

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI WEST WICKHAM PARISH MAGAZINE



August/September 2026

50 pence

THE CHURCH OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
RAVENSWOOD AVENUE
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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 Richard

Dear Friends,

I am writing this when the World Cup is in full swing and we've just had the widely-covered intervention by President Donald Trump on behalf of the star USA player, Folarin Balogun, who had received a red card in the game against Bosnia-Herzegovina, and who should therefore have been banned from the next game against Belgium, had it not been for Trump's successful pleading on his behalf. (For those less familiar with football, justice was done when Belgium defeated the USA 4-1!)

Less widely covered was Sir Keir Starmer's intervention when it was suggested that the time of the England versus Mexico game should be brought forward by six hours. Again the intervention was successful.

As one might expect, this led to cries that politics has no place in sport. Some of you may remember similar cries when in 1970 the International Cricket Council officially [suspended South Africa from international cricket](#). The decision followed mounting pressure from other nations and activists who opposed racial discrimination. The ban was part of a broader sporting boycott against Apartheid in South Africa, with the aim of isolating the country until it abolished Apartheid. Despite the opposition of people like Kerry Packer, who organised a rebel tour of cricketers to South Africa in 1985/86, the suspension lasted 21 years, effectively removing South Africa from all international competitions.

There are similar complaints when Christian leaders get involved in political matters. You may recall Trump's response this April when the Pope made a passionate appeal for peace during a prayer vigil at St Peter's Basilica in Rome, urging humanity to reject selfishness, materialism, and displays of force, declaring, "Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of demonstrations of power! Enough of war! True strength is

revealed in serving life." Trump said of the Pope that he was "not a great fan" and accused the pontiff of being "very liberal" and "soft" on crime.

The problem for those who complain that religion should be kept out of politics is that it overlooks what we find in the Gospels. The Israel of Jesus' day was a theocracy, a form of government in which government is by divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided. In many theocracies, government leaders are members of the clergy, and the state's legal system is based on religious law. And that was the situation in Jesus' Israel, with the theocratic government operating, as it were, under licence from the occupying Roman power.

So, when we find Jesus in dispute with the Pharisees or being critical of the scribes and chief priests, in for example, Luke 20.9-19, Jesus is very much getting involved in politics. And the decision to have Jesus executed by the Romans is very much a political decision intended to prevent any kind of uprising that might upset the Roman Governor and the occupying Roman forces. As the High Priest Caiaphas advised the Jews, it "was better to have one man die for the people," (John 18. 14) than to arouse the anger of the Governor, Pontius Pilate.

And if Jesus was very much involved in politics, then so should we be, his followers. So when we are involved in decisions of a political nature, such as how to vote, (and indeed in any decision making) we should reach our decision on the basis of our Christian beliefs. It's also the reason why it's important that we continue to have bishops as members of the House of Lords, bringing the Christian voice to bear on the decisions being made by Parliament and other matters under discussion.

And if anyone should say to you, "Religion should keep out of politics," you know how to respond.

God bless

Richard

Calendar for August

Sunday 2nd TRINITY 9

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis
10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Mary's with livestream

Sunday 9th TRINITY 10

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

Sunday 16th TRINITY 11

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 23rd TRINITY 12

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

Sunday 30th TRINITY 13

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

Calendar for September

Sunday 6th

TRINITY 14

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's
10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Francis

Friday 11th

3.45 p.m. Messy Church at St. Mary's

Sunday 13th

TRINITY 15

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 20th

TRINITY 16

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
August		
2 nd	Isaiah 55: 1-5	St Mary's
	Romans 9: 1-5	
	Matthew 14: 13-21	
9 th	1 Kings 19: 9-18	Gill Kehoe
	Romans 10: 5-15	
	Matthew 14: 22-23	
16 th	Isaiah 56: 1, 6-8	Valerie Hamilton
	Romans 11: 1-2a, 29-32	
	Matthew 15: 10-28	
23 rd	Isaiah 5: 1-6	Lesley East
	Romans 12: 1-8	
	Matthew 16: 13-20	
30 th	Jeremiah 15: 15-21	David Wada
	Romans 12: 9-21	
	Matthew 16: 21- 28	
September		
6 th	Ezekiel 33: 7-11	James Pitt-Payne
	Romans 13: 8-14	
	Matthew 18: 15-20	
13 th	Genesis 50: 15-21	Sam Hand
	Romans 14: 1-12	
	Matthew 18:21-35	
20 th	Jonah 3: 10- 4: 11	Joan Burford
	Philippians 1: 21-30	
	Matthew 20: 1-16	
27 th	Ezekiel 18: 1-4, 25-32	Gill Kehoe
	Philippians 2: 1-13	
	Matthew 21: 23-32	

FROM THE REGISTERS

1st June 2.00 p.m.

