

# **ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI WEST WICKHAM PARISH MAGAZINE**



**February/March 2023**

**50 pence**

**THE CHURCH OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
**RAVENSWOOD AVENUE**  
**WEST WICKHAM KENT BR4 0PW**

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

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Magazine – Distribution:	Nicky Nightingale	8916 9855
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# REGULAR SERVICES

## SUNDAY

- 8.00 am      Holy Communion**  
*1st Sunday varies - See calendar for details*  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays at St Mary's Church, The Avenue  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at St Francis' Church
- 10.45 am      Parish Communion**  
Activities for younger children (aged 3+) and crèche facilities in church
- 10.45 am      2nd Sunday – Morning Worship**  
(non–Eucharistic)
- 10.00 am      First Sunday – Joint Family Communion**  
with St Mary's, held alternately at each church  
*See calendar for details*

## WEDNESDAY

- 9.30 am      Morning Prayer**  
**10.30 – 11.30am      Church open for quiet and prayer**

# LETTER FROM HAZEL

Dear friends,

2022 was a tough year for many. It started with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, leading to a cost-of-living crisis across the world. This came on top of a climate change emergency with continuing in-action from countries who have made pledges to reduce their carbon emissions. 2022 also saw the end of the reign of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as well as much political uncertainty in this country. In our churches we said goodbye to a number of well-loved members of our community – Carole Hubbard, Cynthia Symes, Julie Bailey, Laurence Smith and recently Tony Goodchild and Barbara Plummer. Many have also been dealing with ill health against a backdrop of long waiting lists and a stretched NHS, and my pastoral conversations have often been challenging as a result.

Jesus Christ came to bring us Good News and promised that those who ask will receive:

*'Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened'.  
(Matthew 7:7-8).*

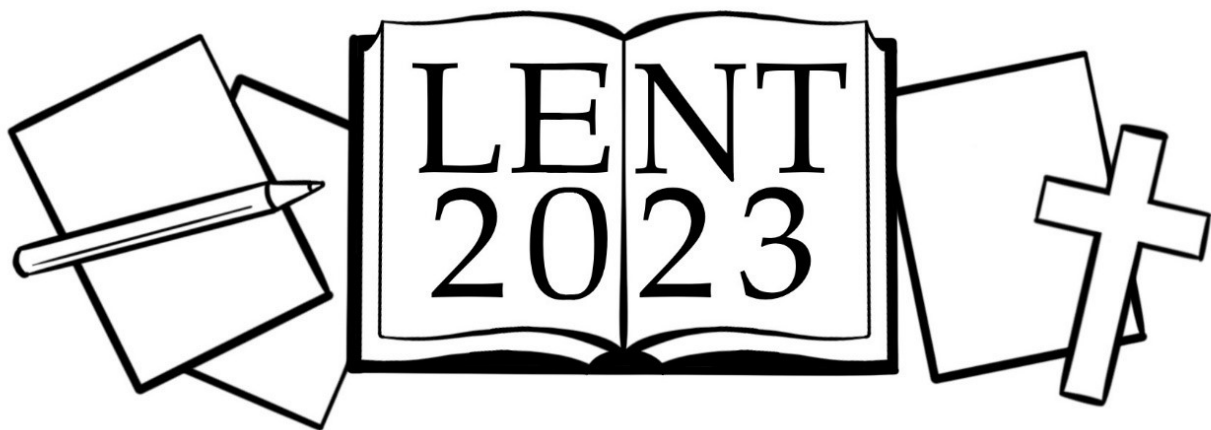
This is a promise that is sometimes difficult to recognise where our prayers seem to go unanswered and, such a situation can lead to a loss of faith. If you've ever felt this way, you are not alone. However, it can be difficult to talk about that loss of faith,

especially to a fellow Christian, who you think is likely to counter it with an example of answered prayer, just to prove that God is able to perform miracles today, as if that would help! That's probably the last thing you want, so you carry on feeling the pain, unable to tell anyone about it.

Our Lent course this year will enable us all to reflect on this. It won't offer answers to prayer, but it might illustrate why some prayers aren't answered. It won't be a situation where you have to bear your soul, but you might want to add your own thoughts to examples given in the groups. I know that it will help us all to understand a bit more about how prayer works. Prayer always works, just not always in the way that we first imagine it will.

The course is based on material from a book "God on Mute" by Pete Greig. You will not need to buy the book to participate. Our sermons over five weeks will give an introduction to each session, so if you do have to miss one, you can gain a sense of what is covered. We are still working out the details of groups, but please watch out for these in the next week or so.

*Hazel*



# CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

## **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>**

## **3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY BEFORE LENT**

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's  
*Richard Ford*

10.00 a.m.

Joint Service at St. Francis (livestream)  
*Hazel O'Sullivan/Richard Ford*

## **Friday 10<sup>th</sup>**

3.45 p.m.

Messy Church at St. Mary's  
Messy Church Team

## **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>**

12.30 p.m.

Valentine's Day Lunch at St. Mary's

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY BEFORE LENT Inclusive church**

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*

9.15 a.m.

Morning Praise at St. Mary's (livestream)  
*Ken Bryan/Hazel O'Sullivan*

10.45 a.m.

