

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

14th April 2024: Third Sunday of Easter

Hazel writes:

It is now four years since we started our current practice of providing this pew sheet in response to the church buildings being closed. Keeping in touch has been so important during this time and we have been able to stay in contact with the majority of those who were part of the **congregations** before the pandemic. However, we now provide spiritual and community support in many other ways, and the pew sheet will not be continuing in this format now that I am leaving. Over the next couple of weeks this message will be dropped and there will be no copy of the reflection or prayer pointers, except for a list of those from our congregations to pray for. We will be in touch with those who receive a hard copy to discuss how we might be able to maintain a connection with the church, and our weekly email will continue to be sent to all those who are on-line.

This week we have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and at 9.15am in St Mary's Church. The service at 10.45am in St Francis' Church will include a baptism as well as communion, and there is another baptism at St Mary's church in the afternoon.

Next **Sunday 21st April**, we will have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St Mary's Church, and a joint service of Morning Worship for St George's Day at 10am in St Francis' Church, when we will be joined by the 7th West Wickham Scout Group.

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 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.

Messy Church is on Friday 19th April, at 3.45pm in St Mary's. We will be focussing on Peter, remembering when Jesus shared breakfast with his disciples on the beach, which was an important moment for Peter. Please do tell friends and neighbours with young families about this monthly congregation which normally meets after school on the 2nd Friday of every month.

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 next **Women's Event** is a trip to London to hear Kate Bottley speak at St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday 16th April at 6.30pm. She will talk about some of the things she's learnt about love, death, forgiveness, loneliness and joy, and why she thinks faith is the key to happiness. The event is free, but you will need to book a ticket:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/have-a-little-faith-tickets-774399338267>. Let Kate Dyer or Hazel know if you're hoping to join us, and we'll make sure that you have the necessary information about travel, and we can get you a ticket if you can't do on-line booking.

As well as her concert with Jacqueline Turner, **Clara Coslett** is also performing a one-woman show at Dorking Halls the following week (Fri 19th – Sun 21st April). Details are available here: <https://www.dorkinghalls.co.uk/ddos/>. It sounds like a show that would be worth going to see.

We will be **collecting foodbank donations** (food, household goods and monetary) in West Wickham High Street for the Bromley Borough and Shrublands foodbanks on Saturday 20th April between 10am and 1pm. If you can help with being a presence there, please contact Stephen Howe on 020 8249 0315 or at aireyowe@gmail.com.

St. George's Supper at St. Mary's will take place on Saturday 20th April at 7.00 p.m. The cost for a 3-course meal of prawn cocktail/melon, roast beef and all the trimmings, trifle, and coffee is £15, and you must provide your own alcoholic drinks. Places can be booked by signing the list in St. Mary's vestibule or through Beryl 0208 289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com and will be limited to 40, so book early to avoid disappointment. There will be a raffle and the usual sing-along of songs after the meal and any profit will be for church funds. Any donations for the raffle would be much appreciated. Thank you. The list will be removed after today's 9.15 a.m. service.

Hazel is hosting a **Farewell Community Tea** event for people to drop in to say 'goodbye' at St Francis' Church Hall from 3 to 5pm on Saturday 27th April. Please circulate the flyer that is available in the churches to all those you know who are associated with St Francis' and St Mary's. All are welcome: do come along and bring a friend.

The West Wickham Rotary Club are hosting a **Rock Choir concert** at St Francis' Church on Saturday 27th April at 7.30pm. Tickets (£10) can be obtained from

WestWickhamRotary@btinternet.com or from Matthews Jewellers on West Wickham High Street.

Hazel's final service will be a joint service in St. Mary's at 10.00 a.m. on **Sunday 5th May**. This will be followed by drinks in the vestibule and then a buffet lunch in the Hall. Lists have been posted in both churches for people to sign up if they hope to attend the lunch, or they can contact Beryl Bolton berylbolton@hotmail.com or 07834983735 at St. Mary's and Nicky Nightingale nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 07771 782914 to give their names and state whether they are vegetarian, vegan or have a food allergy. Final numbers are required by **Sunday 21st April**. Thank you.

