

ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM
18th April 2021: Third Sunday of Easter

Hazel writes:

This Sunday we begin a new series of services: United in Giving. The series starts today when St Mary's have their APCM and will finish on May 9th when St Francis' APCM will be held. These meetings will be held both in the church at 11.30am and on Zoom and I encourage all to attend: even if this is not your own church, the meetings are open to all. There is an invitation being sent out with this week's pew sheet for everyone to attend the St Mary's meeting. This week our theme is United in Thanks and we will be reflecting on all that we have to give thanks to God for.

Next Sunday there will be an on-line **service of Holy Communion** which will be livestreamed from **St Mary's at 10am**. This is an in-person service open to all and there will be another service in **St Francis' church at 8am**.

St Francis' Church will be **open for private prayer** on Wednesday 21st April from 10.30-11.30am.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will premiere on YouTube **at 10am** and will be available to view afterwards. 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 –the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell leads a service on prayer.
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Worcester Cathedral.
 - On BBC 1: Sunday Worship Stories at 10.30 a.m. Kate Bottley shares stories rooted in faith, hope and spirituality and Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. from York. Frank Skinner reflects on his relationship with God.

We will be taking a **tour of Victorian Bromley** in the evening of Tuesday 20th April at 8pm on Zoom when Bromley Civic Society will be guiding us round the most important buildings and providing history around them. The Zoom log-in details have been

circulated in a separate flyer. If you have not received this but would like to attend, please contact francisandmary9@gmail.com.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they need desserts, UHT Milk, tinned potatoes, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Cold meat, Toilet Rolls, washing up liquid and clothes washing capsules and tablets (but not liquid in bottles). 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>

The Foodbank have sent a certificate of **thanks for the donations** collected on Holy Saturday in the High Street, which totalled £559.15 and 'an abundance of food'.

The Rotary Club is offering FREE **Work Club workshops** to help with a job search on-line via Zoom. They all run from 10-11am on the following dates:

- Tues 20th Apr – Sort out your finances
- Weds 28th Apr – CV writing
- Thur 6th May – Job search
- Fri 14th May – Interview skills
- Mon 17th May – Ace your LinkedIn profile
- Weds 26th May – Start your own business

To book your place, email rotaryworkclub@gmail.com.

Each week our “**coffee/tea & chat**” on Thursday at 2.30pm is an opportunity to share with others. It is just 40 minutes and you don't need to commit to joining each week. Please let Rowena (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com/020 8777 6112) know if you would like the log-in details.

Inclusive Church: The next in our series of Zoom meetings focused on how to further grow as inclusive churches will be at 8 p.m. on Thursday May 6th, when we will be looking at Mental Health and Wellbeing. Speakers confirmed so far are Robin Thomson, author of “Living with Alzheimers: a love story,” Andrew Wilson, former chaplain at The Bethlem Hospital, and our own Kate Dyer, GP. We are hoping also to have a school representative to talk about the impact of Covid on students' wellbeing and other stress factors encountered by young people. Questions to put to the panel should be sent or phoned to Richard Ford: richard.ford73@ntlworld.com; 020 8289 2432.

As we look to support our community as we come out of lockdown, I am grateful to those who have already knitted or crocheted some more forget-me-nots for our **bereavement support bags**. These will be especially helpful in the months ahead. If you would like a bag to give to someone that you know who has lost a loved one, there are some in the church buildings, or I can deliver one to you. Hazel

If anyone would like a sanctuary pedestal at St. Mary's in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special anniversary etc. for the Sundays the 10.00 a.m. service is at St. Mary's please let Merri Womack know (8777 8772). For the current period the Sunday dates that are free are 25th April and 9th May.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl: bbolton@ntlworld.com and items for the websites to Brian: brian.griff19@btinternet.com or Gifty: office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk.

Collect

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples
with boldness and fresh
hope: strengthen us to
proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your
peace, to the glory of God
the Father.

