

# St Francis Weekly News for THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

### OPENING THE CHURCH

Thanks to Diana and Ashley the sacred space of St Francis Church was open on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June for individual quiet prayer.

This is the first time that the church has been opened to the parish since the lockdown at the end of March – and how lovely it was to throw open the doors and welcome those who decided to come and spend some time in this very beautiful and special place of worship and prayer.

Our first opening gave us the opportunity to put the new hygiene routines and distancing precautions in place, making sure that those who came [and those volunteering] were kept safe and that the measures were as discreet but as effective as possible.

It seems all went well – and it is with great joy that we can now look forward to opening the doors for worship as from Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July.

According to the latest guidelines we can worship together and share the Sacrament of Holy Communion – as long as we follow the very specific instructions issued by the Church of England.

These instructions are not onerous, and we can easily conform to all that is required. However, although the service itself will be familiar, some of the things we usually do and that we cherish will not be possible quite yet.

For example we will not be permitted to share the peace or to sing. The lack of singing is very sad but hopefully we will come up with alternatives that will not only enhance our prayer, praise and devotions but will also satisfy our yearning to share the joy of worship music.

Please do be assured that if you choose to come to church on the morning of Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July, you will not only receive the warmest of welcomes, we will also ensure that you are made fully aware at all times of how the service will proceed and how, together, we can keep one another safe.

Revd Winnie and Eeyore are getting ready!



If you would like to attend the service on **SUNDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> JULY AT 10.30am**, in order that we can make the necessary arrangements – please call me on 07990 576118 – or send me an email: [vicar@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk](mailto:vicar@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk)

### THE BELL

As we gently make our way into our new way of being and the way we are living starts to resemble a more usual way of life, the time has come for us here at St Francis to lay down some of the things that we have been doing throughout lockdown.

It is with tinge of sadness that I share the news that we intend to cease ringing all the daily offices as from 5<sup>th</sup> July when the church opens again for worship.

We will however continue to sound out the night prayer bell at 9pm, we will do this as an acknowledgement that some are still isolated and shielding and as a reminder to all of us that we are enfolded in prayer, and that we are never alone because God is with us, always and everywhere.

It has been a deep privilege to keep the bell ringing throughout what has been a difficult time for everyone – and I give thanks to God for the many expressions of gratitude, encouragement and help that I have received regarding the bell. Actually,

looking back on it – it seems to me that we've been ringing it together. Bless you all!

Finally - a word of reassurance; please do be aware that although the 9am, 12pm, & 5pm call to prayer will no longer be heard everyday as from the 5<sup>th</sup> July– prayers at those times will still be said in church and throughout the parish [and indeed throughout the world].

#### WILDFLOWER FIELD AND PRAYER CIRCLE



The beautiful prayerful space at the rear of the church building continues to blossom and flourish.

Many are now finding this surprising place of tranquillity and God's bounty a great blessing.

Butterflies, damselflies, bumble bees and birdsong abound, and there is also the cultivated area to explore. Please do try to come along and spend a little time here; explore for yourself how good God is in that the wonders of God's handiwork can be found everywhere - if we allow God to take control and we take the time to see.

#### TWO BECOMES THREE...

Talking of flourishing, to our great surprise we now have three baby magpies hopping around the garden. It is incredibly entertaining to watch these offspring being nurtured by their proud, if rather overworked parents. Surprising too how much noise they generate!

We heard a particular kerfuffle going on the other morning and upon inspection, we chuckled aloud to witness the hasty retreat of an inquisitive squirrel along the top of the garden fence.

Said squirrel had got rather too close to the family's home in the fir tree and was being chased by both parents down the length of the garden fence.

I've never seen a squirrel move so fast!

#### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



The adventure begins on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July ☺

I am delighted to let you know that we launch our great Genesis Adventure this week when we will be inviting interested children and their families to pick up this week's activity pack from St Francis Church. The packs are designed to encourage children to start exploring the wonder of God's creation on a weekly basis all the way through until August.

