

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

13th August 2023: 10th Sunday after Trinity

Hazel writes:

It was great being able to celebrate Mavis Page-Wood's 100th birthday last weekend and this weekend we have another **congregational** celebration when Rachael and Niamh Girling are baptised at St Francis'. It is also time to say 'goodbye' to Tim and Sue Shingler, who are moving this week. Thank you to both Tim & Sue for all that they have done for the churches over the years.

Here's a message from Mavis that I wanted to include early in the pew sheet:

Thank you so much for the cards, flowers and good wishes sent for my 100th birthday. It was so nice to be at Church last Sunday and as I sat there, I thought back over the years. I remember seeing the foundation stone laid and watching the building take shape. I was confirmed at St Francis before the war, married there just after the war, our children were christened and confirmed there, and Ann was married there. My mother took the Sunday School for many years and my father was Church Warden for a long time, so you can understand that St Francis means a lot to me.

Mavis Page-Wood

This week we have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and at 9.15am in St Mary's Church. There is then a Family Communion and Baptism service at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

Next **Sunday 20th August**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am and 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

On **Sunday 27th August**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and then at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

On **Sunday 3rd September**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and a joint service at 10am in St Mary's 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 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.

Primrose Smith's funeral is at 11.15am on Tuesday 22nd August in St Mary's Church with refreshments afterwards in the church hall.

Our next **lunchtime concert** is on Thursday 24th August at 12.45pm in St Francis' Church when we welcome Felicity Cliffe, conducting Orchestra Nouveau. Their concert last year was stunning, so do come and join us with your friends to hear some fabulous music. Tea and coffee available before the concert which begins at 12.45p.m.

Our **Community Garden** at St Francis' will be officially opened at an event on Saturday 2nd September from 10.30am – 12noon. The aim of the garden is to create a safe haven for people to socialise and "grow in friendship". This is a project where we are working together with St John's Church and clientele will come through the social prescribing officers in GP surgeries and in response to leaflets that are left in community areas. Do come along on 2nd September to find out more.

Our new group praying for growth of the Church will start to meet on Tuesday 5th September between 10-11am at 130, The Avenue. Please contact Jean Pogose for more information: (dennis.pogose@ntlworld.com or 8289-5996).

St. Mary's Harvest Supper is on Saturday 30th September and will be a bring-and-share so watch out for a list to go up in the vestibule and at St Francis' from the beginning of September.

As there is not another pew sheet until early September, just a reminder of the date of **St. Mary's Christmas Market - 25th November**. We are urgently looking for someone to organise the lunchtime refreshments in the kitchen during the Market. If you are interested and can help in any way at all please contact Gifty gift@nortey.com. Also, if you are new to the Market and can spare an hour or so to man a stall, please contact Gifty. Thank you.

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.

Paper copies of the church magazines and the Diocese of Southwark's The Bridge newspaper are now available in both of the churches.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned vegetables, cold meat tins, desserts (e.g. sponge pudding, jelly, Angel Delight), coffee, ladies' deodorant and toothpaste. They have plenty of pasta, cereal 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 or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The sanctuary pedestal at St. Mary's this week has been provided by Dave and Wendy Taylor for their wedding anniversary and has been arranged by Merri.

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

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:**1 Kings 19: 9-12**

⁹At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' ¹⁰He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

¹¹He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before

the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

Gospel Reading:**Matthew 14: 22-33**

Immediately after feeding the crowd with five loaves and two fish, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately

Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' ²⁸Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' ²⁹He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus.

³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

Post Communion Prayer

God of our pilgrimage, you have willed that the gate of mercy should stand open for those who trust in you: look upon us with your favour that we who follow the path of your will may never wander from the way of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect

God of glory,
the end of our searching,
help us to lay aside all
that prevents us from
seeking your kingdom,
and to give all that we
have to gain the pearl
beyond all price,
through our Saviour Jesus
Christ.

