

17th June 2021



**St Francis Church**  
you're welcome here

# St Francis Church, Valley Park (virtually)

## Weekly newsletter

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## Where the rubber hits the road

This time last year we were starting to plan how we would 'build back better' - and here we are a year later, still with restrictions in place and a third wave of Covid - albeit we're in a very different place than 12 months ago - thank God.

In several areas, the rubber is beginning to hit the road; plans made, starting to become real. That's what you'll read about in the newsletter over coming weeks. We certainly hoped we'd all return to church in one go, but since we can't do that yet, what better than to invite our junior church and their families in from next week, June 27th?

We still don't know when we can sing together inside - but we can do it in the garden - so join us on Sunday at 5, under the marquee if necessary.

And Generous June? It's great to hear what the Bible says on generosity but take a look at the next pages for how that might look in real life.

### Informal worship

Are you missing the opportunity to sing songs and hymns of worship? Me too!

And we *are* allowed to sing outside. So for the month of June, there's an opportunity to join in a very informal time of praise and prayer in the church garden for about 30 - 40 minutes as follows :

**This Sunday June 20th, 5pm**  
Sunday June 27th, 5pm

Pop in, bring your own coffee/ rug/ jumper/ instrument if you like! Song sheets provided.

The logo for 'Generous June' features the word 'GENEROUS' in blue, uppercase letters above the word 'june' in orange, lowercase letters. A small orange square is positioned to the left of the 'G' in 'GENEROUS'. The text is centered within a white circle on a light blue background.

## Awkward things about church: asking for money!

Money conversations can often be a bit awkward - whether negotiating more pocket money as a teen, coming to terms with your spouse's idea of financial priorities early in marriage, or asking the bank for a loan at any age! But we still need to do it. And as we're discovering the Bible has plenty to say on the subject. I'm still reflecting on this quote from Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, that Cliff mentioned in his talk last week:

'There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, the conversion of the mind, and the conversion of the purse.'

Ouch! That's challenging! It's just human nature that makes us all give a pretty similar answer to the question of how much money is enough - the answer is always just a little bit more. So it's helpful to see what God has to say and to keep looking to bring our attitudes to money in line with his. And actually the great news is that God is hugely generous and delights when we treat ourselves and others with all that we've been given.

### Generosity is about so much more than financial giving!

We all aspire to generosity - but for many of us it's not always what comes most naturally, as other worries can crowd in and make us cautious. Are we generous in our views of others, our encouragement, our giving of time and talents? This week the youth group have been challenging each other to do generous acts. But why should the youth have all the fun? Maybe we could all look for opportunities to be generous in creative ways - and transform our church and community!

Money *does* come into generosity too. Giving money has been a spiritual discipline since the start of the Old Testament when God told the Israelites to give a tenth of their crops to the temple as an offering. Giving a percentage of our money away (a helpful suggestion is 5% to the church and 5% to other causes) simply helps us keep the perspective that all we have, is given by God.

So why does the church need money? People often think that we are funded by the central church. But it's the other way round - it's us, at parish level, who fund the wider church. And at St Francis we not only pay a full share to the Church of England, but also we make contributions to the Methodists and URC, as well as paying for our building, the running costs, support staff, etc. All of this is funded by your giving, and so to maintain the ministry we're called to, we rely on your generosity completely.

We are so grateful for one off gifts that enable us to achieve projects like the new AV kit. But we are totally dependent on regular givers who are able to set up a standing order - that enables us to budget better and also, to collect Gift Aid.

### Could you review your giving in June?

It may need to decrease especially if your circumstances have changed. Or maybe you're now in a position where you could give regularly through your bank account. Please contact [treasurer@sfpv.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@sfpv.org.uk) - Andy would be delighted to help.



# The money you give enables:

Ministry and mission: services of worship, junior church, craft bags and activities, Messy church, creche, youth group, alpha courses, other courses, obstacle courses (theoretically), supporting families around funerals, welcoming families at baptisms and giving them gifts, providing worship for the school. pastoral support for staff, contributions to lessons, training others in ministry including BCMs, LLMs, chaplains, eco-warriors, prayer warriors, pastoral ninjas, GP chaplains, Take Timers, safeguarders, lead ministers, curates, a totally fab administrator, cleaner, running a café and offering as much hospitality as is reasonably possible to as many as possible

Maintaining and heating (and painting) a building that not only gives us a place to meet and worship (pandemics notwithstanding) but also gives so many opportunities to bless our community as it's used by the school/ community association/ patient participation group/ café/ countless pastoral encounters

Tech support like AV, our social media presence, website, database, paying copyright licence fees, resources for sung worship, Zoom subs, videoclips for worship and teaching

Other churches and charities near and far to also flourish in their mission, too.