Morning Worship at St. Francis  
*Brian Griffiths/ Hazel O'Sullivan*

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>**

**SUNDAY BEFORE LENT**

**God on Mute Week 1**

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St Mary's  
*Hazel O'Sullivan/Brian Griffiths (by video)*
- 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's (livestream)  
*Hazel O'Sullivan/Brian Griffiths (by video)*
- 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis  
*Hazel O'Sullivan/Brian Griffiths*

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> ASH WEDNESDAY**

- 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis'  
*Richard Ford/Ken Bryan*
- 8.00 p.m. CTWW Service for ASH WEDNESDAY at TBC

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>**

**LENT 1 - God on Mute Week 2**

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St Francis'  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*
- 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's (livestream)  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*
- 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis'  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*

# CALENDAR FOR MARCH

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>**

CTWW World Day of Prayer Service  
at Coney Hill Baptist

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>**

8.00 a.m.

**LENT 2 - God on Mute Week 3**

Holy Communion at St. Francis'

*Hazel O'Sullivan/Brian Griffiths (audio only)*

10.00 a.m.

Joint Service at St. Mary's (livestream)

*Hazel O'Sullivan/Brian Griffiths*

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup>**

3.45 p.m.

Messy Church at St. Mary's

*Messy Church Team*

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>**

8.00 a.m.

**LENT 3 - God on Mute Week 4**

Holy Communion at St. Francis'

*Richard Ford*

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's (livestream)

*Hazel O'Sullivan/Richard Ford*

*followed by APCM in hall*

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis'

*Richard Ford*

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>**

8.00 a.m.

**LENT 4 Mothering Sunday**

Holy Communion at St. Mary's

*Hazel O'Sullivan*



9.15 a.m. Morning Praise at St. Mary's (livestream)  
*Hazel O'Sullivan/Debbie Adams*

10.45 a.m. Morning Worship at St. Francis'  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*

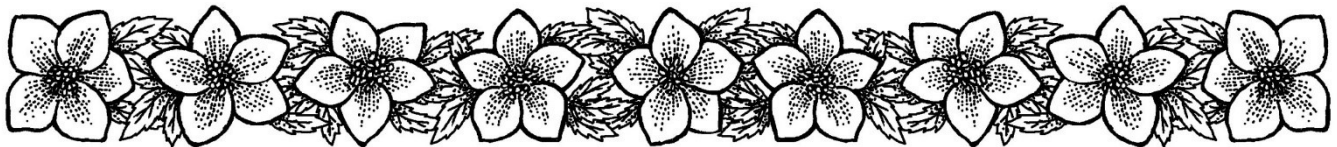
**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>**

**LENT 5 - God on Mute Week 5**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis'  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*

9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's (livestream)  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*

10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis'  
*Hazel O'Sullivan*



**Answers to Crossword Puzzle**

**ACROSS:**

8, Cross-examined. 9, Ash. 10, Apocrypha. 11, Sci-fi.  
13, Typical. 16, Visited. 19, Offer. 22, No account.  
24, RAC. 2 5, Sovereign Lord.

**DOWN:**

1, Oceans. 2, Hophni. 3, Islamist. 4, Exhort. 5, Omar.  
6, On spec. 7, Add all. 12, CBI. 14, Plotting. 15, Awe.  
16, Vanish. 17, Starve. 18, Daub it. 20, Furrow. 21,  
Recede. 23, Cure.

# READINGS FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reader</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Isaiah 58: 1-9a 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 Matthew 5: 13-20	Valerie Hamilton Richard Ford
<b>12<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Special readings Morning Praise	James Pitt-Payne
<b>19<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Phil.4: 4-7 Luke 18: 9-14	Gill Kehoe Brian Griffiths
<b>26<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Romans 5: 1-5 Mark 14: 32-37	Rosemary Swatland Hazel O'Sullivan
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	Ephesians 6: 10-17 Mark 15: 33-39	St Mary's Brian Griffiths
<b>12<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	Psalms 13 Luke 23: 50-56	Alison Davies Richard Ford
<b>19<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	Special readings Mothering Sunday	John Godfrey
<b>26<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	2 Corinthians 1: 3-5 John 20: 19-21	David Wada Hazel O'Sullivan

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## February

### Valentine's Lunch

The Valentine's Lunch will take place in St Mary's Hall on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February** 12.30 p.m. for 1.00 p.m. lunch. Please book your place through Beryl Bolton on 020 8289 8097 or [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com) or sign the list in St. Mary's vestibule. When booking, you need to specify whether you wish to have ham, pate, or cheese with your ploughmen's and, whether you wish for mushroom or tomato soup. Numbers will be limited to 40 so book early to avoid disappointment. All profits for church funds. Once again this is an event organised by the men of St. Mary's. There will be a raffle so if anyone has any unwanted Christmas gifts or anything suitable to raffle donations would be much appreciated. Thank you.

### Coffee, cake and CPR

We now have defibrillators at both St Mary's and St Francis' – an investment in life saving equipment. To give information about these, we are holding a coffee morning at St Francis Church Hall on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February** 10.30-11.30am. There will be tea, coffee and cake and an introduction on how to do CPR and how to use our defibrillators in an emergency. Any funds raised will be donated to the British Heart Foundation.

Please contact Nicky ([nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk) or 8916 9855) or Liz ([stevelizbraemar52@sky.com](mailto:stevelizbraemar52@sky.com) or 8777-2745) if you would like to provide any cakes.

