

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

3rd April 2022: Passion Sunday

Hazel writes:

You will be aware of the call to **support Ukrainian refugees** coming to the UK and many have offered to share their homes. Churches Together in West Wickham are hoping to facilitate bringing such people in our locality together and we have now received details of a number of Ukrainians who are looking for accommodation. If this is something you are thinking of, or you know of someone within West Wickham or the surrounding area who is considering it, please do let Hazel know, so that we can help in matching people up and then facilitating ongoing mutual support between families who are part of this scheme. If you are interested in shaping what this support might look like, please do let us know your ideas, or you can come to a meeting on Tuesday 5th April at 7.30pm in St Francis' (after our time of prayer for Ukraine).

Thanks for all the donations made at last Sunday's services and a Fellowship meeting at Emmanuel during the week. Almost £450 was raised, which was used to buy three buggies, two booster seats and two highchairs for Baby Basics to distribute to Ukrainian mothers in need of these items.

Today, we have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St Mary's Church, and a joint service at 10am in St Francis' Church.

Hymns at 10 a.m. in St. Francis' – Praise to the holiest in the height – There is a green hill far away - My song is love unknown – And can it be.

Next **Sunday 10th April**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am and 10.45am in St Francis' Church, and at 9.15am in St Mary's 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 at St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am.

The churches will also be open to **Pray for Ukraine** as follows:

- Tuesday from 6.30-7.30pm in St Francis';
- Thursday from 9.00-10.30am in St Mary's.

Coffee & Chat this Thursday 7th at 2.30pm on Zoom will be the last of these meetings. If you have been part of this group and cannot make the date or would like the log-in details for our last meeting, please let Rowena know (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com or 8777 6112).

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Francis' at **10am** on Sunday. 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 – on Passion Sunday from the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London.
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from the Chapel of Royal Holloway, University of London.
 - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Kate Bottley visits Hereford to discover stories from the past and present.

We are holding another **High Street foodbank collection** on Saturday 9th April for money and non-perishable food and household goods. If you would like to volunteer some time at our stall, from 10 am to 3 pm please contact Tim Shingler on 07785 772649 or email tim.shingler@ntlworld.com. The collection takes place on the corner of The High Street and Ravenswood Avenue.

There is a **concert for fuel vouchers** on 9th April in St Francis' at 7.30pm. Bromley Borough Food Bank believe there will be a high demand for these vouchers in April and beyond when prices are due to rise, and we would like to be able to support them in this provision. There will be a bar before the performance and during the interval. The performers are Che, a talented young classical piano duo who play individually and as a four hand, and Trifonics, a string Trio who have played across the UK and on stages around the world. Tickets can be booked via <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis-of-assisi>.

There will be a **"Songs of Praise" service** in both churches on Sunday 8th May. A list, with further details, is provided at the back of both churches for you to add your hoped-for choice of hymn.

Good Friday for Children: Activities and Worship at St Francis Church Hall from 11am - 12 on Friday 15th April. Parents can attend the service in church or are welcome to stay and join in with their children. Under 4's must be accompanied.

Action Aid Saturday Coffee mornings are resuming again from 10.30 to 11.30 or thereabouts. The first one will be on **Holy Saturday, 16th April**. Thereafter they will be on the **first Saturday of the month** for the rest of the year. It will be nice to meet up for a chat again on these occasions, so please do come along.

Merri Womack held a **Lent lunch for Welcare** this week and raised the sum of £110. Thanks to everyone for their support.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned hot and cold meat, tinned potatoes, tinned vegetables, long life fruit juice, tinned fish, chopped tomatoes, rice, custard, rice pudding. They are well stocked with pasta, cereals and baked beans. 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>. Thank you for your continuing support.

If you, or someone you know, has English as an additional language and would like to improve it, there is a six-week series of **informal free English conversation classes** running locally. These will be held at Bromley Methodist Church on Wednesday mornings (9.30am -11am) from 20th April to 25th May 2022. People are asked to register in advance through the church office (office@bromleymethodist.org or on 020 8313 1029), so they can prepare appropriately.

The funeral of **Cynthia Symes** will take place on Friday 8th April at 11.30 a.m. at St. Mary's.