Thanksgiving Memorial Service for John Richards

John was born in St. Thomas's Hospital in 1935. During the war he was evacuated to Cornwall and he stayed in touch with the people there for most of his life. After the war he lived in Wickham Chase with his family, he attended Hawes Down School and then on to Beckenham Grammar from where he left early to take up a printing apprenticeship.

He did his National Service in the Army being based at Chelsea Barracks. He worked as a printer for The Times until they moved their work premises to Canary Wharf and he took voluntary redundancy.

John then studied and trained to be a driving instructor which he carried on most successfully getting many young church members through their driving tests. He met Miriam at a dancing class in Croydon. Miriam was training to be a nurse. They were married in 1958 and had three sons.

John and Miriam liked to go walking in the countryside and have the odd pub lunch. They liked going on holidays and also spent some happy times at Merv and Sue's flat in Dedham Mill exploring there. John was a Churchwarden at St. Mary's, more than once I believe.

Sadly, towards the end of his life John had to go into hospital and from there into a care home in South Norwood then when it was possible he was transferred to a care home in Bickley where he had many visitors and finally died peacefully in his sleep.

Chris Hubble

Dates for your Diary

August

Parish Lunch

The Parish Lunch is on **Wednesday 5th August** 1.00 p.m. in the hall. Please let Beryl know if you are unable to attend 0208 289 8097. Thank you.

Thursday Lunchtime Concerts at St. Francis

On **August 13th** we will be welcoming pianist Matt Baker for the first time, who with his duo partner Ed Walters (baritone), will be entertaining us with a varied programme of solo piano music and songs from many lands.

Then on **September 17th** we are looking forward to seeing the talented students of Langley Park school who, accompanied by their Head of Music Mr David Bullen, will be playing many different instruments, and also singing for us.

Concerts start at 12.45 with tea, coffee and cold drinks available beforehand. Admission is free with a retiring collection.

Please come along and support the musicians who work hard to prepare the programmes for us, and bring friends and neighbours along too!

Jean Mathers

September

Parish Lunch

The Parish Lunch is on **Wednesday 2nd September** in the hall. Please let Beryl know if you are unable to attend. 0208 289 8097. Thank you.

Celebrate Big Birthdays.

Saturday 19th September at 7pm, see below.

Advance Notice

An Evening of Magic Tuesday 20th October in the church hall presented by Beryl's grandson, Tom Bolton to raise money for the lighting fund. Tom is also a member of the Magic Circle. Please make a note of the date and we look forward to seeing you the day. More details to follow in the pew sheet over the next few weeks.



St Francis of Assisi Patronal Day and 90th Anniversary Celebrations

Please make a note in your diary for a very special milestone in the life of St Francis of Assisi Church, West Wickham. On Sunday 4th October 2026 at 10.00am we will celebrate St Francis Patronal Day which also this year marks the 800th anniversary of his death. In addition to this, our church will be celebrating its 90th anniversary. A commemorative service will be led by the Venerable Greg Prior, Archdeacon of Croydon, and we will be joined by the Mayor of Bromley, Councillor Christine Harris. The service will feature special music prepared for the occasion. Following the service, everyone is warmly invited to a 'bring and share' lunch in St Francis church hall at 12 noon. Further details will be shared in the Pew Sheets as the date approaches.

At 3pm on Sunday 4th October we will hold our annual Pet Service as a thanksgiving for the companionship, joy and comfort that pets bring to the lives of so many.

