

ST FRANCIS' & ST MARY'S JOINT SERVICES IN 2017

Our joint services for our two churches are held normally on the last Sunday of the month at 10.00 am (with the exception of March and April this year). Please note the time, dates and venues and watch out for the reminders on the pew sheets. These services are a good opportunity to deepen our fellowship with one another.

Month	10.00 am Service	8.00 am Service
January 29 <i>(Candlemas)</i>	St Mary's <i>(All-Age Service)</i>	St Francis'
February 26	St Francis'	St Mary's
March 19 <i>(3rd Sunday)</i>	St Mary's	St Francis'
April 23 <i>(St George's Day)</i>	St Francis' <i>(All-Age Service)</i>	St Mary's
May 28	St Mary's	St Francis'
June 25	St Francis'	St Mary's
July 30	St Mary's	St Francis'
August 27	St Francis'	St Mary's
September 24	St Mary's	St Francis'
October 29	St Francis'	St Mary's
November 26 <i>(Christ the King)</i>	St Mary's	St Francis'
December 31 <i>(New Year's Eve)</i>	St Francis'	St Mary's



REGULAR SERVICES

SUNDAY

- 8.00 am Holy Communion**
1st & 3rd Sundays at St Mary's Church, The Avenue
2nd Sundays at St Francis' Church
4th & 5th Sundays vary – See calendar for details
- 10.45 am Parish Communion**
Activities for younger children (aged 3+) on 3rd Sundays. There are crèche facilities in church
Contact Kate Dyer – 020 8650 8493
- 10.45 am 2nd Sunday - Worship for All Ages**
- 10.00 am Last Sunday – Joint Service**
with St Mary's, held alternately at each church
See calendar for details
- 6.30 pm Churches Together in West Wickham Service**
4th Sunday of the month, held in rotation around the various churches – *see calendar for details*

WEDNESDAY

- 9.30 am Morning Prayer**
10.45 am Holy Communion at St Francis' Church

THURSDAY

- 8.00 am Morning Prayer**

SATURDAY

- 9.00 am-10.00 am: Church open for quiet and prayer.
10.30 am-11.30 am: Coffee and cakes in church, raising money for Action Aid.

DECEMBER 2016

Saturday 3 December

4.00 pm The Big Christmas Sing

Sunday 4 December

8.00 am Holy Communion at **St Mary's** – Hazel O'Sullivan

10.45 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford

Sunday 11 December

8.00 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan

10.45 am Worship for All Ages & Toy Service – Brian Griffiths
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

7.00 pm Park Langley Church Carols at **St Mary's**

Sunday 18 December

8.00 am Holy Communion at **St Mary's** – Richard Ford

10.45 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan
Preacher: Brian Griffiths

6.00 pm Carol Service – Richard Ford
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

Saturday 24 December – Christmas Eve

6.00 pm Lighting the Lamps – Hazel O'Sullivan
Preacher: Richard Ford

11.15 pm Holy Communion – Richard Ford

Sunday 25 December – Christmas Day

8.00 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

10.45 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

Every Wednesday

10.45 am Holy Communion

JANUARY 2017

Sunday 1 January – Naming & Circumcision of Christ

8.00 am Holy Communion – Richard Ford

10.00 am Joint Service at **St Mary's** – Richard Ford

Sunday 8 January - Epiphany

8.00 pm Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan

10.45 am All-Age Communion led by Hazel O'Sullivan
Preacher: Brian Griffiths

Sunday 15 January

8.00 am Holy Communion at **St Mary's** – Richard Ford

10.45 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan
Preacher: Richard Ford

Sunday 22 January

8.00 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan

10.45 am Holy Communion – John Scarth

Sunday 29 January - Candlemas

8.00 am Holy Communion – Hazel O'Sullivan

10.00 am Joint All-Age Service at **St Mary's** – Brian Griffiths
Preacher: Hazel O'Sullivan

Every Wednesday

10.45 am Holy Communion

Dear Friends

The day before I sat down to write this, I saw Ken Loach's new film, "I, Daniel Blake." A thought-provoking, moving and ultimately anger-inducing film, it tells the story of a 50-something widower, certified unfit to work by his GP and his consultant, following a heart attack, but considered fit to work by the Department of Work & Pensions' assessor and therefore required to actively seek work if he is to receive the Job Seekers' allowance. The film depicts his increasing frustration as, in seeking to appeal against this decision, he finds himself trapped in the officialdom and red tape of his local job centre.