The starter pack includes a folder, felt tip pens, safety scissors, glue stick [provided by an anonymous donor – thank you] and the adventure sheets which have been produced in a joint effort between me and ENYP.

If you know of a family who might be interested in joining in the adventure [age range roughly 7yrs – 12 yrs] please do get in touch and I will let them know how to pick up a pack.

A sample activity sheet is included at the back of the newsletter for you to have a go!

#### ST FRANCIS MISSION AND MINISTRY TEAM

First of all who are St Francis Mission and Ministry Team?

Well it's a group of people drawn from the family of St Francis who gather together to pray, talk and explore where God might be leading us as a church in terms of sharing the Good News of God's love for the world as made known to us through God's Son Jesus.

It may seem that 'things just happen' in church – the services, the groups, the things we do to serve the community; in reality however all the activities that take place need careful planning and oversight; and regular prayerful review.

It is the job of the Mission and Ministry Team to ensure that everything that St Francis Church undertakes is thought through, prayed over and

then taken forward in a way that everyone's gifts and skills are used to the best advantage and involving as many people as possible.

After all, each one of us, no matter who we are, we are called to do God's work, we all have a job we can do – no matter who we are! The difficulty comes when trying to find out what our calling is.

That's why it's good for a church to have many different ways to serve God available and accessible to everyone.

Getting involved in a church activity is a wonderful way to learn more about Jesus – not just Bible Study groups [although they are really good if you want to meet likeminded people and stretch your mind] but also groups that meet together to offer companionship or a service to the community in Jesus' name. It's also a great way to find out more about ourselves and this beautiful world we live in.

Never in the history of St Francis Church has there been such a testing time in terms of responding to God's call. There is so much happening not only in the world, but in our country, our community and in our own lives.

Beginning this Thursday evening and over the next few months [and many months thereafter I suspect] the Mission and Ministry Team will be meeting together to identify where St Francis Church is being called to serve, how we should respond, and how best to continue on with some of the much loved groups and activities that we cherish.

Please do remember the Mission and Ministry Team in your prayers and if you have any ideas you feel called to share about the future of St Francis and it's work here in the Heartsease parish, please do let me know – I would love to hear from you.

#### AND FINALLY...

The Churchwardens, PCC, congregation and I would like to say a big belated 'Happy Birthday' to Rosemary Humphries who celebrated her birthday on 24<sup>th</sup> June. Ordinarily we would all sing a birthday greeting when meeting together for worship – as it is we all send our love and best wishes; Many Happy Returns of the Day Rosemary!

[If you have a birthday or any other notice you would like included – please contact Deborah Lechmere.]

#### WORSHIP & PRAYER

As mentioned on the front page, we are very much looking forward to opening up the church for worship on 5<sup>th</sup> July. However, we are very much aware that some folk are still shielding and others are [quite rightly] cautious about venturing into a public space when there is still a degree of uncertainty about what the future might bring in terms of the virus.

It is important that we do not get complacent, or that we overlook those who are restricted to their own homes for whatever reason.

Consequently, we will continue with the weekly newsletter and its accompanying prayers, readings and reflections for the foreseeable future. We will also continue to offer the option of joining the St Francis Zoom Room every Sunday morning at 10.30am.

What we are hoping is that we will have learned from this experience and will always try to seek new and exciting ways to make belonging to St Francis easier and more accessible for everyone.

If you have any ideas – technological or otherwise, I'm all ears!

#### This week's Zoom Invitation:

You are warmly invited to join Revd. Janet at St Francis Church in worship this Sunday morning at 10.30am. We begin with a Service of the Word, followed by a time when we can talk and share fellowship with one another. At the end of this time, a bell will be rung, calling us back to worship and to Spiritual Communion. Please mute your microphones again when the bell for Spiritual Communion rings, as this helps to reduce background noise and any unexpected interruptions.

If you would like to stay for the Spiritual Communion Service, you are invited to join in with a piece of bread and some wine or juice, if you would like to. An Order of Service is attached which you may like to read through beforehand.

