

St Francis Weekly News for FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 20th September 2020



This bulletin may have come to you by email or through your letterbox, if you received it on paper but are happy to receive an email in future please email deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com If you know anybody else who would like this delivered or emailed please contact Deborah or Revd Janet: revdjanetwyer@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

THE CREATIONTIDE WINDOW DISPLAY



Week One

Week Two

Poor old Revd Winnie has found himself in a very difficult spot indeed. Not only has Eeyore disappeared, the beautiful place that he'd hoped to make his forever home is not as safe as he thought it was!

What seemed like an idyllic green and pleasant land is gradually becoming becoming swamped by the flood of waters that are streaming from the mountains to the north as the ice cap slowly melts...

I wonder what will happen next?

ST FRANCIS FREE ALL AGE ACTIVITY PACK



The long promised pack crammed with activities and resources all about St Francis is now available. The packs are available upon request and can be picked up from the church building during opening hours or ordered via the church office 24/7 phonline.

ST FRANCIS VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING SHOP

As we are no longer able to host our usual fundraising events we are very excited to share the great news that over the next few weeks we will be developing an adventurous new way of raising funds for St Francis.



Using the 'Shop' facility on our Facebook page we will soon be offering all manner of donated items for sale.

As well of a number of really good household items we been very blessed to have been

given a huge amount of vintage and antique items that we think will cause a ripple of interest!

We're hoping to have something of interest for everyone, particularly those folk who love to snap up a bargain.

We also have plans to develop a catalogue of Christian Resources that will be available through the shop – as they say: 'Watch this space for further details – or better still find us on Facebook!

WHERE'S EYORE?

As you may already know, Rev Winnie reappeared from holiday last week, but with no Eeyore. All we could discover was that Eeyore was somewhere in Milan. We are glad to say that another message appeared in the post this week. It's a rather nice postcard from another place in Italy.



Here is what the postcard said:

Dear Rev Winnie

Oh dear dear. I've made such a silly mistake. You see, because our church is named after Francis of Assisi, I thought that Assisi is an old fashioned word for Heartsease. Well, I got on a train with Assisi written on the front. But when I arrived it was somewhere quite different! I hope you like the pictures. Of Assisi. I asked a nice man dressed all in brown how to get to St Francis. He is going to help me, and he posted this card for me too.

Love Eeyore

PS 'Assisi' is not the same place as 'Heartsease'. I thought you might like to know that.

It seems that Eeyore is even further away now, and we pray for his safe return. If you think you will be going anywhere near Assisi, let us know; perhaps you will be able to help find him for us.

THE CURATE'S CORNER

On Saturday afternoon (19th September) I was thrilled to attend the induction of our ministry team colleague Ashley Williams as a licensed reader at a lovely service at Norwich cathedral. Ashley and I have shared several chunks of training together over a number of years, so it is really nice that we have both come to be ministering in the same church. God works in mysterious ways!



You may remember that in last week's magazine I told you about our new lighting behind the altar in the church. Since then, several people have remarked to me on how wonderful this looks at night, particularly if you are approaching the building along Deloney Road from the One Stop shop. So late one dark night this week I decided to have a look and I was amazed. I didn't expect it to look this impressive! 'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:16). From something that started as a whimsical experiment I am convinced that this is a real help in making the light of Christ more obviously present in our community and I'm very encouraged to develop it a bit further...



This is such a good photo that it will be appearing on the website. Speaking of which, we've been tweaking said website this last week with the valued help of Deborah Lechmere and we're going to continue to try and improve it. We are trying to make it as simple and easy to use as possible; we aren't quite where we want to be with it yet, but it's a work in progress and if there's anything you feel we should be putting on it, please let us know.

One major improvement is that the last two newsletters (like this one) will always be available for download electronically on the homepage, so if you've lost your copy there is always one available. More importantly, if there is anybody in the community you would like to share our newsletter with, you can now download it and email it, or even print off a hard copy as you see fit. The next challenge is to look into the possibility of hosting sermons as an audio file on the website and to improve our Facebook presence. Watch this space!

Every blessing,

Fr Tracy

FORTHCOMING DATES FOR THE DIARY:

CREATIONTIDE SUNDAY EVENING PRAYERS

Every Sunday 5.00pm

ST FRANCIS DAY SERVICES

4th October

10.30am – Patronal Festival

5.00pm – Evening Prayer

ST FRANCIS FREE FOOD AND COMMUNITY FRIDGE

As you will have read over the past couple of months there has been a huge drop in the amount of food we have been receiving and also in the number of requests for help.

This has been taken as a signal to us that the time has come for a rethink in terms of how we offer support to those experiencing food poverty.

