

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

6th March 2022: First Sunday of Lent

Hazel writes:

At the start of Lent, we look at those temptations that Jesus faced in the wilderness, and this is the subject of our services this Sunday, as well as at Messy Church on Friday. In our service at 10am my reflection will be added to with an update on our telephone befriending scheme, which has now been in place for a year.

Today, we have Joint Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and at 10am in St Mary's Church.

Hymns at 10 a.m. in St. Mary's – Forty days and forty nights – The Lord's my Shepherd - Amazing Grace - Seek ye First – God is working his purpose out.

Next **Sunday 13th March**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church, 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.

Our **Bereavement Support Group** meets this Wednesday 9th March at 2.30pm in Emmanuel Church, The Grove.

Messy Church is on Friday 11th March at 3.45pm in St Mary's Church, with the celebration livestreamed on YouTube at around 4.40pm.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Mary's **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 – Dr. Krish Kandiah launches a Lent series from Bath Abbey
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Lincoln Cathedral on Ash Wednesday.

- On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. - Claire McCollum visits Sunderland to discover the city's Christian links to making glass.

Lent Quiet Day – Saturday 12th March. The theme for this quiet day is "Justice the Jesus Way". It will be held in and around St John's Church, Layhams Road between 10am and 4pm. There will be a brief communal prayer on the hour, every hour, and a variety of areas for personal prayer and meditation. Refreshments will be available throughout. Do drop in any time.

Easter Eggs that share the Easter Story – Chocolate Evangelism! If you buy Easter Eggs for your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews, nieces, etc, think about buying them from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. Each egg comes with a 24-page Easter story-activity book, the chocolate is Fair Trade, and a percentage of the profits will be donated to charity. In the past 11 years, more than 3 million people have read the Easter story books and £320,000 plus has been raised for good causes. You can't buy these eggs in supermarkets, but I would be delighted to order as many eggs as you would like. There are further details and an order form at the back of the church.

Prices: Dark chocolate - £5.50; Milk chocolate - £4.50; White chocolate - £5.00

To get free delivery, I need your orders **by March 13th at the latest**. If you're not able to place your order at church, contact me at richard.ford73@ntlworld.com or on 020 8289 2432. I'll collect the money from you when the eggs have arrived. *Richard Ford*

Coffee & Chat is on the first Thursday of each month at 2.30pm on Zoom and on the third Thursday in person at St Francis' Church. If you would like to come and meet others for a chat, please do join us. If you would like to do this, but cannot make the next date, or would like the log-in details, please let Rowena know (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com or 8777 6112).

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.

We are now approaching the time of our annual meetings when new **PCC members** will be elected. If you are interested in what happens in our churches, please do think

about joining the PCC. Speak to Hazel or any member currently on the PCC for more information.

The Methodist Church in Beckenham is appointing a **Church Administrator** to work 20 hours per week worked over 4 or 5 days. Salary: £15/hour. Duties include managing the church office; letting the church rooms; supporting the ministers and church stewards; liaising with external service providers and managing the church diary. The successful applicant will have expertise in Microsoft Office and will need to collaborate effectively with others. For more information and an application pack contact Christine Handel on 020 8658 1381 or at christine.handel@ntlworld.com. Closing date for applications 18th March with interviews on 2nd April.

Carole Hubbard's funeral is at St. Mary's on Wednesday 9th March at 10.30 a.m. followed by a short service at Beckenham Crematorium. This will be followed by a buffet lunch at 1.00 p.m. at the Bromley Court Hotel. If you intend going to the Bromley Court Hotel, would you please let the family know beforehand at malcolmhubbard04@gmail.com. There will be family flowers only and donations will be either for Motor Neurone Disease Association or St. Christopher's Hospice.

Eco Church is a tool to help us in treasuring God's earth. It's an online survey which looks at:

- worship and teaching
- management of church buildings
- management of church land
- community and global engagement
- lifestyle. You can see the detail of questions asked here:

<https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Eco-Church-Survey-v2-January-2018.pdf>. If there are any things that you would be interested in looking at in more detail, please contact Nicky Nightingale at nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or on 8916 9855.

Police Encounter Panels South Area Police are looking for members of the public to form a panel on each of the three boroughs – Sutton, Bromley and Croydon. The panels are being created to give communities the opportunity to feedback on policing encounters from their own neighbourhoods, by watching Body Worn video (BWV) footage and offering their views on what went well or what the Met can improve. If you are over 18 and live, work, in education or have other strong links to the boroughs and would like to get involved or simply hear more, please email the dedicated mailbox at PolicingEncounters.SouthArea@met.police.uk

Part time job opportunity: Looking for a friendly and trustworthy person to carry out herbicide treatment and occasional garden tidy ups for a local business: Longfield Knotweed Solutions. This is for one day a week (with potential for more days – can be flexible with hours to suit). Will be required to drive a small van, talk face to face with customers and input data onto mobile app. No prior experience necessary but enjoying outside work is important. For an informal chat please contact Charlotte Faint 0784 000211.

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.

If anyone would like to join a group going to Made in Dagenham which the WWOS are performing at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley on Tuesday May 17th, please let Beryl know (8289 8097). If we get a group of 10 or more the cost of the ticket will be £22, less than that it will be £24.

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

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the
powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in
the desert: help us to use
these days to grow in
wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to
your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

Romans 10: 8b-13

'The word is near you, on
your lips and in your heart
(that is, the word of faith
that we proclaim);⁹ because
if you confess with your lips
that Jesus is Lord and
believe in your heart that
God raised him from the
dead, you will be saved.
¹⁰ For one believes with the
heart and so is justified, and
one confesses with the
mouth and so is saved.
¹¹ The scripture says, 'No
one who believes in him will
be put to shame.'¹² For
there is no distinction
between Jew and Greek;
the same Lord is Lord of all
and is generous to all who
call on him.¹³ For,
'Everyone who calls on the
name of the Lord shall be
saved.'