In the week leading up to the anniversaries, there will also be an opportunity to hear the Venerable Carol Coslett give her well-received talk, *Pilgrimage Reflections from Rome to Assisi*, on Wednesday 30th September at lunchtime at St Francis. This will offer a thoughtful and inspiring prelude to our celebrations. More information about this event will be provided in the Pew Sheets nearer the time.

Parish Matters

Garden Party /BBQ – Saturday 20th June 11 - 3

Well, what a glorious day for a garden party. All the stalls were up and ready for business, with a couple of new ones this year, the children's games area and the raffle. We had a steady stream of people with some new faces among them which was encouraging and a fantastic £876.04 was raised.

As always, a heartfelt thanks to those who donated towards the raffle prizes, the bakers, stallholders, servers and those who organised the BBQ and of course those who came along and spent money.

Natalie Outten

What is the only question to which you can never answer "Yes"?

Answer: Are you asleep?

I decided to sell my vacuum. Well, it was only collecting dust!

I started dating a Zookeeper, but he turned out to be a Cheetah!

Matt's Book Review

- Nick Hubble '*Culture Wars in Britain: The Myth of Exceptionalism and the Reality of Division (SocietyNow)*'
- [Quinn Slobodian](#) & [Ben Tarnoff](#) '*Muskism: A Guide for the Perplexed*'

In 1996 I attended a book signing at Waterstones bookshop at the Whitgift Centre in Croydon. The signing was formed of a conversation between two authors whose books had recently been published, both were political historians. One, Peter Hennessey is a well-known broadcaster, the other Brian Brivati is much less well known. Their conversation centred around the question as to 'whether one could write a history of the present?' I can't remember the outcome, but the question has stuck with me.

Both of the books under review in this article are attempts to write a history of the present political and social moment, as both concentrate on particular themes or concerns of our own time. Slobodian writes about arch-contrarian and Far Right agitator Elon Musk, a man who is rarely out of the news either for his politics, or his net worth. Nick Hubble's book looks at the so-called Culture Wars, the fracture of ideas in our society. These Wars are represented by any number of skirmishes whether its responding to Brexit, a subject I was banned from preaching on in my last post, or the question of human sexual and gender expression.

Slobodian posits that there is a form of thinking that can be described as '*Muskism*', which looks to a technologically led future where the inventor and tech mogul is king. The word Muskism is a riff on the socio-economic theory of Fordism, named after Henry Ford, and which centres on mass production, mass consumption, standardisation as well as workers' rights. The rise of the Artisanal and sour dough everything in food and drink is a response to Fordism, an attempt to physically and intellectually reconnect the producer with the product.

Muskism isn't really a developed idea though, at least not in Slobodian's hands as it is a work in progress. There are those who would like to see the Musks, Zuckerbergs and (Peter) Thiels as the intellectual god-king leaders of nations, but this is mainly restricted to them and their friends! Trump is perhaps the closest thing we are likely to see with regards to the (anti)intellectual god-king leader of nations, a man who is a President, but who is also a CEO rather than a politician. (I would not, however classify him as an intellectual as he does not have a developed political philosophy.) This then is the problem with Slobodian's books, as this is an idea in development, and is being developed by a man who is to say the least mercurial, it does not really answer the question it sets out to respond to. If Nick Hubble's book takes a longer view, explaining how the so-called Culture Wars aren't entirely new, but the current iteration of themes and concerns that have been present in our society for a very long time. Culture has never been monochrome or entirely normative: just look at how many times the name for bread rolls and accents change as you travel through our tiny island. The same can be said of Italy, which culturally is not a nation, but a series of interrelated but culturally separate city states. (This is expertly explored by Michael Dibdin in his excellent Aurelio Zen murder mysteries.)

The Culture Wars are an outward expression of ongoing tensions in our society, be they the '*Anywheres*' vs the '*Somewheres*' debates of Brexit, or the so-called metropolitan elite vs everyone else of the tabloid media. Unfortunately, this tribalism is described in zero sum terms: you are either one or the other, when in reality people are a mixture of prejudices and opinion, and these do not always add up into one coherent whole. I know of one person who is socially liberal, and yet who likes both Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson because they are 'fun'. (This idea of 'fun' seems to me to be akin to taking enjoyment from juggling chainsaws whilst blindfolded and drunk!)

