

St Francis Weekly News for SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT 15th November 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?

A NEW MOBILE PHONE NUMBER FOR THE VICAR

Very sadly, after holding the same mobile phone number for well over twenty years I have had to stretch the brain cells and become accustomed to a brand new number.

This has not only been rather a wrench – but is also proving to be a nightmare in terms of letting everybody know!



My sincere apologies to those who have been trying to get hold of me over the past few days without much success.

My new number is: **07368 832294**

[Yippee! I managed to type that without looking at the card I'm having to keep on my desk...]

ASSIST TRUST

It seems a very long time indeed since we last saw our young friends from the Assist trust who used to come and help out with several St Francis Activities.

I was contacted recently by the Trust who asked if St Francis would like to be involved in their Christmas Tree project – a lovely way of keeping contact with their partner organisations and engaging the young people in a creative and exciting venture.

Basically we were asked to 'fill' a Christmas tree bauble with something Christmassy and linked to us.

After a consultation with Revd Winnie and Brother Eeyore this is what we came up with – a Christmas puzzle!

Solve the picture clues and you'll see who the Bauble belongs to...



It was so good to hear from all our friends at Assist Trust, and even better to hear that all is well with them. We can't wait the day when we can safely welcome them back to their former roles helping out whilst learning about being in the workplace.

A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT ASSIST TRUST

Everything that happens at Assist is aimed at helping people with learning difficulties to progress and move forward in their lives.

Assist provides transition and progression services for people with learning disabilities aged 18 and over and the individuals supported at Assist have a very wide range of abilities.

All members are supported to build steadily from strong foundations – in confidence levels, self-esteem levels and abilities to build good relationships – to gradually take on manageable amounts of responsibility and to become more independent in their lives.



Assist provides services for around 130 people with learning difficulties in total at the moment. And is based in the Lazer House and at 20 Colegate Norwich. If you would further information their contact number is: 01603 230200

A familiar face from Assist!

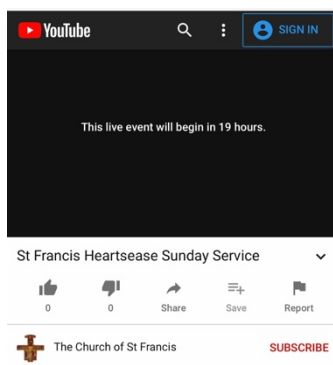
LIVE BROADCAST OF SUNDAY SERVICES

This Sunday we are hoping [technology allowing] that we will break new ground at St Francis by livestreaming our 10.30am Sunday service on YouTube.

The link for the service is below and rather than having lots of hoops to negotiate in terms of logging into the service – this should simply be a one click operation.

Simply click on the link below and it will bring you straight to us – it's counting down even as I am typing!

<https://youtu.be/dfDxe24h3js>



If by chance you cannot find us live tomorrow – never fear, our one time TV producer Fr Tracy is recording the whole service and it will be available for the next 12 hrs following on from the service.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERMON

For those of you who missed our Remembrance Sunday zoom service last week, there is the opportunity to listen to Jim Green's inspiring sermon on our new St Francis YouTube Channel.



If you are reading this on an online device simply click on the link below. If you have a smartphone

carefully enter in the code and upon clicking on search you should be taken straight to the site.

Please do try to view Jim's sermon – you will not be disappointed.

<https://youtu.be/5lolCcXjpdY>

OPEN FOR PRAYER

For the foreseeable future St Francis Church building will be accessible for quiet individual prayer [or for people in a household bubble to pray together] throughout the social lockdown and in the weeks thereafter leading up to Christmas.

The church space will open every weekday morning 10am – 11.30pm. There will also be resources available and you will be able to light a prayer candle if that is something you would like to do.

If you would like to arrange to come at a particular time, or need some further assistance please feel free to call Revd Janet [07368 832294] or Fr Tracy [07834 845623]



The Prayer Table dressed for Kingdom Season

REVD WINNIE & BROTHER EYORE



It's good to see that even members of the clergy and Franciscan Friars can let their hair down when supporting a great cause like Children in Need!

