

**ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM**  
**30<sup>th</sup> May and 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Trinity Sunday/First Sunday after Trinity**

**Hazel writes:**

Last week was Pentecost - the birthday of the Church. Birthdays are always a good time for new beginnings, and there seem to be some of these happening for a number of people. Here is a photo of Dorothea Cowan surrounded by boxes with some much-loved gifts of plants. She will be staying with her son for a few weeks. Please do sign the card which is at St Francis' Church for her and which we will send when she moves into her own new home in Weston-Super-Mare.



This pew sheet includes readings and notices for the next two weeks, as Hazel will be on holiday from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May for a week. Next week the on-line service will be posted on YouTube later in the day (hopefully by 1pm) once it has been recorded at St Francis'. Thank you to Brian Griffiths for agreeing to provide this service.

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June we have Holy Communion services at **8am in St Mary's church** and at **10am in St Francis' Church**.

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June we have a Holy Communion service at **8am in St Francis' church** and a non-Eucharistic service where church wardens from both churches will be commissioned at **10am in St Mary's Church**.

**Morning Prayer** has recommenced and will be on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June at 9am in St Mary's Church and on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June in St Francis' church.

St Francis' Church will be **open for private prayer** on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June from 10.30-11.30am.

The **Bereavement Support Group** will meet on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June at Emmanuel Church, The Grove.

**Messy Church** is on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June on our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham/](http://www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham/)

**Resources and updates for the week ahead** – This week our service will **premiere at 10am** on YouTube. All other files for this week have been combined and posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line. Other worship and resources that you might want to listen to or look at on Sunday:

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org).
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 Doing Justice – A service of reflection on the anniversary of the murder of George Floyd.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Westminster Abbey.
  - On **BBC 1**: Sunday Morning Stories at 10.00 a.m. – Kate Bottley hears about a cathedral helping people back on to their feet and into work;
  - Road to Rome Pilgrimage at 10.30 a.m. - Eight celebrities of differing faiths and beliefs spend 15 days on pilgrimage from the Italian Alps to Rome; and
  - Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Aled Jones visits Newstead Abbey.

#### **On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June:**

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org).
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 - Mattins from St. Georges Chapel, Windsor.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from St. David's Cathedral on the Eve of Corpus Christi.
  - On **BBC 1**: Road to Rome Pilgrimage at 10.30 a.m. – Stephen K. Amos tells the group that as a gay man he struggles to find a religious home; and
  - Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. from Salisbury Cathedral – Katherine Jenkins explores the harmony between music and faith.

The **Bromley Boy Singers** will be performing their first live concert this year in St Francis' Church, West Wickham on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm. Tickets are available to order on-line at <https://bromleyboysingers.org.uk>. If you are unable to book on-line, please reserve your seats (£11 each) in advance, as capacity is limited, through Geoff

Mussard at [music@mussard.org.uk](mailto:music@mussard.org.uk) or 020 8650 8389. Please bring the exact cash on the night - no cheques, no change – to St. Francis' Church, where your name will identify you as having the appropriate number of seats reserved.

Throughout the past year a growing group of people have been receiving daily reflections on two readings from **Morning Prayer** from Hazel and Richard. We are now meeting in the church buildings twice a week: on a Tuesday at 9am in St Mary's and on a Wednesday at 9.30am in St Francis' to say Morning Prayer together and reflect on the bible readings in a discursive way. Anyone is welcome to join us.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently their biggest need is 'bags for life'. They also need jellies, instant whips, biscuits, tinned tomatoes, coffee, squash, deodorant, cleaning spray, antiseptic wipes and washing up liquid. Please do not bring any fresh 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>

We are pleased to announce that St Mary's will be hosting a **Prom Praise Watch Party** on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July at 5.45pm. An opportunity to gather with others, bringing your own picnic to watch and (restrictions allowing) sing along to live hymns and worship songs being streamed from All Soul's Langham Place. Tickets are free, but must be booked in advance, as capacity is limited, either on-line at [www.stjohnsww.com/prompraise](http://www.stjohnsww.com/prompraise) or through Geoff at [tickets@mussard.org.uk](mailto:tickets@mussard.org.uk) or 020 8650 8389.

Our **bereavement support bags** will be especially helpful in the months ahead. If you would like a bag to give to someone that you know who has lost a loved one, do take one from the back of either of the churches.

Do you feel you are being called to put yourself forward to be on the **Southwark Diocesan Synod**? Elections will take place by the beginning of July. The Synod brings people together from across the Diocese to drive mission, set strategies, shape priorities as well as appoint to a range of positions on boards and committees. It is a body which is advisory and is a place where important topics facing the church can be discussed. If you want to find out more, please take a leaflet which you will find copies of in both churches. There are also two webinars where potential members to join and gain an overview of the Synod and agenda for the 2021-2024 triennium and ask any questions that they may have. The dates have been set for Tuesday 8 June at

6pm and Wednesday 9 June at 2pm. Please speak to Hazel if you would like to register for either of these events.

