

ST. FRANCIS PARISH CHURCH, WESTBOROUGH

Welcome to our parish newsletter.

Readings for -

May 3rd Acts 2. 42 – end

Psalm 23

John 10. 1-10

May 10th Acts 7.55 – end

1 Peter 2.2-10

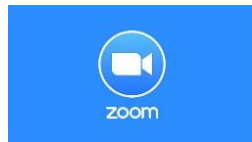
John 14. 1-14



Please Pray 

- For Tracy and her family following the death of her grandfather
- For Carla and Andrew mourning the death of her grandmother
- For Mary's Mum, Betty, who has a cough and is being tested for the virus. Betty is in a care home. 'There aren't any known cases on her floor so far but 2 others were tested negative earlier this week. On the floor above one resident has it and is improving and some others have died.'
- Also Mary's daughter Helen who is a NHS worker and for one of therapists she works with who has the virus and is pregnant.
- For Janet Potter, off ventilation but still very unwell, for Clive and the family.
- For all those who are unwell or are suffering ill health.
- For carers, doctors and nurses
- For all those working to provide us with our essential needs.
- For the scientists working to control the virus, searching for vaccines and effective medication.

- *For all the many people finding the isolation traumatic and difficult*
- *For children missing school and activities and their families coping with home education.*



It is difficult to worship together during this time when churches are closed and we miss seeing each other. We would like to invite you to join with us in a service of worship each **Sunday at 10.30 am – 11.10 am**. You can join us on your phone - when you will be able to hear everyone as well as be heard - or by tablet, smartphone or computer when we can see each other as well as hear. Do please give it a try, details later in the newsletter.

A hard copy of the service will be shared for those who prefer to use it and for anyone who is unable to join the morning service.



News bites

- Next book group meeting will be Tuesday 5th May, 8.00pm, courtesy of zoom. We are reading *Beneath a Scarlet Sky* by Mark Sullivan. You can join us by phone (it's a group call) or online (see details below).
- Congratulations to Brenda Wakefield on her 90th birthday.
- Tots praise is zooming every Tuesday at 10.00 am starting on May 5th.
- We are hoping to have a social evening on zoom shortly, possibly a quiz night, will let you know. Anyone can join in – see below.
- The Church of England have a Freephone daily prayer – just dial 0800 804 8044 to listen in to a special prayer for the day.
- Watch out for news of this year's Thy Kingdom Come programme and ways in which we can participate, even if not physically together.

- With no one coming to church and the hall closed the church has very little income. We are struggling to pay our bills and maintain the building. Please, if you are able, could you consider changing your usual weekly offering to direct debit or standing order? It would help to keep us afloat. Contact Mike Hammond – **562661** or **email m_hammond@talk21.com**
- If anyone has some spare red DK wool, Val is knitting to raise funds for the Beacon hospice and can't buy any at the moment. She is happy to replace at a later date.
- If you are finding things difficult, please don't hesitate to contact Stefanie.
- *For help in the lockdown contact the Community helpline, Guildford Borough Council 01483 444400 or www.guildford.gov.uk/home for help with food, prescription collection or support.*

Thoughts from the Sacristan, Jyl Wheeler...

Since lockdown, I have gone into the church to continue changing the frontals, in line with the church seasons and also to place floral arrangements on the altar for Mothering Sunday & Easter Sunday. I shall also do the same for Pentecost at the end of May. I feel a need for continuity, and in doing so, still giving God praise and glory in His house. On my last visit, I was praying in the pews and actually focussed on the brass name plaque on the chair in front of me....so I went round and looked at all of them, some I knew and some who were before my time. I gave thanks for all their lives at St Francis and our church family that continues on through the years whether we are in church or not. We are all family in Christ. Keep well, safe and sane everybody! Jyl.



Letter from Stefanie...

As most people find themselves in lockdown, we are hearing more reports of reduced air pollution, and hearing the positive change for wildlife and at this very moment I look outside my window and see an array of birds but I haven't witnessed for a long time.

It seems that much of the world is a very different place than it was just a few weeks ago, the new phrases that we use such as social distancing and social isolation and zoom, who had heard of that before!

But let's not pretend that it's all wonderful, for those living on their own telling someone over the phone I love you it's not quite the same when it means staying away from family and friends instead of visiting them.

