## ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM 30<sup>th</sup> January & 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022: Candlemas & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Lent

#### Hazel writes:

Last week David Pickering left us with a question about which aspect of being and bringing Good News to the poor each of us wish to respond to. At our joint services over the next few months, we will be looking at some of these aspects as part of our vision feedback. This will begin with our links with the foodbank on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February.

As a follow up to this service, we will be showing a **film**, **"I**, **Daniel Blake"** at St Mary's Church on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, which looks at some of the challenges foodbank users and others in poverty face. Here's a brief synopsis:

A 59-year-old carpenter recovering from a heart attack befriends a single mother and her two kids as they navigate their way through the impersonal benefits system. With equal amounts of humour, warmth and despair, the journey is heartfelt and emotional until the end.

Come any time from 7.15 for snacks and drinks before we settle down to watch the film at 7.30pm.

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

**Hymns at 9.15 a.m. at St. Mary's** – Make Way – Purify my heart – Lord, the light of your love is shining – Like a candle flame – This little light of mine.

**Hymns at 10.45 a.m. at St. Francis** – Make way - Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us – Praise to the holiest in the height – Lord, the light of your love is shining.

Next **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St. Mary's Church and at 10am in St Francis' Church. Our focus for this week is our links with Bromley Borough Foodbank.

**Hymns at 10 a.m. at St. Francis** – Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty – Dear Lord and Father of mankind – I, the Lord of sea and sky – Will you come and follow me.

On **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February**, we will have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St. Francis' Church and non-eucharistic services at 9.15am in St Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St. Francis' Church. Our theme this week will be Racial Justice Sunday.

**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** on Sunday. 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 <u>www.churchofengland.org</u>.
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 A service for Chinese New Year from the Manchester Chinese Christian Church.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 Live from the Chapel of Royal Hollloway, University of London.
  - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. Semi-final of gospel singer of the year competition hosted by Mark De-Lisser.

#### And for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at <u>www.churchofengland.org</u>.
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 -Community of Westminster Abbey marks the Queen's accession to the throne.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 Choral vespers from our Lady of Victories, Kensington, London.
  - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 11.20 a.m. Final of the Gospel singer of the year hosted by Mark De-Lisser.

**Coffee & Chat** is this week on the first Thursday (3<sup>rd</sup> February) at 2.30pm on Zoom and our next in person date is on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February in St Francis' Church. If you would like to come and meet others for a chat, please do join us. If you would like to do this, but cannot make the date, or would like the log-in details, please let Rowena know (<u>rowena.griff19@btinternet.com</u> or 8777 6112).

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned hot and cold meat, tinned potatoes, tinned vegetables, long life fruit juice, tinned fish, chopped tomatoes, rice, custard, rice pudding. They are well stocked with pasta, cereals and baked beans. Please do not bring any fresh food, or baby milk as the foodbank cannot pass this on. You can also donate financially here <u>https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money</u>. Thank you for your continuing support.

There are currently local **volunteer opportunities** available. A separate sheet is included with this pew sheet with all the details.

As well as seeking new trustees, **Bromley Borough Foodbank** is looking to employ three staff members as Operations Co-ordinator, Warehouse and Logistics Manager and a Volunteer Co-ordinator. All details can be found at the following web address: <u>www.cv-library.co.uk/list-jobs/406850/Bromley-Borough-Foodbank</u>.

We have a spare **wheelchair and two walkers** available (free) to anyone who could use them. Please contact Caroline Povlson on 07711 212623 for more information.

It is **hoped** to go ahead with the **Valentine's Ploughmen's Lunch at St. Marys – Saturday 12th February 12.30 for 1 o'clock.** This is an event organised, usually annually, by the men of St. Marys. Tickets at £10 each are now on sale from Beryl Bolton 0208 289 8097 or <u>berylbolton@hotmail.com</u>. Numbers will be limited to 40 so book early if you hope to come along. We will need to know if you would like ham or cheese with your ploughman's.

