

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

**26<sup>th</sup> November 2023: Christ the King**

### **Hazel writes:**

The Christmas Lights event in West Wickham and the St Mary's Christmas Market gave us great opportunities to engage with our wider **community** this week and I spoke to several people who expressed an interest in returning for one of our Christmas services. Please do take as many of our Christmas publicity cards as you want to give out to friends and neighbours. A personal invitation with the flyer is always better than a card through the door (although that's better than no card at all), so please do distribute as many as possible in the next couple of weeks.

This week we 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.

Next **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and a joint service at 10am in St Mary's Church.

We meet to **pray for growth of the Church** on Tuesday mornings between 10-11am at 130, The Avenue. Please contact Jean Pogose for more information: ([dennis.pogose@ntlworld.com](mailto:dennis.pogose@ntlworld.com) or 8289-5996).

**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.

Our **Christmas publicity** has been finalised and more copies can be printed. If you would like to deliver cards in your locality, please let Hazel ([hazelos58@gmail.com](mailto:hazelos58@gmail.com) or 8777 5034) know how many copies you'll need and which roads you'll be covering.

**Matchbox Theatre** are performing The Shakespeare Codex (Nov 30th - Dec 2nd), a play by Terry Pratchett, including satire, slapstick and philosophy. It is a fast-paced romp about working together to stop humanity's enslavement and to inspire 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. You can book on-line through <https://ticketsource.co.uk/thematchbox-theatre>, or you can telephone the box office on 0845 6804568.

Donations of biscuits and mince pies are gratefully received for the **Big Christmas Sing** which will take place on **Saturday 2nd December**. If you would like to help with refreshments on the day that would also be very welcome. Lists are in both churches for people to note their donation or intention to volunteer. There is a box for the donations. If you would prefer to donate money, then please give this to Gill Kehoe at St Francis' or Kay Mussard at St Mary's.

The **Guild of Church Flower Arrangers** have their next demonstration locally on Monday 4th December at West Wickham & Shirley Baptist church at 2 p.m. with entry £5. All are welcome.

We are holding a **Community Christmas Tree Festival** at St Francis Church, where we will have lots of trees to view, refreshments to enjoy and festive music to listen to. We will be raising money for Welcare in Bromley, a charity that provides practical and emotional support and advice to families in need. The church will be open at the following times:

- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December – 10.00am – 1.00pm
- Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December – 12.00noon – 3.00pm
- Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am – 1.00pm
- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December – 10.00am – 1.00pm
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December (with Treasure Hunt) – 10.00am – 1.00pm.

If you can help with being there as a volunteer at any of these times, please sign up on the sheet at the back of St Francis' Church

**St. Mary's Christmas Parish Lunch** is on Wednesday 13th December at 12.30pm in St. Mary's Hall. The cost is £10 but places must be booked through Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com by 8th December. There will be a sing-along of Christmas songs and carols after the lunch.

**St Francis' Community Christmas Lunch** is on Sunday 17th December at 12.30pm in St Francis' Church Hall. A three course Christmas lunch for £12.00 per person. If you wish to attend, please contact Barbara Goodchild on 0208 777 8782 with payment by Monday 11th December.

**Two very good condition two-seater settees** in grey are available for no charge (but would need to collect from an address in Shirley). If you know someone who would appreciate these, please contact Wendy Carvalho on 020 8777 7888.

It is time for the **St Francis Children's Society Boxes** to be brought into church for opening. I can arrange to open the boxes at home if this is more convenient. With

many thanks, Christine Morton (020 8777 9213).

Recently we blessed the refurbished **Choir Vestry at St Francis' Church** and hope that it will be well used for meetings, prayer groups and other small gatherings. We would like to add a table into the space which can be used in a meeting, but which can be put to one side when the room needs to revert to being a choir vestry. Ideally a gate-leg table 4 that folds down. If you, or someone you know, has one of these that they are looking to donate or sell, please contact Barbara Goodchild (020 8777 8782 or [goodchild854@gmail.com](mailto:goodchild854@gmail.com)). Many thanks.

Some of you will know of **Terry Leggatt**, who had escorted visits to St Francis' from Bethlem Royal Hospital before he returned to prison in late 2019. He is now able to prepare for a return to living in the community, but this will be a long process. One of the things that would help him is writing to people of faith who are fully engaged with the community and dealing with transport, shopping, friendships and family relationships. If you'd like to know more about what this might involve, please speak to Hazel.

We continue to collect items for the **Bromley Homeless Starter Pack Scheme**. Starter packs for families in need include cutlery, crockery, duvet covers (not duvets), pillow slips, tea towels, saucepans, frying pans, bath towel, toothbrushes, etc. Please continue to bring any excess items that you have in cupboards at home.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned vegetables, hot and cold meat tins, cooking sauces, UHT milk, squash, UHT fruit juice and jam. They have plenty of 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](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The sanctuary pedestal at St. Marys this week has been donated by Archie Symes in memory of Cynthia and has been arranged by Merri.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com) and items for the websites to Gifty [office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk](mailto:office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk).

**Collect**

God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory.

**First Reading:**

**Ephesians 1: 15-23**

<sup>15</sup> I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

<sup>17</sup> I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup> so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious

inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

<sup>20</sup> God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup> And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Gospel Reading:**

**Matthew 25:31-46**

<sup>31</sup> 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

<sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took

care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

<sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?”

<sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I

was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

<sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

**Post Communion Prayer**  
Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

In our gospel reading today Jesus is talking about the end times and how each of us will be judged by God then according to how well we have looked after the very least of those in his family. This is those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or in prison. It’s very clear that God will judge us according to our reaction to human need.

I’d like to tell you a story about one person’s reaction to seeing someone in need:

There was a man driving up a road in a housing estate in a big, shiny brand-new sports car. He parked, and saw a poor boy standing by the road, watching him. The boy couldn’t take his eyes off the man and his car. The man noticed this intense interest and became suspicious. Was this urchin planning to damage the car, or perhaps to steal it? The man approached the boy intending to warn him off, but before he could say anything, the boy burst out with a question: “Sir, how did you get such an amazing car?”

The man responded “Now, look here, kid, it’s none of your business, and don’t you dare touch my car! But, if you must know, my brother gave it to me.” The boy’s jaw dropped in amazement and the man thought that he was probably wishing that he had a brother like that. But the boy replied “Oh my! How I wish I could be a brother like that.”

God’s judgment is not like the world’s judgment. God doesn’t judge according to how clever you are or how much knowledge you’ve gained. He doesn’t look at how famous you are, or what fortune you’ve amassed. No, it’s all about what help has been given. And it doesn’t need to be a huge amount of help, like the gift of the flashy sports car. It can be very simple help. Most importantly though, it has to be directed to those who are in need.

You might feel that you don’t have opportunities to meet anyone in need. And that’s why, in all our work of compassion, we aim to help you make those connections. Our links with Bromley Borough and Shrublands Foodbanks are one way in which you can help, through making donations or volunteering to get those donations to the right place. We’ve also recently added our co-ordination of donations for the homeless locally through the Bromley Homeless Starter Pack Scheme. If you can’t give any of these items or get out to volunteer, maybe you have time on your hands and could write to a prisoner. There’s an entry in the pew sheet asking for people to think about writing to Terry, who would love to keep his links with our church community for when he is able to live in the community in a year or so.

There is also an obvious situation of need that we see each day at the moment on the news and that's the situation in Israel and Gaza. You might think that there's no way in which you can help here, but I want to tell you about what I heard at an event last week from the Dean of St George's College in Jerusalem, the Very Revd Richard Sewell. Richard was my incumbent when I was going through my application process for ordination, so I know him well and trust what he says. He talked about three ways in which we can support the Christian community in Israel and Palestine. Maybe one of these could be a way in which you can help someone in need.

- Firstly, we can reject the cycle of tit for tat violence that has been going on here for many years and instead stand up for peace. This can be done in two ways: not saying anything that stokes up division, whether that's in relation to the Israel/Palestine situation, or any other situation of tension; and also by praying for long-term peace, no matter that this might seem impossible, as nothing is impossible with God.
- Secondly, we can support Christians in the Holy Land financially. If you know anyone there, please do find out what they need. Most are dependent on business from pilgrims and tourists, but there are none of these visitors there now. However, you can still gain access to craft items that people have to sell and which would make great Christmas presents. Here's a link to the St George's shop website which will give lots of ideas: <https://stgeorgestore.com>. The other side of Christian activity in Israel and Palestine is in ministry with those who are in need, such as through the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, which was bombed last month. They are determined to continue with their ministry of healing but will need all the help they can get to do so. Following a recent visit to Jerusalem, Archbishop Justin Welby has set up an appeal for the ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem (including healthcare programmes, education and training, support for youth and women and ecumenical & interfaith engagement) all of which are being greatly affected by the war. Here is a link to where you can donate to this appeal: <https://www.jmecca.org.uk>.
- Finally, we must do all we can to encourage those in the Middle East to make things better. This might involve attending an event like the one that I did last week, but importantly Richard says, please do not look away, however awful, however intractable the situation may seem to be.

In summary, we are called by Jesus to give help to those in need in an uncalculating way. It's not about only helping those who we deem to be worthy of help, or about helping in a situation because we'll be given thanks and praise, or even because it means we'll get to heaven.

So, why do we give help to those in need? Well, I think that the reading from Ephesians has some indication of this. In this reading Paul prays that the Ephesians might be given a spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that they might know hope, through understanding God's riches and his great power. If we too can understand God's riches and his great power, we can bring hope to those situations of need that we see each day, and we can be a brother (or sister) to another like that poor boy from the housing estate wanted to be, like Jesus wants us to be. And it's through giving help such as this that we'll then know something of that kingdom where Jesus is King.

### **Prayer Pointers**

Pray against dark intentions and hardened hearts which have led to lands ravaged by war and torn apart by evil actions.

Give thanks for the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Gaza and pray for the safe release of all hostages, while aid may be allowed through to reach those in dire need.

Pray for all Christians affected by tension and violence because of their faith and for Jews in this country who are being targeted because of the war between Israel and Gaza.

Pray for stability within our government. May all in parliament look to serve the people and not their own importance.

We pray for churches throughout the land as Christmas approaches. May we be able to reach out to those who have lost their way and have succumbed to worldly influences, with a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

Pray for the NHS, for community nursing and for all those whose health is deteriorating because of lengthy waiting lists, including those who need help with mental health issues but who are struggling to find help due to lack of resources.

Remember by name especially Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Jack Bramwell, Sue Jones, and Tina Hamilton.

Pray for those who have recently lost loved ones, including the families of Sheila Weir, Helen Matthews, Sandra Morrison and Christine Haggart.