First Reading:

Isaiah 56: 1, 6-8

Thus says the LORD:
Maintain justice, and do
what is right, for soon my
salvation will come, and
my deliverance be
revealed.
And the foreigners who
join themselves to
the LORD, to minister to
him, to love the name of
the LORD, and to be his
servants, all who keep the
sabbath, and do not
profane it, and hold fast
my covenant—
⁷ these I will bring to my
holy mountain and make
them joyful in my house
of prayer; their burnt-
offerings and their
sacrifices will be accepted

on my altar; for my house
shall be called a house of
prayer for all peoples.

⁸ Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts
of Israel I will gather
others to them besides
those already gathered.

Gospel Reading:

Matthew 15: 10-20

¹⁰ Then Jesus called the
crowd to him and said to
them, 'Listen and
understand: ¹¹ it is not
what goes into the mouth
that defiles a person, but
it is what comes out of the
mouth that defiles.'

¹² Then the disciples
approached and said to
him, 'Do you know that
the Pharisees took offence
when they heard what
you said?' ¹³ He answered,
'Every plant that my
heavenly Father has not
planted will be uprooted.

¹⁴ Let them alone; they
are blind guides of the
blind. And if one blind
person guides another,
both will fall into a pit.'

¹⁵ But Peter said to him,
'Explain this parable to
us.' ¹⁶ Then he said, 'Are
you also still without
understanding? ¹⁷ Do you
not see that whatever
goes into the mouth
enters the stomach, and
goes out into the
sewer? ¹⁸ But what comes
out of the mouth
proceeds from the heart,
and this is what defiles.
¹⁹ For out of the heart
come evil intentions,
murder, adultery,
fornication, theft, false
witness, slander.
²⁰ These are what defile a
person, but to eat with
unwashed hands does not
defile.'

Post Communion Prayer

Lord of all mercy, we your
faithful people have
celebrated that one true
sacrifice which takes
away our sins and brings
pardon and peace: by our
communion keep us firm
on the foundation of the
gospel and preserve us
from all sin; through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect

God of constant mercy, who sent your Son to save us: remind us of your goodness, increase your grace within us, that our thankfulness may grow, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading:

Romans 12: 1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters¹ by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and not all the

members have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸ the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

2nd Reading

Isaiah 51: 1-6

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.

² Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.

³ For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like

Eden her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴ Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵ I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.

⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

Gospel Reading:

Matthew 16: 13-20

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' ¹⁴ And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' ¹⁵ He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah!

For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in

heaven.' ²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Post Communion Prayer

God of all mercy, in this eucharist you have set aside our sins and given us your healing: grant that we who are made whole in Christ may bring that healing to this broken world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

I wonder where you meet with God or Jesus. In our Old Testament reading we hear that Elijah met with him in the sound of sheer silence. Jesus himself met with God when he went to a quiet place to pray. In the gospel reading today we hear that he went up a mountain by himself after he had dismissed the crowds. And, if you remember, last week he took three of his closest disciples with him when he went up a mountain to pray. Now, we don’t have too many mountains here in West Wickham to climb up for prayer, but it may be that there’s a room in your home where you know you can be quiet – I always go out of the office whenever I pray, so that I won’t be distracted. Sometimes to the garden, sometimes to the bedroom, sometimes to another place.

I’d like to suggest that it’s vital that you have somewhere that you know you can meet with God or Jesus, because this will enable you to achieve so much more. Look at what happened when the disciples were in the boat:

- When they felt battered by the waves and thought that they were seeing a ghost when Jesus walked towards them, they were frightened. You never do anything well when you’re feeling frightened.
- Once the disciples heard Jesus speak, saying “Do not be afraid”, they were calmed down. And this calm was extended to Peter being brave enough to try walking on water himself. While Peter had the command from Jesus “Come” in his head, and he was focussed on walking towards Jesus, he was fine.
- However, when he took his notice away from Jesus and focussed instead on the strong wind, he became frightened again and began to sink.
- Crying out to Jesus with the phrase “save me” brought Jesus’ hand towards him and again Peter’s focus was turned towards Jesus, so he was able to get back in the boat, and the wind ceased.

Do you see that when the disciples had their focus on Jesus, any other problems going on in the world could be dealt with. However, as soon as the focus changed to look only at what’s going on in the world, the going got tougher.