At the heart of this film is his relationship with a single mother of two young children, whom he befriends at the job centre, who has been relocated to Newcastle because her local authority has been unable to house the family in London, and who finds herself sanctioned, that is to say, has had her benefit stopped, because, being unfamiliar with Newcastle, she gets on the wrong bus and is late for her appointment at the job centre. To ease his financial situation, Daniel is forced to sell most of his furniture; Katy, the young mother, having searched for work as a cleaner, ends up working for a dubious "escort agency" in order to put food on the table for her children.

Although the characters are fictitious, there has been enough in the press in recent months to show that they are representative of many who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in desperate straits. Three years ago, when the number of foodbanks in this country had tripled, and the number has now increased further, Archbishop Justin Welby commented that foodbanks were "sadly necessary . . . and are not invariably the result of fecklessness, laziness, or just sheer idleness; and demonising those who use them is not an approach that we should take." The same can be said of those who visit the Work Club that members of both St Francis' and St Mary's help support or who are supported by the weekly soup run. The problem with demonising those who are on benefits and then taking measures to ensure that no one exploits the system is that these extreme measures also hit the innocent.

Now if you have read this far, you may be wondering what this has to do with celebrating Christmas. The answer is "everything!"

The Bible accounts of the Nativity tell us that on the night of Jesus' birth, his parents found themselves homeless and had to seek shelter in a stable. Soon after His birth, the Holy Family were on the run, becoming refugees in Egypt. The message is clear, God, taking on human flesh in the person of Jesus, identifies Himself with the poor, the homeless and the refugee.

Then later, Jesus makes it very clear that He expects His followers to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger and clothe the naked.

None of this suggests that we shouldn't celebrate Christmas. Jesus Himself was a great one for parties – the first of His miracles saw Him providing a generous supply of additional wine at a wedding!

So have a very happy Christmas, but don't forget those living in poverty here and abroad. How about an extra donation to our local food bank or a relief organisation of your choice – or perhaps both?

And if you get the chance, go to see "I, Daniel Blake," and ask yourself what should be the Christian response to the situation depicted in it?

God bless and Happy Christmas.

Richard



Prayer Cycle

We pray for those who live in:

Sherwood Way; Silver Lane; Southcroft Avenue; Springfield Gardens; Stanford House, High Street; Station Road; Surrey Road; Sussex Road; Tudor Gardens; White House, Dixon Place; Wickham Court Road; Wickham Crescent; Wilmar Gardens; Woodland Way.

In our cycle of prayer for other churches in West Wickham, we pray for Emmanuel Church: the Minister, Rev Bill Bowman, and all the church family there.

At this time of year many churches offer their space as a winter night shelter for those who are homeless and on the street. According to Crisis, around 3,500 people sleep rough on any one night across England, which is double the amount compared with 2010. Pray that steps will be taken to improve our housing supply and that people are helped through crisis situations, such as relationship breakdown, leaving a care institution or mental health problems, so that the root cause of homelessness is dealt with.

As people think about gifts to give at Christmas time, pray that we might be mindful of those who are not able to make plans for Christmas. Pray that gifts donated at our Toy Service this year will bring joy to children whose families are in a challenging situation.

Pray for people who are in such desperate situations that they fall prey to the human trafficking network. It's estimated that there are almost 21 million slaves worldwide. Pray that victims might find healing, hope and justice and that perpetrators can be stopped, maybe through God speaking directly into their lives.

Give thanks that the pews donated by St Francis' to St Andrew's Church in Gweru, Zimbabwe, have now been installed. Pray that the country will be able to improve its financial and humanitarian situations.



Mission Action Planning at St Francis'

Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, poet and theologian, said 'Life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved'. I believe that this is what God is calling us to do – to live our lives and live them to the full. And this is true for us as a church, as well as us as individuals. A group from St Francis' spent a day in October brainstorming ideas on what the priorities of our church life should be over the next five years. This came after a number of months of prayer and engagement with the congregation and other organisations that we have links with. The Mission Action Plan (MAP) which is forming from that discussion has been shared with the PCC and with the congregation.