### **Ash Wednesday**

Ash Wednesday this year is on **22<sup>nd</sup> February**, when there will be a morning service of Holy Communion and Ashing at 10:45am in St Francis' Church. We hope that there will also be an evening service at another church in West Wickham – details are being sorted out.

### **Community lunch**

Our next Community Lunch is on **26<sup>th</sup> February** at 12.30pm in St Francis' Church Hall. If you would like to attend, please contact Barbara Goodchild: [goodchild854@gmail.com](mailto:goodchild854@gmail.com) or 8777-8782.

## **March**

### **World Day of Prayer**

The World Day of Prayer is an opportunity to come together with others to find out about the challenges that people face in different parts of the world. Our ecumenical service this year is on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 10.30am** in Coney Hill Baptist Church.

## **West Wickham Trefoil Guild**

On the third Wednesday afternoon each month, a group of ladies can be seen going into St. Mary's Youth Hall. Who are they and what do they do? They are all members of West Wickham Trefoil Guild. Originally members were all ex-Girl Guides; these days anyone can join who has sympathy with the aims of Guiding and supports what they do. Our activities have included having visiting speakers – during this past year we have had talks from RSPB on local birds, butterflies and the lady code-breakers at Bletchley Park. We do a bit of craft, try flower arranging, and sometimes just tea and chat.

We also take part in National Trefoil Guilds fund raising efforts and in 2020 over £113,000 was raised for Riding for the Disabled. We support local Brownie and Guide Units - some years ago I recall helping Brownies to learn to knit!

We would welcome any new members, as speakers need a reasonable sized audience and perhaps if you had a daughter in Brownies or Guides and could enjoy a tea and chat why not give us a try?

Any further information, ring me Joan Baker 0208 777 1225.

# RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL EVENTS DATES

## 2023 DIARY

### February

- 11<sup>th</sup> Valentine's lunch at St Mary's – 12:30pm
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Ash Wednesday

### March

- 3<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Prayer
- 19<sup>th</sup> All Age Mothering Sunday services

### April

- 1<sup>st</sup> (TBC) High Street Foodbank collection – 10am to 3pm
- 6<sup>th</sup> Maundy Thursday
- 7<sup>th</sup> Good Friday
- 9<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday
- 22<sup>nd</sup> St George's supper at St Mary's – 7:00pm

### May

- 1<sup>st</sup> Bank Holiday – West Wickham Village Day
- 6<sup>th</sup> Coronation Day
- 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Christian Aid Week
- 18<sup>th</sup> Ascension Day
- 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> Jazz Evening at St Mary's (TBC)
- 18<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Thy Kingdom Come
- 28<sup>th</sup> CTWW Pentecost service and AGM – 6pm

### June

- 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Matchbox performances
- 17<sup>th</sup> St Mary's Garden Party

### July

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> West Wickham Choir performances (TBC)

**August**

- No planned events

**September**

- TBC Concert at St Francis'

**October**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Pet Service at St Francis
- 7<sup>th</sup> Harvest Supper at St Mary's
- 8<sup>th</sup> All Age Harvest Services
- 29<sup>th</sup> CTWW Bible Sunday service and meeting 6pm

**November**

- 5<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service at St Mary's
- 11<sup>th</sup> (TBC) High Street Foodbank collection 10am to 3pm
- 12<sup>th</sup> All-age Remembrance Sunday services
- 25<sup>th</sup> St Mary's Christmas Market
- 30<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec Matchbox performances

**December**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> The Big Christmas Sing at St Francis' 4pm
- 16<sup>th</sup> Scouts' Carols service at St Mary's
- 17<sup>th</sup> Carol Services
- 24<sup>th</sup> Christingle service at St Mary's 4pm
- 24<sup>th</sup> Lighting the Lamps service at St Francis' 6pm
- 24<sup>th</sup> Midnight Communion at both churches 11:15pm

The information on the events with (TBC) will be updated over the next few months. Please update your diary with the above and your support at all events will be gratefully appreciated.

## **Eco Church – a report from St Mary's**

Eco Church is an award scheme for churches of all denominations in England and Wales, aimed at encouraging churches to take seriously the need to protect God's world. One of the key themes in the Creation Story in Genesis is that we are called to be stewards of God's creation.

There are three levels of award - Bronze, Silver and Gold – and five areas to which these apply: Community and Global Engagement, Lifestyle, Management of Church Buildings, Management of Church Land, and Worship and Teaching.

Just before Christmas, David Taylor and I settled ourselves in front of a computer screen to see how St Mary's measured up against the criteria listed under these categories.

Community and Global Engagement included such things as whether the church hosted events that enabled local people to engage with local leaders on local environmental issues and being involved with local conservation work. Overall, we struggled to identify areas in which St Mary's was involved, although we did feel that we supported a local informal car sharing scheme – the 8 O'Clockers are good at this. Not surprisingly we scored rather poorly in this category: 22 out of 230 and no award.

Lifestyle saw us do a little better, with the criteria including promoting walking and cycling to church and encouraging church members to limit their waste by adhering to the principles of reduce, reuse, recycle. However, we do encourage a communal Christmas card scheme amongst the congregation, although its



take-up was rather patchy this year. St Francis does rather better! This time we scored 34 out of 160, and still no award.