I wonder what you’ve been doing this week, and whether you’ve been able to keep your focus on Jesus. For me, the experience of the disciples in the boat during the storm played out similarly. I spent around three or four hours one day trying to get to grips with a new HR computer system introduced by the Church of England. I focussed

on the email guidance that I'd received and didn't get very far with being able to complete an annual return that I need to make each year. The next day when I began in prayer before battling with the computer and logging into the system, it took me just 20 minutes to complete the task, as I was in a much calmer frame of mind.

We've recently had a number of baptisms at our churches and in that service the candidate (or parents and Godparents in the case of a child), make two commitments: firstly to turn away from sin (that is, the ways of the world) and secondly, to turn to Christ. Today's gospel story shows why this is such a good approach to life. Turning away from a focus on the world (especially the bad stuff in it, like the wind of a storm) and towards Jesus is always a good approach to take to situations. As I illustrated just now, it can save a huge amount of time, anxiety and frustration and often leads to a better outcome.

So, I urge you, do find a space at home to pray and meet with God, or Jesus. It's also helpful to take a step back from the world and focus on Jesus when faced with a difficult situation. Sometimes it's not possible to go away to a quiet place to pray, but if you can make that turn towards Jesus at a crucial moment by stopping and changing your focus from what's in front of you towards Jesus and thinking about what he might do in the situation, that will help. The disciples in the boat had the physical Jesus with them and turning to him helped them in finding a good way through their experience. We may not have Jesus in the same physical sense, but we do have the Holy Spirit that he promised to his disciples just before his death.

This promise is for us too, so if you can find a way of gaining a sense of Jesus' spiritual presence with you at any time, this will help to bring your focus onto Jesus. As I found this week, this will most certainly save time, anxiety and frustration, as well as leading to a better outcome to almost any situation.

Prayer Pointers

Thank God that he never takes his eyes from us even though we may forget him when things get on top of us. Pray for the courage to follow Jesus even when we can't see the way ahead.

Pray for our world, which is full of turmoil and unrest:

- For those caught up in conflicts: soldiers fighting for their country; their families worrying about their safety; those living in fear of their homes being destroyed.

- For those on the sea: fishermen and those who work on cruise ships and cargo ships; for migrants who are travelling in tiny boats across huge seas trying to reach safety and a better way of living, and for their families who wait anxiously for news of their safety.
- For those in tourist industries, just recovering from the pandemic, seeing their livelihoods under threat again from extreme weather.
- For farmers watching their crops ruined by rain, while fire ravages that of others.
- For those who are on holiday, looking forward to time outside enjoying your creation, but cannot because of the weather.

As results day comes for many during this month, pray for all who have taken exams this summer. Pray for those who will be going off to university and college, leaving their comfort zones and entering new pastures and life experiences. Pray for their families who will have an empty place at the table.

Pray for Rachael and Niamh Girling beginning a new life in Christ following their baptisms and for Tim and Sue Shingler beginning a new life in the West Midlands.

Pray for those who are living through rough seas of life: for those who are suffering with constant pain; those facing difficult diagnoses; those who are sad at the loss of a beloved family member or friend. Pray especially for:

- Vicky Pearce, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Barbara Goodchild, Joan Mountain, James Pitt-Payne, Jack Bramwell, Sue Jones, Brian Griffiths and Tina Hamilton.
- Dom Goeghan's family following his sudden death at age 33: Deirdre & Paul (his parents), Caragh & Mark (sister & brother-in-law) and Barbara (grandmother), as well as all his extended family & friends.
- the families of Marian Haydon and Primrose Smith, mourning their loss, as well as those who are remembering an anniversary associated with a departed loved one.

A prayer for us all in the coming weeks:

Lord, when the storms get close, save us, lift us,
and help us keep our eyes fixed on you,
rather than looking down and seeing only the difficulties.
Give us your perspective to see all the possibilities that you have in store for us.
Thank you for being there for us in all the storms of life.
Help us to step out in faith and follow your lead,
secure in the knowledge that you are always there to lift us up. Amen.