

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

18th December 2022: 4th Sunday of Advent

Hazel writes:

As well as the Christmas community lunches that are reported on below, it has been great to welcome many families from the local area to a couple of Christmas services already. We had over 40 children, parents, carers and helpers at **Messy Christmas** in St Mary's Church on Friday and then more than 120 children and adults at the **Scouts' Carol Service** in St Francis' Church on Saturday.

Next **Sunday 25th December**, we will have Christmas Day Communion services at 8am in St Mary's Church and at 10am in St Francis' Church.

On **Sunday 1st January**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and at 10am in St Mary's Church.

On **Sunday 8th January**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church and non-eucharistic services for Epiphany at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' 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 at St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am. These events will **NOT** take place between Christmas and New Year.

On **Christmas Eve** we will have the following services:

- Christingle at 4pm in St Mary's Church;
- Lighting the Lamps at 6pm in St Francis' Church;
- Midnight Communion services at 11.15pm in both St Mary's and St Francis' Churches.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week both our carol services will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Francis' at 10.45am and from St Mary's at 4pm, with refreshments following both services. 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.

Thank you to all those who helped make the Community Christmas lunch on Sunday 11th December at St. Francis' such a success. It was lovely to see familiar faces again and great to have members of the Youth Club helping.

St. Mary's also enjoyed a great Christmas Community lunch on Wednesday 14th December. Numbers were lower than normal partly due to the adverse weather conditions, but those who came along enjoyed a lovely meal followed by carols and Christmas songs at the end. Thank you to all who helped, particularly Ann who did all the cooking.

The Saturday **Action Aid monthly coffee mornings** started at Easter and £313.55 has been collected. With an amount already in the bank, £600 will be forwarded to Action Aid shortly. Thanks to those who serve coffee and make cakes and those that come and participate. The coffee mornings will be resumed on the first Saturday in the month in the New Year.

A **qualified and experienced carer** known to our pastoral care team has some free time when she could take on another client, including help with things such as: personal care; food preparation; shopping; assistance with walking; laundry, ironing and some cleaning. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from some more help around the home, do call Izabela on 07761 326618.

You can get a free life-saving **home safety check** from the London Fire Brigade who will visit your home and do a fire safety check, including providing a free smoke alarm if necessary. This is especially helpful if you have mobility issues, including the housebound. Please do let others know about this. You can get more detail at <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety-visits/>

Churches Together in West Wickham are opening up **Warm Spaces** on five days each week (normally 9am-5pm) providing somewhere warm for people to meet in for free. If you could help with this for a couple of hours on a rota basis, please contact the following:

- For a Monday – Jon Hills (jon@wwsbc.org.uk or 020 8777 5705) at West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church
- For a Tuesday – Ian Hamlin (ianh2102@hotmail.com or 07543 561868) at Coney Hill Baptist Church
- For a Wednesday - Kate Dyer (katedyer41@hotmail.com or 07808 468591) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) at St Francis' Church
- For a Thursday – Laura MacBean (laura.macbean@googlemail.com) at West Wickham Methodist Church
- For a Friday – Pat Best (patbest@btinternet.com or 020 8464 7208) at Emmanuel United Reformed Church

Croydon- Zimbabwe Link

For some time, we have had a link with St Andrew's Church in Gweru, Zimbabwe, as part of Croydon's link with the Central Diocese of Zimbabwe, whose Bishop, Ignatius Makumbe, used to be the incumbent of St Andrew's. Information about the current situation in Zimbabwe, how the church is faring and appropriate subjects for prayer can be found in the Croydon-Zimbabwe Link bulletin, now available on both church websites: <https://www.stfranciswestwickham.co.uk> ;

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require milk (long life), coffee, sweets, cooking sauces, soup, rice, tinned potatoes and other vegetables. They are well stocked with pasta, cereal, tea and biscuits. Please do not bring any fresh or frozen food, or baby milk as the foodbank cannot pass this on. You can also donate financially here: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>. Thank you for your continuing support.

If anyone would like a pedestal at either church in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special anniversary etc., please contact Merri Womack (8777 8772) for St Mary's (or there is a list to sign in the vestibule at St. Mary's) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

Both churches will be decorated for Christmas by the ladies on the flower rotas. The pedestal flowers at St. Francis' this week have been requested by Margaret Thorne and those on Christmas Day are to celebrate Brian's 70th birthday on the 20th December and also as a thank you to everyone at St. Francis and St. Marys for all their prayers and in celebration of Brian's recovery from the surgery last year – 1 year on the 14th December.

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

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and
minds, that when your Son
Jesus Christ comes again as
judge and saviour we may
be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our
God.

First Reading:

Isaiah 7: 10-16

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to
Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ Ask a sign of
the LORD your God; let it be
deep as Sheol or high as
heaven. ¹² But Ahaz said, I
will not ask, and I will not
put the LORD to the
test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said:
'Hear then, O house of
David! Is it too little for you
to weary mortals, that you
weary my God
also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord
himself will give you a sign.
Look, the young woman is
with child and shall bear a
son, and shall name him
Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat
curds and honey by the
time he knows how to
refuse the evil and choose
the good. ¹⁶ For before the
child knows how to refuse
the evil and choose the
good, the land before

whose two kings you are in
dread will be deserted.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1: 18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the
Messiah^l took place in this
way. When his mother
Mary had been engaged to
Joseph, but before they
lived together, she was
found to be with child from
the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her
husband Joseph, being a
righteous man and
unwilling to expose her to
public disgrace, planned to
dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But
just when he had resolved
to do this, an angel of the
Lord appeared to him in a
dream and said, 'Joseph,
son of David, do not be
afraid to take Mary as your
wife, for the child conceived
in her is from the Holy
Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son,
and you are to name him
Jesus, for he will save his
people from their sins.' ²² All
this took place to fulfil what
had been spoken by the
Lord through the prophet:
²³ 'Look, the virgin shall
conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him
Emmanuel', which means,
'God is with us.' ²⁴ When

Joseph awoke from sleep,
he did as the angel of the
Lord commanded him; he
took her as his wife, ²⁵ but
had no marital relations
with her until she had
borne a son; and he named
him Jesus.