<u>Please note new date</u> for an augmented St. Mary's Church Choir to present a concert on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February at 3.30 p.m. in aid of church funds, including Roger Jones' "Three Wise Camels" – an alternative story for Epiphany. Tickets at £7 each can be requested in advance – refreshments will be provided at the end. Please book via <u>tickets@mussard.org.uk</u> or 0208 650 8389. *Geoff Mussard* 

We are now holding more in-person services in both churches on Sunday mornings, which we hope will create a much greater sense of regularity in our worship, with people able to feel safe in a space that they know well. As a consequence, we will be needing more volunteers to support these services. If you feel able to add any of the following roles to your schedule, please let the following people know: Welcomers at St Mary's - Beryl Bolton - berylbolton@hotmail.com Welcomers at St Francis' - Joan Burford – jandbburford@talktalk.net Readers at St Mary's - Kay Mussard - kay@mussard.org.uk Readers at St Francis' - Joan Burford - jandbburford@talktalk.net Intercessors at both churches - Hazel O'Sullivan - hazelos58@gmail.com Refreshments at St Francis' - Marion Barry - whitelandm@yahoo.com Livestreaming and slides at St Mary's - Gifty Nortey - office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk Livestreaming at St Francis' - Nichola Nightingale - nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk

#### St Francis and St Mary's Arts events 2022: supporting mental health.

As you may know, we cancelled plans for a Festival of Arts in 2020 due to the pandemic. Instead, we would like to have two arts weekends this year, linking these to how the Arts can have a positive influence on people's mental health, which will be so important in 2022:

- The first would be a Visual Arts weekend and might include a photography exhibition, film night and art exhibitions and will be 9-10<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- Then a Written Word weekend will be 24-25<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and might include a book exhibition, poetry and other readings.

This is all in the very early planning stage and we would like many people to contribute ideas, plan and organise these events. If you would like to get involved please contact any of us: Ken (<u>kennethabryan@aol.com</u>), Kay (<u>kay@mussard.org.uk</u>), Debbie (<u>debadams64@icloud.com</u>), Tim (<u>tim.shingler@ntlworld.com</u>), Nicky (<u>nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk</u>) and Kate (<u>katedyer41@hotmail.com</u>).

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 (<u>nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk</u> or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

The flowers at St. Francis this week are for Daphne Dack for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 29<sup>th</sup> January and have been arranged by Celia and Marion.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl <u>berylbolton@hotmail.com</u> and items for the websites to <u>brian.griff19@btinternet.com</u> or Gifty <u>office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk</u>.





# Serving our community

As we come out of the pandemic, more community services are looking to improve how they serve our locality. Here are three varied opportunities to help in the community:

1. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED to drive elderly Bencurtis residents to the West Wickham shops in one of the Bencurtis minibuses. We're looking for drivers who can give up one morning (or more) a week to take shoppers to Sainsbury's at 10.00 a.m. & pick them up again at 11.30 to return them home. An ideal way to serve folk in our local community! Drivers need to have a clean driving licence, to provide character references & be willing to be DBS checked. Ideally, they need to be under 70 years of age, as drivers over 70 will need to complete a DVLA driving assessment. The Friends of Glebe Housing Association/Bencurtis will cover insurance costs. Further details from Geoff Larcombe (Tel: 020 8777 5114 ; Mobile: 07954 707755 ; email: g.d.larcombe@gmail.com).

#### 2. School Governor roles

Compass Academy Trust is looking to recruit local volunteer school governors within our family of schools (Marian Vian, Unicorn and Wickham Common & Oak Lodge). Local governors do not have to be specialists in education; instead, much of the role is the inquisitiveness to question and analyse; and the willingness to learn. You will be expected to get to know the school through visits, attending events and meeting the staff and students. You also need enthusiasm, commitment and a little spare time.

The local governors work with school leaders to deliver the best education for pupils at our schools and ensure they are nurtured and cared for in a safe environment. We look at a diverse range of matters - from deciding what kind of schools we want to be and thinking about how we want to get there; to setting school priorities and ensuring they are delivered. The Local Governing Body meets every term, currently virtually, to discuss these matters and in turn are accountable to the Board of Trustees. To help local governors in their role you will receive:

- Induction training to welcome and introduce you to the role of Local Governing Body
- An ongoing programme of training.
- Support and guidance from other members of your governing board (such as a 'buddy')

#### THE TRUST ACTIVELY ENCOURAGES VOLUNTEERS FROM A BAME BACKGROUND.

If you would be interested in having an informal chat to find out more about how you

can contribute to governance, please email your details to:

governance@compassacademytrust.org. Joyce Munro, Governance Manager, will be glad to contact you to arrange an informal conversation.

#### 3. Bromley Borough Foodbank (BBF) is recruiting new Trustees

At BBF, we've been helping those facing food poverty in our local community for over 10 years. It's a big job and it requires lots of volunteers in a wide variety of roles. One of those roles is as a Trustee: we have five and are looking to recruit two more. We hope that one of them might have HR experience, but don't let that stop you applying if you have other attributes that might interest us. For instance, we could learn a lot from a Trustee who has been helped by BBF or another Foodbank.