***Please do forward this invitation to others who may wish to take part.***

The 'Zoom Room' will be open from 10.15 to allow some set-up time, and participants are invited to join us from 10.20 for private prayer, with worship beginning at 10.30am. ***You are asked to mute your microphone on arrival, as this helps avoid unexpected interruptions.*** At the end of the service please leave the Zoom space prayerfully.

To enter the St Francis Zoom Space, please click on the link below from 10.20am on Sunday. We look forward to welcoming you!

**Topic:** StFrancisChurch Zoom's Sunday Spiritual Communion Meeting

**Time:** 10.20 onwards on 28th June 2020

#### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7985930265>

**Meeting ID:** 798 593 0265

Your feedback and any comments will be welcome after the service via text or email, and throughout the week in conversation with Revd. Janet.

#### PASTORAL CARE

##### ALMA SABBERTON

It is with deep sadness that I have to pass on the sad news that Alma Sabberton [late of Goulburn Rd], a long standing and deeply loved member of St Francis Church, has died. Although we have not seen Alma in church for quite some time, she remained very much a part of our church family. She will be sadly missed but remembered with much affection.

May she rest in peace, and rise in Glory +

Please don't forget...

Even though we are slowly getting accustomed to this new way of life for many of us sadness, stress, and anxiety can sometimes become overwhelming.

Please do not feel that you are alone - help and support is always available.

This is just a gentle reminder that we are always ready to listen if you need to talk.

Revd Janet [07990 576118]

Eleanor [07840 206716]

There is always someone available in the church building weekdays 11.00am – 12.00pm – please feel free to knock at the door, it will open to you.



#### USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In these difficult times someone might just need one of them...

Childline: 0800 1111

Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

St Francis Free Food: 07990 576118

#### .A WORD FROM THE VICAR

Having read through the readings and reviewed what I've written, especially about the Mission and Ministry Team meeting, it seems that God is leading each one of us to start thinking very seriously about what God wants us to do in terms of what lay ahead of us.

Not only in terms of St Francis Church, but for each one of us as individuals.

We are each one of us a beloved child made in God's own image – each with a part to play in God's amazing plan for the universe; each of us uniquely gifted with particular gifts and qualities.

The past few months have seen us being forced to make changes to the way we were once living, being vigilant in looking out for one another; following rules and guidelines designed to protect us.

For some, this way of living will stay around for a very long time – for others old ways will resurface very quickly and they will go on much as they did before – a glance at the photos of the crowds flocking together during the recent hot weather are an indication of that.

Looking out for one another; caring for those who for one reason or another are in need of a helping hand; listening to a friend offloading; following the rules and guidelines set in place to keep us safe – these have all been much in evidence, and if God's world is to flourish and be transformed back to the garden of peace it was intended to be – these are

the very same values and qualities that we will need to hang on to.

In all that has happened I am sure that we have all got a glimpse of what is best in us [and what we need to amend - St Paul talks a lot about the importance of this]; but the other important thing is this - what is best in us is the very thing that God wants us to use for our own good and for the good of the world around us.

Everyone has something to offer; either in giving or in gracefully receiving. And when we mindfully and gracefully give or receive in the name of Jesus; that's when we fulfil God's calling on our lives.

It's not complicated or complex this answering of God's call – it's quite simple really. Just love, be loved and be obedient to God's rule of love.

Following the lockdown rules have saved many lives – following God's rules will save not only lives but the whole world as well.

We've made such a good start over these past few months – my prayer is that together we keep up the good work.

May God bless you as you think and pray about what God may be asking of you.

*Revd Janet*

#### FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: John R; Doreen F; Tom; Martin M & Margaret; Riley & his mum and family; David; Jeanette, David & Grace; David B; Paula; Gill; Karen; Maegan; Colin; Pete; Lauren; Fr Brian; Hazel L.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Shirley.

