when we get together, which I hope to see some of you at in 2023:

- A Good Friday service. It's undetermined what exactly we might do, but it will involve an ecumenical service at 11am in St Francis' Church.
- An evening service for Pentecost Sunday, followed by our AGM.
- Possibly something to mark Bible Sunday in late October.

We're also hopeful that some kind of initiative following on from the Warm Spaces will continue with support from all the churches.

This is all good news, not because it's success in the eyes of the world, but because we have a common purpose as disciples of Christ to live fulfilling lives together with others.

We, like Simon Peter and Andrew, are called to be Jesus' disciples. He has chosen us, not because we are successful in the world's eyes (although some of you may be), but because he sees you as someone who is prepared to change their way of thinking and to live a life excited by the prospect of bringing the kingdom of heaven into this world by helping those in need and telling the good news of Jesus.

Prayer Pointers

Jesus calls us not only to repentance and life-style changes but he calls us to love others as ourselves. Pray that we may be quick to say sorry when we have made mistakes and hurt other people.

Jesus called his disciples whilst they were at work mending their fishing nets. Pray for all Christians called to be salt and light in their places of work – often the hardest places to be people of faith.

In the Southwark Diocesan Prayer Cycle, pray for ministers and congregation of St Margaret of Antioch, Lee - Tim Goode (Rector); Daniel Walker (Assistant Curate); Jenny Standage (Reader); and Anne Smith (Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary) and the staff and pupils at St Margaret's Lee CofE School.

Pray for those who feel marginalised or excluded by the church – especially those in same sex relationships. Thank God that Bishops in the Church of England are recommending blessings of same sex marriages recognising that this goes too far for some and not far enough for others. Pray for General Synod members debating this topic next month.

Hold before God all those who feel they have no choice but to withdraw their services and stand on picket lines seeking governments to turn around and support them more through increased pay deals and improved working conditions. Pray for those on all sides involved in such difficult dilemmas: for Union leaders, politicians and all involved in deciding what is right and affordable and just and fair.

Hold before God the continuing war in Ukraine - for those living in fear whose whole lives have been turned round, upended and damaged. Pray for those left rootless and homeless and those who grieve the death of family and friends. Pray for a just and peaceable solution.

Pray for those we know and love, our family, friends, and neighbours who are in need this day, especially for the physically and mentally ill. In our congregations pray for these by name –Mark Outten , Vicky Pearce, Mike East, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Karen Plummer and Mary Sanders – and those known to God alone.

Hold before God all those who have died in the faith of Christ crucified. Pray especially for Tony Goodchild and for Barbara and Tony's family, and for Barbara Plummer and for Katie and Barbara's family. Thank God for their examples of faithful service over many years in St Francis.

Offer our own personal prayers and thanksgivings - all those things that worry us; those situations we feel helpless in; those decisions that burden us; those losses that overwhelm us, and all that we are thankful for.