In order to qualify for a Management of Church Buildings award, you have to achieve such things as making year-on-year improvements in energy efficiency, having a metered water supply and collecting rainwater to use on the church premises. But we do have water-saving devices fitted to our toilets – hippos - and we use double-sided printing whenever possible. Consequently, David and I were pleasantly surprised to find we scored 157 out of 450 and gained a Bronze Award.

Management of Church Land required us to meet criteria which included having a regularly stocked birdfeeder and undertaking wildlife surveys on our land. However, we do encourage members of the local community to use church land for contemplation, the Scouts grow fruit and vegetables on our land and we have a bug hotel (if this comes as a surprise to you have a good look to the left of the grounds at the front of the church) thanks to Messy Church. Result: 85 out of 155 and a Silver Award.

And finally, Worship and Teaching. This required us to be addressing such things as having caring for God's earth featuring as a teaching theme in our Church's children's work and hosting guest speakers from environmental organisations such as Christian Aid at least annually (three cheers for the Big Christmas Sing) and having special Sundays relating to caring for God's earth, such as Harvest Festival. This was our strongest area and with 91 out of a 100 we achieved Gold!

But this is only the beginning, because we can reassess our position as often as we like, and now we know what is required and where our weak areas are – Community & Global Engagement and Lifestyle - we can begin to address them. So when you're encouraged to reduce your personal energy consumption (as you're being encouraged at this very moment), to undertake a personal carbon footprint audit and to attend a film evening with an environmental awareness-raising theme, you'll know why.

*Richard Ford*

### **Advance Notice**

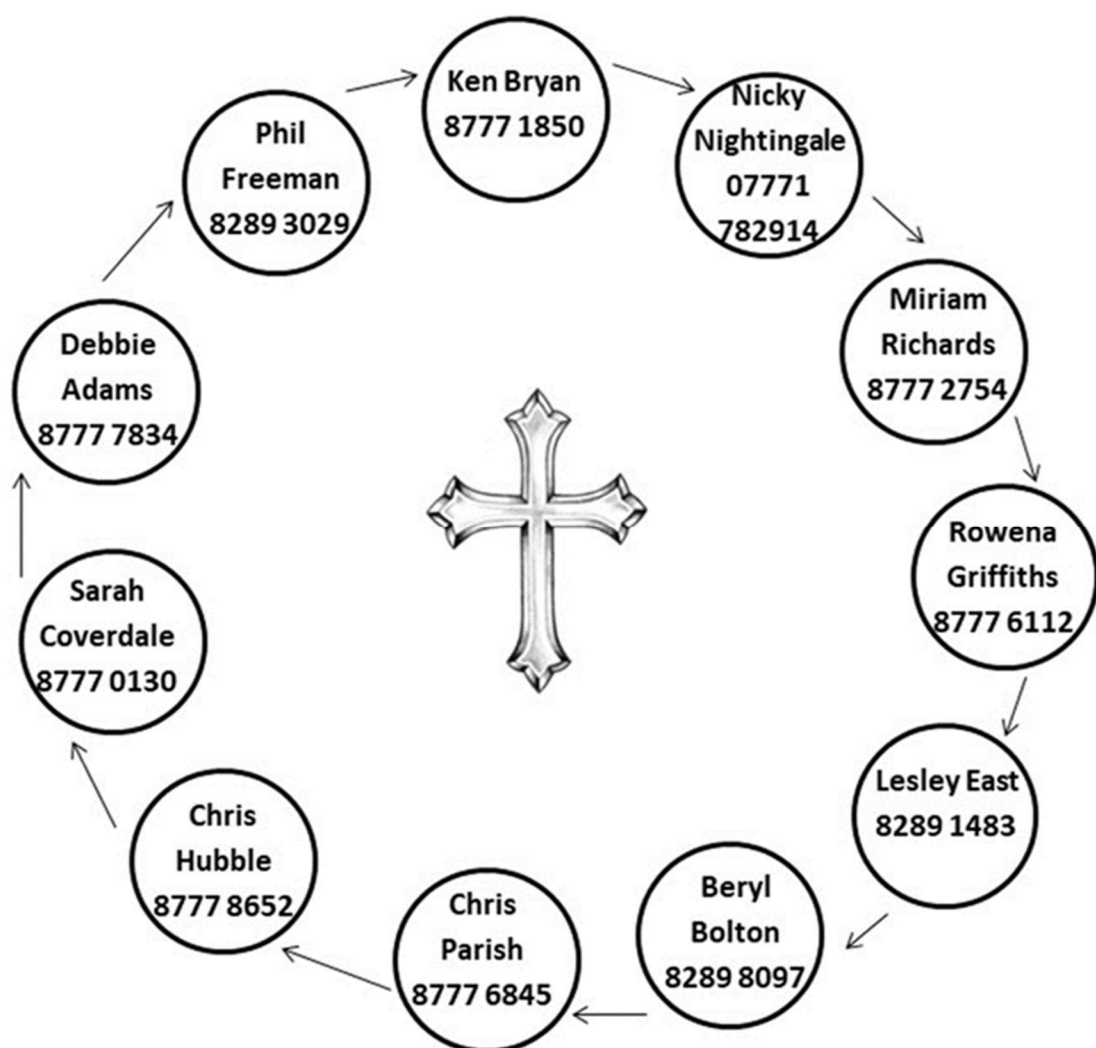


A St. George's Supper event will take place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 7.00 p.m. in St Mary's Church hall. Further details nearer the time but keep the date free.

