

# ***ST. FRANCIS PARISH CHURCH, WESTBOROUGH***

June 7<sup>th</sup> 2020

Welcome to the latest lockdown newsletter.

We continue to pray for our community during this very difficult time. If you are in need, want to talk or would like to be remembered by name in prayer please contact the rector, Stefanie Hodges on 01483 504228 or email [stefanie@mhodges.co.uk](mailto:stefanie@mhodges.co.uk)

Whilst the church is closed we have a service on zoom every Sunday at 10.30am. Everyone is very welcome to join us on computer or tablet or phone. Text 07889638710 or email [dianerpeters@netscape.net](mailto:dianerpeters@netscape.net) for the quick link. Most times it works well!

Hi, greetings to you all.

As I sit here this morning at 6.30 am the sun already shines and the birds singing as if they are welcoming in this new day, I can only smile and be grateful of what I see and hear around me.

Even at a time when much of the world has suffered greatly, there are still signs of hope and life. No better day to be reminded that this day the worldwide church, celebrates what is known as Pentecost Sunday. The anniversary of the day God made His presence known

to every one of every race, and what Christians celebrate as the birth of the church.

As I sit here, a little robin sits on the edge of a flower pot which has signs of the new life popping out through the soil.



This little bird in front of me would never know the powerful message he brings, Little robin red breast reminds me of the cost that Jesus was prepared to pay to show us his love for the whole world, the blood that flowed from Jesus body and his own life given up for you and me and the new shoots emerging from the soil so close by, represent through Jesus death and resurrection we can have new life, new growth.

Life is bursting out all around us if only we took time to see, and two blackbirds now scamper around so close to me, one, a young one, it looks like he is a fledgling excited to see its new surroundings and only feet



behind him the adult keeping a watchful eye.

This too reminds me of God, keeping a close eye on us, giving us the freedom to explore and respond to what is around us, but close at hand when we need him.

No one escapes these difficult and challenging times we live in, through the last 10 weeks we, I'm sure, have experienced difficulties like we would never have imagined but also experienced moments of joy and laughter, kindness and love.

As I and the people of St Francis continue to pray for our community may this time remind us all of the greatness of God who by his Holy Spirit will give us what we need in our time of need. The bible calls it new life,

Despite the present circumstance, let us believe and trust in whatever measure, small or large,

The Holy Spirit can bring Peace when we feel anxious and afraid,

God's spirit will bring hope when everything around us may feel hopeless, not just for now but for the future,

God's Holy Spirit will bring strength when we feel weak and find it hard to carry on.

And even amongst it all, he will give us an inner joy to uphold us in all our circumstances.

So as I sit here in my garden, I pray for those who believe and those who find it hard and even those who find no reason to, -yet- ; that you will call to the God of love for He will give you what you need not just through these extra ordinary time but through all time.

God bless you

*Stefanie*

Stefanie Hodges  
Team Rector  
St Francis Church

## Flowers for Pentecost



### **Pentecost Prayer**

Spirit of life, fill our emptiness with your fullness

Spirit of power, stir our hearts afresh,

Spirit of love touch us, and through us, our neighbour.

Spirit of Creativity enable and empower the gifts you have given

Spirit of eternity, draw us ever deeper into your kingdom.

Flowers and prayer by Jyl Wheeler

### **Thank you LORD for lockdown!!**

Many time in the past, pre lockdown, we looked at the hedges and borders in the church garden and thought "we ought to tackle the weeds, pull back some of that ivy and generally help Joe to keep the gardens tidy" , but other things got in the way.

But, thanks to lockdown, we went out for a walk one day and decided the Lord's house was looking rather

neglected and unloved, whereas the weeds in our garden were fearful of showing their heads!!

Over the past few weeks we have slowly worked around the side garden and tidied, retrieved a boxful of balls and toys, plus the odd spoon, mug and coal!! Now we wonder if it might be possible to gather a few folk together to help Joe keep the gardens tidy on the last Saturday of each month (once lockdown allows us to meet) when the Community Shop is in Operation. There are jobs for all levels of ability in a garden and the opportunity for us all to learn from one another and a group is always more fun than attempting it on your own.

Log the date in your diary ( last Saturday in the month) and have something to look forward to or come anytime during lockdown, you are socially distanced from passers-by but it gives you new people to talk to.

Mike and Sue Hammond

*Thank you so much Sue and Mike – take a look as you go out for your exercise – the garden is looking beautiful.*

Thank you also to Dave Holt for painting the outside gas pipe with protective paint.

Forthcoming tasks include painting the hall cupboards with white gloss and the walls of the toilets – probably during August as we will not be able to access the hall when the preschool return in June. Is that something you could help with?

Come to coffee, tea and chat – on zoom!



Tuesday 9th June      3.00pm – 4.30 pm

Everyone is welcome to join us for tea and chat. Text 07889638710 for the code or email

[dianerpeters@netscape.net](mailto:dianerpeters@netscape.net) for the link. You will need to have your own cup of tea and biscuit at the ready!

## Book Group

We are reading 'Before the coffee gets cold' by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. All readers welcome. The next group meeting will be on 9<sup>th</sup> June at 8.00pm courtesy of zoom.



Tot's Praise (for under 5's) meets every Tuesday in term time – currently on zoom! We sing, chat and share a short story (finishing with a snack we have

secreted away at the beginning). Don't forget to have a favourite soft toy with you ...

