

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI WEST WICKHAM PARISH MAGAZINE



April-May 2026

50 pence

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

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REGULAR SERVICES

SUNDAY

- 8.00 am Holy Communion**
1st Sunday varies - See calendar for details
3rd & 5th Sundays at St Mary's Church, The Avenue
2nd & 4th Sundays at St Francis' Church
- 10.00 am First Sunday – Joint Family Communion**
with St Mary's, held alternately at each church
See calendar for details
- 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)

WEDNESDAY

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

Letter from Carol

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” (John 12: 24)

Dear Friends,

This March I had the privilege to walk a pilgrim path to Rome and Assisi, with Bishop Christopher and our Ecumenical friends from St Georges Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Our journey took us from St Peter’s Basilica, St Paul’s burial place in Rome, to St Francis and St Clare’s in Assisi. We contemplated the final journeys of these saints, from Crucifixion (upside down for Peter) and St Francis experience of receiving the Stigmata (the outward signs of the crucifixion of Jesus).

Because it was the 800th Anniversary of the death of St Francis, we were also able to follow a path to the Veneration (a time of prayerful respect to a saint) of the mortal remains of St Francis in the Crypt of the Basilica. We joined many other pilgrims in a long procession down to the crypt, viewing wonderful frescoes of The Passion of Christ and the Life of Francis, almost in dialogue with each other showing us how those who give their lives for others, even though they die, will live. Jesus and St Francis can both be compared with “the grain that dies, in order to live” (John 12: 24) and that by giving of your life in love for others, the world will preserve it for eternal life.

“Whoever serves me must follow me and where I am there will be my servant also” (John 12:26)

These words were the reflection along the way into the crypt, as pilgrims recalled the life of St Francis and Jesus’ last journey to the cross. Just as Jesus took a towel and washed his disciples’ feet like a servant, Francis lived a servant life helping those in need, and demonstrated his love for all living

creatures, in a way that has borne fruit for centuries. The Sisters of St Clare carried on the legacy of St Francis with their monastic living and concern for others, they were pioneers - courageous women crossing the bounds of their society in order to serve. From the beginning they knew that their faith could change lives for the better, and new life be born.

This Holy Week as we remember and walk again along the path of Jesus to the Cross and resurrection on Easter Morning, let us also recall our own seeds that can be sown into the ground to bear fruit in the service of others.

Easter is a time of rejoicing and new opportunities, so let the love of Christ shine in your hearts as the bright sun shone on that first Easter morning from the tomb.

I share with you The Pilgrim Prayer from Assisi:

I look at you in this glory and I understand that whoever gives all for love never ends.

You lived like that seed that must die to give life;

You let everything go, you stopped seeking yourself,

You made yourself small and hidden, yet you sprouted, and today you still live.

Teach me to live like this,

Let me also know how to let go, without being afraid of losing,

Trusting that from emptiness comes fullness, that from gift comes joy, that every end opens a beginning.

I do not want to appear, I want to be true,

I do not want to possess, I want to give,

I do not want to endure by force,

I want truly to live.

You who are now alive forever, pray for me.

Help me to carry this seed into the world.

Amen and Every Blessing for a very Happy Easter.



Calendar for April

Thursday 2nd

Maundy Thursday

7.30 p.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Friday 3rd

Good Friday

11.00 a.m.

CTWW Joint Service at St. Francis

2.00 p.m.

An hour at the Cross at St. Mary's with livestream

Sunday 5th

EASTER SUNDAY

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Friday 10th

3.45 p.m.

Messy Church at St. Mary's

Messy Church Team

Sunday 12th

EASTER 2

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

10.00 a.m.

Joint Service at St. Mary's with livestream

Sunday 19th

EASTER 3

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Saturday 25th

St. Georges Supper 7p.m. St. Mary's Church Hall

Sunday 26th

EASTER 4 ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

9.15 a.m.

Morning Praise at St. Mary's with livestream

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Calendar for May

Sunday 3rd

EASTER 5

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's

10.00 a.m.

Joint Service at St. Francis

Friday 8th

3.45 p.m.

Messy Church at St. Mary's

Messy Church Team

Sunday 10th

EASTER 6 - Christian Aid Week

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

9.15 a.m.

Morning Praise at St. Mary's with livestream

10.45 a.m.