The first part of the plan is a vision of where we want to be in five years' time. While this is not the most important part of the plan (which is more about the journey than the end product), we do need a vision in order to be able to map out the journey that's to be taken.

The group saw the vision of St Francis' Church as being **a community of faith that's in touch with the wider local community**. This leads on to three priority areas:

1. Being secure in our faith, so that we're happy to share it with others. We are exploring opportunities to discuss our faith with others within the church community, possibly in groups or in times before or after the service on a Sunday. We are also going to trial some different forms of communion and prayer, as doing something differently can open your eyes to a truth which repeating the same actions again and again will never uncover.
2. Being in touch with the wider local community. We'd like to understand more about what the businesses and families in our local community need and we're going to use a questionnaire in different situations over the next few months to do this, testing whether there's a desire for the space in the church to be opened up and used in a greater variety of ways.
3. Being in touch with the wider local community will help us to make the most of our location here at the heart of West

Wickham. We want to connect with those who pass by on a regular basis. This doesn't necessarily mean having people outside (although that would help). It might also involve making changes to our building frontage, our website and other links to social media. The website has now been brought up-to-date, we have our own Facebook page and we've installed broadband in the church. Other changes are likely to be longer term.

Our vision is all about living our lives to the full through being a community of faith in touch with the wider local community. If you have any further ideas, please do contribute these; please also pray for the activities associated with these plans and get involved in them yourself, so that you can be a part of the living faith of this church.

Hazel

Women's Group

At our Women's Group in 2016 we've looked at some of the pressures that women are under today and considered possible solutions to these. We're now approaching the party season and this brings us even more pressure to be sociable, look good and have a fun time.

We will be hosting an informal discussion evening on this topic on **Tuesday 6 December at 8.00 pm in St Francis' Church**. We'll consider some of the things that can go wrong on a night out and there'll be someone there who is a street pastor to tell you about her experiences helping those in need out on the streets at night. We'll also have someone there with Avon products to sell, either for Christmas gifts, or for your own use in preparing for a Christmas party.

As before, there'll be some light refreshments available to help the conversation along. Do come, whatever your experience of Christmas parties has been (good or bad) – and do bring a friend!

Hope to see you there.

Hazel



Mothers' Union

On 2 August, we held our Annual Garden Party, but well, can you believe it is only 6 weeks to Christmas? Where has this year gone?

On 11 October, Joan, Barbara, Valerie and I went to Wychcroft for a retreat. The theme was "A Celebration of Faith" and was led by Jane Hoskins, a SPA and Quiet Day Leader. We all had a wonderful time, it was very relaxing and gave us an opportunity to have time to ourselves, to meditate and pray. We have already decided that we want to go again next year!

Our last MU meeting was on Tuesday 1 November, with an excellent speaker, Christine Jenkins. Christine is a Southwark Cathedral Day Chaplain and she told us what an average day was like for her in the Cathedral. We were enthralled - and surprised as well - and there were lots of questions afterwards!

We do not have a meeting in December as we will be attending a service in Emmanuel Church on Tuesday 6 December at 2.15 pm. Some of us will also be attending the Carol Service in St John's Church, Selsdon, on Wednesday 7 December at 1.30 pm.

Our members are looking forward The Big Christmas Sing on Saturday 3 December. There are lots of enjoyable things going on at this time of year.

We have not yet booked any speakers for next year, so if anyone has any ideas, please let me or Barbara know.

We wish you all a Very Special Christmas and Happy New Year

Joan Burford, Leader (☎ 8777 2034)



Burrswood

It is 9 years since I first went to Burrswood - a haven for body, mind and spirit. At the end of the half-mile drive, edged with woods, wild flowers and ponds, the main building comes into view. The original house, built by Decimus Burton, comprises the reception area, a lovely sitting room, dining room and study. If you turn right, you will come to the orangery, bookshop and, down a few stairs, to the large church, the out patients' department, therapy pool and tea room. The views over the Weald are stunning. Healing services, quiet days and daily services are held in the church.

