

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

4th December 2022: 2nd Sunday of Advent/St Mary's Patronal Festival

Richard writes: "It hardly seems possible that the six weeks of Hazel's sabbatical are nearly up, that this will be my last message and that we will be welcoming her back this coming Tuesday. My thanks to all involved in whatever way in mounting this year's Big Christmas Sing: the choir, the readers, those responsible for the refreshments and those responsible for stage management, but especially to Geoff Mussard for the music and David Wada for the coordinating the event. As you know, both our parishes are linked with St Andrew's parish in Mkoba, Zimbabwe, where the parish priest is Revd Sebastian Meso. Along with this pew sheet you will receive a copy of the Croydon-Zimbabwe Link Prayer Diary setting out how we can prayerfully support our fellow Christians in that country. I urge you to use it."

Next **Sunday 11th December**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church, 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 at St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am.

Messy Church is on Friday 9th December at 3.45pm in St Mary's Church.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Mary's at 10am. 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.

Knit and Natter – Warm Space – St Francis – 7th and 14th December - We will be holding 'knit and natter' as part of the Warm Space initiative on Wednesday 7 and Wednesday 14 December between 11.00am-1.00pm at St Francis – please do come along and let others who enjoy knitting know they are welcome to come along and join in.

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

Croydon- Zimbabwe Link - For some time, we have had a link with St Andrew's Church in Gweru, Zimbabwe, as part of Croydon's link with the Central Diocese of Zimbabwe, whose Bishop, Ignatius Makumbe, used to be the incumbent of St Andrew's. Information about the current situation in Zimbabwe, how the church is faring and appropriate subjects for prayer can be found in the Croydon-Zimbabwe Link bulletin, now available on St Francis' church website:

<https://www.stfranciswestwickham.co.uk/about-us/the-wider-church/zimbabwe-link/> ;

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 this week at St. Mary's has been provided by Joan Baker in memory of Peter and Chris and has been arranged by Wendy Carvalho.

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

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:**1 Peter 2:1-10**

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. Like new-born infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone

chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner', and 'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Gospel Reading**Luke 1: 39-56**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will

call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has
done great things for
me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who
fear him from generation to
generation.
He has shown strength with
his arm; he has scattered
the proud in the thoughts
of their hearts.
He has brought down the
powerful from their
thrones, and lifted up the
lowly;
he has filled the hungry
with good things, and sent
the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant
Israel, in remembrance of
his mercy, according to the
promise he made to our
ancestors, to Abraham and
to his descendants for ever.'

And Mary remained with
her for about three months
and then returned to her
home.

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, who
chose the Blessed Virgin
Mary to be the mother of
the promised saviour: fill
us your servants with your
grace that in all things we
may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your
salvation; through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

Prayer Pointers

As we think of Mary, pray for all mothers today: for those for whom motherhood has brought joy, for those who have struggled with the responsibility, for those whose children are ill, and for those women unable to have children.

Pray for the congregation of St Mary's as they celebrate the dedication of the church on 8th December 1954. Pray that all who worship there and in St Francis' may continue to be surprised by the goodness of God and spread that goodness in our community.

The second Advent candle lit in church on Sunday represents faith. Pray that, like Mary, we may have the faith to obey and to say 'yes' to God's prompting

Pray for God's blessing on Hazel as she reaches the end of her sabbatical – that it has been a time of refreshment, renewal, and re-creation. Pray that she may continue to know God's peace and joy and be surrounded by his loving care.

Pray for all who work for justice and reconciliation and all who are suffering as a result of war. Pray for those suffering in Ukraine and in places of conflict around the world.

Hold before God those for whom this Christmas will be affected by the cost of living. Pray for all those who reach out to the poor at Christmas especially our local foodbanks in Bromley and Shrublands and for all who volunteer there.

Pray for the sick in the parish and others known to each of us. In our congregations pray for these by name –Mark Outten, Vicky Pearce, Mike East, Pat Allegacone, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Tony Goodchild, Barbara Goodchild, Karen Plummer and Miriam Richards (with prayer for increased mobility) – and those known to God alone

Hold before God all those on our hearts who are struggling to come to terms with the loss of a loved one. Pray especially for the soul of Andrew Duke and for Annie and her family: for the soul of Ann Coia and for her son Stewart, Jane and Stewart's two sisters Lesley and Sheila: and for the soul of Margaret White, for her daughter Kim Teare and all Kim's family. Pray that God may be close to them and that they may know his comfort and peace.