What you would do as a Trustee:

- As a team: you would sit on our "Trustee Board", which provides strategic direction and oversight for all BBF activities and works to ensure that BBF is properly run.
- At an individual level: you would also be asked to take responsibility for particular aspects of BBF's operations, getting to know what is happening and providing guidance and support in those areas.
- Time commitment: the Trustee Board meets every other month, with one awayday and some training each year in addition to the AGM. The time commitment for your individual responsibilities as a Trustee would be tailored to fit your circumstances.

What we are looking for in our Trustees

- A blend of different skills and experience: we want people from different backgrounds with a wide range of talents to bring to bear in their Trustee role.
- A willingness to learn: we don't require Trustees to have previous experience of being a trustee or to understand the legal responsibilities and liabilities it entails; we can help you learn about them and the other aspects of your role as a Trustee.
- Diversity: we would like our Trustee Board to reflect the ethnic, gender and other diversity of our clients and the staff and volunteers who work for us.
- Supportive of our ethos: we require each of our Trustees to be supportive of our collective Trustee Board responsibility to maintain BBF's Christian identity and ethos.
- Commitment: to be a Trustee you need to be committed to BBF and its aims, to devote the necessary time and effort to fulfil your responsibilities and to work well as part of a cheerful and dynamic team.

Interested? please contact Simon Lees, Chair of Trustees, at <u>accounts@bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk</u> or 07768 175377

#### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022

#### Collect

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations and glory of Israel: make your home among us, and present us pure and holy to your heavenly Father, your God, and our God.

#### First Reading: Hebrews 2:14end

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

#### Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), <sup>24</sup> and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.<sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, <sup>29</sup> 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

<sup>33</sup> And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.
<sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup> so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

#### **Post Communion Prayer**

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

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#### Candlemas

#### Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022

#### Collect

Lord of the hosts of heaven, our salvation and our strength, without you we are lost: guard us from all that harms or hurts and raise us when we fall; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple.<sup>2</sup> Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' <sup>4</sup> The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!' <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup> The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will

go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

### Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:31-end

<sup>31</sup> 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." 37 Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you,

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Lent

just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

<sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." 44 Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

#### **Post Communion Prayer**

Go before us, Lord, in all we do with your most gracious favour, and guide us with your continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally by your mercy receive everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Today is a great festival in the church – sometimes called Candlemas. Some churches mark it by blessing the candles to be used in church for the year ahead. This ritual mirrors today's gospel reading, which includes verse 32, where Simeon calls Jesus 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles'. Let's unpick that:

- Firstly, it's about a light. That's why we have candles in church, in particular our paschal candle for festivals like today's, as we think of Jesus as the light of the world.
- Secondly, it's about a revelation. Jesus shows us what God would be like if he were here on earth as a human being. Actually, God isn't a human being, but we find it easiest to understand everything about him if we use human analogies, so that's how we talk about him. And knowing the stories of Jesus helps to illustrate how this would work.
- And finally, the revelation is given to Gentiles that's us. Jesus came not just for the Jews, but also non-Jews. It took people years to recognise and understand this, but now we see that the message God gave us in Jesus is for the whole world, not just one special group of people.

So, today is an opportunity to look back at Jesus' birth and remember him as 'God with us' – a revelation of what God as a human would be like. It's by being born into very human and humble circumstances that Jesus shows us what God is like: he stands alongside us. As I said last week, he doesn't do this in a heroic way, but in a way that shows us God's heart for the poor, the vulnerable, the hurting.

Our reading from Hebrews this week tells us that this is what Jesus came to do: to share the same experiences as we do, so that we can receive that promise of eternal life after death and so we might have freedom from the power which our natural fear of death can hold over us. At the end of this passage, we read that Jesus helps those being tested, because he himself was tested. Jesus was tested when he faced his own death, and so we know that God understands our suffering and the kind of fear that we might have if we didn't know that promise given by Jesus through his experience beyond death.

This is the kind of light that's offered to us by Jesus. It's not a never-ending happiness, but a strength to get through the tough parts of life. This is what Simeon and Anna, those two older, and wiser, people in the temple were telling Mary and Joseph when they met them with Jesus just forty days after his birth: that Jesus would help many people to get through the tough parts of life. There's something very special about this scene because it is truly multi-generational. Simeon and Anna had been patiently waiting for something or someone who would reveal God's redemptive power. And if you spend your life watching out for God, you do become wiser and more able to spot him. Simeon and Anna would have met many different people. They must have had discussions with a great deal of them, wondering: is this the person that God has promised? And each time so far, they would have been disappointed. No, he (or maybe she?) is not the one.