# St Francis and St Mary's Prayer Chain

Many people find they are given strength and peace of mind when they know that they, or their loved ones, are being prayed for. And the more people who are praying for someone, the better!

If you would like prayer for yourself, please call anyone on the chain below and they will pass a message on around the circle. If you like a name added to the intercessions list in our services, (which will be on-line as well as in-person) please state this when you make contact.



## February

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Candlemas**

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Luke 2: v.22. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and presented Him to the Lord. We praise you Lord for the quiet strength of Joseph; the prophetic insight of Simeon; the dedication of Anna, and the courage of Mary as she faced the truth that a Sword would pierce her heart. May we be bearers of our Lord's light, which lightens the world, and help us like Simeon, to live for the Lord and depart in peace. Amen.

**22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Ash Wednesday**

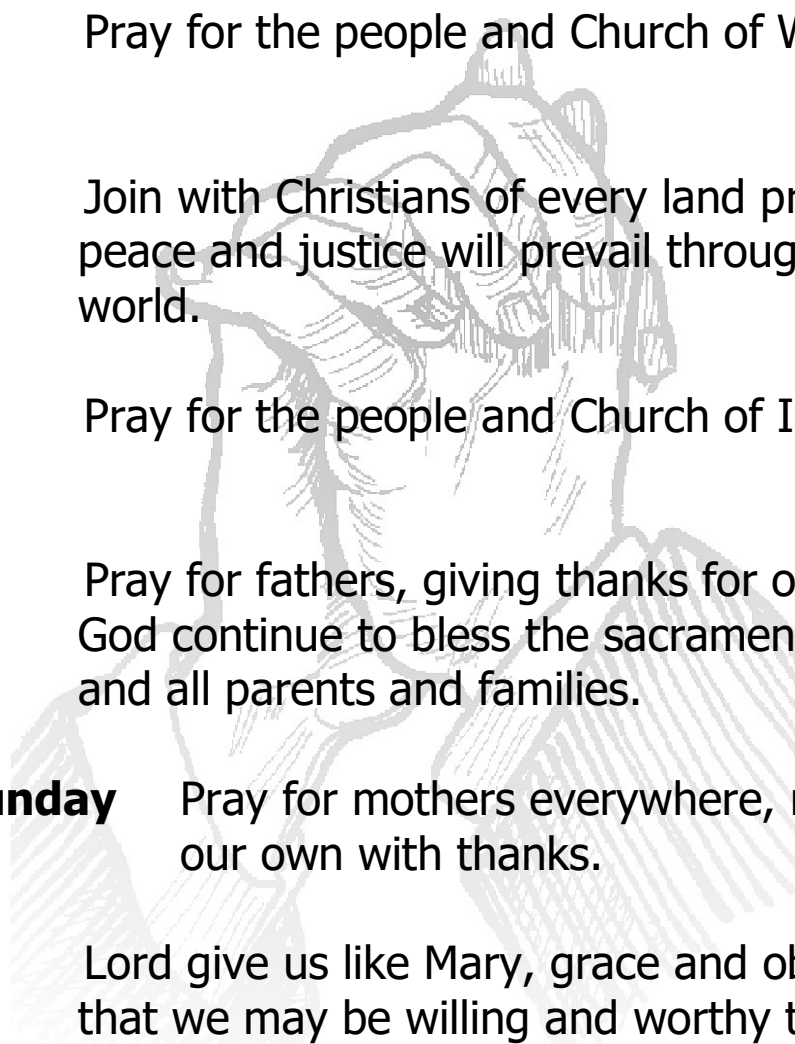
Lord may this Lent be a holy time of dedication and reflection – How are we using our lives?

### **A Prayer for the Season of Lent**

Almighty and all-seeing God, we thank you for this season of Lent: A time to reflect on our discipleship, to consider our calling, to examine ourselves and to assess the health of our faith. Help us to be honest in this; to see ourselves as we really are, with all our weaknesses, ugliness, and sinfulness. Help us to face the things we usually push aside; the unpleasant truths we sweep under the carpet. Help us to come to you now; acknowledging our faults, recognising our weaknesses and receiving your forgiveness, which alone can make us whole, through the Grace of Christ. **Amen**  
(Nick Fawcett)

# FOCUS

## March

- 
- 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**St. David** Pray for the people and Church of Wales.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**World Day Of Prayer** Join with Christians of every land praying that peace and justice will prevail throughout the world.
- 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**St. Patrick** Pray for the people and Church of Ireland.
- 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**St Joseph Of Nazareth** Pray for fathers, giving thanks for our own. May God continue to bless the sacrament of marriage and all parents and families.
- Mothering Sunday** Pray for mothers everywhere, remembering our own with thanks.
- 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Annunciation** Lord give us like Mary, grace and obedience, so that we may be willing and worthy to carry out your will for us.

### **A Prayer for those suffering in War**

Lord of all peace, be with all suffering from war, all divided peoples, all separated from loved ones, families, and friends. God of love, whose compassion never fails, we bring before you the griefs and perils of peoples and nations, the needs of the homeless; the helplessness of the aged, sick and injured; and the sorrow of the bereaved. Comfort and relieve them, O Merciful Father, according to their needs. For the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen (After St. Anselm 1033 – 1109).