There are many aspects of this new reality that we are living in and some are harder to grasp than others.

I have been talking and witnessing those who are finding this time a real struggle and the safety of a normal routine taken from them.

It is also especially difficult for those who are struggling financially or for the elderly or those with physical health conditions.

Thank goodness the early scenes of panic buying showed a side of human nature that we can all demonstrate in times of stress. Attitude of 'everyone for themselves'.

And yet this morning as I watched the news and saw Captain Tom 100 years today, A man who has experienced the most perfect times in his life through the war, A man who cannot walk unaided and yet has found some way of demonstrating his concern for others, what turned out to be an attempt to walk the length of his garden to raise £1000 for charity has now turned into a staggering £30 million and walked 200 laps of his garden. A hero for the nation!

We have seen volunteers around the country giving of themselves time and energy to support others.

The staff in shops working tirelessly to make sure the shelves are stocked, while churches and voluntary groups putting packages together for those who are more vulnerable or self-isolating.

And it's not just in this country, one of the most incredible things was in a gun driven neighbourhood in the states, where people were frightened to leave their homes and shootings, murder, burglaries etc. are a daily occurrence. These gangs are coming together to work with a local priest to deliver parcels to the most needy.

And globally we are seeing countries and companies taking a dramatic response with financial losses becoming a secondary concern to the lives of individuals

And now we hear that the lockdown is going on longer than we first thought, might seem like the storm will never pass. But it will, this morning we've heard China are experiencing no new cases and life is beginning to emerge slowly but surely in other places.

It has been really heart-warming to hear your stories of the silver linings in this difficult time. New hobbies, families experiencing together time which was not possible in the past, seeing neighbours come up with creative ways of supporting each other.

Neighbours sitting in the garden with a cuppa talking over the fence to neighbours they wouldn't normally have time to enjoy this luxury. Not sure if you think of the positive but the amount of home spring cleaning has been a great incentive. And of course those of us who are concerned about climate change appreciating the drop in pollution.

Surely this is a time to reflect, are we going 'return to what had become the norm or are we going to take what we have learned and make it a positive legacy.

On mothering Sunday the Archbishop of Canterbury said "looking inwards will only reveal the limits of our own resources, and lead to deeper fear and selfishness. Acting in love found from God in Jesus Christ will do the exact reverse.

This situation has forced us out of our inward looking lives and reveals our interconnectedness and vulnerability. It is drawing on compassion and action across Neighbourhoods and even continents.

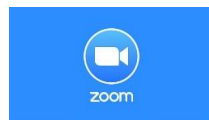
I pray but as we move beyond this time of social isolation, we continue to understand that working together and depending on each other is a strength and not a weakness, we all have something to give as well as something to receive. **Stefanie**

Contact details:

Rector – Revd Stefanie Hodges – 504228 [day off Friday]

Curate – Revd Diane Peters – 532792

If you have any news or tips you would like to share in the next newsletter or any prayer requests please send them to Diane on 01483 532796 or dianerpeters@netscape.net



JOINING THE SUNDAY SERVICE – DETAILS OF HOW TO DO IT – IT REALLY IS EASY!

1. By phone (any phone) Just before the start of the meeting, dial 0203 481 5237, enter the meeting ID followed by the hashtag key then enter the password (which will be numbers). That is all you need to do! Have your copy of the service by you. Ring Diane on 532796 for the ID and password on Saturday or I can text it to you if you would like.
2. By computer, tablet or smartphone – I will send the invitation, just click on the link and you will be in. The invitation will have an ID and password which you may need to enter but usually the link alone is sufficient. I just need your email address so I can send you the invitation.
3. It was lovely to have 18 of our people last Sunday worshipping together. Just give it a try, you don't need anything special. Don't worry if you haven't a camera as you should still be able to see and hear. Ring Diane or David if you want help or would like a practice go first! 01483 532796
4. We are using zoom which is password protected.
5. We have an open screen first so we can welcome each other, Mary and Roger gallantly provided the music. During the singing you should only hear Mary and yourself as I will mute everyone else, not because we don't want to hear you but because of the time lag in the sound of different people's devices, so sing away lustily.