The **Christian Aid** Team have arranged the following events for Christian Aid Week to raise money for projects in Burundi, one of the poorest countries in Africa:

- **Saturday 11th May:** Join the **London Freedom Walk**, visiting churches in the City of London. It starts from 12.30pm at All Hallows by the Tower (or you can join later along the route) and finishes at 5pm with an option to experience full Choral Evensong inside St Paul's Cathedral. To take part you might be sponsored or give a donation to Christian Aid. You are welcome to go round the route on your own, or with friends, but if you would like to join us as a group please contact Jonathan Tickner (07774 422120 or jticknerphoto@gmail.com). Details of the route, which is just over 5km, are available on the following website: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/london-freedom-walk>.
- **Sunday 12th May: Family Quiz Evening** 7pm at St Mary's Church Hall, The Avenue, West Wickham. Bring your own drinks and snacks, tea and coffee provided. Teams of 6 to 8 - come as a team or join a team when you arrive. Donations to Christian Aid (suggested minimum £5 per person). There will be a raffle so please bring some small change. Please let us know if you have a team (and how many people) or if you want to join a team on the night - contact Anna Seabrook (07791 106199 or anna_seabrook9@yahoo.co.uk)
- **Tuesday 14th May, Film Night** 7pm at St Mary's Church, West Wickham. The film is 'Hidden Figures', a biographical drama about three inspiring black, female mathematicians working on the NASA space Program. Refreshments and popcorn provided. Donations to Christian Aid. Please contact Tony Ivey (07771 942013 or iveytony@yahoo.co.uk) if you would like to come.
- **Saturday 18th May**, 10 am - 2 pm, a **Plant Sale** in the front garden of 80 Kingsway, Coney Hall and an activity for children. Please start sowing seeds and growing plants for this sale. If you have plants available, please contact Julie Lancaster (020 8777 2373 or julie.lancaster08@gmail.com). Plants can be

delivered to the front garden of 80 Kingsway 5.30 - 8 pm on Friday 17th May or from 8 am on Saturday 18th May.

We have set up an electronic envelope with Christian Aid to receive donations, which can be gift aided if appropriate. The link is

<https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2024/west-wickham-cofe-churches>

If you're not so interested in walking a long distance on Saturday 11th May, please do come to the **Children's Society Coffee and Cake Sale** in the hall at St Francis' Church from 10am to 12noon where delicious home-made cakes will be on sale, together with coffee and biscuits, children's amusements, "Guess the weight of the Cake", and a Raffle. Donations of home-made cakes would be very welcome.

We will continue to collect items for the **Bromley Homeless Starter Pack Scheme** for those starting out in a new home with nothing. 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.

We have received a certificate of thanks from **Bromley Borough Foodbank** for the donations made during January and February which weighed a total of 83.95kg. Many thanks to all those who have contributed. Please keep the donations coming in by using the boxes outside either the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned vegetables (including potatoes and tomatoes), hot and cold meat tins, cooking sauces, UHT milk, squash, UHT fruit juice, coffee, desserts, washing up liquid and toilet rolls. 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>.

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'.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl berylbolton@hotmail.com and items for the websites to 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 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.

REFLECTION – Ken Bryan

We are still in the Easter season and here we have a reading with the disciples and some other followers together, in what was probably the room where only a few days earlier they had had their final meal with Jesus. They were with the two, Cleopas and another, who had just met Jesus on the road to Emmaus who had hurried back to tell everyone what had happened.

The men had had trouble believing the women who had told them that Jesus was risen and no longer in the tomb. And now they were confused as they heard what had happened on the road to Emmaus. Was Jesus really alive?

One can imagine the chatter, the questions the disbelief. What was going on and what did it all mean? They had lost their leader and friend, someone they looked up to and held very dear. They were naturally hurting and grieving as they remember his final hours on the cross and being taken down to be buried. People don't come back to life after that – do they?

Just as we might be sad, confused and grieving if we lost a close friend who is young with their life in front of them which is un-lived and unfulfilled. Except that we know now that Jesus' life was fulfilled and complete.

It was at that moment that Jesus appeared in the midst of them.

Firstly, he has said 'peace be with you'. God's peace which he gives them, as he can see that they are startled, terrified, frightened and that they have doubts in their hearts.

He wants to reassure them as far as their human understanding can take them that he is risen yet he has flesh and bones that they can touch and he still bears the scars of the piercings that he received of the nails in his hands and feet and the spear in his side. He even asks for food which he eats in front of them.

He then unfolds the past in the scriptures showing them where it has all been leading. He then tells them the significance of this to them now and where it is leading for the future.

Their role in beginning to bring all people to God through him in a new way.

Jesus then in verses 46 to 49 gives them four guiding insights to show the disciples the direction in which they are to go.