But through each conversation, they would have learned something more about life and about the pleasures and pains that people face. This is one of the privileges that I have as someone who takes funeral services. In a funeral visit I have the great honour of listening when the family recall who their loved one was, and they tell me about the characteristics of their life that they want to be remembered in the service. This is where I get to find out where God is at work. The family won't be able to tell me this, but through the Holy Spirit, it's often possible to spot it and offer it back to the family to help them see something else in their loved one and how there's a greater connection to God than maybe they first realised.

And this process is especially powerful when the conversation involves more than one generation. I took a funeral on Tuesday this week. A woman called Carole. When I met with the family, I spoke with both Carole's husband and her two children. And when we came to the service itself, two of her grandchildren also contributed. The theme to much of what they told me was about sharing: how Carole shared the things she loved with others – her recipes, her support of Crystal Palace and the England cricket team and her appreciation of the countryside and nature, such that she'd avoid going anywhere by motorway, but preferred the 'pretty route', as she used to call it. Now, because her family listened to what she shared with them, they were able to see where God might have been revealed through these things. They may not have called it God, but once I introduced them to God as love, they could make this connection and so some of their grief could be transformed into a joyful remembrance.

And the same thing can happen with anyone struggling with the difficulties of life. It's only by sharing what's happening with someone else, that it might be possible for them to give support. And this can happen in both directions in terms of age difference – a younger person may be able to help an older person physically or with newer technologies, and an older person may be able to help a younger one with mentoring or giving guidance, as well as maybe having the time and ability to listen which others of the same generation might not do so well.

There's a song: "Lean on me", which might help us to reflect on this. You can find it at <u>www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nx\_D0VTHBag</u>. The words are below:

 Sometimes in our lives, we all have pain We all have sorrow But if we are wise We know that there's always tomorrow

> Lean on me when you're not strong And I'll be your friend I'll help you carry on For it won't be long 'Til I'm gonna need Somebody to lean on

Please swallow your pride
 If I have things you need to borrow
 For no one can fill
 Those of your needs
 That you won't let show

You just call on me, brother, when you need a hand We all need somebody to lean on I just might have a problem that you'll understand We all need somebody to lean on

 If there is a load you have to bear That you can't carry I'm right up the road I'll share your load If you just call me

Jesus can only help us to bring about a transformation if we share our troubles and disappointments, as well as our joys and what we are hoping for, with others who are close to us, whatever their age.

The key thing in making any gathering a success, whether it's multi-generational or not, is this sharing. It's about everyone sharing what they have experienced in the past or are doing so now, and others listening to them, so revealing where God might be working, or where some transformation might be needed, through prayer or practical support.

Can you see where God is revealed today, and then respond with your own action, or pass this revelation on to others, just as Simeon and Anna did when they met Jesus in the temple?

We know that this revelation of God which we find in Jesus can shine a light into the heart of everyone in the world – let's do so today at Candlemas, telling others where it is that there's a light for revelation to the world.

#### **Prayer Pointers**

At Candlemas we reflect on how Anna and Simeon recognised the special light of your Son, Jesus, when they saw it. Pray that we will be filled with that same spirit and vision so that we, too, may recognise this light in the people and events of the world in which we live.

Pray that our worship may not be confined to church services but might include seeking justice and working with those in poverty, the unemployed and those who are disadvantaged in our society. Pray for Christians Against Poverty and all the work they do to help those in debt and those struggling with addictions.

Pray for those who are subject to discrimination and unfair treatment because of their gender, culture, religion or sexuality, especially those who have felt rejected by the church.

For peace in our world, especially for flashpoints between nations. For peace in Ukraine and in the Middle East and Afghanistan. For governments of the nations, that they may seek peace and pursue it.

For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce, Carole Hubbard, and Robert Davis. For all recovering and convalescing from treatment - that they may have patience and be ready to accept help from others as they heal.

Lord, forgive us our impatience. Forgive us our smash-and-grab, want-one-now, fast food, instant results, drive-thru lives. Teach us once more the value of waiting as Simeon and Anna waited in the Temple. Still our restless hearts, tame our wandering minds, and in the waiting, tune our ears to the still, small voice of your Spirit. Help us to listen to you, and to listen to those that most need to be heard.