First Reading: Acts 3: 12-19

¹² When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, ‘You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?’ ¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong,

whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. ¹⁷ ‘And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

Gospel Reading: Luke 24: 36b – 48

³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ ³⁷ They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?’ ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ While in their joy they

were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence. ⁴⁴ Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Post Communion Prayer

Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

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REFLECTION for the 3rd Sunday of Easter – Ken Bryan

United in Thanks

This morning our theme is *United in Thanks*.

Giving thanks at the time of a pandemic might seem a bit strange but if we think about it, we do have a lot to give thanks for.

Now I don't want to ignore the negative side of what has been happening over the last year and more. We have all been through a great deal and it has been new to us all. But there are times when we can think of all the positives that have occurred during that time.

And as a community of faith, I do think we should be looking at the good that is around us.

Living in a democracy like other nations we have a reasonably open government who try to do their best and take the population with them in their decision making. How difficult that is when you have people with strident views which are diametrically opposite. Some saying it is nothing and we should ignore the virus. Others saying we should be in the strongest of lockdowns and go with the most pessimistic of science assessments. Others want to focus on the economic impact and others on the social impact and health for the lonely and depressed or for the education of the children and young people. And everyone who believes that the government have bottomless coffers to fund anything and everything and all at no cost to anyone now or in the future.

Who would want to make decisions in these circumstances, with a loud press and social media to criticise your every decision?

We must give thanks that we have a health service free at the point of need and staffed by amazing people who have been prepared to go way above and beyond their normal duties to serve the sick and the dying. Even when it has been at their own personal cost of home and family life, or even their own health - the ultimate sacrifice.

We have all seen on the television, scenes inside hospitals with doctors and nurses working under the utmost strain and covered in protective equipment for hours on end. And there are the support staff including cleaners who have such an important role as they are at the forefront of containing the virus and there are so many others involved. Many brought to tears as they struggle to meet the constant demands of so many sick and dying patients.

On finance, we are fortunate that this country is one which has reserves which allow for extreme events and support for many people who would otherwise have suffered

financially through their loss of jobs or the folding of businesses. Who had heard of furlough payments before last year?

And who would have thought that various taxes and charges would have been suspended or revised to allow businesses to go into virtual hibernation until they could function again?

Research has been paid for up front and orders for vaccines placed long before they were approved. Yet this allowed for the most amazing roll out of the vaccinations to people from older age groups and those younger people who are clinically vulnerable. Scientists have been working flat out to discover the make-up of the virus and the antidote to overcome it. And even when it changes, they are ready to adapt the vaccine. And then the huge logistical effort to produce the vaccine in quantity, to produce the glass bottles to containing the vaccine then transport them in cold and controlled conditions to the myriad of vaccination centres set up around the country to allow ease of access. And I am particularly grateful that I have had my second vaccination. All this has happened at no additional direct cost to the public. Rich and poor have received the same vaccine and there has been no jumping of queues by those who have money or consider themselves very important. It has been a great equaliser.

Then there have been the Key workers who we have clapped for because of the work they kept doing to keep the country functioning.

Those working in supermarkets, food stores and pharmacies. Those delivering packages and their organisations together with the logistics needed to keep things on the move from production to our homes.

Essential workers keeping the machinery of our modern lives going. The power, the computers and information technology, the maintenance of buildings and infrastructure. Not to forget the emergency services, especially the ambulances and paramedics.

Care home staff putting themselves at heightened risks.

Teachers for the key workers' children and learning new skills to deliver their lessons online and keeping in touch with their classes remotely and having to open and close 'bubbles' which changes who they see and how they teach.

And not forgetting restaurants and organisations that have been struggling financially, yet have been providing meals for those who are struggling to feed themselves and their families?

Also, the many Foodbanks providing a much-needed service. Despite us all being shamed that a wealthy country like ours has to resort to dependence on charities to feed the most vulnerable in our society.

I wonder if we can sense God being with us through the Health workers and the Key workers and those who show empathy and concern for others.

Despite my mentioning many people involved with many facets of our lives there will be some very important ones I haven't mentioned who you will be thinking about.