St John's want your empty **crisp packets** to create survival kit blankets for rough sleepers and those in need. Recycling is a great way to save the oceans and this could make a real difference to people's lives! Have a look at our page to find out more: ([www.facebook.com/CrispPacketProjectWestWickham](http://www.facebook.com/CrispPacketProjectWestWickham)), or check out this video: <https://youtu.be/L5FWMca5BFY>. You can collect and wash crisp packets and bring them to the Foodbank donation points, or you can follow the video to make a finished sheet - we'd love you to join us!

If anyone would like a **pedestal flower arrangement** 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 Nicky Nightingale ([nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

**John Womack** would like to thank everyone at St. Marys for the wine and card on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and all his friends for all the messages and cards.

**Thank you** to everyone who supported the plant sale last weekend when a profit of £100+ was made for St. Mary's church funds. Thank you too to all those who donated plants and supported the event.

**Jean Mathers** has a child's cot, which can also become a bed, with a new mattress which she is happy to give away to someone for a donation to St. Mary's. If anyone is interested, please contact Jean on 0208 777 7629.

**Opportunity to help someone in need.** Deacon Laura MacBean at the Methodist Church has been supporting a lady in her 50s who came to her two years ago as a safeguarding referral. Through a local charity she has been living in a variety of accommodation, but she now needs to move somewhere to rest and refresh until she can move into a private rented place or find someone suitable to lodge with. We are looking for a Christian lady (or an older retired Christian couple) with a spare bedroom who could offer a few weeks' respite while we try to work out a longer-term solution. Please get in touch with Laura ([laura.macbean@googlemail.com](mailto:laura.macbean@googlemail.com) or 020 8249 8592) if you can offer some respite or more permanent lodgings and would like to find out more.

Each week our "**coffee/tea & chat**" on Thursday at 2.30 pm is an opportunity to share with others. It is just 40 minutes' and you don't need to commit to joining each week.

Please let Rowena ([rowena.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:rowena.griff19@btinternet.com) /020 8777 6112) know if you would like the log-in details.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl [bbolton@ntlworld.com](mailto:bbolton@ntlworld.com) and items for the websites to [brian.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:brian.griff19@btinternet.com) or Gifty [office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk](mailto:office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk).

**NB Any extra items for the pew sheet for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June should be forwarded to Hazel as Beryl is away. Thank you.**

**Collect**

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**First Reading: Romans 8:12-17**

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— <sup>13</sup> for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ <sup>16</sup> it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

**Gospel Reading: John 3: 1-17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus by night and said to him,

‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

<sup>11</sup> ‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have

seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Almighty and eternal God, you have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and live and reign in the perfect unity of love: hold us firm in this faith, that we may know you in all your ways and evermore rejoice in your eternal glory, who are three Persons yet one God, now and for ever.

**Collect**

God of truth, help us to keep your law of love and to walk in ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in Jesus Christ your Son.

**First Reading:****2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1**

<sup>13</sup> But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture— 'I believed, and so I spoke'— we also believe, and so we speak, <sup>14</sup> because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup> Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

<sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart.

Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, <sup>18</sup> because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**Gospel Reading: Mark 3: 20-35**

<sup>20</sup> Then Jesus entered a house, and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. <sup>21</sup> When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.' <sup>22</sup> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.' <sup>23</sup> And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. <sup>27</sup> But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

<sup>28</sup> 'Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their

sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'— <sup>30</sup> for they had said, 'He has an unclean spirit.'

<sup>31</sup> Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' <sup>33</sup> And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' <sup>34</sup> And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

**Post Communion Prayer**

Eternal Father, we thank you for nourishing us with these heavenly gifts: may our communion strengthen us in faith, build us up in hope, and make us grow in love; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## Sermon – Ken Bryan

Today is Trinity Sunday, yet when we search scripture for mention of the Trinity we come up with a blank.

The closest to a mention of the Trinity in the bible comes at the end of Matthew's gospel chapter 28 verse 19 when he writes that, just before his ascension, Jesus says to his disciples "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

How can we understand a little more of how we have come to the doctrine of the Trinity of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament tells of the Jews and their God who had revealed himself to his people from the time of Abraham. He was their father figure and guided their prophets and leaders down the centuries. He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses as their guiding principles of life and their laws as found in the Torah. Their scriptures were completed by many other writers who were inspired in their writings.

They were steeped in their relationship with their one God.

The God who was the Creator of the world the one who was to be worshipped. He was their God and they were his people.

Then as had been foretold by some of their prophets came a Jew who claimed to be the Messiah whom they had been predicting. This was not easy for them to accept. Especially for the priests and the powers-that-be who felt that he would upset the status quo. Surely, he was only a mere human like themselves living and breathing, eating and sleeping, laughing and weeping.

But he was more than that as his teaching, his miracles and healings demonstrated. And it all culminated on his rising on the third day after crucifixion which testified to that.

He had spoken of coming from the Father, saying "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30).

The Jews and now gentiles as well, who believed in Jesus became known as followers of the Way. Their numbers increased and communities of Christians grew up in many places.



These new Christians shared their knowledge of the life and works of Jesus and what it meant for them in their belief in God and how they lived their lives.