To join us text 07889638710 for the zoom code or email [dianerpeters@netscape.net](mailto:dianerpeters@netscape.net) for the quick link.

## The impact of Covid19 on Church Finances at St Francis

Like most of the UK the Church of England is virtually closed down but still has to pay out for many things with a much reduced income. As far as St Francis is concerned without collections at services and the income from letting the hall we are seriously struggling to 'make ends meet'.

Total Income for this year so far is down by £4550 but we still have to pay our utility bills (Gas, Electricity, Water), Insurance, Parish Share as well as maintain the buildings and parish work. Although we have saved a little on utility bills since we have closed the hall and church, so far this year the Hall rental income has fallen by nearly £5000. The decrease in income is likely to continue for some time to come.

Please consider how you may be able to help at this difficult time.

One simple way to help is to use 'Give as you live'

*Not a @GiveasyouLive member yet? Sign up now and start earning free donations when you shop at 4,000+ top retailers >*

<http://donate.giveasyoulive.com/charity/st-francis-pcc/ct3783>

If any member of the church has a collection of envelopes which they have not been able to take to church because of lockdown I will be happy to collect them. Just telephone me on 01483 562661. Mike

Create a prayer cairn in the church garden...



For centuries people have laid stones as markers for their prayers. Whether you are a member of the community or church please feel free to place a prayer stone to the cairn at the front of the church when you pass by. Feel free to paint your stone or to place a name or prayer underneath your stone. For safety reasons please bring your own pebble and do not touch those left by others.

Thank you.....There are many, many people to thank for helping to see us through this difficult time. For all those who work in health care, in hospitals and homes in every capacity, for the shop workers and food growers and deliverers, for teachers, friends and neighbours. A special thankyou to those often unsung heroes, the postmen, parcel deliverers and the refuse collectors without whom life would have been so much more difficult. Thank you.





## THANK ME, BUT THINK TWICE.

Thank me not with clapping,  
Now the applause is over and the echo of clapping  
fades,  
Don't think there aren't ways to thank me  
There are actions that mean more than praise.

Thank me by understanding  
that your actions still carry weight  
That the lives of the people on my ward  
are connected by the choices you make.

Thank me by following guidelines,  
thank me by heeding advice,  
When you're desperate to visit your family,  
Thank me by thinking twice.

Thank me in absent kisses,  
Thank me in ungiven hugs,  
Thank me by crossing the road  
To avoid someone you love.

Thank me by frequently washing your hands,  
Thank me by taking the test  
Thank me by being patient  
When you just want to shout and protest.

Thank you for cleaning the surfaces  
And resisting touching your face,  
Thank you for counting six chairs,  
And for measuring out your space.

Thank me by going out early  
When few people are on the streets  
Thank me by staying away from crowded beaches  
Thank you from staying away from me.

Thank you for hiding your smile with a mask  
Thank me by dropping off shopping  
On your elderly neighbours path

The strange and significant Thank Yous  
This language we all had to learn,  
If you can continue to speak it  
Then I can continue my work.

Because none of us is an island  
And alone we are at sea  
I couldn't have done my job properly  
Without the things you did for me.

Thank you for teaching my children  
Thank you for making my food  
Thank you for letting me in your shops  
While you stood outside and queued

Thank you for making the equipment  
Thank you for donating blood  
Thank you for collecting my rubbish  
Thank you for sewing my scrubs

Thank you for standing together  
While standing 2 m apart  
Separated and distant physically  
But shoulder to shoulder in heart.

Someday maybe I'll tell you

Exactly what I've been through  
But for now just thank me  
By being your most selfless you.

Thank you Written by Jude Simpson (who works in the NHS)

*I found the poem below very helpful It is so easy to get caught up by the busyness and the challenges of life and I found this really helpful – contributed by Stefanie Hodges*

**Be kind to yourself** by Laura Ding Edwards

If the mountain seems too big today  
Then climb a hill instead  
If the morning brings you sadness, it's okay to stay in bed.  
If today your head weighs heavy and your plans feel like a curse,  
There is no shame in rearranging, don't make yourself feel worse.  
If the shower feels like needles, and a bath feels like you'll drown  
If you haven't washed your hair for days don't throw away your crown!  
A day is not a lifetime, a rest is not defeat,  
Don't think of it as failure, just a quiet, kind of retreat.  
It's okay to take a moment from an anxious fractured mind,  
The world will not stop turning while you get realigned  
The mountains will still be there when you want to try again,  
So climb them in your own time and love yourself till then.

Your challenge - How many positive words can you make out of the letters in the word '**uncertain**'.

Some suggestions of sites you might like to look at with your children or young people

### **Make and Pray**

Daily videos for children and families featuring a make-at-home craft with an accompanying bible story or prayer idea. Ideal to share with families who are looking for things to do at home.

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/make-and-pray>

### **INspire**

Daily videos for teenagers using challenges from sport and culture to help them explore the Bible and how it might be relevant today. Created for teenagers with no experience of church, as well as those who've been there all their lives.

<https://www.instagram.com/su.inspire/>

**Community helpline** 01483 444400 for help with prescriptions, food or personal support- run by Guildford Borough Council.

If you would like to contribute something for the next newsletter please email [dianerpeters@netscape.net](mailto:dianerpeters@netscape.net) or text 07889638710