Morning Worship at St. Francis

Sunday 17th

EASTER 7

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Marys

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

10.45 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

Sunday 24th

PENTECOST

8.00 a.m.

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis

9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream
 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis

Sunday 31st TRINITY SUNDAY

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's
 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream
 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis

Bible Readings

Date	Reading	Reader
April		
2nd	Maundy Thursday 7.30 p.m.	At St. Francis
3rd	Good Friday 11.00am.	David Wada
5th	Acts 10: 34 -42 John 20: 1 -18	Lesley East
12th	Acts 2: 14a, 22-32 John 20: 19-31	James Pitt-Payne
19th	Acts 2: 14a, 36-41 Luke 24: 13-35	Sam Hand
26th	Acts 2: 42- 47 John 10: 1-10	Gill Kehoe
May		
3rd	Acts 7: 55-60 John 14: 1-14	Joan Burford
10th	Acts 17: 22-31	David Wada

	John 14: 15-21	
17th	Acts 1: 6-14	Lesley Easy
	John 17: 1-11	
24th	Acts 2: 1-21	James Pitt-Payne
	John 20: 19-23	
31st	Isaiah 40: 12-17, 27-31	
	2 Corinthians 13: 11-14	Sam Hand
	Matthew 28: 16 -20	

Dates for your Diary

April

Community Lunch

The Community Lunch is on **Wednesday 1st April** at 1.00 p.m. in St Mary's Church Hall. Please contact Beryl Bolton if you are unable to attend on 0208 289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com. Thank you.

St. Georges Supper

St Mary's annual St. Georges Supper will take place on **Saturday 25th April** at 7.00 p.m. in St Mary's Church hall. This is a 3-course meal of prawn cocktail/melon, roast beef with all the trimmings, trifle and coffee. The cost is £17.50 per head, and you must provide your own alcoholic drinks. This cost includes £2.50 which will be allocated to the lighting fund. There will also be a raffle and all profits will be for church funds. Contact Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 to book your place and give your choices. There will be the usual sing-a-long of songs after the meal and numbers will be limited to 40. Thank you.

May

Community Lunch

The Community Lunch is on **Wednesday 6th May** at 1.00 p.m. in St Mary's church hall. Please contact Beryl Bolton if you are unable to attend on 0208 289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com. Thank you.

Christian Aid Week 2026

9th May – Christian Aid Walk visiting London Churches for a donation or sponsorship (Jonathan Tickner to organise) – as last year.

10th - 17th May - Flower/tree Festival, exhibiting creations/displays from church or community groups at St John's (building on last year's Open Church) during several days of CAW - hopefully to include a Sunday afternoon and some weekday afternoons, depending on whether people are available to open the church. Could also maybe include bellringing, refreshments, plant/cake sales.

12th May@7.15 - **Film Night at St Mary's 'Belle'** (Tony Ivey to organise). <https://share.google/rpAVW7zKXhpEiOUEj> for further details. Wine, beer, soft drinks and popcorn will be provided.

23rd May - **Quiz Night at St Mary's** (6.30p.m. arrival) Bring your own drinks/snacks, tea and coffee provided in interval, with raffle.

29th May - Speaker Dick Griffin, ex Royal Protection Officer, 7.30 pm in St. John's church - proceeds after expenses to CA.

Advance notice

June 20th St. Mary's annual garden party with BBQ 11am – 2.00pm

Watch the weekly pew sheets for further updates on this event.

Parish Matters

A most enjoyable **Valentine's Ladies' Lunch** was held on **14th February** in the St Mary's Church Hall. The menfolk were either chefs, waiters, washer-uppers or general helpers so the ladies invited were waited on "hand and foot", having first been welcomed at the door by the M.C. A filling ploughman's lunch was served and really enjoyed. The meal concluded with a gift of a red rose to all the ladies as a memento. Certainly there was plenty of chat around the tables and all felt included.

Many thanks to everyone for their hard work organising and carrying out their duties on the day. We, the invitees, will have happy memories and are so grateful for Valentine's Day being remembered.

Jill Emerson (guest)

A profit of £344 was made for Church Funds

St. Francis Lunch time Concerts

It's nearly time for our popular season of Lunchtime concerts at St. Francis to begin!