In verse 46 he confirms the biblical theology of what has happened, in verse 47 he gives them an evangelistic programme, in verse 48 he tells them that they have apostolic authority having been with him and seen and heard all that he has said and done, and

in verse 49 he tells them that there is a spiritual dynamic to what has happened and that they will be given spiritual insight and power in what they are about to do.

This is what the new followers of Jesus Christ needed. A theology that understands what has been written in scripture, beginning with Genesis and the God-given creation and the covenants that have been given to the people, the laws of Moses, the insights of David and the visions of prophets like Isaiah.

Secondly, this is not a time for sitting back and chatting to themselves about what they have seen and contemplating what it might mean and what they could do. It was a time for action. For going out into the world and telling people what they had seen and to bring the message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus.

Thirdly, the disciples have an authority because they have been with Jesus throughout his ministry. They can say with first-hand experience what Jesus taught them and what they can pass on with their teaching. They are authentic witnesses and can be believed.

And so, the fourth guiding insight is the Holy Spirit that the disciples received to give them a spiritual strength, power, and confidence for what they were about to embark upon.

So, as we read in Acts, it is after Pentecost and the disciples' receiving of the Holy Spirit, that they embark on their mission.

It is the now confident Peter who gets up to address the people after the healing of a poor lame man. He says that the healing has not taken place because of his or the other disciples' power but it is by faith in the name of Jesus. So, the glory should go God through Jesus the one whom they rejected and crucified.

Peter tells them that it is God who glorified Jesus and he is the same God of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is clearly telling them that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the scripture which goes all the way back to Abraham.

His openly talking to the crowd about Jesus is his first real foray into evangelism. And he is doing it with the confidence and authority of one who has been with Jesus as a close witness to all that he did.

And Peter has followed the spiritual guidance and power that he has received to achieve the healing.

Then while not condemning them he calls them friends when he uses the words that Jesus has told them he says:

'And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his

Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out'. He is challenging them all to turn away from their previous life and repent of their sins and to receive forgiveness.

Peter has used the guiding insights given to the disciples and we too could follow these insights to show us what we should be doing and can give us the confidence to do God's work here in West Wickham.

With knowledge that we can have power from God's Holy Spirit to do his will. Whilst ensuring that what we proclaim and teach is direct from scripture and guided by what has been written by the disciples and those close to the events of the time.

The things that we do for God are evangelistic. I know that for some of us that word brings concern and doubt. But 'evangelism' just means taking what we know out into the world and trusting that we will be given the right words at the right time to bring others closer to God. God knows who we are and what we are capable of, so he doesn't expect us to be something that we are not. But we must not shy away from our faith and letting others know what it means to us.

After all, if we aren't prepared to live a Christ centred life and share our thoughts with others who will? And the church as we know it will wither. It does not always mean tub-thumping and shouting about our faith but witnessing in any situation that we find ourselves in.

It is true that we do not have the direct authority that the disciples had but we do have the New Testament, written down by those close to Jesus and agreed by the disciples if not always written by them. We are guided by these words and are led by the spirit to understand and follow. The more we read the scriptures the more we will understand and the more answers we will receive to our many questions.

And with faith we can have the confidence that we have the Holy Spirit to direct us especially when we are confused and unsure in strange or difficult situations.

So, on this third Sunday of Easter, can we continue to reflect on the Good News at the heart of our faith, that Jesus, our saviour was crucified but was raised to new life by God.

Through him we can have forgiveness for our sins and lead a life confidently following all that he wants us to do.

Amen

Prayer Pointers

Pray for peace in Gaza, Israel, Ukraine and Yemen. Pray for the leaders of opposing factions and nations, that they may peaceably reflect upon the past and be guided for the future.

Pray for those people affected by the cost-of-living crisis around the world. Pray for those with responsibility for national and global economic policies, that they may learn from mistakes of the past and be guided in decisions for the future.

Pray for those who suffer discrimination because of their gender, race, background and disability. Pray for policy makers in government and in business, that they may learn ways to foster equality of opportunity for all people.

Pray that all Christian people may learn to value those who are like them and those who are different, so that God's church may offer a genuinely warm welcome to all.

Pray for those who are suffering as a result of their health or the health of loved ones, those who feel isolated, and those who grieve the passing of a person they love. We remember especially Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Jack Bramwell, Sue Jones, Barry Burford, Pam Tabner, Mark Christy, David Taylor and Joan Mountain.