## **45 years of 'Wittering On'**

### **A Journey in Reader Ministry**

Last year was the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my licensing as a Reader in Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff and so I have been reflecting on the whole experience. I have served in four parishes and preached in many other churches both large and small. I started my ministry in St Paul's Church in the Parish of Aberavon, South Wales where I was baptised, confirmed and was an altar server. Sadly, the church congregation dwindled and some years ago it was closed for worship. The St Paul's Centre next door is still thriving as a Job Club and Community Resource Centre which is wonderful as Aberavon is one of the poorest areas in Wales.

When I moved to London in 1979, I was invited to become a Reader in St Philip, Norbury – the church at the top of the road I lived in. I joined a team of three other Readers (one of whom was more Welsh than I am!) and spent 9 years in ministry there. Croydon was in Canterbury Diocese at the time so I had, and still have, a Canterbury License signed and sealed by Archbishop Robert Runcie. (Coupled with my Welsh Certificate of Admission it probably makes me totally illegal!!) St Philip's has a wonderful choir who are very famous. They have made many records, appeared on TV, and toured the world under the name of 'Libera.' Needless to say, they quickly discovered that I am the only Welshman who can't sing, and I was banned from leading the responses for Sung Evensong!!

In 1981, I married Rowena (not in St Philip's but in Putney Methodist Church) and we moved to South Norwood in 1982. Our two boys, Rhys and Gareth, went to St Mark's Church of England School in South Norwood and, to my surprise, I was poached by the Vicar of St Mark's, Philip Thrower, becoming a Reader there in 1988. I don't know what the transfer fee was, but I didn't receive a penny!! In 1993, we moved to our present home in Shirley, but carried on worshipping at St Mark's. We still have many good friends there.

Those from St Francis will remember Terry Hawkins, Sheila's husband. Terry used to be a churchwarden at St Mark's. Terry and Sheila had moved to West Wickham and started attending St Francis. They persuaded (pestered!) Rowena and I to come to Christmas Midnight Mass in 2003. We enjoyed the worship and fellowship at St Francis and so became members of the congregation. My License was transferred there in 2004 – the same year that Rowena was commissioned as a Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary. Interestingly, I am only licensed to St Francis – not to the United Benefice.

I still have most of the sermons I have preached over the years. There have been some interesting preaching experiences! Here are just a few:

### *The Very First One*

I had to pass written and practical exams to become a Reader. Yes, it was tough to make it as a Reader in Wales! The last part of the process was to preach a sermon for the examining chaplain

in an empty church in Penarth near Cardiff. The church had no sound system and the examiner was hiding behind a pillar making notes. My sermon was based on the Beatles song 'All You Need is Love'. I have read it many times since and can't believe the naivety of some of the things I wrote. Still, the examining chaplain thought it was just about good enough so it was agreed that I should be licensed. I think Llandaff Diocese must have been desperate for Readers that year!

### *The One with the Stripper*

When I was at St Philip's we also used to preach at Queen's Hospital Chapel in Croydon. This was a hospital for the elderly. During one of my sermons a lady started stripping off. I could see what was happening out of the corner of my eye but carried on gamely. She got down to her bra before a nurse pounced on her and covered her up. No one has stripped off during a sermon since – at least not yet .....

### *The One off the back of a Lorry*

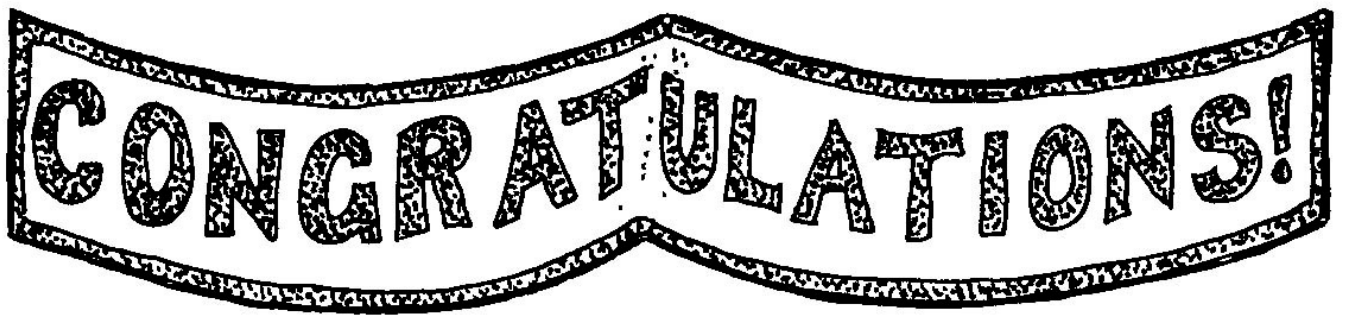
Churches Together in South Norwood had a Good Friday service outside Barclay's Bank in the High Street. They invited me to preach on the back of the lorry that had transported the worship group. I had to compete with the very noisy generator on the lorry providing the power for the sound system. If that wasn't enough of a problem, during my sermon a lady fainted off and needed first aid treatment. I think I must have bored her into submission.

Now that I have reached the ripe old age of 70 at Christmastime, I am no longer on the Southwark Diocese 'Active Readers List' and



so I have to ask Hazel's consent for me to continue my ministry with 'Permission to Officiate (PTO)'. I look forward to sharing God's Word with you all in the future and enjoying the fellowship of St Francis' and St Mary's – if that's OK with Hazel!!