Post Communion Prayer

Father in heaven,
who sent your Son to
redeem the world and will
send him again to be our
judge: give us grace so to
imitate him in the humility
and purity of his first
coming that, when he
comes again, we may be
ready to greet him
with joyful love and firm
faith; through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

Collect

Eternal God, in the stillness of this night you sent your almighty Word to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation: give to the earth the peace that we long for and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

First Reading:

Hebrews 1: 1-4

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Gospel Reading

John 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. ⁴What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who

believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Post Communion Prayer

God our Father, in this night you have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and for ever.

Collect

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in
wonder at heaven touching
earth: accept our heartfelt
praise as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal
God.

First Reading:

Isaiah 62: 6-12

Upon your walls, O
Jerusalem, I have posted
sentinels; all day and all
night they shall never be
silent.

You who remind the LORD,
take no rest,⁷ and give him
no rest until he establishes
Jerusalem and makes it
renowned throughout the
earth.

⁸The LORD has sworn by his
right hand and by his
mighty arm: I will not again
give your grain to be food
for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not
drink the wine for which
you have laboured;
⁹but those who garner it
shall eat it and praise
the LORD and those who
gather it shall drink it in my
holy courts.

¹⁰Go through, go through
the gates, prepare the way
for the people;
build up, build up the
highway, clear it of stones,
lift up an ensign over the
peoples.

¹¹The LORD has proclaimed
to the end of the earth:
Say to daughter Zion,
'See, your salvation comes;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before
him.'

¹²They shall be called, 'The
Holy People, The Redeemed
of the LORD';
and you shall be called,
'Sought Out, A City Not
Forsaken.'

Gospel Reading

Luke 2: 8-14

⁸In that region there were
shepherds living in the
fields, keeping watch over
their flock by night. ⁹Then
an angel of the Lord stood
before them, and the glory
of the Lord shone around
them, and they were
terrified. ¹⁰But the angel
said to them, 'Do not be
afraid; for see—I am
bringing you good news of
great joy for all the
people: ¹¹to you is born this
day in the city of David a

Saviour, who is the
Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This
will be a sign for you: you
will find a child wrapped in
bands of cloth and lying in a
manger.' ¹³And suddenly
there was with the angel a
multitude of the heavenly
host, praising God and
saying,
¹⁴'Glory to God in the
highest heaven, and on
earth peace among those
whom he favours!'

Post Communion Prayer

God our Father,
whose Word has come
among us in the Holy Child
of Bethlehem:
may the light of faith
illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and
deeds; through him who is
Christ the Lord.

Collect

God our Father, in love you sent your Son that the world may have life: lead us to seek him among the outcast and to find him in those in need, for Jesus Christ's sake.

First Reading:

Galatians 4: 4-7

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶ And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our ¹ hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2: 15-21

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Post Communion Prayer

All praise to you, almighty God and heavenly king, who sent your Son into the world to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin: grant that, as we are born again in him, so he may continually dwell in us and reign on earth as he reigns in heaven, now and for ever.

REFLECTION – Richard Ford

To follow after the Carol Services on Sunday.

Prayer Pointers

The fourth Advent candle represents love and especially Mary's love and the angels declaring God's Good News of love. Pray that, we be love bringers, taking the flame of your love into the dim and ugly places, showing Christ's love to those who need it.

On Christmas morning: Open our eyes to see the baby in Bethlehem;
Open our ears to hear the voices of angels; Fill our spirits to experience the light shining through the darkness, as God divine becomes man in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Pray for those who lead our country at a time when so much is troubled.
Pray for wisdom in addressing the multiple challenges we face; for a solution to the many strikes happening at this time; for readiness to preserve the fabric of society and support for the most vulnerable.

Pray for all who must work this Christmas, and those who long to find regular work.
Pray for paramedics, care home staff, ambulance drivers and those who work to protect us in the emergency services.

Continue to pray for all who work for justice and reconciliation and all who are suffering as a result of war and civil unrest. Pray for those suffering in Ukraine, Haiti, Yemen, Somalia and in other places of conflict around the world that there may be a just and lasting peace.

In our congregations pray for these who are experiencing ill health by name – Mark Outten, Vicky Pearce, Mike East, Pat Allegacone, Jane Smith, Joan Burford, Graham Stone, Rowena Griffiths, Daphne Dack, John Dack, Tony Goodchild, Barbara Goodchild, Karen Plummer, Miriam Richards and Marion Rand – and those known to God alone

Hold before God all those for whom this year is the first Christmas without a loved one. Pray especially for the souls of Ann and Tony Sibley and for their daughter Kim and their son Earl. Hold before God the families in Solihull, grieving the loss of their children; and for all families who have lost children at this time. Pray that God may be close to them and that they may know his comfort and peace.