On this visit, I had my first experience of the hospital wing. After my stay at the PRUH, this was like going from hell to heaven! The days flew by. I bagged the bath/Jacuzzi after breakfast, where I wallowed happily, my old bones and joints gently massaged by the Jacuzzi waves. Then physio or hydrotherapy, a visit from one of the chaplaincy team, coffee in the sitting room, lunch, tea with homemade cakes, a communion service most evenings before supper. The most taxing thing was trying to decide what to choose for meals each day!

Cheerful, willing staff, happy and anxious to help in any way, day or night, the beauty of the surroundings, the peace and tranquillity - I'm already planning my next visit! There are guest rooms as well as respite care in the hospital and you can enjoy massage, physio and hydrotherapy if you wish.

Details can be obtained from their website: www.burrswood.org.uk, or telephone: 01892 865988, or write to Burrswood, Groombridge, TN3 9PY.

Joan Taylor



Mission News from Mike & Fiona Smith Ear Aid Nepal

As Ear Aid Nepal with INF (International Nepal Fellowship) is one of our chosen Missionary groups for this year, an update of news is important.

In Nepal, limited infrastructure isolates whole communities from accessing medical care, especially during the monsoon season, when roads are routinely washed away. Ear Aid Nepal and INF focus their efforts on the poorest and most remote regions in West Nepal. Hence, ear camps have been carried out since 1993, bringing specialist care to those with hearing disabilities (which are common in Nepal), resulting in neglected education and employment limitations. It became apparent that a permanent hospital and training facility was needed. Ear Aid Nepal worked intensively with INF to provide professional assistance and help with fundraising. As a result the new hospital in Pokhara was opened in November 2015.

Many medically trained volunteers have given their time and expertise, but currently there is a problem with the availability of visas for expatriate members. Hence Mike & Fiona have not as yet been able to return to Nepal in September as hoped. As an ear, nose and throat surgeon, Mike has been involved with ear camps for many years and with the team of national Nepalese workers invested much energy and time into the new hospital, so not being able to return at this stage is frustrating for them both, especially as the Government no longer allows any work under tourist visas. Other organisations are similarly affected and the reasons are very unclear. Our prayers will be valued for this situation as INF seek to somehow find alternative ways around the present visa problem.

Mike has been working as a locum consultant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, but is at present in Nepal for a world conference of ENT surgeons and then he will visit the new hospital in Pokhara, taking more equipment for them, but unfortunately will not be able to work. On his return, Mike has an appointment with the Nepalese Ambassador – is this a step nearer to solving the visa problem? We must continue to pray.

Mike & Fiona close their last letter as follows: "We will continue to let you know about future developments in Nepal. Our hearts are there and we hope to return before long.

Cynthia Matthew

A Good Christmas

This time last year I went to St Paul's Cathedral to hear the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, talking about 'A Good Christmas'. He illustrated his talk by referring to Christmas carols. He said that there are three types of carols or Christmas songs:

1. Isn't it cold - shouldn't we be having a jolly time?
2. Isn't the baby sweet?
3. The disturbing carol.

For him, disturbing carols are those that take us into the real meaning of Christmas – the second verse of *O come, All Ye Faithful* (God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God), the second verse of *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (Pleased as Man with Man to Dwell) and the verse in *We Three Kings* that speaks of King and God and Sacrifice.

Rowan Williams then said:

We ought to be looking with speechless amazement at every human face. Everywhere we look we see a humanity that God believes is worthwhile. Humanity needs to be transformed from within. We ought to be overwhelmed by God's nearness and alarmed by the radical nature of the claim made. It's about letting down our defences between us, God and each other. Christmas ought to be a very surprising time - refreshed by the newness of what comes into the world in Bethlehem. Pray that we don't lose that sense of surprise. God overflows with love and this love is entrusted to humanity - to unreliable people like you and I.

In Advent we think about Mary waiting for the birth of Jesus and singing her song of praise and hope and promise as she rejoices with Elizabeth (*The Magnificat*). Her baby came to transform humanity. In Jesus, God totally changes the order of things. He puts the bottom on top and

the top on the bottom. God revolutionizes the way we think, the way we act, and the way we live. It's easy to be impressed with money, power, status and education. But God turns it upside down. The poor are put on the top; the rich are put on the bottom. It is a revolution; God's revolution.