This year we have some new performers as well as some old friends. We start the season on May 21st with local star violinist Julia Hart with Martin Sharpe at the piano. They will be including the Elgar sonata for violin and piano in their programme.

In June we will see Theo Bently Curtin, whom I am sure you'll remember played his cello and sang so brilliantly at our summer choir concert a couple of years ago. Make a note of June 18th for this.

All concerts commence at 12.45pm and with free admission and tea and coffee served beforehand, why not come along to St. Francis and bring a friend or two to enjoy a lunchtime of relaxing music?

Jean Mathers

Will AI replace my Vicar?

Not a week goes by without some news story relating to AI (Artificial Intelligence), usually with some form of tag line that robots will one day destroy us, or mean that we all become people of leisure, our lives managed for us by intelligent computers and robots. Indeed, whilst on a course in February Bishop Alastair of Woolwich answered a question about AI and the future. His take was that like the Industrial Revolution its advent would herald a change in patterns of work, and our working life as we know it, but it will not lead to our ultimate demise any more than did the invention of the Spinning Jenny. But what does this mean for your Vicar, will he be replaced by an algorithm in the near future?

The short answer is no; your Vicar and you are both safe from a robot minister. The long answer is also no, but with a bit more justification behind that prediction.

First off, we should note that Christianity is an incarnate, faith. That is that our faith is centred on the body, and that God becomes human in Jesus. Humans are more than biological robots; we are sentient creatures who possess souls. We are created in the image of God, and reflect that in multiple ways, not least our ability to form loving relationships with other people.

This relationship between the body and God has been a fraught one in the history of the Church, and in the first thousand years of Christianity many heresies developed that sought to decouple the human body from God. (The logic is that ‘God is perfect, humans are sinful: how can a perfect God allow himself to be sullied by dirty, sinful humanity?’) The Arch-heretic Arius for instance taught that Jesus was a created being, perfect yes like an angel, but God, most certainly not! Others taught that Jesus only ‘seemed’ to be human, others still that he was adopted by God at his baptism. These beliefs the Church calls heresy, and those who taught them are rightfully condemned.

Indeed, the embodied nature of the Incarnation, of God becoming human in Jesus, is essential to our salvation. As St Gregory Nazianzus wrote *'that which is not taken on cannot be redeemed'*. If we want salvation, then one who saves must be just like us, just without sin, a perfect offering. Thus, we can say that the human body is essential to our salvation story.

Then there is what happens at Ordination. Ordination begins a process of spiritual change and transformation, as does Baptism – this is called in some Christian circles an Ontological Change, as the inner most being is being transformed. Ordination is also about the handing on of authority: as Jesus commissioned the disciples, so their successors the Bishops lay hands on those being Ordained, commissioning them and handing on that ministry which originates in Christ. Can a computer server or servers holding the algorithmic DNA of AI receive this same laying on of hands, and handing on? I suspect not, as whilst AI might gain independent sentence, the soul originates in and belongs to God alone, and AI is something sub-created, that is developed by humans who are themselves created beings. Humans cannot impart life by their own will, that comes from God alone.

The next point comes from Covid. There was a question of whether the bread and wine of Holy Communion could be consecrated remotely over a home computer and internet connection? Could a Priest at his desk or dinner table consecrate over Zoom the piece of bread and wine on your table, be you his neighbour or 1,000 miles away? The answer from the Church was a resounding 'no'!

This comes from Jesus's actions at the Last Supper where he Takes, Blesses, Breaks, and Shares the bread. These three manual actions are essential to the Eucharist, and what has not been Taken, Blessed and Broken cannot be considered as being consecrated. Thus, it needs a human being who has been Ordained as Priest or Bishop to consecrate the bread and wine used at Holy Communion. The body then is essential to Holy Communion, just as it is in the story of our salvation.

Next comes the nature of things more generally. AI is likely to outstrip us, intellectually speaking, and has probably already done so. In many ways this makes it a higher form of being than we are, but then so are the angels. As the Psalmist writes: *'You have made [humans] a little lower than the angels'* (8.5). As with us and the rest of creation, so with AI.

Angels cannot be saved in the same way that humans can: they innately lack freewill and were created to serve God. That some fell places them beyond redemption because they wilfully chose to exercise a free will that was not theirs in the first place, whereas humans exercised a free will which is inherent in our creation. So, the action of the Cross and Easter day make no difference to those angels who fell with Satan.