*Brian Griffiths*



## **The Peace Candle**

On Remembrance Sunday last year at St Francis', Brian introduced a Peace Candle in his talk, and he explains this below:

Most people when asked what they really wish for in the world, will say 'world peace.' Christians are often known as 'people of the light' – we are meant to reflect the light of Christ amongst our families, our friends, our work colleagues, our community, and our world. That light brings peace. This is a deep peace that the world alone cannot give, but we can spread it to the world.

What does it mean to 'bring light'? Some American tourists visiting Russia were leaving a church when a woman approached and gave them a coin. "Please, use this money to buy a candle and light it

in the name of peace,” she said. The tourists did as the woman asked and on their return home the candle was lit in their church and has been lit at every subsequent service as a reminder that we are people of peace. If an unknown Russian woman could give their church a simple candle and challenge them to pray for peace, why shouldn't they give candles to their friends in other churches and challenge them to pray for peace. So, they did and in giving away the candles they told the story of the Russian woman. They also challenged churches to give a candle to another church or churches and ask them to do the same. The movement spread around the world and peace candles are now lit in churches around the UK and in Australia, Fiji, Palestine, South Africa, USA, and other places.

During the Remembrance Sunday service at St Francis, our own special peace candle was lit to remind us to pray for, and to bring that deep peace that passes all understanding. The candle is now lit at every service. During communion services, it is lit at the time of passing the peace which seems very appropriate.

***Lord Jesus Christ, who brought peace by the shedding of your own blood, grant us peace in our hearts; inspire us to be peacemakers, and give us courage to face the pain of the world with hope; that peace and justice may triumph everywhere. Amen.***

*Brian Griffiths*

## **St Andrew's Church, Gweru**

For some years, now, our two churches have been linked with St Andrew's Church in Gweru, a high density suburb in the Central Diocese of Zimbabwe. During that time, St Andrew's has had a number of incumbents, including Ignatius Makumbe, who is now the Diocesan Bishop. After his promotion, we lost contact with the parish, but at the end of last year, the Archdeacon of Reigate was part of a small group to visit Zimbabwe and she kindly offered to take with her any correspondence to the Zimbabwe churches that their link churches cared to send. Joyce Taylor, a member of St Francis, now resident in Coloma Care Home, who has known Bishop Ignatius for some time, sent him a small gift, and I sent a letter for the new priest in charge of St Andrew's, Father Sebastian Meso.

To my delight, shortly after Christmas, I received an email from Fr Meso, telling us about himself and updating us on what is happening in his parish.

Fr Meso joined St Andrew's at the start of 2021 as a deacon, becoming a priest later that year and taking over the parish from Revd R Chikuyo. Things were difficult at that time as the country was only gradually coming out of COVID-19 restrictions. People were still in fear of the disease and few were brave enough to attend Sunday services. Fr Meso continued:

"All I can say, God has been wonderful so far. The aftermath of COVID-19 is still with us. Our Sunday service attendance is growing gradually as some people were still restricting

themselves as were the restrictions. We also have our mid-week services every Wednesday. During Lent we have services everyday and this year we were studying the book of Acts.”

Although the parish is blessed with a mixed age range, the majority are not working: some are pensioners, on very small pensions and some are not employed. Those gainfully employed are civil servants. However, the number of groups, or guilds, active within the parish and the numbers involved, were it not a sin, would make one very envious: the Mothers’ Union numbers 100, with a further 21 members of the Anglican Women’s Fellowship and 30 in the Anglican Church Men’s group; the St Agnes’ Guild has 20 members and St Peter’s 10 (I have no more information about these groups, but will try to find out more). Then there are 45 young people being catered for and a Child Ministry of 60.

Fr Meso adds that they are currently constructing their Rectory! At the time of writing, they were on slab level, with plans to construct the ablution block once the Rectory is finished.