Consequently, at the Parochial Church Council meeting held on Thursday 17th September, the decision was taken that St Francis Free Food would be gently discontinued over the next few weeks. It was also agreed that a meeting would be held with all interested parties to discuss the future of the Community Fridge that we are unable to reopen under the current restrictions.

As we explore what God has planned for us in the future please be assured that we will be making every effort to ensure that should the need ever arise again St Francis Church will be in a position to offer timely support and practical help.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to all those who have worked tirelessly over the past six months or so to make St Francis Free Food happen.

Please be assured that should you or someone you know be in need of a helping hand the 24/7 answerphone 01603 431259 is still available and the church building will continue to be staffed every week day morning between the hours of 10am – 12pm.

PASTORAL CARE MATTERS

With restrictions, regulations, and the situation with infection rates changing almost daily it is natural we will all of us be feeling anxious one way or another.

If you are worried about any of the changes that are happening, or if you need some assistance of any kind please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are very happy to talk with you if that would be helpful.

Please do not feel that you are alone - help and support is always available, whatever may be troubling you.

Revd Janet [07990 576118]

Father Tracy [07704 328319]

Eleanor [07840 206716]

Also, there is always someone available in the church building weekdays 10.00am – 12.00pm; please feel free to knock at the door, it will open to you.



USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Childline: 0800 1111

Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

A WORD FROM THE VICAR

As the days swiftly fly by I realise that in a few weeks time we will have lived at St Francis vicarage for a whole year. Such a lot has happened in that year – I can honestly say that there has not been one single dull moment.

Amid the ups and downs what has proven to be a constant source of delight is the steady stream of visitors we have welcomed into the vicarage garden.

The most recent newcomer we have named Spike, and no prizes for guessing that Spike is indeed a hedgehog. And yesterday evening we discovered that Spike has a friend; we now have two hedgehogs dropping in for supper.

Given the restrictions on human company – I'm considering myself well blessed!

God's blessing be upon you and yours

Revd Janet

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Darren; Maegan; Doreen F; Tom; Riley & his mum and family; Jeanette, David & Grace; Paula; Colin; Pete; Lauren; Fr Brian; Hazel; Ben; Frazer.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Shirley.

We remember with love Frank and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

CREATIONTIDE THANKSGIVING

We thank God for the world he has made, and for all his love and care.

For the warmth of the sun,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the rain which makes things grow,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the woods and the fields,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the sea and the sky,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the flowers and the animals,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For families, friends and the gift of love,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For all your gifts,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Church of St Francis
Heartsease**



**Heavenly Father
We ask your blessing upon us.
Hold the Heartsease Community,
and all the world,
in your arms of love.
Be with us.
Give us your strength,
peace, and healing grace.
Watch over us,
protect us from harm;
and keep in safety
all those who care for the sick
and attend to our needs,
in Jesus name we pray.
Amen**

PRAYERS FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

God,
who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Lord God,
defend your Church from all false teaching and give to your people knowledge of your truth, that we may enjoy eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy; and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall, keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

READINGS FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUDAY AFTER TRINITY

JONAH 3: 10 – end of 4



When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.’ And the Lord said, ‘Is it right for you to be angry?’ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live.’

But God said to Jonah, ‘Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?’ And he said, ‘Yes, angry

enough to die.’ Then the Lord said, ‘You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?’

PSALM 145: 1 – 8



**I will exalt you, O God my King, •
and bless your name for ever and ever.**

**Every day will I bless you •
and praise your name for ever and ever.**

**Great is the Lord and highly to be praised; •
his greatness is beyond all searching out.**

**One generation shall praise your works to another •
and declare your mighty acts.**

**They shall speak of the majesty of your glory, • and
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.**

**They shall speak of the might of your marvellous
acts, •
and I will also tell of your greatness.**

**They shall pour forth the story of your abundant
kindness •
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.**

**The Lord is gracious and merciful, •
long-suffering and of great goodness.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen**

PHILIPPIANS 1: 21 – end

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer.

I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation.

And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.



MATTHEW 20: 1 – 16

'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right."

So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.

And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?"

They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard."

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first."

When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.

And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."

But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'



REFLECTION FOR 15TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the beginning was ... the Word? John's Gospel isn't among our readings today, but its dramatic opening may help us understand more fully what we just heard, as well as how we might be best placed to hear it.

Please, hold that thought as a question. What did we hear?

One of the joys of attending St Francis in recent weeks has been the wide range of people stood at this lectern. It reminds me that we lead, receive, proclaim and open up to what God is asking of us with a variety of voices.