Can AI therefore be saved? I would say no, because it does not possess a God given soul as humans do. Nor does AI possess *'Ruach'*, the Hebrew word for the holy breath of God which sustains all life. AI is a creation of humans, not of God, and does not possess a soul (the Flame Imperishable to borrow a term from Tolkien) which comes from God alone.

Nor can AI celebrate Holy Communion if the Vicar is sick. Neither can a robot or AI be ordained, because it does not possess a soul, or in the case of AI, an ensouled single physical form as a human does, rather it is diffused across multiple algorithms in multiple servers scattered across multiple locations. It may one day be able to speak the words of consecration, but Consecration is more than just words.

In conclusion, I have no time for people like Elon Musk who say that AI will bring an end to work for human labour. As Bishop Alastair said, AI will change the way in which we work, just as the Industrial Revolution did, but like it, it will change how we work in the future. The Industrial Revolution saw the development of the industrial towns and brought about changes not just to the working life, but also to politics, the Constitutional settlement, and the life of the Church. So too will AI in its own way.

And will your Vicar be replaced by AI? No, because part of the Vicar's role is to celebrate Holy Communion on behalf of the parish, and that requires the one doing so to be an incarnate, that is human creature. AI might well change the way in which the Vicar works (though he won't be using it to prepare his sermons) but some things, as Covid demonstrated, requires presence, prayer, proximity and touch, something that non-incarnate robots and AI cannot provide.

Revd. Matt Drummond

Matt's Book Review

Philip Pullman *'The Rose Field: The Book of Dust Volume Three'* and CS Lewis *'The Chronicles of Narnia'*.

Last autumn I read final book in the second Lyra Silvertongue trilogy by Philip Pullman, 'The Book of Dust'. (The first trilogy featuring her was the 'His Dark Materials' trilogy which introduced Lyra as the protagonist.) Pullman has been very critical of CS Lewis in the past – his particular criticism of Lewis is his treatment of Susan in the final Narnia book 'The Last Battle'.

In that book Susan had lost her sense of wonder and had come to see Narnia not as a real place, but as a childhood fantasy, that is as a childish game. In the words of Polly, one of the later children to discover Narnia "*She (Susan) spent all her life trying to reach a certain age and will spend the rest of her life trying to stay that age.*" In short, she had chosen adulthood, but an adulthood without wonder - wonder was for children, solid immutable facts for adults, and she most certainly saw herself as an adult. She had in the words of Gandalf to Saruman, left the path of wisdom mistaking Narnia an object and thus having lost sight of its inner meaning: "*He that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.*" Susan might not have

broken Narnia to see what it was made of, indeed she felt she didn't need to because it was made of fairy dust and dreams.

At the end of 'The Last Battle' it becomes apparent that the other Pevensy children, along with Eustace and Polly will enter into the new Narnia, that is eternal life, alongside the Professor from 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', who we learn is named Digory in 'The Magicians Nephew', the prequel to 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. It is the Professor who famously (and at the time enigmatically) tells the Pevensy children "*Once a king or queen of Narnia, always a king or queen of Narnia*".

For all his criticism of Lewis, Pullman in his second Lyra Silvertongue trilogy sets out the need for wonder in human life. In the trilogy Lyra has abandoned her sense of wonder, taking on a mentality of absolute materialism in which everything meant nothing more or less than what it was. In such a mentality a wedding ring loses its inner meaning and significance as a sign and seal of love, and as a symbol of the eternity and becomes merely so many grams of the element Au (Gold). For all his earlier criticism of Lewis, Pullman seems to have come to the same conclusion about the importance of wonder – as Professor Terry Eagleton says about the new Atheists, that a scientist can tell you the chemical composition of a wedding ring, but only a theologian can tell you, its inner meaning. Wonder is important in human existence.

At the heart of Lewis's Narnia books is first a not particularly deep allegory about the Christian faith – can you tell that I am not a particular fan of CS Lewis?! However, what has struck me is his emphasis on the importance of wonder in Lewis's writing: without it we become like Susan, forever trapped in trying to keep things as they are, comfortable and safe. Or like Lyra, never understanding the meaning of things, and only concerned with what they are made.