The members of our two churches have been united in wanting to help wherever and whenever they can. With collections of food and medicines and other practical help. Other acts of kindness including phone calls to keep in touch, or emails, socially distanced visits or just a chat over the fence or in the street. We have even been talking to neighbours we have never spoken to before.

The joint benefice has been doing all it can to keep our worshipping life going with services recorded and online. With many thanks to Hazel who has become our technology expert along with Brian who have done so much. And there have been Home Groups meeting on Zoom which have become much more of support groups. There have been bereavement support meetings and Messy Church online. Foodbank collections at both churches as well as in the High Street.

We have so much, and together we want to give thanks for that and show God's love in the world by helping others.

In our reading from Acts Peter has just healed the crippled beggar. In verses six to eight it says:

"Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God".

Peter is in the world, being active doing God's work. He heals the man who was lame but makes it very clear that it is not he who is doing the healing but God alone. So, he doesn't want any glory, but all the glory belongs to God.

He has turned to Christ. He is sharing what he has witnessed in Christ's rising from the dead.

He recognises that he has been given authority to go out and tell of what he has seen Jesus do and say.

And now he is fulfilling that by telling others of Christ's rising from the dead.

Through scripture we are all witnesses, even though we haven't seen the risen Christ like the first disciples. We are, like Jesus said to Thomas, 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

What we do, we do for Christ. We are God's eyes and ears to see and hear of need and we are his hands and feet to go to where we are needed and to do what we are called to do to bring God's love into the world.

Sometimes this might not be clear to us but in the words of a quote I read this week 'But what I do now know is that we don't know everything. We don't know our own value, and things aren't as clear as they may seem. Keep doing the right thing, and most importantly, keep going'.

United in thanks we praise God for sending us Jesus to be our Saviour and the Holy Spirit to be our guide.

Amen

Prayer Pointers

Give thanks for the gift of eternal life made possible by the resurrection. Pray that our doubts and disbelief may be turned into awe and wonder as we rejoice in the power and reality of the risen Jesus. Pray for our churches of St Mary's and St Francis' that we may be vibrant witnesses to the resurrection and beacons of hope in our community.

Give thanks for all the good things we have experienced through Christ in the difficult time of the pandemic – for the technology that has enabled us to keep worshipping – for the dedication and kindness of those who have taken on the task of keeping in touch with our congregation – for the ministry team who have been open to learning new skills in online worship – for the Messy Church team who have kept the project alive – for all those whose kindness is hidden, those who have done kind deeds for those who have been housebound during lockdown.

When Jesus met the disciples, he said 'Peace be with you'. Pray for those across the world who strive to bring peace where there is conflict and war. Pray for the work of the United Nations and for peace in areas where peace is fragile – especially for Myanmar, Ukraine and Taiwan. Nearer to home we pray for an end to the violence in Northern Ireland.

God of Majesty, give rest to your servant Philip, who, having served his Queen and country, has passed from this life, full of years yet strong in spirit. As we give thanks for

his life, as Prince and husband, as Consort and family man, we pray that all he has done may continue to bear fruit in the lives of individuals and the life of this nation.

Pray for all those who are ill and for those who have had surgery or treatment recently –especially for Michael Sanders. Pray for those we know, and those known to God alone, who seek God’s healing grace. Pray that they may feel the love of the risen Jesus in their hearts, that they may not fear the future. Comfort them and sustain them in their need.

Pray for those who have died and help us to trust they are at peace with you. We pray that we too may share with them the joy and light of the Kingdom of Heaven. Pray for all who have lost a loved one especially those who have been bereaved as a result of the Covid outbreak. Pray for all those who have been unable to attend a loved one’s funeral due to Covid restrictions. Show us how to reach out to the bereaved with kindness and care, so that the hope of the resurrection shines clear in our lives.

Lord, the resurrection of Your Son has given us new life and renewed hope. Help us to live as new people in pursuit of the Christian ideal. Grant us wisdom to know what we must do, the will to want to do it, the courage to undertake it, the perseverance to continue to do it, and the strength to complete it.

(New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book)