Each year the Bishop of Southwark has a **Lent Call** which raises money to support projects throughout the diocese and in our link dioceses of Zimbabwe and Jerusalem. Details of the projects being supported in 2022 are available here: <https://southwark.anglican.org/news-events/events/lent-call/resources/> there are also hard copies available in each of the church buildings to borrow or read while you are there. There are envelopes available for donations during the next few weeks and the offertories on Easter Sunday will also go towards this appeal.

West Wickham Rotary Club are holding a **Fundraiser Dinner** on Thursday May 12th at The Warren, which should be a very interesting and entertaining evening. Funds raised

will go towards the London Search and Rescue team, which is based at The Warren, and there will be information on their work, as well as a speech from Richard Griffin who served the Royal Family as a protection officer for many years. There are copies of a flyer in the churches if you want more information. Tickets are £29. Let Hazel know if you would like to join her and others at the event and she will send you an electronic link to make a booking or will do it for you if you are not on the internet.

Two local ladies have set up a **befriending service** called Companions. There are leaflets about this in both of our churches, or if you'd like more information, contact either Andrea (07506 686238) or Maria (07939 120718) or by email at companions22@btinternet.com.

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'.

No flowers now until Easter.

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

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the
mysteries of his passion,
that we may know
eternal peace through
the shedding of our
Saviour's blood, Jesus
Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord GOD has given
me the tongue of a
teacher, that I may know
how to sustain the weary
with a word.

Morning by morning he
wakens— wakens my
ear to listen as those who
are taught.

⁵ The Lord GOD has
opened my ear, and I was
not rebellious, I did not
turn backwards.

⁶ I gave my back to those
who struck me, and my
cheeks to those who
pulled out the beard; I did
not hide my face from
insult and spitting.

⁷ The Lord GOD helps
me; therefore I have not

been disgraced; therefore
I have set my face like
flint and I know that I
shall not be put to shame;
⁸ he who vindicates me is
near.

Who will contend with
me? Let us stand up
together.

Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

⁹ It is the Lord GOD who
helps me; who will
declare me guilty?

Second Reading:

John 12:1-8

Six days before the
Passover Jesus came to
Bethany, the home of
Lazarus, whom he had
raised from the dead.

² There they gave a dinner
for him. Martha served,
and Lazarus was one of
those at the table with
him. ³ Mary took a pound
of costly perfume made of
pure nard, anointed Jesus'
feet, and wiped them
with her hair. The house
was filled with the
fragrance of the
perfume. ⁴ But Judas
Iscariot, one of his

disciples (the one who
was about to betray him),
said, ⁵ 'Why was this
perfume not sold for
three hundred denarii and
the money given to the
poor?' ⁶ (He said this not
because he cared about
the poor, but because he
was a thief; he kept the
common purse and used
to steal what was put into
it.) ⁷ Jesus said, 'Leave her
alone. She bought it so
that she might keep it for
the day of my burial. ⁸ You
always have the poor with
you, but you do not
always have me.'

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the
least of our brothers and
sisters we do also for
you: give us the will to be
the servant of others as
you were the servant of
all, and gave up your life
and died for us, but are
alive and reign, now and
for ever.

REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

Imagine yourself in the scene of our gospel reading as one of Jesus’ disciples.

Ever since Jesus had revealed his divine power by raising Lazarus from the dead, his life has been in great danger. You left Jerusalem with him and spent some time on the edge of the desert in a town called Ephraim.

The Passover is drawing near when all must return to the Temple. In spite of the danger, Jesus has decided to return to Jerusalem and you and the rest of the disciples have accompanied him.

Your last visit to Jerusalem was to the home of Lazarus in Bethany, and now you are here again.

When you arrived, you were filled with great respect for Jesus; there is the tomb where Lazarus had been interred, and from where Jesus had called him back to life.

You had helped with trembling fingers to remove the bandages which then gave Lazarus his freedom.

To meet Lazarus again will confirm that it had not all been a dream or deception.

All three members of the family come to greet you. The two adoring sisters are first to embrace Jesus, then they make way for Lazarus who goes down on one knee in homage to Jesus, as if he was truly a king.

Jesus raises him to his feet and embraces him, his old friend.

You all enter the house – it would be unwise to be seen by too many people; news travels fast in Jerusalem.