We remember with love Alma; Barry S; and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends

#### PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;

in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **The Church of St Francis Heartsease**

**Heavenly Father**  
**We ask your blessing upon us.**  
**Hold the Heartsease Community,**  
**and all the world,**  
**in your arms of love.**  
**Be with us.**  
**Give us your strength,**  
**peace, and healing grace.**  
**Watch over us,**  
**protect us from harm;**  
**and keep in safety**  
**all those who care for the sick**  
**and attend to our needs,**  
**in Jesus name we pray.**  
**Amen**

#### PRAYERS FOR 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Almighty God,  
you have broken the tyranny of sin  
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts  
whereby we call you Father:  
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your  
service,  
that we and all creation may be brought  
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

God our saviour,  
look on this wounded world  
in pity and in power;  
hold us fast to your promises of peace  
won for us by your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining and whose power we cannot comprehend: show us your glory as far as we can grasp it, and shield us from knowing more than we can bear until we may look upon you without fear; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

#### READINGS FOR 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

##### JEREMIAH 28: 5 – 9



Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD; and the prophet Jeremiah said, 'Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD fulfil the words that you have prophesied, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.'

##### PSALM 89

O Lord God of hosts,  
who is as mighty as you, O Lord?  
Your faithfulness surrounds you.

You rule the raging of the sea;  
when its waves rise, you still them.

You crushed Rahab like a carcass;  
you scattered your enemies with your mighty  
arm.

The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours;  
the world and all that is in it—you have founded  
them.

The north and the south—you created them;  
Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name.

You have a mighty arm;  
strong is your hand, high your right hand.

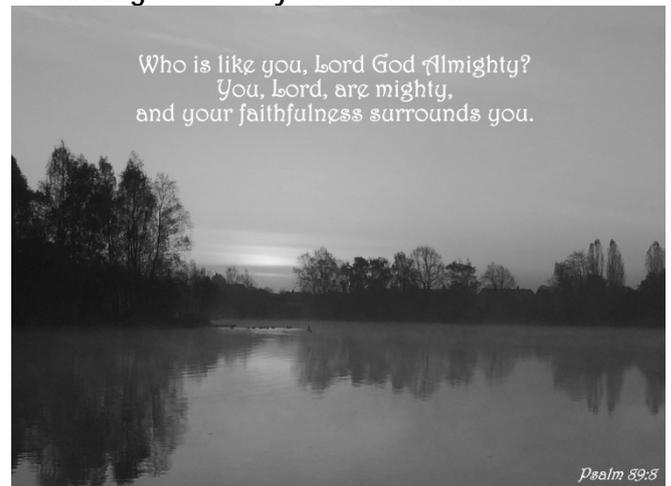
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of  
your throne;  
steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

Happy are the people who know the festal shout,  
who walk, O Lord, in the light of your  
countenance;

they exult in your name all day long,  
and extol your righteousness.

For you are the glory of their strength;  
by your favour our horn is exalted.

For our shield belongs to the Lord,  
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

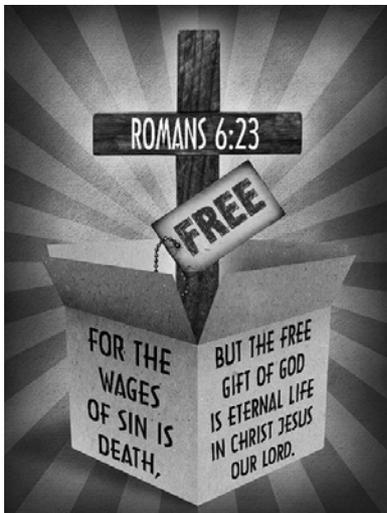


##### ROMANS 6: 12 – end

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



MATTHEW 10: 40 – end

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward



## REFLECTION ON MATTHEW 10 V40-42

Today's Gospel reading comes at the end of a chapter which is entirely focussed on Mission. Jesus is sending out the disciples, giving them instructions to spread the good news of his kingdom, and also warning them that the road will not be easy and that they will face trials, tribulations and persecution. He warns them that their message even has the power to cause divisions in families.

Right at the end of the chapter we get these three short verses which are presumably meant by way of encouragement. Those who welcome you, says Jesus, are effectively welcoming me. Whoever offers you hospitality, is offering it to me, and will be rewarded accordingly.

