



24th December 2020



St Francis Church, Valley Park (virtually)

Two week Christmas edition!



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Christmas blessings

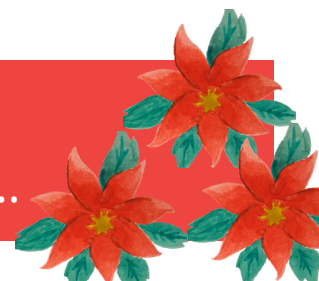
'May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas.'

That's how my favourite Christmas blessing begins - you'll hear it a few times over the next couple of days. It's a particularly helpful prayer in this most difficult of Christmases, humanly speaking. What a gift to know joy in these times of adversity. The shepherds' excitement resulted from their encounter with God and finding Jesus despite their fear and trembling. And perseverance is a key attribute at the moment. We have much to learn from Mary and Joseph's willingness to follow God through their challenges. And above all, may we be confident in the peace of Christ - peace that is not of this world (mercifully, since it's in short supply in the news these days).

I'm reminded of an old hymn with this chorus: 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.' That's not escapism (and it's not always easy!) But it *is* the way to a happy Christmas this and every year. May you know His peace and joy this Christmas time.



Join us at our Christmas services!
It'd be lovely to see you - details next pages...



24th December 2020



St Francis Church
you're welcome here

It's our Christingle and Crib service today!

Join us at 3pm Dec 24th
on our usual Church Zoom link:
www.bit.ly/SFCzoom



*Featuring our whole junior
Church, who've beautifully
and movingly recreated the
nativity!*



If you've not managed to collect one
of our packs, grab an orange, a
candle, red ribbon and sweets and
join us

**Crib and Chrirstingle
service... Dec 24th 3pm**

**Valley Park Treasure
Hunt... Dec 19th - Jan 3rd**



St Francis Church
you're welcome here

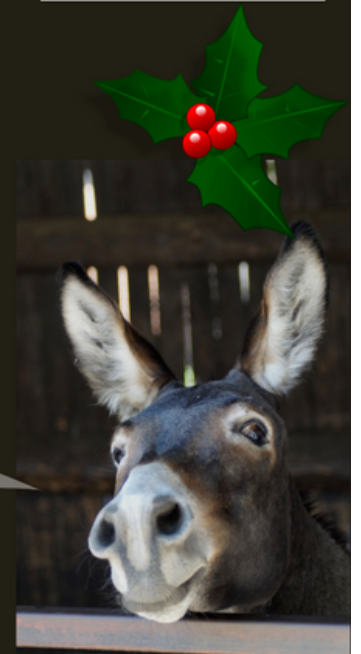


Join donkey on the
**Valley Park
Treasure Hunt,**
any time between
Dec 19th and Jan 3rd!



Join in when you choose by scanning
the QR code or following this link:
www.bit.ly/VP-TreasureHunt

Come and have some fun
around Pilgrim's Close! It's
suitable for all ages, takes
about half an hour and you
could win a little prize!



24th December November 2020

Christmas Services 2020

Booking is open for our Christmas communion services!

Booking is required as spaces are limited due to Covid restrictions

Email rev@sfvp.org.uk or leave a message on 02380271152

Virtual Crib and Chrstingle.

Dec 24, 3pm: On Zoom - bring your Chrstingle bag.

First communion of Christmas

Dec 24, 1130pm: In real life! 'midnight mass'

Booking now open!

Christmas Day Communion

Dec 25, 8.45am: In real life!

Booking now open!

Virtual Christmas for all ages

Dec 25, 10am On Zoom

Carols and (BYO) Coffee

Dec 27, 10am on Zoom.



24th December 2020

Worship over the next 2 weeks.

The 8.45 is in the church building!

Join us for communion at 8.45am in person. Wear a mask and a warm coat, maintain distance as ever, and please book in if you're able. Email or phone Sarah to say you're coming. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Services this week and next.

December 24th: Christmas Eve

3pm : Virtual Christingle and Crib Service- usual Zoom link

11.30pm: Said Communion in Church (please book in)

December 25th: Christmas Day

8.45am: Said Communion in Church (please book in)

10am: Virtual All Age Worship for Christmas - usual Zoom link

December 27th: 1st Sunday of Christmas

Please Note: No 8.45am Communion

10am: Carols and BYO Coffee - informal carols and Christmas reflection with Steve and Phil- usual Zoom link.

January 3rd: Epiphany

8.45am: Said Communion in Church (please book in)

Leader: Sarah; Speaker: Joe Sweetnam

10am: Virtual Morning Worship- usual Zoom link.

Leader: Peter Rhodes; Speaker: Joe Sweetnam

Monday January 4th

10am Morning prayer - usual Zoom link.

We have a new cross!