SALVATION ARMY

TOYS & TINS appeal

St Francis will be once again supporting the Salvation Army Christmas Toys and Tins appeal this year.

If you would like to drop off a donation of any non-perishable Festive Foods for the hampers or a gift for a child or young person, the church building is open every weekday morning between the hours of 10am and 12pm.

The suggested gift list is as follows:

Board Games and puzzles
Craft and modelling kits
Action figures
Dolls and teddy bears
Educational toys
Pens and Pencils
Baby toys
Toiletries for teens
Hats and gloves
Books

There is an 'Amazon Wish List' if you would like to have a look - the link is: <https://amzn.to/2GqiuCd>

A PLEA FOR HELP

Last week you may well recall that we gave out a plea for financial help for William Poulson who was a regular and avid supporter of the Fridge project.

Unfortunately William's home, his houseboat has sunk and he is trying to raise money in order to salvage it.



We mentioned the sum of £35,000 which is in fact incorrect. The amount that William has to raise is a rather more modest £3,500 – although still a huge amount of money if you haven't got it!

If you are able to offer some help, William has a gofundme page under 'Happy Moorhen Salvage' – and as they say – every little helps

Our thoughts and prayers remain with William at this very difficult time.

NOVEMBER SOCIAL LOCKDOWN

This is a little reminder that although we may not be able to help in every circumstance, St Francis Church remains a place where all are welcome to come to, to spend some quiet time in prayer, to enquire about assistance with food parcels – and to find a listening ear.

Please feel free to call at the church building any weekday morning 10am – 12pm; or call the 24/7 answerphone [01603 431259]

**The Church of St Francis
Heartsease**



ST FRANCIS ZOOM ROOM HOUSEGROUP

Do you fancy an online get together to catch up with each other, share a Bible passage and pray?

We will be starting a zoom group on the first and third Monday of the month, starting on 16th November.

The group will start at 7pm and finish around 8pm.

All are welcome – please contact Jim Green via email: jimpiecrust@gmail.com or simply zoom in:

Join Zoom Meeting

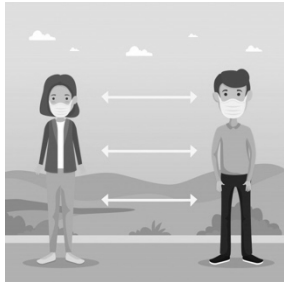
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83340751619?pwd=dnNMV015R2I2RIE2T1R3VWhUbIRzQT09>

Meeting ID: 833 4075 1619

Passcode: 460998

ST FRANCIS WALKERS

We can't meet in each other's homes or gardens, but two people can go for a socially distanced walk together.



So we are suggesting that if you would like to go for a walk - just turn up at the church between 10am and 10.30am on a Wednesday morning.

Once there are there are two people who are happy

to walk with each other - after filling in a simple safeguarding form - they can then set off for a walk of their choosing, to Mousehold, around the estate, or anywhere else they agree to go, for as long as they decide.

It could be a prayer walk, a nature walk, or just a walk and chat walk! Up to you!

Please contact Jim Green for further details jimpiecrust@gmail.com or phone Revd Janet: [07368 832294]

PASTORAL CARE MATTERS

As we are all now more than well aware, Covid 19 is a real threat to the wellbeing of many people – and not only through the disease itself.

The November social lockdown may well present many people with all sorts of difficulties so never has it been more necessary for us all to treat one another with kindness.

And never before has it been so vital for us to look and listen out for folk who might be struggling.

Please, if you would like the opportunity to have a chat, 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.

We are also able to offer help if you or someone you know needs support with basic food provision.

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

Revd Janet [07368 832294]

Father Tracy [07834 845623]

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

Norfolk Assistance Scheme: **01603 223392**

A WORD FROM THE VICAR

As you will have seen on the front page I have had to change my mobile phone number.

The actual change was quite simple – I passed my phone across to my clever granddaughter and she did it for me.

What hasn't been so simple has been letting everyone know about the change – and letting go... I have to confess that I spent at least one evening mulling over how I would manage this seemingly insurmountable task – and regretting the loss of a number that is burned into my memory.

