

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

19th June 2022: First Sunday after Trinity

Hazel writes:

Last Saturday the **Deanery Pilgrimage** saw around 40 people walking some or all of the distance between the ten churches in our Deanery. It was a great day of hospitality, prayer and chatting with different conversation partners along the way. Debbie, our Area Dean sends many thanks and blessings to all those who participated.

For those wondering who the two babies were in my talk last week, here is a picture of them as you'd know them today. I'm sure you recognise them both. It was the only way that I was going to get a mention alongside The Queen!



Our focus for next week's services is **Refugee Sunday** and we will be collecting donations for a van which is going to help Ukrainians in Eastern Europe – see my message below about how you can donate.

Today, we have Holy Communion services at 8am and 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis'.

Hymns at 9.15 a.m. in St. Mary's – Christ is made the sure foundation -As the deer pants for the water – Dear Lord and Father of Mankind – Be still and know that I am God – To God be the glory.

Hymns at 10.45 a.m. in St. Francis' – Christ triumphant – Be still and know that I am God – To God be the glory – Give thanks

Next **Sunday 26th June**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church, 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.

In preparation for the Festival of Arts we are having a **film night** to illustrate how important our emotions are in good mental health. This will be on Tuesday 21st June at

7.15pm in the Bernard Dent Room at St Francis' Church – a flyer with more details has been separately circulated.

St. Mary's Garden Party with BBQ is on Saturday 25th June from 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. with barbecue available from 12 to 2.00 p.m. Light refreshments will be served all day and there will be stalls of plants, cakes, books and a bouncy castle.

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 posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line.

Hope Church are delivering **humanitarian aid** to churches in Poland **for Ukrainian families and the elderly**. If you would like to help in this effort, they have a monthly drop off and the next date when a van will leave is 26th June. Please bring any of the following items to either of our church buildings before midday on Sunday 26th and we will ensure that they get into this van:

First Aid kits, Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, Antiseptic wipes, Batteries, Torches, Cooking oil, Sanitary products, Canned food, Rice, Pasta, Flour, Salt for cooking, Nappies, Calpol, New blankets for babies, Toiletries and Baby Milk powder.

Julie Bailey's funeral service will be on Wednesday 29th June, beginning at 11am in St Francis' Church, followed by a burial at Beckenham Crematorium & Cemetery and a reception from 1pm at The New Inn, Hayes. Anyone attending should wear bright colours please. Donations can be made to St. Christopher's Hospice, through a 'Snowdrop Fund' where you can also leave messages, pictures, music. Here's a link: <https://maureenjuliebailey.muchloved.com>.

In our latest magazine was an article about **Symbiosia**. They have an event at Sydenham Garden, which is a space recommended by Laura at our Mind meeting this week. If you are interested in seeing this space and learning more about Symbiosia, you can sign up for the event on Saturday 2nd July from 2-4.30pm at Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>) – search for Symbiosia.

An open-air **Passion Play** is happening at Gatton Park near Reigate on 14-17 and 20-23 July. Hazel will be going to the performance on Friday 15th July. Here's a link to the website for details and to book tickets: <https://www.gattontheatre.org.uk/current-production/>.

A lady in Crystal Palace is moving to a home as she has dementia and is looking for someone to **give a home to one (or both) of her two cats**. They are around five years old. If anyone is interested in having more information, please contact Hazel.

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require 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.

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

The pedestal at St. Mary's this week has been provided by Michelle Graydon, Margaret Bond and Beryl Bolton in memory of Joy Yallop and arranged by Beryl.

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

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:

Galatians 3: 23-29

²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Second Reading:

Luke 8: 26-39

²⁶ Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on land, a

man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me' — ²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss. ³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and

in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

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.

REFLECTION – Ken Bryan

As the Easter celebrations fade into memory, here on the other side of Trinity Sunday, it is easy to forget that we are now and always called to be an Easter people: living our lives in the light of the Resurrection, our hope resting in the one who is life and love.

This God of our Easter Faith is always coming to us, always coming to meet us where we are. Our reading from Luke's Gospel today finds Jesus meeting a man who has been suffering for years and has been cast out of his home by his friends and family. He has no life and is as good as dead and living in the tombs only confirms that. Yet, into this darkness Jesus comes. Unafraid to face a difficult and possibly evil situation. And he comes with understanding and with love.

The miracle healings in Luke come in groups. In earlier chapters Jesus was healing in front of a large crowd. He was showing God's work in the world to a large number of people, demonstrating how different he is to all others with authority over the world and all evil.

In chapter seven there were miracles and healings of servants and a child in front of a few which seem to be more for the newer believers. And now in chapter eight we have healings in front of the disciples only. This to show what they might be coming up against but also to show them that he is with them.