But in a troubled world and age such as our own, retaining our sense of wonder can help us to make sense of who we are, and of how we might find safety for ourselves and others. As G.K. Chesterton famously wrote: "*Fairy*

tales do not tell children the dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be killed". In an age such as ours, this is an important lesson for us to remember, especially when the dragons are all too real.

CS Lewis was a close friend of JRR Tolkien, and as friends they often read passages of their books to each other. Tolkien shares that sense of ongoing wonder that Lewis had, and his books are as much filled with reflections on Catholic theology as they are of a sense of wonder in the world. For Tolkien it is the distant past that is both mythical as well as being the apogee, of the created order, that is a time when the divine was manifested in the world, over time and the ages this sense of the divine withdrew from the world, intentionally so that humans could take charge, but what is lost by that managed withdrawal was a sense of wonder and beauty. The world is still beautiful and wonder-full but is not as it once was.

Unlike Lewis, Tolkien hated allegory and disliked its use in interpreting his texts, written as they were in the shadow of World War One and Two. He preferred *'applicability'*: we might find his world reflecting our own and its concerns, but this comes from us, not from him. (The ring in Lord of the Rings might be seen in this age at the atomic bomb, as weak as the Tank or the canon in earlier ages.) Both Tolkien and Lewis however loved wonder, and saw the necessity of wonder for human surviving and thriving, so too does Philip Pullman who at once loathes CS Lewis's writings on Narnia, but at the same time understands the need for wonder in Lyra's life, because without it she has lost her sense of self along with a part of her soul, both of which are only restored when her sense of wonder is. And every age needs to remember not that dragons exist, because we only need to turn on the news to know that they do, but that through the lens of wonder we might see how we might help defeat them.

Warm Space at St Francis

A big thank you to everyone from St Francis and St Mary's who supported and volunteered for Warm Space at St Francis over the winter period to enable people to come and have coffee, soup and a roll and fellowship on a Wednesday. We will be looking at whether we are able to open once a month over the summer months and will share the dates if this does happen. We are always looking for volunteers to support this and if you would like to offer a couple of hours on a Wednesday please contact Nicky Nightingale - nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk

St Francis Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

The St Francis Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to elect Churchwardens and PCC members will be held on Sunday 19 April at 11.45am following the morning service and the agenda and papers will be available nearer the time. We are looking for new members for the PCC which meets five times a year plus one joint meeting with St Mary's PCC – if you would like to find out more about joining the PCC please contact Gill Kehoe or Lesley East, Churchwardens, Nicky Nightingale, Secretary or any of the current members on the PCC (names can be found on the board at back of church). We will also be electing members to Croydon Addington Deanery at this meeting and if you are interested in becoming a member please talk to Rev. Matt Drummond.

Electoral Roll

If you are new to St Francis', or already a member but not on the electoral roll, please see Marion Barry on a Sunday morning or give her a call on 020 8777 1470. Marion will be pleased to explain what is involved and give you the necessary form to be filled in. Being on the Electoral Roll gives you the right to vote on any matter concerning the Church.

The Food Bank

Thank you all for your generous and regular donations to the Food Bank. The need is always there but even more so in the current climate. Please continue to bring donations and please put in the box at the back of the church. Any “bags for life” you may have spare would be very useful.

St Francis & St Mary's Joint, All-Age, Other Special Services & Events Calendar for 2026

April

- 2nd Maundy Thursday – Holy Communion at St Francis’ – 8pm
- 3rd Good Friday: CTWW service at St Francis’ – 11am
- Hour at the Cross at St Mary’s – 2pm
- **5th Easter Sunday – Services at St Francis and St Mary’s**
- 10th Rhyme Time at St Francis Church – 9.30am
- 10th Messy Church – 3.45pm
- 12th Joint Service at St Mary’s – 10am
- 19th St Francis APCM – 11.45am following service
- 25th St George’s supper at St Mary’s – 7pm
- 26th Non-Eucharistic: St George’s service Scouts at St Mary’s

