

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

**14<sup>th</sup> August 2022: Ninth Sunday after Trinity**

### **Hazel writes:**

Our revised distribution of pew sheets is still taking some getting used to. We will review the practice towards the end of September once we have established a regular pattern. Next week there will be another three-week edition to enable summer breaks to happen.

Next **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> 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. There will also be a baptism for Cyrus Hunt, a member of our Messy Church, at 1pm in St Francis' – do stay or come along for this service too.

**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.

**Resources and updates for the week ahead** – This week our service will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Mary's at 9.15am. 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.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require toilet rolls, soup, cooking sauces, tinned cold meat, squash, coffee, surface spray cleaner, toothpaste and washing up liquid. 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.

This week we have our next **lunchtime concert** which will be a very special event: Felicity Cliffe is bringing her own Orchestra Nouveau to play for us. Felicity is well known as Conductor of the Hayes Symphony Orchestra who regularly play at St. Francis'. This will be a great opportunity to hear her smaller group of excellent musicians playing the Mozart's "Gran Partita" in a setting with good acoustics - Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August at 12.45pm in St Francis' Church. Tea and coffee will be available beforehand. Do come along and bring a friend to support her new venture.

We are starting a **Community Garden** project to provide companionship for vulnerable and isolated people referred by GP practices through their Social Prescribing officers. This will use a space at the rear of St Francis' Church which needs to be cleared this summer. If you would like to be involved in this work on Mon 15th or Weds 17th August, please call John on 07950 627988 or Stuart on 07780 683942 to find out more details. Please do pray for the project and let me know if you'd like to be involved in future planning or volunteering. Hazel

Following our **focus on lay ministry**, there are two opportunities to think a bit more about learning and development in this area:

- The popular Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship enables an exploration of mission, ministry and vocation of all God's people without any need to commit beyond studying for ten months. This begins in September running on different evenings and mornings at the diocesan offices or online.
- On September 11<sup>th</sup> we will have a focus on Christian adult education in a service where we will hear from Brian and Debbie about what it is to be teaching and learning in this context.

Please do use these two opportunities as a way of thinking anew about what else God might be calling you to become involved in.

The **Rotary Clubs of Bromley** are organising a Fun and Fundraising day for Ukraine Independence Day on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August at The Warren. Join in with family games from 1-4pm (bring your own picnic) and then there is a fundraising dinner in the evening from 7pm with entertainment. More details and tickets for £50 each can be obtained from <https://www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/page.php?PgID=872719&ClubID=699>

Oak Lodge School are looking for **volunteer community governors** who play an important role in supporting the school and holding it to account for standards. You don't need to be an expert in education or have links with the school, but you must be committed to the successful running of the school. This means being available to give your time to be in school and to attend meetings at various times throughout the year. In return, you'll find that being a governor is hugely rewarding and that you develop new skills and knowledge. As a school that is committed to building a diverse community, we're particularly keen to hear from people from underrepresented groups and with protected characteristics, particularly older people and those with disabilities. For more information or to express an interest please contact the Trust Governance Manager, Joyce Munro at [governance@compassacademytrust.org](mailto:governance@compassacademytrust.org).

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](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The flowers at St. Mary's were provided by Brian and Chris Hubble for their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and were arranged by Merri.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.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).

**Collect**

Gracious Father, revive your Church in our day, and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**First Reading:****Jeremiah 23: 23-29**

<sup>23</sup> Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? <sup>24</sup> Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. <sup>25</sup> I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' <sup>26</sup> How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? <sup>27</sup> They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. <sup>28</sup> Let the

prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. <sup>29</sup> Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

**Second Reading:****Luke 12: 49-56**

<sup>49</sup> 'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup> I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup> Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! <sup>52</sup> From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup> they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-

in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

<sup>54</sup> He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. <sup>55</sup> And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. <sup>56</sup> You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

**Post Communion Prayer**

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

Both the gospel readings in the last two weeks have been about money – how to manage it through saving and giving, so that our focus is on God, rather than on material things. And it’s really difficult for some at this time when they don’t have enough money for even the basics – a meal and a warm shower. Preaching about using your money wisely at this time might seem irrelevant for some. So, you might be thankful when I say that Jesus has now moved on to a different topic. But ... this week, he’s tackling something even more difficult than money – he’s talking about emotions.

Specifically, he’s saying that, for those who follow him, there will be situations of division, which will create increased emotions. He himself recognises that he’s currently under great stress due to conflict with the authorities. He and his disciples are on their way to Jerusalem, so he’s about to face the most difficult time of his life. But his closest friends and companions, they just don’t get it – they don’t understand that he’s about to face up to all the sins of the world, meeting them head on by giving up his own life.

They don’t see that a crisis is coming. The Roman occupation, Herod’s oppressive regime, wealthy and arrogant high priests in Jerusalem: they are all pitted against Jesus – a young prophet announcing God’s kingdom and healing the sick. Why can’t they see this crisis coming?

Jesus asks at the end of this passage: *“do you not know how to interpret the present time?”* I want to look today at how we can help one another to interpret the present time today.

