

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

20th February 2022: 2nd Sunday before Lent

Hazel writes:

How appropriate that Storm Eunice comes just before the Sunday when we remember Jesus and his disciples caught in a storm on Lake Galilee. A focus on Jesus can bring a calm to any storm, and I pray that we all might know this at a time when many are experiencing metaphorical storms in their lives as we come to terms with what might be a new normal. Ken's sermon this week helps us with this – do read it here if you will not be at St Mary's this week to hear it: Hilary Fife will be presiding and preaching at the 10.45am service in St Francis'.

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. in St. Mary's – Eternal Father strong to save – Make me a channel of your peace – Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us - Breathe on me breath of God – You shall go out with joy.

Hymns at 10.45 a.m. in St. Francis – All creatures of our God and King – Breathe on me, breath of God – Eternal Father strong to save – I cannot tell how he whom angels worship

Next **Sunday 27th February**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Francis' Church, 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.

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 www.churchofengland.org.
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
 - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 from Cornerstone Church, Nottingham reflecting on God as a refuge and strength.

- Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Buckfast Abbey with the choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.
- **On BBC 2:** Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. – Claire Mcollom explores Edinburgh and shares stories of inspirational Scottish Christians.

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 <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>. Thank you for your continuing support.

Please note the date for an augmented St. Mary's Church Choir to present a concert on **Sunday afternoon 27th 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 tickets@mussard.org.uk or 0208 650 8389. Geoff Mussard

Last chance to buy tickets this week although some will be available at the door.

As set out in the magazines, this year our **Lent groups** will look at The Beatitudes, which some believe are the most powerful and beautiful teaching that Jesus gave. If you are not normally part of a home group, do be in touch with a leader to join in for the period of Lent or you can sign up on a sheet in church:

- Monday evenings – contact Richard on 020 8289 2432 or richard.ford73@ntlworld.com
- Wednesday evenings – contact Nicky on 020 8916 9855 or nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk
- Thursday mornings – contact Debbie on 020 8777 7834 or debadams64@icloud.com
- Friday mornings – contact Ken on 020 8777 1850 or kennethabryan@aol.com

You can swap from one group to another so that you don't miss a week.

Ash Wednesday is on Wednesday 2nd March. There will be two services of Ashing and Holy Communion: 10.45am at St Francis' Church and 8pm at the Methodist Church in Hawes Lane. Do come to one of these services to mark the beginning of Lent.

A **women's event** will be on Tuesday 1st March, when we will be sharing pancakes at St Francis' Church from 8pm. If you would like, bring your own favourite toppings and a friend to share the pancakes with.

The **funeral of Carole Hubbard** will take place at St. Mary's on Wednesday 9th March at 10.30 a.m. and afterwards at the Bromley Court Hotel.

Police Encounter Panels - South Area Police are looking for members of the public to form a panel on each of the three boroughs – Sutton, Bromley and Croydon. The panels are being created to give communities the opportunity to feedback on policing encounters from their own neighbourhoods, by watching Body Worn video (BWV) footage and offering their views on what went well or what the Met can improve. If you are over 18 and live, work, in education or have other strong links to the boroughs and would like to get involved or simply hear more, please email the dedicated mailbox at PolicingEncounters.SouthArea@met.police.uk

Part time job opportunity: Looking for a friendly and trustworthy person to carry out herbicide treatment and occasional garden tidy ups for a local business: Longfield Knotweed Solutions. This is for one day a week (with potential for more days – can be flexible with hours to suit). Will be required to drive a small van, talk face to face with customers and input data onto mobile app. No prior experience necessary but enjoying outside work is important. For an informal chat please contact Charlotte Faint 07840 002115

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.

Coffee & Chat is on the first Thursday of the month at 2.30pm on Zoom and on the third Thursday in person at 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 (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com or 8777 6112).

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'.

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

Almighty God, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Reading: Revelation 4

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.' ² At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! ³ And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; ⁶ and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living

creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,

'Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the
Almighty,
who was and is and is to
come.'

⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, ¹¹ 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'

Gospel Reading: Luke 8:22-25

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go

across to the other side of the lake.' So they put out, ²³ and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A gale swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. ²⁴ They went to him and woke him up, shouting, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

Post Communion Prayer

God our creator, by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise, and the bread of life at the heart of your Church: may we who have been nourished at your table on earth be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross and enjoy the delights of eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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REFLECTION – Ken Bryan

For those who have seen the film 'I Daniel Blake', which some of us watched recently at St Mary's, you will be aware of how a decent man was beaten down by the benefit system so that he had to sell all his furniture just to get by and in the end, it never got resolved for him. Yet he still helped a struggling young mum and her children in practical ways.

We all like him suffer in one way or another. Possibly not as harshly as Daniel but we all face storms in life some minor and some extreme.

It might be for health reasons, through bereavement, loss of employment or a business, through financial struggles, or difficult relationships or maybe natural disasters. The list goes on and on.