But an oral tradition would not be enough for a fast-growing movement. So, the gospels and letters of Paul and Peter were written to be shared amongst the members of these new communities of faith.

The ensuing decades saw many disagreements as to exactly what was the basis of their faith and this was especially true of the nature of God and the place of Jesus in the godhead.

There was one particular group led by a priest named Arius which emphasized the supremacy of God the Father, meaning that the Father alone is almighty and infinite, and that therefore the Father's divinity must be greater than the Son's. Arius taught that the Son had a beginning, and so was rather the first and the most perfect of God's creatures.

It was because of these fundamental disagreements that the Roman Emperor Constantine called the bishops together in 325AD for the Council of Nicaea which was the first of its kind in the history of the church. Of the 1800 bishops in the Roman Empire who were invited some 300 attended as well as other representatives.

The long-term effects of the Council of Nicaea were significant. For the first time the bishops of the Church agreed on a doctrinal statement on the issue of the deity of Christ. They agreed that the Son is of the same substance as the Father. He is of one being with the Father and was begotten at the beginning of all time.

One of the projects undertaken by the Council was the creation of a Creed, a declaration and summary of the Christian faith. This was not quite the finished Nicene Creed that we have today as it was further added to at the Council of Constantinople in 381AD.

It was at that later Council that consideration was given to the Holy Spirit.

The Jews had recognised that God's Spirit came upon people to lead them into a right way of living as in Isaiah 61:1 'The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners'.

But for the Jews the Spirit did not have an identity of its own.

For Christians, the Spirit was active from the birth of Jesus and in Matthew 3:16 'when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him'. This was saying that the Spirit was coming from the Father.

In the letter to the Romans we heard this morning, Paul is saying 'if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God'. The Spirit being an active helper in our journey of faith.

And where there had been a community that had not been getting on well with each other in Corinth, Paul brought them together and ended his second letter with a blessing with its Trinitarian form: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all'.

So the doctrine in a more full-fledged form was formulated based on [John 15:26](#) where Jesus says of the Holy Spirit: "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

The agreement at the Council was to expand Nicene Creed and state that the Holy Spirit 'proceeds from the Father'.

And this is the Creed that we say to this day.

Now we don't need to remember all these details to be able to call ourselves Christians. We should not in any way feel inadequate if we can't answer detailed questions we are asked by others. But we should keep on asking questions just like Nicodemus did.

He was a Pharisee, an expert in Jewish Law but Jesus seemed to have a deeper understanding of God that intrigued him. He was dying to find out if Jesus was for real to ask his questions. So, he went by night to talk to Jesus trying to ensure that no one would notice. If he was hoping for easy answers, he was disappointed. He is told he can't see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Nicodemus is confused.

The answer Jesus gives does its work on him however and he is transformed, seeing everything differently. He appears later in the Gospel close to Jesus, and again at the burial of Jesus providing embalming spices.

The story suggests that when we hunger for God, enough to take risks, God hears and meets us in person, like Nicodemus. We may not get an answer we understand all at once. It might at first seem like silence. But simply being heard by God as an individual can help us work it out. We realise we count, and God loves us just as we are.

Sometimes we have unexpected experiences of God that surprise us. They can lead to a sense of God changing the direction of our lives or completely changing the way we live the life.

We want to live our life fully as God would have us do, as we follow the example of Jesus and have the Holy Spirit to help us.

The doctrine of the Trinity is designed to help us in time of need, to bind us together in love and to send us out on our mission.

Our last hymn this morning 'I the Lord of sea and sky' clearly tells us where we should be going and who we should be helping but more than that it is saying that it is not for us to tell others to go but we will listen to God and in Jesus' name we will be guided by the Spirit to go where we are needed.

As Christians we should look no further than Matthew's gospel and Jesus' last instruction to his disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. As modern-day disciples we are challenged to follow that instruction.

Amen

### **Prayer Pointers**

- Give thanks that through the gift of the Holy Spirit we can know ourselves as children of God and joint heirs with Christ of eternal life. May we be able to proclaim this good news of our inheritance with others who do not have this understanding.
- Thanks for the diversity in the church and our fellowship with other churches in West Wickham. Pray that, as we come out of the coronavirus restrictions we can work with the other churches to provide support to our wider community.

- As we remember the death a year ago of George Floyd, pray for a society where racism is not tolerated, whether this be comments directed at minority ethnic people or institutional processes that discriminate on the basis of race.
- For faith communities in China and other countries where freedom of religion or belief is restricted, so that Christians can keep standing strong through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- For peace in the Middle East – especially in Palestine – and for all who are trying to negotiate an end to the conflict.
- For those areas in our country where covid cases are rising again – that they may be able to control and that deaths can be minimized through a strong uptake of the vaccine.
- For a fair and equitable distribution of vaccines to the poorer countries of the world and a greater proportion of populations who come forward to receive the vaccine.
- For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce and Julie Bailey.
- For all those who have died and for their loved ones who mourn at this time – especially pray for the soul of Michael Sanders and his wife Mary as she comes to terms with his passing.