I wonder if you have any difficult situation going on in your own life where you think no-one really understands what it is that you’re going through. I imagine that we can all think of something – some will be major life issues, others more trivial, but we all have something. Even if you have nothing personal, you only have to see one of the many conflicts that are going on in the world (for example, with climate change) to get emotional one way or the other: some say: ‘we can’t afford to make the changes in life that we need to’, while others say: ‘we can’t afford not to implement greener technologies’.

And when you’re dealing with a difficult situation, other people may hear you say something or see you do something unusual. While they may wonder what it is that’s causing that speech or action, they’re not aware of the underlying reason for the unusual behaviour that’s really a display of raw emotion.

Jeremiah the prophet gives us an example of this kind of behaviour. He did a number of things to demonstrate what God was telling him to say – he smashed a pottery jug to indicate the devastation that was coming to Jerusalem; he bought a field to indicate that God would return Israel to their land. And yet no-one thought to listen to what he was saying. Clearly there were other false prophets that were being listened to, as described in our reading today. That created a huge amount of pressure on Jeremiah who complained to God that he couldn't take any more of this. No-one came to his help and yet, Jeremiah continued to follow God's call in being a true prophet. Eventually he was thrown into a muddy cistern. You can just imagine the kind of emotions that Jeremiah would have loved to have described to others, but he didn't because he felt no-one would listen to him.

To give another example of raw emotions not being understood, this week at the bereavement group we discussed how people found it difficult when they burst into tears at the most inopportune times – maybe while shopping, or when they were on the bus. At the group, they were able to tell their story openly and not worry about the tears coming because everyone there understood their context, their situation. However, outside of that group, it's more difficult to speak about grief, even with old friends because they might want to save them from seeing them express such raw emotions.

Maybe you can relate to this situation.

In our gospel reading, however, Jesus is open about his own stress with his disciples. In verse 50 he admits to being stressed and then he goes on to talk about the divisions that he knows will come for those who follow him. I wonder if anyone put an arm round him after he said all this. Probably not. And yet, it's when our emotions are highest that we need the most care from others.

Following Jesus means being open to the needs of others. And this isn't just practical needs – providing a meal or giving a lift somewhere. No, it's also emotional needs and spiritual needs. And taking time to listen to someone explain what they're going through is the best way of providing this support.

However, the need for someone to be listened to is sometimes difficult to spot. So, for those who do need support, please open up about your needs, and expose your vulnerabilities, just as Jesus did when he talked about his stress.

As followers of Jesus, we need to react to moments of vulnerability or high raw emotion in a way that shows it's OK to speak about a burden, pain or sadness that's

being experiencing. And when we ourselves experience a raw emotion, if you're with another Christian, try explaining it, showing yourself to be human and capable of the full range of emotions. This is what Jesus would have done and it's only in behaving in this way that we can open up those opportunities for God to work through those who are with us.

So, repeating Jesus' question at the end of the gospel: *'do you know how to interpret the present time?'* Let's help each other to be able to answer positively to this question by opening up to each other and listening to what others are telling us about their vulnerabilities and things that make them emotional.

Leave some time for reflection, while playing a Taize track (*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est*: where there is charity and love, there is God). And if you find the tears coming, please don't worry about that – it's God's way of you reaching out for support:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF8AW6JzWpE>

If anyone does feel that they'd like an opportunity to talk about any situation that they find themselves in, please do ask me at the end of the service. While we may not have time today, we can arrange something for the coming week.

## **Prayer Pointers**

Thank God for the times when He was clearly present in our lives especially through the word or touch of friends and family. Pray that when people are sad, need help or feel vulnerable, we can reach out and care for them. Pray that St Francis' and St Mary's may be places where people can be themselves and know the love of Jesus.

Pray for those whose homes have been destroyed by the gas explosion in Thornton Heath last Monday and especially for the family of 4-year-old Sahara Salaman killed in the tragedy. Pray for all who are working with them to find temporary housing especially the local churches.

Pray for governments and regimes around the world where there is turmoil and uncertainty. Pray especially for the people of Sri Lanka, Yemen, Ukraine, Taiwan and Palestine. Pray for peaceable solutions so that people may live in harmony.

Pray for those in our own country and community who are struggling to make ends meet and cope with rising costs. Pray for organisations helping those in debt especially

for Christians Against Poverty and for our local foodbanks supporting those unable to afford basic necessities.

Hold before God all those we know who are ill. Thank God for the love, care and support of all in our NHS when we are vulnerable. Pray for all those awaiting operations, test results or consultations. In our congregations we pray for these by name – Paul Morris, Vicky Pearce, Mike East, Pat Allegacone, Jane Smith, Graham Stone, Daphne Dack – and those known to God alone.

Pray for all who have died recently. Pray for the soul of Laurence Smith, for Primrose and her family in their loss and for all whom we have loved and yet see no longer. Pray that in times of pain, confusion and grief the bereaved may find comfort in God, in family, friends or neighbour, in a touch, a word, a smile or companionable silence.

Offer our own personal prayers and thanksgivings. We entrust to God all those things that worry us; those situations we feel helpless in; those decisions that burden us; those losses that overwhelm us, and all that we are thankful for.