For those who are proud – those who crave power and status and authority – Mary's baby has a warning. For those who use their supposed power and authority to look down on or ignore the poor, the disadvantaged and vulnerable people, there is 'danger in the manger'. For all those who support and perpetuate unjust regimes and rulers, there is 'danger in the manger'. But, the Child born of Mary looks with compassion on those who are humble - those who are on the wrong end of oppression – those who are bullied. For these there is hope and 'love in the manger'. For those who accumulate wealth as if there's no tomorrow – for those who are more than well-off but have no regard for the poor and the hungry and the homeless – then there is 'danger in the manger'. For those who speculated and gambled on the stock market which resulted in firms going bust, people losing their jobs and families struggling financially, there is 'danger in the manger'. But for the hungry and thirsty – for those for whom this Christmas will be a real struggle because they are out of work, and those who find themselves up to their ears in debt through no fault of their own - there is 'hope and promise of plenty and a new start from the Child in the manger'.

The Child about to be born in that manger in Bethlehem is going to completely change the world. Nothing will ever be the same again – and Mary knew this in her heart of hearts. Her song – *The Magnificat* – reminds us that her child came to bring justice, hope and peace to a troubled world.

Brian Griffiths

The Good Shepherd Mission To The Homeless

The Good Shepherd Mission to the Homeless (GSMH) was launched in 1990 by Sister Joan O'Donoghue, who was part of a small convent of nuns living in Montacute Road, New Addington and attached to the Good Shepherd RC Church on the estate (hence the name of the

homeless project). The nuns were members of the Daughters of Mary & Joseph. You may know the order locally as they are responsible for The Emmaus Centre in Layhams Road, West Wickham. In 2007, Sister Joan was awarded the MBE for her work with the homeless and the community in New Addington.

Sadly, Sister Joan died in 2010, aged 76. However, the homeless project still continues to flourish and this is a lasting legacy to her tremendous compassion and dedication to the plight of the homeless.

One room in the little convent house in New Addington was packed full of food and clothing that would be taken every week to the homeless in Central London gathered at Waterloo and Lincoln's Inn Fields. Initially, a lot of the work was done around 'Cardboard City' at Waterloo. This was developed as the Imax Cinema complex, but the homeless still gather around St John's Church there. Sister Joan used to go around the local churches, giving talks about the project and one of her early talks was given to the St Mary's branch of the Mothers' Union. This fired up the imagination of the congregation of St Mary's and soon several in the parish were volunteering to travel to London every week in the minibus, packed with food and clothing. The project now has become a truly ecumenical venture and funded entirely by local donations.

When the convent in Montacute Road closed down, St Edward's Church, New Addington, came to the rescue. They offered their hall as a place to prepare the food and their vicarage driveway as the parking place for the minibus. Every Thursday lunchtime, a small army of people prepare a range of sandwiches (cheese, egg, spam and jam), a large urn of tea with flasks of hot water to top it up and several flasks of steaming hot soup. In the summer months there are cold drinks as well. Invariably, someone will make a tray of bread pudding and there is usually a supply of buns and KitKat bars. Men's clothing is always needed by the homeless and the minibus is often loaded with shoes, trousers, jackets and other items of clothing to be given away. Someone will bring along toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo and disposable razors.

The journey to London starts from St Edward's at 6.30 pm every Thursday night. The first stop is Lincoln's Inn Fields, where between

50 and 100 homeless people of all nationalities and ages, are eagerly waiting for the minibus to arrive. After Lincoln's Inn, the volunteers make the short journey to Waterloo where about 20 homeless are cared for. Finally the volunteers arrive back at New Addington around 9.45 pm.

The crew are on a rota basis, offering to help when they are available. Currently there are eight volunteers from St Mary's and two from St Francis'. Some of the volunteers from St Mary's have been offering their services every week for 20 years! The crew are very friendly and there's a lot of banter on the minibus during the journey to and from Central London (don't ask about the shower caps!) Two of the volunteers from St Mary's even found themselves on a soup run in Brisbane, Australia, whilst they were on holiday there earlier this year. That project was called 'Rosie's – Your Friends on The Street'. Rosie's have a prayer which sums up the reason the GSMH exists:

O Jesus, Make our hearts so human, that others may feel at home with us,
So like Yours, that others may feel at home with You,
So forgetful of self that we might simply become the place where You and they meet
In the power of Your Love and the joy of Your friendship.