Out of the two books Nick Hubble's is by far the most useful and informative. (I am not saying this because his mum and dad are members of one of our churches, but because he makes a complex situation easy to understand and navigate.) His is also a book which effectively tries to answer the question as to whether one can write a history of the present? The answer is yes, and it is yes because he takes the time to write himself into our historical moment – he is not an outside observer looking in, but like each of us, a participant navigating the complex currents of our own times.

For anyone interested in the world we find ourselves in, Hubble's book is the one to go for. Slobodian's book is interesting, but lacks the content and depth to make it useful, and it feels more like a marker or placeholder than a useful analysis, and at £25 is overpriced! On the other hand Hubble's book comes in at a more reasonable £16.99. If you are interested in exploring Musk and Muskism then Sönke Iwerson's book *'The Tesla Files: Inside Musk's Empire of Deception'* (available in West Wickham's Library) offers a much better take on this emerging philosophy, and unlike Slobodian's book is backed by documentary evidence.

***'We are the sheep of his pasture, the flock of his hand' (Psalm 95):
We the Sheeple'***

Did you know that sheep are mentioned over 500 times in the Bible? When they are mentioned, it is often with regards to their (and our) need for guidance, and as a metaphor for our waywardness as people. In the new Testament they feature most frequently in John's Gospel, with Jesus' Good Shepherd discourse. Here we are told we are God's sheep, a flock that knows its shepherd and is protected by him.

We may imagine sheep to be thick. However, sheep are far from unintelligent, and the insult of calling people who follow the herd as being

'*sheeple*' is highly misleading. Just as pigs are notoriously clean, so sheep are highly intelligent creatures, ones whose deep knowledge of the land is passed on from generation to generation.

A few years ago I took a walking holiday in the French Pyrenees. On my walk I was met by a herd of sheep, albeit sans shepherd, but despite being shepherdless they were far from lost. I heard them before I saw them as the lead sheep wore a bell around its neck. This older sheep knew the land, it knew the land well - it was hefted to it and so guided the flock across the perilous rocky landscape, enjoying pastures far higher than Ben Nevis!

In the life of the Church, the shepherding metaphor is most clearly seen in the office of the Bishop whose symbol is the crozier shaped like a shepherd's crook. The crozier is both a metaphor for discipline, of hauling the sheep in, but also of centring, the stick and its shepherd being a still point both in the universe, but also in the midst of the charging sheep in the process of being herded.

St Augustine of Hippo wrote a long treatise on the shepherd in the life of the Church. He viewed the role as being a heavy burden of love and service. The shepherd is not separated from the sheep, but lives alongside them, how else can the shepherd know the sheep or the land on which they live?

There is a deeper meaning to the sheep metaphor, one that is described in Cumbrian shepherd James Rebank's book *'The Shepherd's Life'*. His is a book I consider to be the best book on ministry and Anglicanism, and which has been my companion on my recent retreat. (As a book the Church gets virtually no mention, but its lessons are ones that speak to us as Anglicans.) In his book Rebanks introduces the reader to the idea of the sheep and shepherd being 'hefted' to the land.

To be hefted is to know the land intimately, to know its safe places, its shady places, and its places where it is safe to drink. (The word 'Heft' itself refers

to a plot of land in Northern English.) A sheep is hefted to its pasture through generations of connection; knowledge passed from ewe to lamb. This is why illnesses such as Foot and Mouth can be so damaging, in a moment centuries of passed-down knowledge of the land is lost along with a flock, slaughtered out of necessity.

The shepherd too is hefted, as he knows his farm, both its land and his sheep: a good shepherd, as Rebanks says is one who knows his sheep and the places they go to for water, safety, and to escape the shepherd. In the Parable the Lost Sheep the shepherd knows where the lost sheep has gone, he knows the land, and knows where a lost sheep is likely to be hiding. As Jesus the Good Shepherd says in John's Gospel *'I know my sheep and they know me' 'they know my voice'*.

As Anglicans, and as a Vicar you and I are hefted to our parish: we know its boundaries, its highways and byways. Here we are following in the monastic tradition of St Benedict of Nursia (the Father of Western monasticism). In his monastic Rule there is a call to *'stabilitas'* (stability), of not shifting around from place to place because that produces instability, but settled and stable. It is one that is central to our charism as Anglicans, that is to be connected to community and Parish. In this sense of connection which transcends time and connects us to place, we bear witness to our faith, and our care for our community as it is through stability that we come to know the land, and our place in it.