Gospel Reading:

Luke 4: 1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,
returned from the Jordan and
was led by the Spirit in the
wilderness,² where for forty
days he was tempted by the
devil. He ate nothing at all
during those days, and when
they were over, he was
famished.³ The devil said to
him, 'If you are the Son of
God, command this stone to
become a loaf of
bread.'⁴ Jesus answered him,
'It is written, "One does not
live by bread alone."'

⁵ Then the devil led him up
and showed him in an
instant all the kingdoms of
the world.⁶ And the
devil said to him, 'To you I
will give their glory and all
this authority; for it has
been given over to me, and
I give it to anyone I
please.'⁷ If you, then, will
worship me, it will all be
yours.'⁸ Jesus answered
him, 'It is written,
"Worship the Lord your God
and serve only him."'

⁹ Then the devil took him to
Jerusalem, and placed him
on the pinnacle of the
temple, saying to him, 'If

you are the Son of God,
throw yourself down from
here,¹⁰ for it is written,
"He will command his
angels concerning you, to
protect you",¹¹ and
"On their hands they will
bear you up, so that you
will not dash your foot
against a stone.'"

¹² Jesus answered him, 'It is
said, "Do not put the Lord
your God to the test.'"

¹³ When the devil had
finished every test, he
departed from him until an
opportune time.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord God, you have
renewed us with the living
bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger
for him who is the true and
living bread, and enable us
to live by every word
that proceeds from out of
your mouth; through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

Our gospel reading today is all about power and whether it is used wisely or abused. When Jesus is in the wilderness, he is coming to terms with how to use his power wisely. If you want to see what the unwise abuse of power can lead to, you can look at what is happening in Ukraine today. Abuse of power often stems from an individual’s uncertainty about that power or from a feeling of inferiority. Whether this is the root of Putin’s abuse of power, I wouldn’t like to say, but it’s something to reflect on.

Jesus knows that he has supernatural powers. He is comfortable with what that means for his life, and he sees the three temptations for what they are:

- He was tempted to do a miracle, so giving him a benefit from that power that he has in meeting his own hunger, but that would be of no benefit to others.
- He could go into partnership with the devil, giving him a shortcut to status and power (as seen in the eyes of this world) but this wouldn’t show anything of God’s kingdom.
- Finally, he’s given the chance to become a celebrity and avoid the reality of his life to date as a carpenter, but that would result in cutting himself off from many ordinary people who’d be unable to relate to him as a result.

All of the options offered by the devil are about power in a worldly sense. This is the temptation that Putin has fallen into the trap of and the temptation that we are open to every single day. It may not be to the same degree, but it’s the same temptations – our own benefit over others; following the ways of this world, rather than God’s kingdom; or gaining approval from others rather than from God. However, Jesus is focussed on relationship: he is the Son of God (and therefore his heir). And God is a God of love, so Jesus knows that his ministry has to focus on relationships and coming alongside others.

Yes, he does want to help others face up to the issues of hunger, worldly status and celebrity culture, but he meets these justice issues with love. I heard a podcast recently where the speaker described justice as ‘love in public’. This means that Jesus is love personified. This is the person who most showed that ‘love in public’.

Each of Jesus’ temptations in the desert can be seen as solving an issue (hunger, status differentials and celebrity culture) in one go, with a solution that would impress many, many people. However, this is not God’s way. No, God’s way is about humans being human and helping each other out one by one. This is how God’s kingdom is realised. It’s not in a big bang, but in stopping, engaging with and healing the one individual who is hurting. Jesus stops for the one, he engages with the one and he heals the one.

Although it might be more impressive to heal a whole neighbourhood all at once, Jesus chooses to have a deeper relationship with individuals to understand their issues, whether that be mental health, poverty, cancer treatment, sight loss, etc. first, before helping them in some way.

The world blurs individuals who are suffering with any issues such as these into one group. Through that blurring each person loses their individuality and the problem is depersonalised. But God focusses on the one.

For example, you might say that something like poverty is too complex to find a solution that fixes it. However, Jesus sees the opportunity to help one person facing this issue. His kingdom principle is to stop for the one. God's kingdom is not about working miracles to impress masses of people. Instead, it's about coming alongside individuals to find out what it is that they need and then providing for that need.

In the passage from Romans, Paul recognises that people encounter God and his power when they confess Jesus and call on his name. We can use that power wisely by coming alongside others like Jesus did in his ministry, or it can be wasted on temptations such as those he experienced while he was in the wilderness.

God has given us the power of love. Where are you using this power in your life? Can we resist the temptation to solely meet our own needs or for the gain of our own group over another?

Prayer Pointers

Pray that God will be alongside us during Lent as we reflect on the challenges of the Gospel and how we can live by the responsibilities of our calling, especially when we find it hard to follow him as easier pathways beckon.

Pray for the Lent groups in our Benefice as they study The Beatitudes together. Pray for opportunities to live The Beatitudes in our daily lives, bringing Christ to those we meet at home, in our churches and in our community.

Pray for the church in Zimbabwe and our Link Dioceses of Central Zimbabwe, Manicaland, Masvingo and Matabeleland. For Christians there running food kitchens to provide for those who are homeless or do not have enough food, as they seek to grow crops to help feed those in need around the Dioceses.

For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce, Julie Bailey and Cynthia Symes. For all recovering and convalescing from treatment - that they may have patience and be ready to accept help from others as they heal.

For the soul of Carol Hubbard, and her husband Malcolm and all her family and for the soul of Robert Davis, for his wife Marian and all his family as they mourn them and look to the future. May God help them to begin again.

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.