Amen

Brian Griffiths



Some Church Notice Howlers

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on 24 October in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Please remember your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' in the church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

February/March Magazine

Items for inclusion in the next magazine are needed by Sunday 8 January 2017 please, or contact Margaret Green to make alternative arrangements via:

Tel: 8777 4450 or email: magletitiagreen@hotmail.com



Bishop Richard wrote in November . . .

On a pre-funeral visit many years ago I was told by an elderly bereaved widower that, although his recently deceased wife had some faith in God, his own was demolished when a fellow soldier was shot to pieces alongside him in the Second World War. Both of my parents served in the Armed Forces during that war and both of my grandfathers during the First World War, so I'm well aware of the profound impact of those terrible conflicts on so many lives. In 2016 we are remembering the hundredth anniversary of the appalling carnage of the Battle of the Somme. We hear daily about deeply destructive conflicts in Syria and other parts of the Middle East, and we are seeing the huge crisis of refugees and asylum seekers. Misery, suffering and evil are endemic in life.

For those who wish to hold a faith in a good, loving and sovereign God the existence of so much evil and suffering in life is one of the biggest challenges of all. How are we to understand our lives and the purposes and action of God in the face of the sheer awfulness of life so much of the time? At a recent seminar at King's College London, Prof Vernon White described the doctrine of Providence as "impossible, but necessary". This captures the dilemma of theodicy very well. The month of November provides a rich opportunity to reflect on these themes as we remember our own personal bereavements at the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, the tragedy of war on Remembrance Sunday, before moving to the focus on Christ the King, and Advent later in the month.

Each Sunday in the Eucharist we proclaim the 'mystery of faith' – 'Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again'. This Christological lens is the best way of approaching the dilemma of theodicy. We need the whole Christological narrative of creation, incarnation, cross, resurrection, ascension, and second coming. In creation we remember that God is the source of all being, and creation is the result of God's free and loving purposes. Christianity has eschewed both a Manichaean view that there is an eternal battle

between good and evil, and a view that God is somehow absent, indifferent or impotent in the face of suffering and evil. In Christ's incarnation, suffering and death we see God alongside and within life in all it brings – both good and ill, and by doing so bringing redemption and hope. The Resurrection is the great affirmation of God's way of self-giving love bringing new life. In the Ascension, ideas of Christ the King, and the themes of Christ's Second Coming in Advent we are assured that God's love and justice are indeed sovereign.

These matters are complex and challenging – so it is vital that we not only think through our understanding of God and life with our heads, but we also seek to reflect on and pray these things deep within our hearts in a language beyond words. The doctrine of Providence has profound implications for how we live and understand our lives. It can save us from despair and cynicism and move us to a real trust in the transforming power of the suffering and self-giving love of God.