But to be hefted is not just to know the land, it is to belong to that land in a deep and spiritual way. We do not just know our community, we belong to it, and we are part of its life. The land changes because of our presence, and changes when we are absent from it.

We are not just hefted to the land however, but also to God, whose sheep we are. We know his voice, and we follow his call – we belong to him. But like all sheep we do not always want to go the way the shepherd is leading

us, and so Jesus (and Rebanks) often have to search the land in order to restore the lost sheep. Another reason why the shepherd as well as the sheep needs to be hefted.

Sadly, sheep often have a negative press, they do so in parts of the Bible as well as in our culture: they are either lost and in need of guidance (the Bible) or mindless drones following the pack. Yet Jesus and God in Psalm 95 calls us his sheep, the flock that is led by his hands. And sheep know the shepherd and the land intimately - we are hefted to it, and that enables our service of God's Kingdom.



Crossword Answers

Across:

8, Prince of Peace. 9, INF. 10, Unmarried. 11, Gulag. 13, Treason. 16, In aid of. 19, Arena. 22, Calvinist. 24, Pad. 25, Moses and Aaron.

Down:

1, Spring. 2, Sinful. 3, Scourged. 4, Commit. 5, Spur. 6, Matins. 7, Feed on. 12, Urn. 14, Erastian. 15, Own. 16, Income. 17, At last. 18, Friend. 20, Empire. 21, Adding. 23, Inst.

St Francis & St Mary's

Joint, All-Age, Other Special Services & Events Calendar for 2026

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

September

- 2nd St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 7th Joint service at St Francis' – 10am
- 11th Messy Church – 3:45pm
- 19th Birthday celebrations dinner at St Mary's – 7pm
- 14th Non-eucharistic: Education or Creation Sunday
- 15th Women's Group – Open to All – Talk on AI – 7.30pm – St Francis
- 17th Lunch Time Concert at St Francis – 12:45pm
- 19th Scouts Awards evening at St Mary's at 5pm
- 28th St Michael & All Angels

October

- 4th Joint Service at St Francis': St Francis' Patronal Service (Gift Day) and 90th Anniversary – details to follow – 10am
- 4th 'Bring and Share' lunch following Joint Service to celebrate 90th Anniversary of St Francis of Assisi Church, West Wickham – 12.00noon
- 4th Pet service at St Francis' – 3pm
- 7th St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 9th Messy Church – 3:45pm
- 10th Harvest Supper at St Mary's – 7pm
- 11th Harvest Festival All Age – Scouts at St Mary's
- 26th Bible Sunday

November

- 1st Joint service at St Mary's (All Saints) – 10am
- **2nd Memorial Service at St Francis' – 3pm**
- 5th St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 9th Non-eucharistic: Remembrance Sunday
- 13th Messy Church – 3:45pm
- 17th Women's event at St Mary's – 8pm
- 27th High Street Christmas Lights event at St Francis' - tbc
- 28th St Mary's Christmas Market – 10:30am to 2:30pm
- 29th Advent Sunday

December

- 5th The Big Christmas Sing at St Francis' – 4pm
- 6th Joint service St Mary's Patronal Sunday – 10am
- 6th Brunch following St Mary's Patronal service – 11:30am
- 6th St Francis' Christmas Community Lunch – 12:30pm
- 10th St Mary's Christmas Community Lunch – 12:30pm
- 11th Messy Church – 3:45pm
- 13th Scouts' Carol service at St Francis' – 6:30pm
- 13th–20th Christmas Tree Festival at St Francis'
- 20th Carol services: 10:45am at St Francis' and 4pm at St Mary's
- 24th Christingle at St Mary's – 4:30pm and Lighting the Lamps at St Francis' – 6pm
- 24th Midnight Communion Services at both churches – 11:15pm
- 25th Joint service at St Francis' – 10am