There are some echoes here of the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew Chapter 25 where the king in the story says that anything done to the least of the members of his family has been done to him and conversely any neglect shown has also been shown to him.

So what are we to make of this? I think the key point is that those who want to follow Jesus are expected to behave like him, to welcome everyone in his name and to provide for their needs. Even a cup of cold water is very welcome!

At St. Francis we have tried to take this very seriously during the current crisis and, through the generosity of local supermarkets, local schools and individuals we have been able to offer not just a cup of cold water, but proper food parcels to those in need.

Although Jesus promises rewards, we have not done it for that purpose. We have done it because we follow his teaching of loving our neighbour and, for us at this time, it has meant listening to what is being said about peoples' needs and doing our best to respond to them. We naturally hope that when people see the love of God in action they may want to respond to it and find out more about it.

So today's reading represents an encouragement to all of us to look out for the needs of our neighbours, and any visitors in our community and to welcome them and show them hospitality, because this is what Jesus would want to happen.

David Lechmere (Reader)

## IN SEARCH OF TRUE FREEDOM

The letter to the Romans represents the summit of the Apostle Paul's teaching of what it means to be a Christian. In this particular section (Romans 6 v12-23) he is looking at the Christian life in terms of slavery and freedom.

"Do not be a slave to sin" he tells his readers. "Do not allow sin to control your life. Remember that you have been freed from the power and penalty of sin by the grace of God."

In today's culture we have lost something of the sense of sin and it's not a concept we are comfortable with, however the concept is very real. As Paul says elsewhere in Romans "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". Sin is all about living our own selfish way rather than God's way and Paul is saying that has to change.

He echoes Jesus famous teaching that no-one can serve two masters. Look, he says, "you can either choose to be the slave of sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to be the slave of righteousness which will lead to eternal life. You who have chosen to follow Jesus have been set free from the slavery of sin and should now give yourselves to the service of Christ."

In Paul's terminology being a slave is to surrender yourself to the control of another. We can perhaps recognise those who are slaves of fashion, always shopping for the latest clothes, or those who are slaves of physical fitness and/or beauty for whom the gym is a top priority. We can recognise those who are slaves of ambition, money or possessions

who give all their efforts to securing the next promotion, the next new car, the next new house.

Sadly too there are also those who are slaves to drugs or alcohol and are entirely focussed on where the next fix is coming from. And in all of us, if we are honest, there is the desire to do wrong, to follow the selfish path and put our own interests before those of others.

"Thanks be to God", says Paul. "Jesus Christ has set us free from all of this. He gives us the free gift of eternal life. Paul does not mean that we are completely free to do as we like. In fact much of this chapter is a counter argument to those who claimed that being free in Christ meant they could do absolutely anything without fear of reprisal or punishment. Paul says that as Christ's followers we need to regard ourselves as "slaves of righteousness" and that we should seek to live lives of holiness, setting ourselves apart to do the things that God wants us to.

Paul is saying that if we are "slaves" to Christ, in other words owing our allegiance to him, then in fact this is true freedom because we will only want to do those things which please him and are in accordance with his will. We have been set free from the slavery of sin in order to serve Christ. This does not mean that we will always get it right. It does not mean that Christians are perfect people! It does mean that we are encouraged to live Christ's way and to find in doing so the true freedom which is God's free gift to us.