Martha has prepared a meal. You know it will be good because you have enjoyed her cooking many times before.

The door is shut. You are all present around the table, and there is Lazarus, beaming with pleasure, a changed man. Every moment now is precious to him; he lives for the moment, just to be alive makes him grateful to God. He deeply appreciates the gift of life and the world in which he lives. He finds great peace and joy in the love of family and friends, and the bond between Jesus and himself is eternal.

Picture this happy peaceful scene. The threats and dangers are forgotten. Everyone around the table eat and drink together. The food was as good as you expected, the talk is easy, and you are all glad to be here together among friends.

Sometimes a silence fills the room, and you, while seated at the table, let your eyes wander. You can see dust particles floating in a shaft of sunlight, a peaceful moment.

You take a sip of wine. You feel content: good food and wine, your closest friends are with you and Jesus is safe.

There is movement in the room, Mary is holding a jar of perfumed Nard, a very expensive balm only used on special occasions, an unction to soothe and console.

You watch her move close to Jesus as he reclines near the table.

The room remains silent as Mary goes down on her knees by Jesus' feet. No one speaks. In your heart you feel that what is about to happen will be fitting and proper.

Mary breaks the seal and takes the lid off the jar.

Jesus remains composed.

The air is filled with a lovely perfume that makes you breathe deeply, taking the fragrance deep into your lungs.

The beauty of the moment is enhanced as Mary gently anoints Jesus' feet. Her hands lovingly smear the ointment over his instep, his toes, his heels and the soles of his feet.

Your heart warms towards Mary. She is honouring your beloved Jesus. Her actions say more than words ever could.

The jar is empty, nothing saved. Mary caresses his feet until all the unction is gone, only its perfume remains in the air.

Jesus who has given you so much, knows also how to receive.

Jesus feels at home. You all come from different backgrounds but through your common love for Jesus you feel like one family, your true family. You feel at home.

To complete her task of love, Mary must wipe any excess from Jesus' feet.

You watch Mary who is taking the pin from her hair which then falls in long dark curls onto her shoulders. She leans forward and her hair covers Jesus' feet as she gently wipes them. See her hair becoming darker as the oil makes it shine ...

'What a waste of money!' It's Judas, the treasurer. The intimacy of the moment is shattered, never to be regained. 'Why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?'

The insult angers you; you know he isn't thinking about the poor, only his own dishonest gains.

Mary, still at Jesus' feet, looks embarrassed and looks at Jesus. He sees tears in her eyes.

'Leave her alone, she had to keep this scent for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.'

The atmosphere in the room has changed. Judas has deliberately spoiled a beautiful moment, and like a knife in your stomach, Judas' hostility reminds you of the danger that awaits Jesus and the threat to his life.

To confirm your fears, people you hadn't noticed until now, who had come to view Lazarus, are already sloping off to inform the Temple authorities.

Prayer Pointers

On Passion Sunday give thanks that Jesus was prepared to suffer so that we might have the promise of eternal life. Pray for all who suffer in any kind of way because of their faith.

Give thanks for all the goodness we see around us: for the kindness of friends and strangers – for those who have been like Jesus to us.

For the Diocese of Jerusalem particularly for the parish of All Saints, Beirut supporting people in poverty and need by distributing food parcels to vulnerable people – a project supported by the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call.

For our country, especially as the cost of living soars. Show us how to support each other, even when we might be struggling ourselves. Pray for all who work in our foodbanks, our homeless hostels and our support networks.

For those struggling with ill health – especially Julie Bailey, Vicky Pearce, Barbara Colpus and Mary Sanders. Give thanks for our National Health Service – for all healthcare professionals who care for the sick at home, in hospital and in hospices.

For the soul of Cynthia Symes, for her husband Archie, her daughters Joanna and Michelle and all her family. May God help them all to begin again.

Offer our own personal prayers – our deepest needs, our fears, our joys and thanksgivings and for all those who we love dearly.

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of strength and peace, send your blessing on the people of Ukraine. Sustain them in their struggles, hold them in their fear, protect them from all danger, and be for them the hope they desire. *(Composed by Andrew Nunn – Dean of Southwark)*

Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call Prayer 2022

Loving and saving God, we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven, help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities. Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.