12th August - the day a solar eclipse will darken the skies of Western Europe

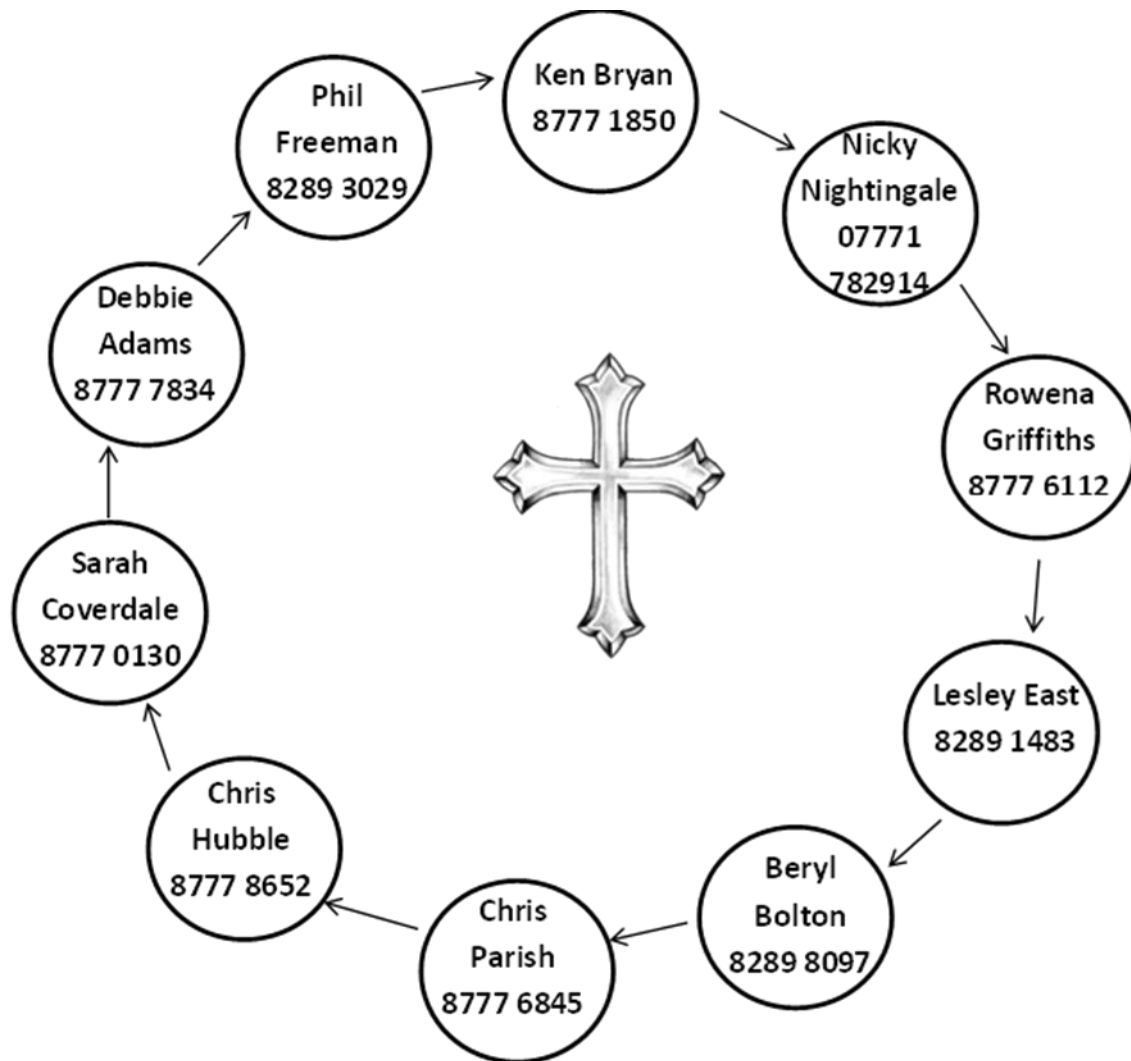
12th August will be the first total solar eclipse in mainland Europe since 1999.

On 12th August, the Moon will pass between the Earth and the Sun, blocking sunlight for over two minutes. Some areas like northern Spain, Greenland and Iceland will experience a total eclipse, but here in the UK there will still be a partial eclipse. Europe won't see a total eclipse again until 2090.