Just before meeting the man in the tombs, Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. Finding themselves caught in a storm, the disciples feared for their lives. After calming the storm Jesus chides them for their lack of faith. The disciples are learning that with Jesus, there is no need to fear death because, in comparison with God's love, shown to us in the faith, ministry, and Passion of Jesus, death is a small and feeble thing indeed.

From this close encounter, Jesus leads his disciples to this man possessed by many demons, again showing how knowledge of God in Christ can free us from the isolation and broken relationships that the man had from his family and others in the city.

And finally, after leaving the man freed from the chains of death and demonic occupation, Jesus rounds out his demonstration of the power of life over death by healing a bleeding woman and raising a little girl from the dead.

Throughout, by trusting that God's love can reach them, even on the point of death itself, the people Jesus heals and the people who love and care for them find that that love is carrying them, lifting them up, breathing life into their lives.

For the disciples who are committing themselves to follow Jesus as their master they realise how different Jesus is from them and from any other prophet they have heard of. They are prepared to follow him. As it were, they are all in the boat together, but they are not sure about where they are heading or what might befall them on the way.

The four miracles all show the sorts of troubles that are to be faced in their lives, and in ours. The challenges of the natural world including storms. Then there is the challenge of mental illness and evil which makes people do wrong things. The sickness of the woman with ill health which is ever near us. And then a bereavement of a child. With death a certainty for all of them and for us all.

Jesus here is teaching his disciples by demonstrating in their sight how he overcomes evil in this world. Troubles are an ever present; possibly a necessity for us to grow in faith.

Our Christian faith does not free us from troubles as we all have come to realise. Just as it says later that the Son of Man must suffer. No ifs or buts. There's a certainty that he will suffer and an insistence that this must happen. And Jesus says, 'If anyone would come after me let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me'.

Jesus forces his disciples to face the storm in the boat, face the demons in the man, to face the sick woman in the crowd and he took three of his closest disciples to see the bringing back to life of Jairus' daughter. They were going to have to face the grim realities of the world and not shy away from difficulties.

Peter who was there at all four of the events sums it up in his letter "beloved do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12). Although he was talking about persecution in particular, he could have said the same with regard to any kind of troubles.

And Paul reminds us that even before Christ came, God was preparing the way, entering into covenant with God's people, demonstrating a way of faithfulness that leads to life. But now there is no need to be imprisoned by law - it is by faith we are all living closer to God through Jesus Christ.

It is not the case, of course, that times will always be good. If the past two years of pandemic have taught us nothing else, we have learned that troubled times come to all of us. Easter faith promises that, however bad things may be, God is there, working to bind together what has been broken and to redeem that which has been lost. By recognising when we are living in the tombs, whether the tombs of circumstance or tombs of our own making, we can look up and find Jesus already there, waiting, ready to free us for life and love.

And part of that freedom, which was imparted at Baptism and which we re-enter each week in the Eucharist, is the call to go with Jesus to those difficult places.

Whoever has put on Christ in Baptism is called to follow him into the tombs and dark places, to enact and embody his love for the world. And so may this be our hope and our prayer, that we, like Jesus, may always be found seeking those who need that love most. And that in the seeking, we may find and share the life and love which make all things new.

Amen

Prayer Pointers

Sunday's Gospel reading is an amazing vision of a healed mind. With mental health issues on the rise following the pandemic, pray for those suffering especially for people we know personally who are struggling with their mental health. Pray for the professionals working with people with mental illness.

The healing of the man in the Gospel reading also brought about his complete transformation. He leaves his encounter with Jesus 'proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.' Pray that as we encounter Jesus may we experience transformation. Pray that we may be open to the love, comfort, compassion and justice that Jesus brings.

In the week that marks five years since the tragedy of Grenfell Tower, pray for those who are still grieving and living with the memory of the fire every day. Pray that the survivors may find ways to work through their trauma, find justice and experience Christ's deep and healing peace.

Give thanks for all who bring hope to those who have no settled home: social workers, lawyers, home office officials, hostel staff and law-makers. Pray for the Ukrainian people arriving in our country that they may find places of safety where they can rebuild their lives.

Hold before God all those we know who are sick, especially those suffering from cancer and undergoing treatment. In our congregations we pray for those struggling with ill health – especially Vicky Pearce, Mike East, Pat Allegacone and John and Anita Curtis – and those known to God alone.

Pray for all who have died recently, especially Julie Bailey and for her daughters Pippa and Zazine and her wider family and friends. Thank God for the example of her life – for her laughter and joy even when faced with illness.

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.