Can we, when we face our difficult situations, turn to Christ? And do we? It is never easy and even the disciples showed that their faith was fragile. Jesus was there to calm the storm. Though he did that straight away, they came to see that he would not always work to order just because things got difficult.

The disciples are an example to us to have faith in Jesus at all times. And for us it is not always that Jesus is there immediately to quell the storms of our life, but we are encouraged to keep on believing in him through all things. It may be that some things will never be resolved as we would want them to. However, other blessings may flow from our situations.

In future we can sympathise with others in a similar situation. We can empathise with them. They can sense an authenticity in our concern and feel that we really understand because we have been through something similar.

Because of our situation we can meet others who will help us and some who we can help. Helping others can often be a way of dealing with what we are going through.

We can overcome, not that all difficulties go away but we find new coping mechanisms. It doesn't always mean going back to the old ways but, like the current phrase, there will be a 'new normal'.

Through a difficulty like mental health, we might be led to change what we do and learn a new skill or trade. I read only this week of Gabriella Taylor a tennis player who was number five in Britain three years ago who suffered from mental issues on the lonely tennis tour. She gave up tennis during lockdown and took up painting and now has started to do it professionally as her new normal, having left tennis behind.

Many people both young and old have suffered during lockdown and time spent in isolation, away from people. School children not able to develop social skills and those in care homes not able to see loved ones and so losing their cognitive skills and memory.

As we have not been having the usual interaction with people it would be good for everyone to be kinder and more considerate to each other as we come out of the pandemic.

During lockdown we have had time to look again at our faith and reassess our relationship with Jesus. Of course, this can be done at any time.

We look to Jesus, and he points us to God. It can be easy for us to put God in a box and want to turn him on when we need help. But God is not like that to be used by us only in times of need.

In our reading from Revelation John gives us his vision to try to give us a sense of God's otherness; His majesty. God on His throne, around which is a radiant rainbow, and the natural world responds to his authority with lightening flashing and thunder roaring with elders and incredible creatures around his throne. It says:

On each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle.

Down the centuries these are images that have come to represent the gospel writers. Telling us of the life of Jesus as he points us to God. The human face is Matthew, the lion is Mark, the ox is Luke, and the eagle is John.

These animals may have originally been seen as representing the highest forms of the various types of animals, that is man, the king of creation as the image of the creator; the lion as the king of beasts; the ox as the king of domesticated animals and the eagle as the king of the birds.

Further symbolism has Matthew symbolised by the winged man or angel which represents Christ's incarnation and his human nature.

Mark by the winged lion symbolises the incarnation because lions were supposed to sleep with their eyes open and the comparison is with Christ in the tomb.

Luke by the winged ox which symbolises sacrifice as well as service and strength, representing Christ's Passion and Crucifixion.

John by an eagle symbolises Christ's Ascension and his divine nature.

The vision of John's is similar one from of Ezekiel, which you will find in his Chapter 1. And he was writing at the time of the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC. Both declare God's almighty power and His otherness which we should never forget.

Difficult things that happen to us and those around us cannot be explained easily as we do not have the ability to know the mind of God. But a faith in God is all that is asked of us. Together with an openness to God and to each other.

I'd like to finish with a poem by Jane Smith who is linked with our joint benefice through St Francis and joins us on the livestream. This poem talks of our brokenness and our pains, yet our desire to focus on God in search of our healing.

Broken Places by Jane Smith

My beautiful oak tree
Lies fallen to the ground
Its brokenness for all to see
So hard to understand

If only others knew it
I'm also like that tree
But the brokenness is hidden
Deep inside of me

I feel I have to hide it
It hurts so much inside
All those times I smiled
When I really should have cried

The pain is not just physical
It is emotional too
I need the restoration
That's only found in you

I need to be more open
With others and with You
Help me to be real Lord
And give me courage too

I choose to not be silent
You ask for honesty
Please heal my broken places
And set me fully free.

Prayer Pointers

Pray that we may love others as much as Jesus loves us. That our love may be self-giving and seeking no reward other than knowing that we serve and bless those in need.

For all ordained clergy and authorized lay ministers in Christ's church, that they would be faithful and compassionate in their service; and for all members of our congregations that we may mirror Jesus' teaching by our words and actions.

For all around the world living amid conflict; the innocent victims fearing for their survival. Pray particularly of the evolving situation between Russia and Ukraine. And pray for those involved in talks to prevent invasion.

Pray for all battling their own conflicts – for addicts and those who work with them. For all suffering from mental illness, especially those under treatment in the Bethlem Royal Hospital.

Pray for all those in the clutches of debt and all those fearing the spiralling cost of living. For those struggling to pay energy and food bills, especially those who have young families.

Pray for all Police Officers especially those in positions of leadership in forces. Pray for wisdom in how they make the strategic decisions necessary to deal with crime in these very challenging times. Pray for a culture of fairness and integrity in police forces and for those choosing the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police here in London.

For all those who are ill and for their friends and relatives – especially for Vicky Pearce, 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.

For the soul of Carole Hubbard, and her husband Malcolm and all her family as they mourn her and look to the future.