Loo roll.

## Navigating out of the pandemic

Boris's announcement on Monday wasn't a great surprise was it? And what a relief that the weddings of the couples whose Banns we've read out can go ahead as planned! But with social distancing, we can't fit more than 30 into the worship area, and we still don't know when we can return to congregation singing. All in all we feel it's best not to rush. And also, it's over a year since we were all in the building together, and it will take a little while to work out good ways of doing things again and get rotas up and running.

Bearing all this in mind, the Council and ministry team have worked with me to come up with a plan that will help us get back to the building over the summer. The first stage can happen despite the announcement on Monday; and **we will keep livestreaming the 10am throughout, in any case**. Here are the three phases we're currently planning - they are subject to review and of course, change! But we're getting used to that...

### Phase 1

June 27th – July 18th inclusive

- Welcome back junior church & creche
- Parents invited to join the service live in the building

### Phase 2

July 25th - August 29th inclusive

- Same principle; no junior church but provision for primary school age and creche
- parents continue to enjoy worship and we look to welcome back more adults, bearing in mind it's holiday time and many are away .

### Phase 3

September 5th onwards

- aim for full return of congregation to church building, with full provision for junior church, welcome coffee etc.

### Celebrating Joe's ordination as priest: July 4th

Joe will be ordained priest on July 3rd and will celebrate his first communion at 0830 on July 4th. We're hoping that he can also celebrate a short, informal communion for us all outside after our 10am service, followed by a church family picnic! Please keep this date free - further details next week.

Got comments or questions on how we're navigating our return to the building? Please get in touch with Sarah, the wardens or a council member.



## **What's On at St Francis**

### **URGENT - Volunteers needed please**

VPCA Community Fayre - Sunday June 27th 11 - 2.30pm:

Could you volunteer to help out at this community fayre that VPCA are holding in the carpark behind the community centre?

Any amount of time would be really helpful - just an hour or longer.

It's another great opportunity to support our local community!

Please contact Sarah [rev@sfvp.org.uk](mailto:rev@sfvp.org.uk) or Paula, the community engagement coordinator at [communityengagement@valleyparkcommunity.co.uk](mailto:communityengagement@valleyparkcommunity.co.uk), or phone 02380 266593.

### **Take Time**

Our next meeting of Take Time is at 12pm on Wednesday July 7th, on our usual church Zoom link.

### **Café is back!**

In the Church garden. Table service only, simple teas and coffees for a donation only, names kept for Track and Trace, please don't come if you're ill, keep to social distancing.

Monday June 21st 11am - 12 Adults only

Wednesday June 23rd 9 - 11am. All welcome!

### **Fair Trade - new catalogue**

Angela has a new Fair Trade Craft Catalogue and would love to assist you with your order (buying in bulk is more eco-friendly) - do contact her:

Tel: 02380271150, Email: [angelarwmorris@gmail.com](mailto:angelarwmorris@gmail.com)

## For most prisoners, the hardest period of their lives starts the day they are released.

Some ex-prisoners are returning to south Hampshire and have asked for a Christian volunteer to support them.



Statistics show that, on average, 46% of ex-prisoners will re-offend within one year of release. **BUT** – this figure reduces significantly if someone takes a personal interest in their rehabilitation. Ex-prisoners benefit from emotional support, practical help and wise guidance. Having a 'mentor' can help them rebuild their lives and give hope for a different outcome. **A little of your time (2-3 hours/week) can change the direction of a life.**



Area churches are working with a Hampshire Christian charity to bring **hope** to those living in our **local community** who are truly marginalised and **feel like outcasts**. There is currently a waiting list of those requesting support.

**COULD YOU HELP?** Volunteer mentors inevitably find that service in this work is a fulfilling part of their own faith journey. If you want to explore the idea of using your life skills in this vital ministry, please consider attending an **Open Evening on Zoom** in late June / early July (with no commitment) to find out more. To receive more information about the event please send your request via the website: [www.newfoundations.cc](http://www.newfoundations.cc) (See **FAQ** page to answer your initial questions or contact Cliff [cliff@cliffandsarah.co.uk](mailto:cliff@cliffandsarah.co.uk) or 07753224078.

*"And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matt. 25:40)*

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## Worship this week.