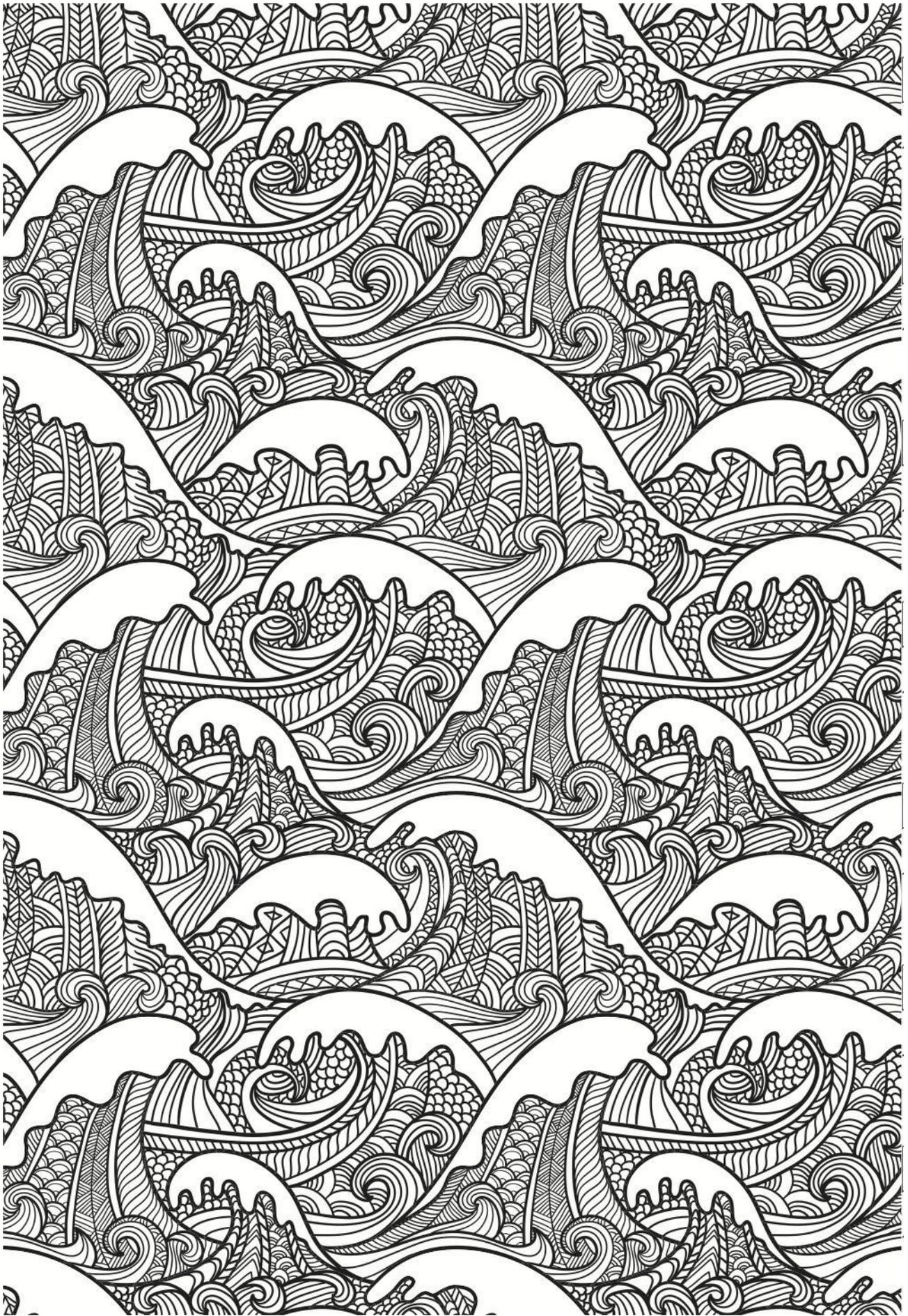
David Lechmere  
Reader



Jesus said to his disciples, "Wherever you go, if people welcome you, then they are welcoming me, too. And if they welcome me, then they are also welcoming God."

He continued, "If someone welcomes a prophet and welcomes them because they are a prophet, then they will receive the same reward as a prophet. If someone welcomes a good person and welcomes them because they are good, then they will receive the same reward as a good person.

And if someone helps one of these little ones – if they give them only a cup of cold water because they are one of my followers – then they will certainly be rewarded."



You rule the raging of the sea;  
when its waves rise, you still them.

# Activity time

# ROOTS children's sheet

28 June – 4 July 2020

Name .....



**Matthew 10.40-42**

Jesus wants us to welcome everyone as we would welcome him.