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

PRAYER FOCUS AUGUST – SEPTEMBER

I ended my last Focus for Prayer by commenting that Ordinary Time is a time for the extraordinary. It is a season that celebrates people whose lives have been transformed by God, and our own call to be people of transformation. This we will see more fully in the Transfiguration when we see Christ as he is, and we as we are becoming in and through him. It is for this reason that the Transfiguration is one of my favourite celebrations in the Church's year, along with the Annunciation.

On 15th August comes the day that marks the end of the Virgin Mary's earthly life: in the Orthodox East in particular this day is called the '*Dormition*', meaning to '*fall asleep*'. Mary's is a life marked by consistent service and obedience to the call of God: she loves and nurtures Jesus both in her womb and through his childhood. She is present throughout his ministry and watches him die, and finally tradition places her in the upper room the day of Pentecost. Our call is to serve as she did, and to join our 'yes' to God with hers.

This day also offers us the chance to consider how Mary's life was changed and transformed by the presence of God. The Bible and experience both tell us that those who spend time in God's presence are transformed: I have for instance spoken in the past about those who seem to have been transfigured through lives of prayer and service, Desmond Tutu in particular. If the presence of God in our lives transforms and changes us, then how might Mary have been changed by the presence of God in her womb for nine months, and her spending 33 years in his earthly presence.

The day before the Church celebrates the life of St Maximilian Kolbe on 14th August. Kolbe is remembered as a man who took literally the call to lay down one's life on behalf of others, having been detained at Auschwitz

because of his monastery's care for refugees. He offered his life in place of another condemned to execution. Sometimes our yes to God may mean saying no to something so valuable that we struggle to imagine life without it.

Another moment of celebration comes towards the end of August with the celebration of St Barnabas the Apostle. He is one of the lesser-known apostles, indeed he is called Nathaniel in John's gospel, a reminder that service does not always mean greatness or esteem, but quiet faithfulness in service of the Kingdom of God. It thus seems appropriate to celebrate him in August, a time when society goes on holiday, and we let go of our concerns of work for a few short days. It is also a month when the Proms season is taking place, a chance for us to marvel at human creativity, and listen to music old and new, *'a magic far greater than any taught at Hogwarts'*, so says its Headmaster Albus Dumbledore in *'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'*.

September marks the end of Summer and the onset of Autumn, though psychologically more than meteorologically as the warm weather of summer often continues into the month, but as schools, colleges and universities return, and as we come out of the summer of rest into the autumn of renewed activity. As these bodies return to work, so we are called to pray for all students and teachers.

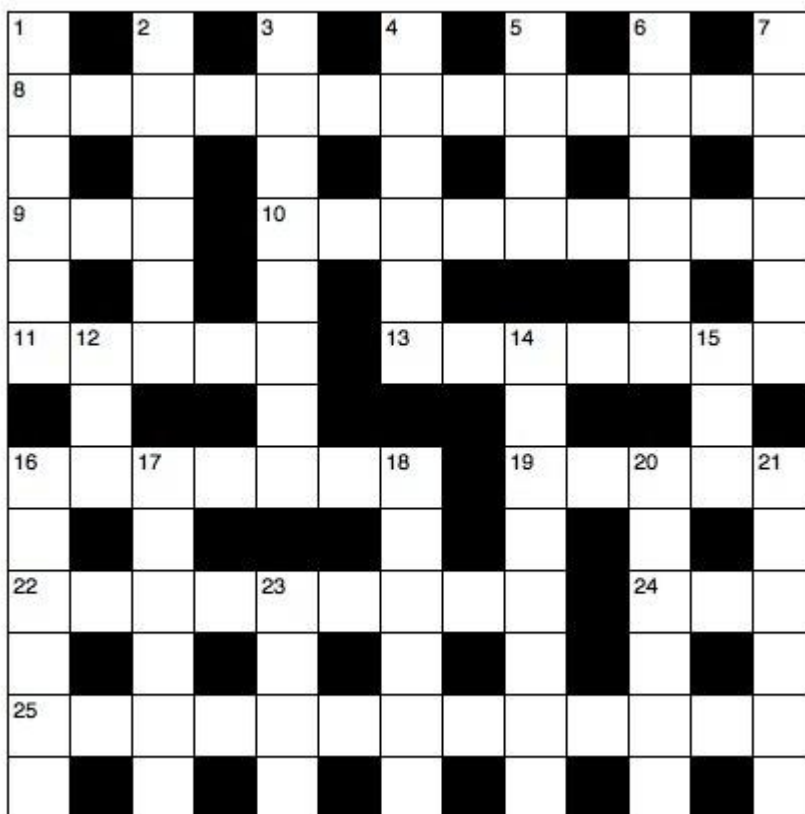
In September we celebrate Holy Cross Day, a day which remembers the tradition that Helena the mother of Emperor Constantine discovered the wood of the Cross and then restored the holy places in Jerusalem. The story (and this is very much a story/ tradition) of the wood of the Cross, a story based in ancient tradition, is also that of our fall and salvation: the wood comes from a sapling of the Tree of Knowledge and Good and Evil and planted over Adam's tomb (Golgotha) by his son Seth. The sapling goes on to provide the wood for Moses's staff amongst other things before forming the