One of the delights of attending study sessions, especially at Belsey Bridge during the last 3 years, was sitting in the dining room, hearing the conversations.

Such spaces were for many years especially challenging for me - my hearing impairment makes it very hard to distinguish between what is being said just nearby or on the other side of the room - just one reason to thank God for hearing aids. ERMC - our training institution - has a catchment area that includes Europe.

Hearing multiple conversations, including in different languages, was a positive reminder of gatherings of my family when I was younger, at which German, French and Greek - even a little Italian from time to time - would be mixed with English.

It strikes me that so much of our scripture is conversational.

Today, Jonah is complaining to God; Paul is in correspondence with the Church in Philippi and Jesus is talking with his disciples. Three different examples of how humans interact with each other and God.

Jonah - really angry that his mission was not only pointless (he absolutely *knew* that God wasn't really going to destroy Ninevah) but it also revealed to the foreigners he had been called to speak to, that his understanding of God was incomplete. It made him look like a fool.

Paul's letters have a very conversational tone. I imagine him pacing about while a scribe tries their very best to capture his words in a way that will do justice to the style and depth of those ideas *and* be intelligible to those hearing them read out. Is this period in Rome to be the closing phase of his life,

or can he look forward to yet another chapter of his ministry to the far-flung of the Roman Empire?

So already we have a richness and a contrast.

Questions concerning a petulant prophet and a seasoned apostle possibly coming to terms with likely martyrdom.

And then we have our Gospel.

Not unusually, the conversation began in the previous chapter, when Jesus warned rich people they would struggle to understand what was required for salvation. He offered that memorable image of the camel and the needle's eye. Not for the first time, his disciples struggled to grasp what he was saying - traditionally wealth was a sign of blessing so how could that now be an impediment?

And here is Jesus' answer, and true to form he heaps conundrum upon conundrum. He tells them that heaven is founded on loving, consistent principles, but those of God. In God's context there is always an element of mystery - a hint of things hidden in plain sight.

This argument in the foreground, if you like - the conversation going on just in front of us - is that everyone is paid a fair wage, but there is a catch.

Those only engaged for the last hour of work are paid the same as those who have toiled all day.

In the beginning was ... the Word?

This is John's Greek paraphrase of a Hebrew account of creation, itself possibly inserted at the beginning of Genesis before an older version to give it extra dramatic impact.

Why? - because the exiles brought back encounter and conversation with competing Babylonian stories and ideas.

So the people of faith, with experiences stretching back to Abraham and the prophets; edited and re-ordered their texts. Our lectionary compilers echo this by linking grumpy Jonah with Paul writing to new Gentile believers and Jesus confusing his disciples.

All arguably summed up by John's poetic word-play, pitched to the culture of his day.

So scripture provides records of conversations in conversation with each other and with different world views. Is it surprising, then, that the use of 'Word' - *Logos* - is itself not entirely - clear?

At least one scholar has suggested that a fuller sense is given by – ‘In the beginning, God started ... the Conversation’.

A key take-away from our Gospel is *that* we fully engage – *not when* we do so – in our conversation with God.

How can we tell that we are fully engaged?

Yet another scriptural passage has something useful to offer here.

On the road to Emmaus, the risen Christ engaged the travellers ... in conversation. He opened up the scriptures to them, gave them a broader context, deepened their understanding and related one passage to another. Only once that had settled in their minds, and he had left them, did they recall their hearts burning within them at his teaching.

Whether our ministry is to preach, teach, lead worship or break open the Spirit in the bread and wine; whether it is to gather, week by week in common cause, in person or on-line, to discern God’s activity in our and each other’s lives; whether it is to offer selflessly our talents for organisation or pastoral care ... every heart can burn, every soul can yearn, for connection with our creator God.

All are welcome to join the conversation here. Here, where we worship a God who created a context that is still groaning, growing - rarely stable or fixed. Described and recounted in these pages.

Let’s not forget to talk about that every time we can.

Let’s let God into every conversation we possibly can.

But let us also be wary.

My ministry, primarily within a Community Health, possibly a bereavement context, will be bound by a restriction. I must ensure that my Christian faith doesn’t create an impediment to those seeking spiritual support in challenging circumstances.

Dying happens to those without any faith or with completely different beliefs, and that must be totally respected.

From our viewpoint here that may sound like it is allowing the values of the secular world to take priority, but let us consider it a little further, in the light of a conversational model.

Even when we discuss things, we can’t, and don’t, bring every element of our faith into what we say and it is clear, whenever we discuss something deeper – as in Home Group for example – that we

bring different experiences, traditions, and ideas to the conversation.

Disagreeing, or having a different perspective, is really important, I think, for all participants.