Joe has used his carpentry skills to make us a beautiful, simple wooden cross that's up in the Worship area. We'd love to pursue the possibility of a cross that the whole church family can contribute to - when we're able to be together again. In the meantime this simple cross will help to focus our worship. Thanks so much, Joe.



Joe writes, 'I was surprised when I arrived at St. Francis back in October, to find that there was no cross on the wall at the front of church. As it is such a focal point for worship, I instantly offered to Sarah to make a temporary one whilst a more permanent crucifix was agreed. After a while my offer was accepted and I set to on working out how to produce a cross.

When I started working out where to cut the wood it quickly occurred to me how vital the proportions are. The cross is such an iconic symbol that we see everywhere in churches and on jewellery. If the dimensions were wrong it would be instantly noticed and look odd. It wasn't my intention to make anything extravagant.

The cross where Jesus was tortured and executed would not have been glamorous. I'm sure it would have been covered and stained from the blood and filth of the previous people unfortunate enough to have encountered it. I then set to work, sawing the timbers and chiselling out the joint. At times I found this emotional.

I think it would be impossible to make a cross like this and not think of the pain and torment that Jesus would have gone through in the hours before and during his time on the cross. When striking the chisel into the wood it was hard not to imagine the roman soldier driving the nails through the flesh of our King, and what he went through for each of us.

I am pleased that the wall at the front of the church is no longer empty, and there is now a visual focus for us during worship. I hope you find this cross a suitable temporary measure whilst a more permanent fixture is decided upon.

Like so many times in life, what I thought was a simple straight forward job turned out to be more of an event than I was expecting which drew me closer to, and in deeper relationship with Him. What will you be doing over the next few weeks and coming year to take your relationship closer with God?'





Church Family News

Could you be a school governor?

We have 3 vacancies for foundation governors - Governors who have a Christian faith and would like to use it in this vital ministry. Governors bring their wisdom and experience to enable the school - and thereby the children - to flourish! Whilst it takes a bit of time and commitment, full training is given. You'll make a difference to a whole school! Contact Sarah for more details .

Office news

Heather has been with us since March and has been such a blessing! She has decided it's time to go and pursue her own vocation, especially in light of the Covid crisis. She says: *"Supporting those affected by critical illness has become my life's work and I intend to continue advocating for this cause and raising awareness until either the necessary resources are in place or I take my last breath!"*

She leaves us in mid- January with our huge thanks and blessings.

We'll have an opportunity to hear from her in January before she goes.

Take Time

Christian meditations will continue virtually in January on 1st Wednesday of the month at 12pm and 3rd Wednesday at 8pm.

Next one: 12pm
Wednesday January 6th
on usual Zoom link

Link for services

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

www.bit.ly/SFCzoom

International Cafe

Frederick and Maryline in Strasbourg are hosting an International Cafe! They would love us to join them along with their local church; on Thursdays from 11am French time on the following Zoom link.

They are looking forward to chatting with you!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8606398021?pwd=L0tDaUxpOEIxdUVyemQwUUV2NFZzUT09>

Meeting ID: 860 6398 0212

Passcode: 568175

24th December 2020

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me... a new website!

It's now up and running at the same web address as before. It's still a work in progress so please bear with us. Please email Sarah with any omissions/ typos/ suggestions and other comments for consideration - some things can't be changed because of how it's made ☺.

We're currently using many royalty free stock images and will look to set up a file of pictures taken by our many talented photographers - we're not quite there yet.

Many thanks indeed to those who've got us this far - the team who put the proposal together - Steve, Glen and Rogerio and others, Heather for work across the board, Phil for faithfully working with our old template, Chris and Mike for their infinite patience with tech matters...

Take a look:
www.stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk

QUIZAID

Put your thinking caps on

Saturday 16 January

2021 at 7:15 for

7:30pm by Zoom

All welcome!

Same organisers – same quizmaster - Adam

Enter individually or

as a small family group

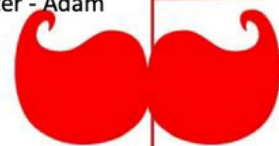
Teams will vary each round

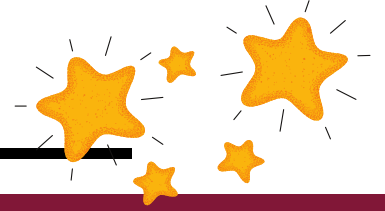
Prize: a box of fair trade goodies

Entry by donation to JustGiving

<http://www.justgiving.com/CFQuizAid>

Maybe £5 per person or more?





Points for prayer this week:

For the world:

- That all may know the comfort, joy and peace that Jesus brings this Christmas time.

From the World Council of Churches: For Stateless People.