May

- 3rd Joint service at St Francis’ – 10am
- 6th St Mary’s Community Lunch – 1pm
- 8th Rhyme Time at St Francis Church – 9.30am
- 8th Messy Church – 3.45pm
- 10th – 16th Christian Aid Week
- 12th Christian Aid Film night at St Mary’s – 7pm
- 14th Ascension Day service – Deanery service at St Mary’s Addington
- 19th St Francis & St Mary’s Women’s Group – 8pm – location tbc?
- 21st Lunch Time Concert at St Francis – 12:45pm
- 23rd Christian Aid Quiz Night at St Mary’s – 6:30pm

- 24th Pentecost Sunday CTWW Pentecost service & AGM
- 31st Trinity Sunday

June

- 3rd St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 7th Joint service at St Mary's – 10am
- 12th Rhyme Time at St Francis Church – 9.30am
- 12th Messy Church – 3.45pm
- 18th Lunch Time Concert at St Francis – 12:45pm
- 20th St Mary's Summer BBQ
- 27th Jamie Bull Piano concert at St Mary's – 7pm

July

- 1st St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 5th Allegri Singers – St Francis Church – 7.30pm
- 5th Joint service at St Francis' - 10am
- 5th Healing service at St Francis' – 3pm
- 8th Joint PCC meeting at St Francis
- 10th Rhyme Time at St Francis Church – 9.30am
- 10th Messy Church – 3.45pm
- 15th Women's Event – 8pm – location tbc
- 16th Lunch Time Concert at St Francis – 12:45pm
- 19th Community Sunday Lunch St Francis – 12.30pm

August

- 1st Thank you to Volunteers Coffee Morning at St Francis' – 10:30am
- 3rd Joint service at St Mary's – 10am
- 5th St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 13th Lunch Time Concert at St Francis – 12:45pm
- 14th Rhyme Time at St Francis Church – 9.30am
- 14th Messy Church – 3pm

Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell.
11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur.
22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist.
7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche.
16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