Cross of Christ. It is an interesting tradition, which links history to spirituality and the story of our salvation.

At the end of September, we celebrate the Feast of St Michael and All Angels. I don't imagine that angels play a great part in our lives, at least knowingly from our own perspective, yet they are those who worship God, who represent the presence of the divine (e.g. the voice of God from the burning bush in Exodus) and who protect the Church and God's people. Our call as a Church and as individual Christians is an angelic one: to offer worship to God, and to serve and protect the children of God, in particular those who are weak and vulnerable. So perhaps angels do play a greater part in our lives than we might first imagine, it is just that we need to have eyes more open to the presence of the divine.

As I say, there is nothing 'ordinary' about Ordinary Time!

Crossword Puzzle



Crosswords Clues

Across

- 8 One of the titles given to the Messiah in Isaiah's prediction (Isaiah 9:6) (6,2,5)
- 9 International Nepal Fellowship (1,1,1)
- 10 Single(1Corinthians7:27)(9)
- 11 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal book about Soviet prison camps, The — Archipelago (5)
- 13 Treachery(2Kings11:14)(7)
- 16 Of India(anag.)(2,3,2)
- 19 'God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the — ' (1 Corinthians 4:9) (5)
- 22 Follower of a theological system characterized by a strong belief in predestination (9)
- 24 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to— the ropes' (Jeremiah 38:12) (3)
- 25 They brought together all the elders of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 4:29) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 The season when kings 'go off to war' (2 Samuel 11:1) (6)
- 2 Simon Peter's response to Jesus by the Sea of Galilee: 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a — man' (Luke 5:8) (6)
- 3 Beaten with whips (1 Kings12:11) (8)
- 4 'You shall not — adultery' (Exodus 20:14) (6)
- 5 Encourage (Hebrews 10:24) (4)
- 6 Service of morning prayer in the Church of England (6)
- 7 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and — — him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving' (4,2)
- 12 Run(anag.)(3)
- 14 Member of 17th-century party that denied the right of autonomy to the Church (8)
- 15 'We will triumph with our tongues; we—our lips'(Psalm12:4) (3)
- 16 Earnings(1Corinthians16:2)(6)
- 17 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that——you have renewed your concern for me' (Philippians 4:10) (2,4)
- 18 How Paul described Philemon (Philemon 1)(6)

- 20 Multiple territories under the rule of a single state(Daniel 11:4)(6)
21 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women,—to Israel's guilt' (Ezra 10:10) (6)
23 This month(abbrev.)(4)

Answers earlier in the Magazine

WE ARE ALL GUILTY

Well, I am. At times! Of complacency of leaving it to others to sort out!

BUT we do have a duty when it comes to the safeguarding of children **OR** vulnerable adults in the church.

There is a manual in our church vestibule entitled, '*A Safe Church*', which is for reference by anyone and acts as a guide to safeguarding matters.

If you do have a genuine concern about such a matter, then you may wish to speak to Charlotte Wilson or Kim Teare, our Safeguarding Officers or to one of the churchwardens.

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

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

Contact: Stephen Howe 8249 0315

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

Contact Barbara Goodchild 8777 8782