+Richard Kingston



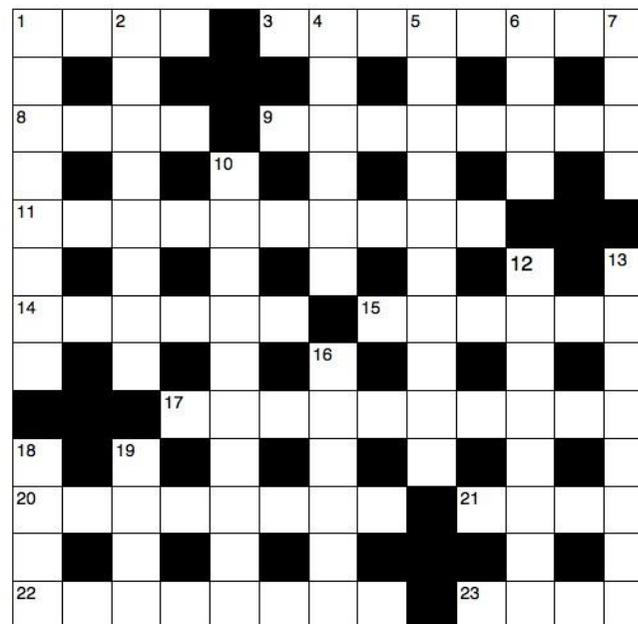
A Winter Prayer

Let us huddle together this morning,
 our community a place of warmth in our lives
 as we share the flame of hope and connection.
 Let us allow the frost of isolation and bitterness to melt away
 as we open ourselves to a sense of peace and spirit.
 We extend our thoughts to all those who are cold this morning,
 lacking shelter or love to keep them warm.
 Let us wrap our prayers around them and each other like scarves,
 and wish each other safe journeys through the storm.
 May we be insulated from fear as the earth is insulated by the snow.
 And, like bulbs, may we continue to grow and open inside, despite the cold,
 Ready for the spring, to stretch and grow towards justice.
 Amen

The Rev Kate Wilkinson



Bible Crossword for December/January



Clues

Across

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)
- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag) (8)

23 'The eye cannot say to the —, "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)



Down

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — —, and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 'The tax collector. . . beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and —' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
- 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

Answers to October/November Crossword

D	E	A	C	O	N		A	P	P	E	A	R	
A		F			E		G		R		L		
W	I	T	S			H	E	A	V	E	N	L	Y
N		E			U		I		Y			T	
	A	R	G	U	M	E	N	T			M	O	B
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E		O		R		O		C		A		Y	
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	L		S		N		R				W		G
O	B	S	T	A	C	L	E			J	O	H	N
	A		A		L		A				R		A
E	N	A	B	L	E			M	A	R	K	E	T

Not Only Christmas Day

Lord, this is my prayer
 Not only on Christmas Day
 But until I see You face to face
 May I live my life this way:

Just like the baby Jesus
 I ever hope to be,
 Resting in Your loving arms
 Trusting in Your sovereignty.

And like the growing Christ child
 In wisdom daily learning,
 May I ever seek to know You
 With my mind and spirit yearning.

Like the Son so faithful
 Let me follow in Your light,
 Meek and bold, humble and strong
 Not afraid to face the night.

Nor cowardly to suffer
 And stand for truth alone,
 Knowing that Your kingdom
 Awaits my going home.

Not afraid to sacrifice
 Though great may be the cost,
 Mindful how You rescued me
 From broken-hearted loss.

Like my risen Saviour
 The babe, the child, the Son,
 May my life forever speak
 Of who You are and all You've done.

So while this world rejoices
 And celebrates Your birth,
 I treasure You, the greatest gift
 Unequaled in Your worth.



I long to hear the same words
That welcomed home Your Son,
"Come, good and faithful servant,"
Your Master says, "Well done."

And may heaven welcome others
Who will join with me in praise
Because I lived for Jesus Christ
Not only Christmas Day!

Peter, 2011



The Magic of Christmas

"Joy to the World," the carollers sang out
As last minute shoppers scurried about,
Desperately seeking that one special gift
That would give Christmas morning a magical lift.

As an old man stood standing, listening to the song,
Midst all the madness of the bustling throng,
In a shaky, hoarse voice he began to join in
Singing the words of the famous old hymn.

One by one people stopped with their madness
To join with the old man for a moment of gladness.
By the time the carollers finished with singing the song,
The whole throng was united as they all sang along.

As if by magic from out of the sky
Church bells rang out from a chapel nearby.
And when it was over the people greeted each other
With messages of good will they shared with one another.

You see, that magical lift the shoppers sought for so long,
Was not in the buying or scurrying along.
That magical gift so desperately sought
Was the Spirit of Christmas - which could never be bought.

Tom Krause, 2012

Lord Jesus,

Please forgive me for being so grumpy as I trudge through
the never-ending tasks set before me this holiday season...
My to-do list seems to keep growing with shopping, church
services, and family gatherings---

and I'm running short of time!

Restore the joy of Christmas to my heart . . .
and help me to relax each day and make time for

YOU --

my one true Source of Joy.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH

Ravenswood Avenue West Wickham

Invite you to

THE BIG CHRISTMAS SING!

**Raising Funds for
CHRISTIAN AID**

ON SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2016

AT 4.00 PM

Featuring:

West Wickham Choir

Pickhurst Junior School Choir

Carols & Other Christmas Songs & Readings for All

Free Refreshments