So whatever our opportunity to engage, we must remember that we cannot assume anything on behalf of others.

Not even on a shared understanding of the Bible or tolerance for different perspectives among Christians. It is a sad fact that some use our scripture in ways that are a far cry from demonstrating gifts of the Spirit - to belittle, to other, exclude or to assure those ‘in error’ that they are destined for hell.

Satan, during Christ’s temptation in the desert, knew very well what passages to reference in order to get Jesus thinking seriously about the cost of his calling.

My core calling, as I explore how best to serve in licensed ministry, may well be to converse; and I thank you, from the depth of my heart, for providing an opportunity for that to flourish at a life-stage that is, in some respects, quite late in the day.

Ashley Williams
Lay Reader



Congratulations Ashley on the occasion of your Licensing – may you know God with you every step of the way as you journey on in your new ministry.





Paul's world Life in Philippi – I don't know what to choose – 20 September 2020

Background information to support the weekly resources on **Philippians 1.21-30** in print and online at www.rootsontheweb.com

Life today

Some decisions are easy to make and other times we may really struggle to work it out. When did you last have to make a difficult decision? What helped you to decide?



Imagine

Imagine you are part of the church in Philippi and Paul comes to talk to you about a difficult decision he has to make. Paul was a very important person in the church in Philippi. He tells you he's thinking of leaving. That would have a big effect on everyone. He talks about wanting to be with Christ because of the promises he believes about the life to come. You remind him of the learning and growing you still have to do as a church and ask him to stay. Eventually, Paul gives in, because he realises that being with you and others like you is the best thing he can do to serve Christ and help build the church.

Did you know?

People living in Paul's time would have had much shorter life-expectancy than we do today, with an average adult living only to 25 or 30 years of age. People would have therefore married early and had children young. Sometimes this caused more difficulties like mothers dying in childbirth. Many people also lived with disabilities and there was very little help for people whose lives were tough. Paul was struggling with life like this while knowing that the life he had been promised with Christ was awaiting him.

ROOTS

ROOTS children's Sheet

20-26 September 2020

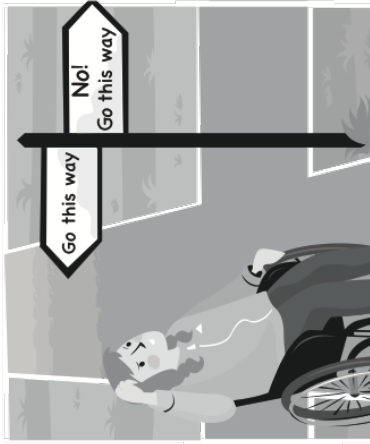
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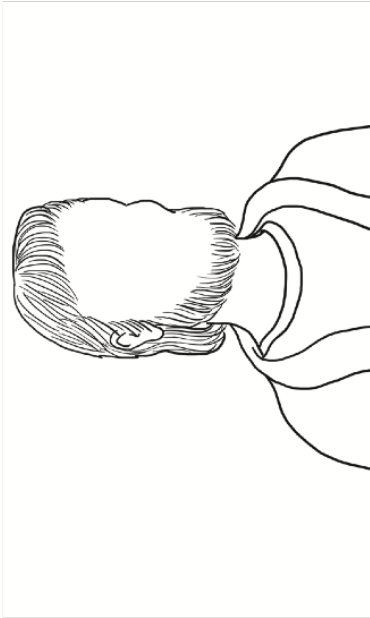


Philippians 1.21-30

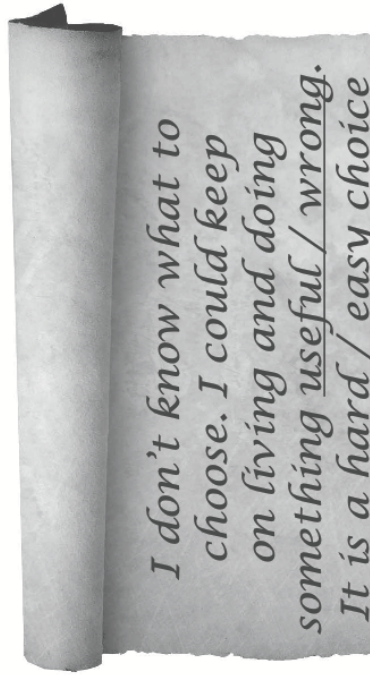
Paul helps us to think about making the right choices and sticking with them when it's hard.



Add the expression Paul might be making, as he has to decide whether to stay with his friends or go to be with Jesus.



Choose the right words by circling them in each of these sentences from Paul's letter to the Philippians:



Name

Colouring time

God helps us make the right choices.