## Family time

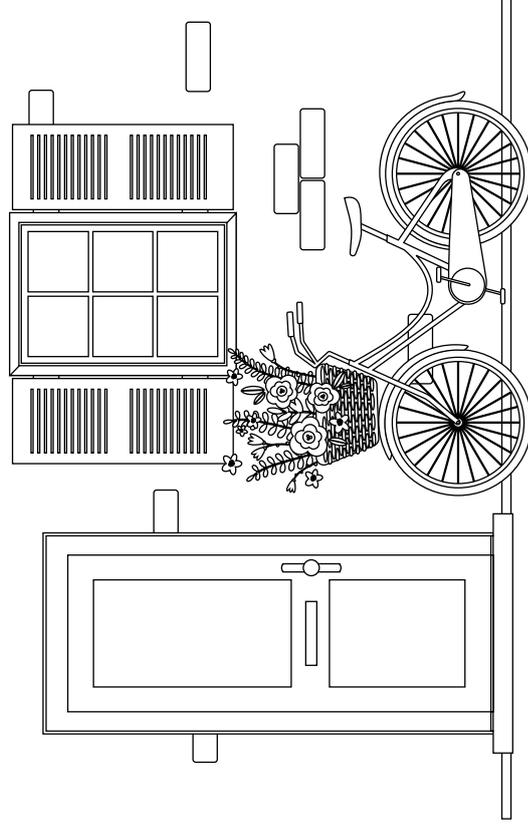
**Talk** Sometimes we get an unexpected knock on the door. How do we react when it's someone we don't know?

**Do** Plan a tea party and invite some people from your church that you do not know very well.

**Pray** Every time there is a knock on your door this week, pray for the person who is on the other side and pray that God will help you make them feel welcome.

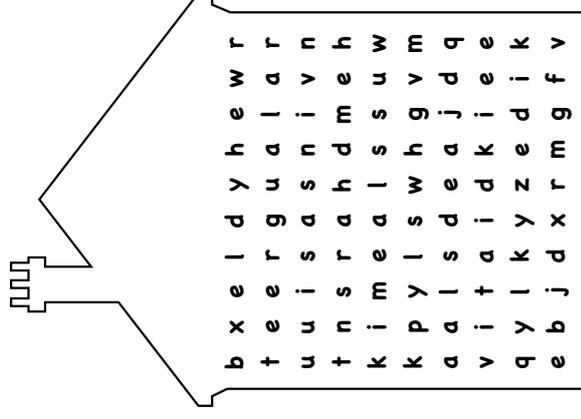


How we welcome someone is very important. Can you make this front door look really welcoming?



**Puzzle**

Can you find the 'welcoming' words in the word search?



- drink
- greet
- handshake
- hug
- kiss
- meal
- play
- share
- smile
- wave



If Jesus came to your house today, how would you make him feel welcome? Write what you could do or say.

what I could do...

what I could say...

Name .....

## Colouring time

Jesus wants us to welcome everyone in his name.



# HOUSE TREASURE HUNT!

FIND SOMETHING WITH THE QUEEN'S **H** HEAD ON IT

FIND SOMETHING **G**REEN

FIND A **D**ARK PLACE

FIND SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH THE LETTER **T**

FIND AN **A**NIMAL

GO TO THE ROOM BEGINNING WITH THE LETTER **K**

HOW MANY **L**IGHT BULBS ARE THERE IN THIS ROOM

FIND A **D**RINK BEGINNING WITH **W**

FIND SOMETHING THAT HAS AN **A**ERIAL

FIND SOMETHING **R**OUND

FIND SOMETHING THAT USES **I**NK

FIND SOMETHING YOU WEAR AROUND YOUR **N**ECK

WHEN YOU'VE TICKED OFF EVERYTHING ON THE LIST REARRANGE THE LETTERS IN BOLD TO REVEAL WHAT GOD MADE ON THE VERY FIRST DAY!

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**BRING YOUR COMPLETED SHEET BACK NEXT WEEK.  
IF YOUR ANSWER IS CORRECT YOU CAN CLAIM YOUR PRIZE!**