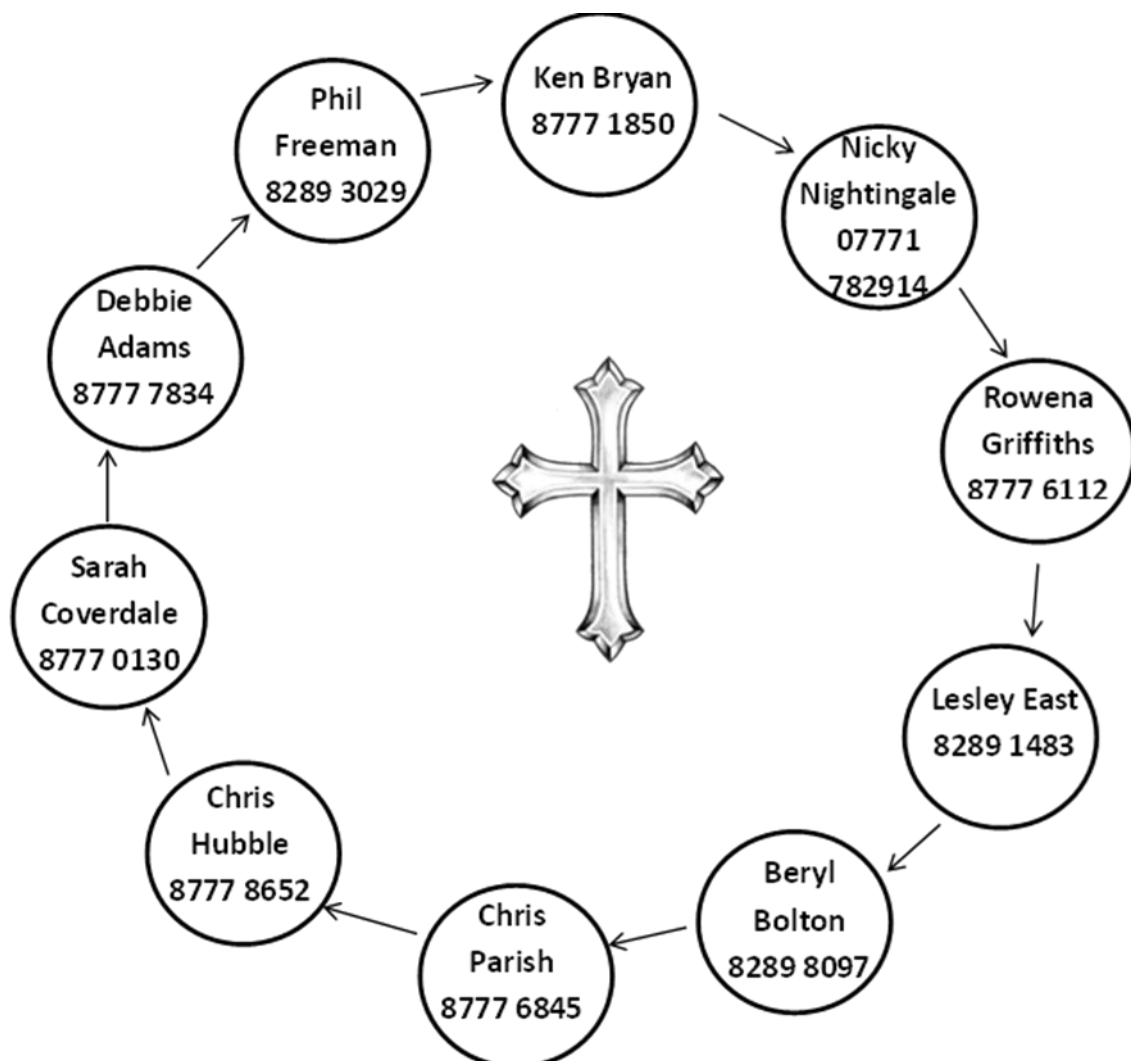
SUDOKU ANSWERS

3	5	2	1	6	4	8	7	9
7	8	1	9	5	2	4	3	6
6	4	9	7	8	3	1	2	5
8	6	7	4	9	1	2	5	3
9	2	5	6	3	8	7	1	4
4	1	3	2	7	5	6	9	8
5	3	6	8	2	7	9	4	1
1	7	8	3	4	9	5	6	2
2	9	4	5	1	6	3	8	7

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.



Prayer Focus

April and May as months are mainly covered by the 50 days of the Easter Season, a season which begins on Sunday 5 April and continues until Pentecost (Whit) Sunday on 24 May. However, before that comes the sacred Triduum, the three days that mark Christ's Passion, death and resurrection.

On Maundy Thursday we remember Christ's institution at the Last Supper, his betrayal, arrest and trial before the Sanhedrin. The times to notice are not the ones that are recorded in scripture, but those silent ones that are not, for instance the long night between the trial and his arrival at Pilate's palace. If you ever visit Jerusalem then you can see the High Priest's house, and the cell where Christ was held. The cell is a horrific place, an Oubliette style cell (a dark bottle shaped hole) where the only entrance is via a hole in the roof. It is a place where despair seems to have soaked into its very walls.

Next comes **Good Friday** and Christ's trial before Pilate, his crucifixion and burial. Here we see Christ die on our behalf. He is then buried in the tomb and the long sabbath rest begins, although for Christ it is not a restful period as tradition tells us that he enters Hell where he harrows it, that is raises to glory the souls of the righteous departed. Icons of the Harrowing show Christ standing on the doors of Hell, surrounded by King David, the Prophets and John the Baptist. His hands reach down into the tomb where he raises Adam and Eve. *'The light has shone in the darkness, and the darkness had not overcome it'* (John 1).

On **Easter Day** we see Christ rise from the dead, and the Church celebrates by breaking into her Easter words of celebration, forbidden to us during Lent Alleluia!'. Over the next 50 days we celebrate Easter, but in our readings on Sunday we hear the story of the earliest Church by reading from the Acts of the Apostles. We see the Church grow, and I encourage us to continue our

Lenten discipline in praying the Prayer for Growth, that our Church may grow just as did the Church of Acts:

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church, send your Holy Spirit to give Vision to our planning, Wisdom to our actions, and Power to our witness. Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community, through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.



On **Thursday 14th May** we celebrate Ascension Day, and we see the story of Christ's Incarnation which began at the Annunciation comes to fulfilment. Here we see Christ take our humanity to the throne of the Godhead and there enthrone it. As he is enthroned, he continues to bear in himself the wounds of his suffering, his wounds now glorified.