We pray for:

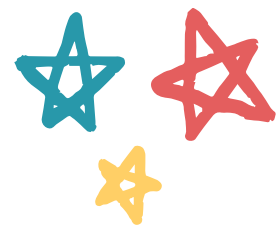
- an end to the discrimination and marginalization that lead to some people being stateless
- those who lack support and feel they are in limbo while being stateless
- churches and other organizations to reach out to provide stateless people with what they need to live
- governments and international organizations to change policies and practices so that all people feel they belong somewhere.

Church Life:

For our partners in the Methodist and United Reformed Churches as we all celebrate Christmas, and especially for Mark Robinson and Sue Keegan von Allmen as they lead CHandler's Ford URC and Methodist Churches respectively.

Our local Community:

- Pray for the residents of Raglan Close and Castle Lane
- For all we know who are unwell, including Kate Muammar, and those on our prayer chain
- For all those who are struggling at this time financially, emotionally; those who will be alone; those in care homes, and all frontline staff in the NHS, education, prisons, and all key workers.



24th December 2020

St Francis Church information



St Francis Church
you're welcome here

Answerphone		02380271152
Facebook		@stfrancisvp
Website		www.stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk
Instagram		stfranchischurchvalleypark
Zoom		www.bit.ly/SFCzoom
Twitter		@FrancisValley
YouTube		St Francis Church Valley Park

Who's Who

Church Administrator:

Heather Parsons -
admin@sfv.org.uk (usual
office hours: Mon - Fri 9 -
12), Tel: 02380271152

Church Cleaner: Ann Daly

(usual time to clean:
Saturday afternoon)

Junior Church Lead:

Debbie Reed -
juniorchurch@sfv.org.uk

Youth Contact: Cliff

McClelland -
youth@sfv.org.uk

Pastoral Lead and Prayer

Chain: Fiona Grove -
pastoral@sfv.org.uk

Lead minister: Sarah

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

Curate: Joe Sweetnam -
curate@sfv.org.uk (Day
off Friday)

Methodist minister: Sue
Keegan von Allmen

URC minister: Mark
Robinson

Church Council

Church Wardens: Alison Rhodes and Fiona Grove

Pro (Deputy) Warden and Gift Aid secretary: Geoff Roberts

Plus 1 vacant prowarden post

Safeguarding officer: Helen Kelso - safeguarding@sfv.org.uk

Church Council Secretary: Liz Bolton

Treasurer: Andy Grove - treasurer@stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk

Church Council Members: Debbie Reed, Graham Shankland, Phil
Watts, Rogerio Ramos.

Plus 2 vacant posts

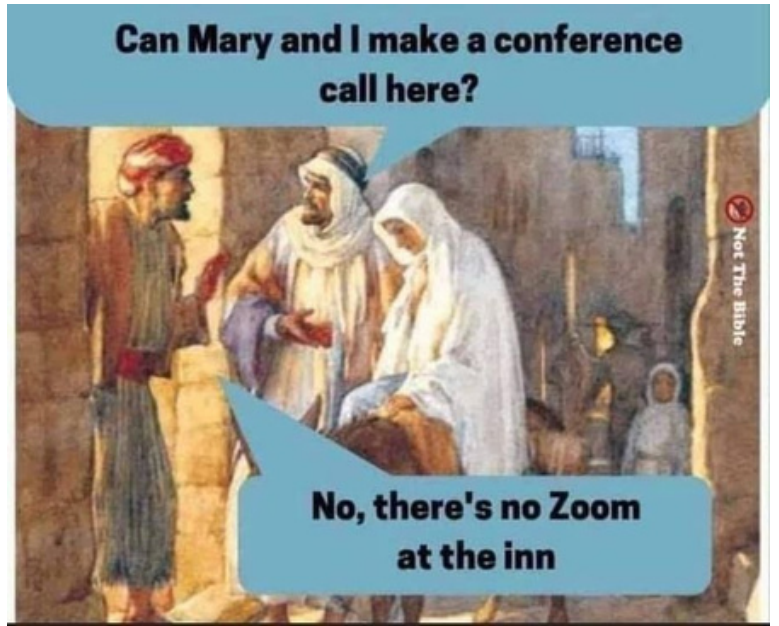
Deanery Synod Reps (ie Church of England Reps): Peter
Rhodes, Steve Williams and Brian King

Methodist Church rep: David Gurr

Plus 1 vacant post

URC Rep: Chris Hill.





Merry Christmas!



24th December 2020

Holidays

We might not be going far but the clergy (Joe, Cliff and I) are off from Dec 26th - Jan 2nd inclusive so that we're refreshed and ready to go in 2021! We hope you're able to take a break too and that you enjoy a peaceful Christmas and discover joy in unexpected places and people!

Please contact the office (Heather's in Dec 29th - 31st) or a Church Warden for anything urgent.

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

rev@sfvp.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.