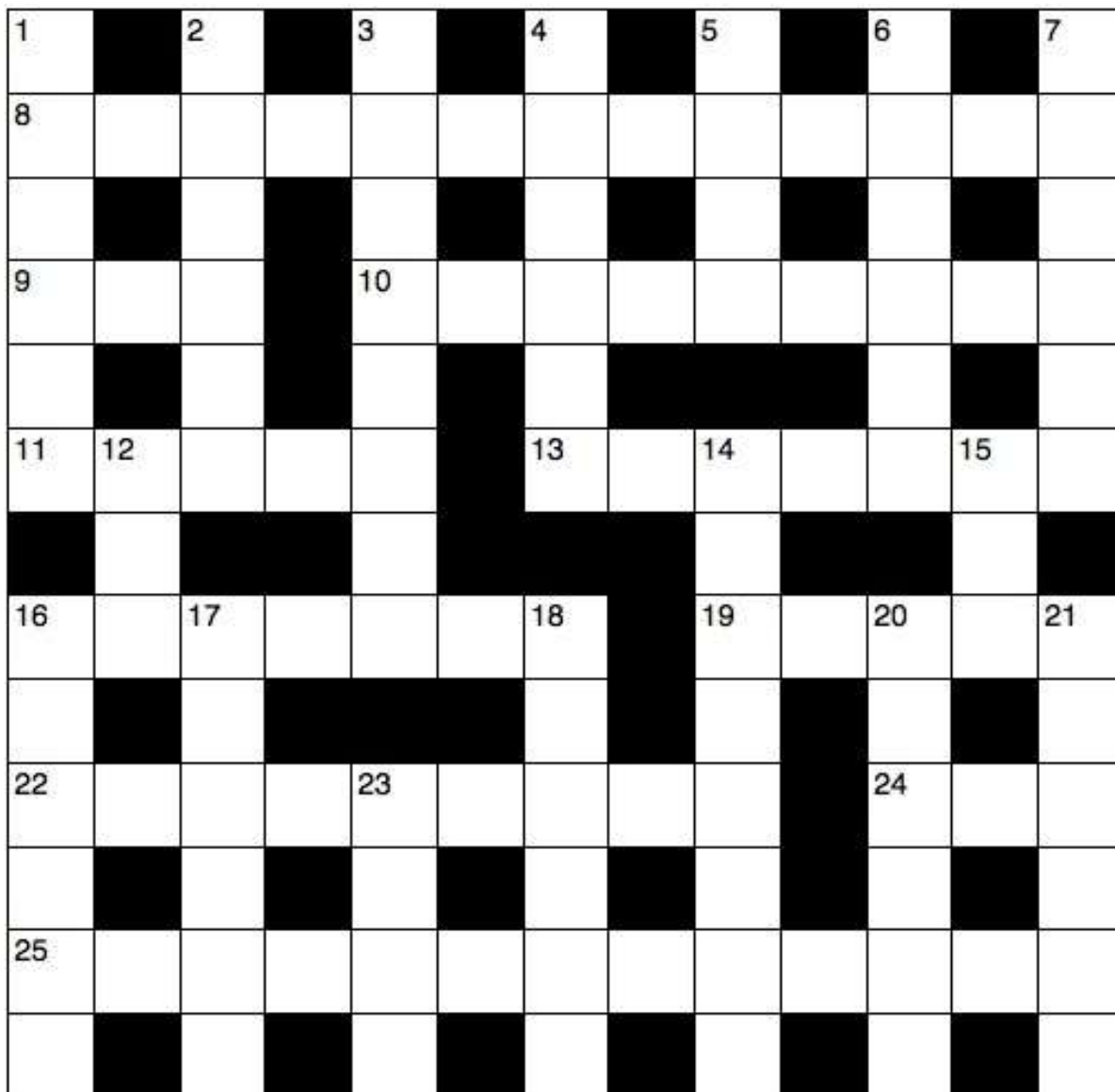
The email concludes:

“I really need both your spiritual and physical support Rev Fr Richard, because it is my prayer that God opens doors for us to finish building our Rectory around this time next year 2023.

Thanks for starting the ball rolling, we keep in touch. Be blessed.”

*Richard Ford*

## CROSS WORD GRID



### ***Across***

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)  
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)  
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)  
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)  
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)  
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)  
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)  
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14  
 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)

24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1) 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

**Down**

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
- 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
- 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
- 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
- 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
- 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
- 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
- 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
- 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
- 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
- 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
- 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
- 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
- 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
- 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
- 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

***The NIV bible was used to set the crossword.***

*Answers on page 6*

## **GROUPS & ACTIVITIES AT ST FRANCIS CHURCH**

**On the first Saturday of every month** the church is open from 10.30 am to 11.30 am when refreshments are served, and this raises money for Action Aid.

*Contact Barbara Goodchild      8777 8782*

**The Church Halls.** Our main large hall is available for hire. There is also a small hall which can be used in conjunction with the main hall at weekends and during school holidays.

*Bookings Secretary: Liz Raper      8777 2745*

**Church Choir.** The choir helps to lead the singing at Sunday services. It regularly sings anthems and there are special musical services at festivals. Rehearsals: 7.15 pm – 8.15 pm on Thursdays.

*Contact: Geoff Mussard      8650 8389*

**Men's Group.** This meets on the second Monday evening of the month, alternately at St Francis' and St Mary's.

*Contact: Tim Shingler      8402 8286*

**Reading Group.** This meets on the second Thursday morning of the month.

*Contact Rosemary Swatland      8777 7369*

**Matchbox Theatre.** A well-established amateur dramatic society which includes members of St Francis' Church and performs in the church hall, two or three times a year.

*Contact Annie Norris      8651 1775*

# **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH HALL**

## **Cubs**

Tuesdays from 6.15 pm to 7.45 pm

Contact Kat Hardman .. .. . [katkahardman@gmail.com](mailto:katkahardman@gmail.com)

## **Scouts**

Fridays from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Contact Hilary Moy, Group Scout Leader .. .. . 07961 826814

## **Ravenswood Women's Institute**

Fourth Thursday of the month from 7.45 pm

Contact Barbara Goodchild .. .. . 8777 8782

## **West Wickham Market [Stalls & Refreshments]**

Fridays from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm .. .. . 07712 492854

## **Wednesday Market**

From 9.00 am to 1.00 pm .. .. . 07956 580467

## **Debbie's Dance**

Thursdays from 9.00 am to 10.00 am [debbiesdanceschool@yahoo.com](mailto:debbiesdanceschool@yahoo.com)

## **Sugar Craft & Cake Decorating**

Thursdays at 8.00 pm (Six meetings a year)

*Articles and items for the magazine are always welcome.*

*We are currently looking for a new editor, but if you have any contributions for the next bi-monthly magazine [editions*

*for Dec/Jan, Feb/March, etc], please contact our vicar, Hazel*

*by the second Sunday of the month*