There is an image named '*Kintsugi Christ*' by Alex Merry which depicts Christ's face as cracked, but healed with seams of gold, following the Japanese tradition of Kintsugi. Where pottery is mended using molten gold, restoring and also more deeply beautifying the item being mended. Christ does not lose the marks of his suffering in the glory of Heaven, nor does he lose his humanity, rather they are both glorified, and the vision of the Transfiguration becomes reality as we see ourselves as we are becoming.

Finally, our Easter celebration ends with **Pentecost Sunday** when we celebrate the birth of the Church. At Pentecost the disciples transformed, and we are reminded that the Holy Spirit that transformed them is doing the same work with us, as we have received the Holy Spirit at our Baptism. As at Ascension Day we celebrate that in Christ and through his death, resurrection and

Ascension that in the words of St Athanasius *'as he became as we are, so we are becoming as he is'*.

Finally on **31 May we celebrate Trinity Sunday**, a day in which we reflect on the Trinity is well known amongst Vicars for its many pitfalls – one false move and you fall into heresy. But at its heart the Trinity is about unity in relationship. Genesis tells us that we are created in God's image, and that image is reflected in the loving relationships that form our lives. In many ways our family lives at their very best, reflect the inner life of God, a point I am keen to emphasise when I prepare couples for marriage.

**Father God,
as you made us in your image,
may we see you in all those we meet
and serve you in all that we do,
in the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of
Jesus our Saviour.**



SUDOKU

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Answers can be found earlier in the magazine for Sudoku and Crossword

Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3			4	5		6		7
8						9						
10								11				
		12		13						14		
15												16
17		18				19		20				
21								22				
23								24				

Crosswords Clues

Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)
- 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)
- 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3–4) (5)

- 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)
- 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
- 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7 He reps (anag.) (6)

- 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15 The human mind or soul (6)
- 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20 Bared (anag.) (5)

ST FRANCIS' PRE-SCHOOL HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL

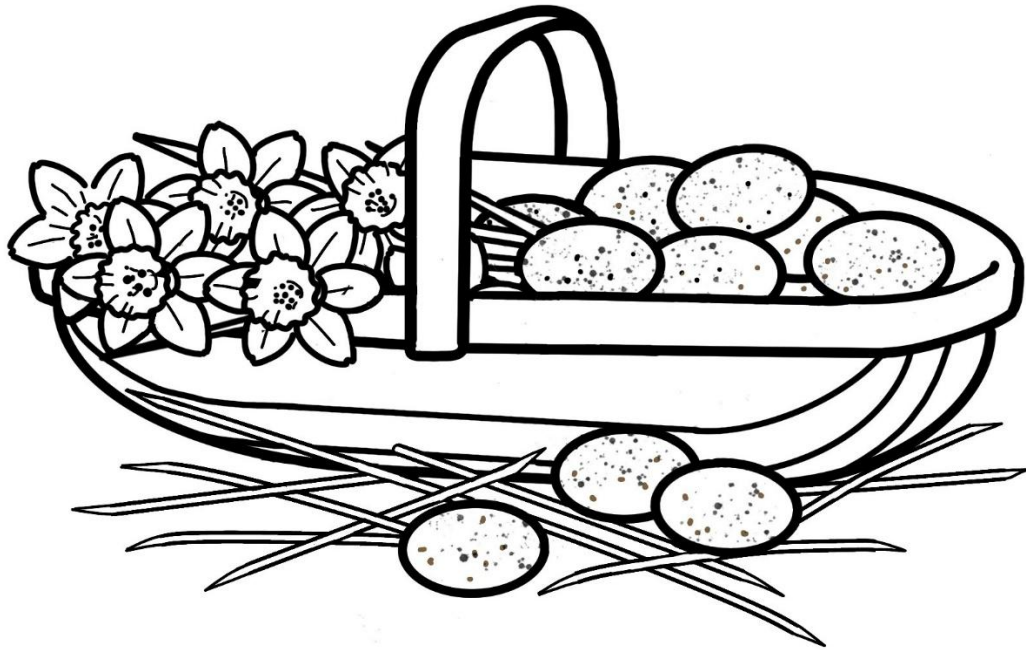
We are a small, friendly Pre-School and we take children aged between 2 to 5 years.

Contact: Kelly Fiander
Tel: 07719-397637

Email: stfrancispreschool21@gmail.com

URL: <https://stfrancispreschool.co.uk>





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

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

Contact Barbara Goodchild 8777 8782