Sunday June 20th: Trinity 3/ Generous June 3 😊

**8.30am** Said Communion in the church building

Please book in by emailing [rev@sfpv.org.uk](mailto:rev@sfpv.org.uk)

**10am:** Virtual Morning Worship - usual Zoom link.

Speaker at both services: Joe

Leader at at both services: Sarah

Reading: 2 Corinthians 8: 16-9:5

Live on Outreach radio this week? YES

**5pm** Informal sung worship and prayer - St Francis Church garden

Monday June 21st, 10am: Morning prayer in church building

## Services in the church building

It's brilliant to be able to share communion together in person! Please book in as above, enter the church through the main door (through the lych gate and garden), wrap up warmly, wear a mask and don't come if you're ill. We'll keep a record of your name for 3 weeks in line with government guidance.

## Link for services

Here's the super quick link that takes you to all of our Zoom services and events:

[www.bit.ly/SFCzoom](http://www.bit.ly/SFCzoom)

# Points for prayer this week

## **From the World Council of Churches:** Malawi, Zambia

- greater food security for those most vulnerable, especially in times of climate change
- an end to political and economic corruption
- rising standards of living, particularly for those most poor
- an end to exploitation of resources and of the people, especially those who are young and/or female.

## **Our wider world:**

Pray for

- All those affected by the delay in lifting Covid restrictions
- All those affected by the third wave of Covid, especially young people and those self isolating and sick
- All those countries struggling with huge numbers of Covid patients and inadequate supplies of treatment
- Fair and speedy vaccine distribution
- Bishop Debbie as she leads Winchester Diocese, and Bishops Tim and David as they step back to discern the future

## **Our local Community:**

- Pray for the residents of Wild Cherry Way, Honeysuckle Way, Violet Close
- For all those bereaved recently,
- That our café might be a place of welcome, connection and reconnection in our local community



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## St Francis Church information



**St Francis Church**  
you're welcome here

Answerphone		02380271152
Facebook		@stfrancisvp
Website		<a href="http://www.stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk">www.stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk</a>
Instagram		stfranchurchvalleypark
Zoom		<a href="http://www.bit.ly/SFCzoom">www.bit.ly/SFCzoom</a>
Twitter		@FrancisValley
YouTube		St Francis Church Valley Park

### Who's Who

**Church Administrator:**

Caroline James  
admin@sfpv.org.uk , Tel:  
02380271152

**Church Cleaner:** Ann Daly

(usual time to clean:  
Saturday afternoon)

**Junior Church Lead:**

Debbie Reed -  
juniorchurch@sfpv.org.uk

**Youth Contact:** Cliff

McClelland -  
youth@sfpv.org.uk

**Pastoral Lead and Prayer**

**Chain:** Fiona Grove -  
pastoral@sfpv.org.uk

**Lead minister:** Sarah

McClelland -  
rev@sfpv.org.uk (Usual day  
off Friday)

**Curate:** Joe Sweetnam -

curate@sfpv.org.uk (Day  
off Friday)

**Methodist minister:** Sue

Keegan von Allmen

**URC minister:** Mark

Robinson

### Church Council as of 25/4/21

**Church Wardens:** Alison Rhodes and Fiona Grove

**Pro (Deputy) Warden:** Debbie Reed (Plus 1 vacant prowarden post)

**Gift Aid secretary:** Geoff Roberts

**Safeguarding officer:** Helen Kelso - [safeguarding@sfpv.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@sfpv.org.uk)

**Church Council Secretary:** Post vacant.

**Treasurer:** Andy Grove - [treasurer@stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk)

**Church Council Members:** Rogerio Ramos, Liz Bolton, Caroline  
Emmins, Jan Southern

*Plus 3 vacant posts*

**Deanery Synod Reps ( ie Church of England Reps):** Peter

Rhodes, Steve Williams and Brian King

**Methodist Church rep:** David Gurr

*Plus 1 vacant post*

**URC Rep:** Chris Hill.



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## Would you like someone to pray with you?

God does extraordinary things when we pray. And prayer's not just a solitary activity, we're to pray for one another. Can we pray for you at the moment? Members of our prayer ministry team would be delighted to pray with you over the phone or on Zoom - please just ask; contact Sarah, Joe, or Fiona Grove in the first instance.

'Pray for one another, so that you may be healed.'

James 5: 16

## Thanks for reading!

As ever this comes with my prayers and love in Christ.  
Sarah

Sarah McClelland

Lead Minister, St Francis' Church.

A Local Ecumenical Partnership of the Church of England, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church.

Pilgrim's Close, Valley Park, Eastleigh SO53 4ST

[www.stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk](http://www.stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk)

[rev@sfpv.org.uk](mailto:rev@sfpv.org.uk)

T: 023 8048 6298

Usual day off: Friday

This message was sent BCC to all on our church mailing list. If you'd prefer not to receive further mailings please let me know.