What's your number people would ask - and very confidently [and perhaps a touch smugly] I would reel it off.

Those days seemed lost forever when I pondered late into the night upon my dodgy memory ...

Overcome with angst I sought out my said clever granddaughter and shared my fears.

'Oh Nanny' she said 'it's only a number! You'll soon get used to it'

I crept away from her room feeling suitably chastised.

Yes! it is only a number - and at a time when so many people are losing so much more through illness, job losses and family break ups how dare I get upset about a mobile phone number?

It also got me thinking about my reliance on my technology – how dare I take such a thing for granted, get upset over something as trivial as changing a number.

Technology is indeed a wonderful thing in terms of keeping some of us in touch with one another – but the reality is that many people do not have the luxury of access to a smart phone let alone a tablet – or personal computer or laptop. All of which are a part of my daily life.

For many these things are an unreachable luxury – or a step too far in terms of learning how to use such devices.

And even more worrying is that the plight of those who are excluded from technology is made all the worse now that today's world seems to rely on online communication.

For example banks, City Council, Insurance Companies, DWP, to name but a few, all assume that everyone has easy access to information and communication technology.

How bewildering and anxiety provoking it must be to be confronted by such thoughtless and excluding practice – especially in times of stress such as we are living through now.

In a few months' time we here at St Francis will be launching our Heartsease Community Money Advice Centre – and one of the things we hope to do is provide easy access to online services for all those who might be struggling financially. In the meantime, having lived through just a teeny amount of inconvenience – please, if you are struggling with not being able to access online resources, information or help – or if you need a helping hand to communicate with officialdom just contact us and we will do our best to help.

My new phone number is: 07368 832294 or you are welcome to call any of the other church numbers in this newsletter – or call at the church any weekday morning between 10am and 12pm.

God bless you and yours

Revd Janet

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Scott, Alison, & Millie S; Stephen C; Barry S; Margaret T; David & Cynthia S; Darren L; Maegan; Tom; Riley & his mum and family; Jeanette, David & Grace; Paula; 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 Doreen; Rosemary; Sheila; John; Joy; Shirley.

We remember with love Betty Brittain; Kathleen Kelley; Beryl Farrell and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

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 SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE
ADVENT

Collects

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed
to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God
and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him
in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Heavenly Lord,
you long for the world's salvation:
stir us from apathy,
restrain us from excess
and revive in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Post Communion

Gracious Lord,
in this holy sacrament
you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last
to that fullness of life for which we long;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE
ADVENT

ZEPHANIAH 1:7, 12-end



Be silent before the Lord GOD!

For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. At that time I will search Jerusalem with

lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts,

'The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm.'

Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them, though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

PSALM 90: 1 - 8



Lord, you have been our refuge •
from one generation to another.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the earth and the world were formed, •
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust and say: •
'Turn back, O children of earth.'

For a thousand years in your sight
are but as yesterday, •
which passes like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away like a dream; •
they fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green and flourishes; •
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

For we consume away in your displeasure; •
we are afraid at your wrathful indignation.

You have set our misdeeds before you •
and our secret sins in the light of your
countenance.

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

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11



Now concerning the times and the seasons,
brothers and sisters, you do not need to have
anything written to you.

For you yourselves know very well that the day of
the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

When they say, 'There is peace and security', then
sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour
pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will
be no escape!

But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day
to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children
of light and children of the day; we are not of the
night or of darkness.

So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let
us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep
sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk
at night.

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and
put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a
helmet the hope of salvation.

For God has destined us not for wrath but for
obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died for us, so that whether we are awake or
asleep we may live with him.

Therefore encourage one another and build up each
other, as indeed you are doing.

MATTHEW 25:14-30



'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned
his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to
one he gave five talents, to another two, to another
one, to each according to his ability.

Then he went away.

The one who had received the five talents went off
at once and traded with them, and made five more
talents.

In the same way, the one who had the two talents
made two more talents.

But the one who had received the one talent went
off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his
master's money.

After a long time the master of those slaves came
and settled accounts with them.

Then the one who had received the five talents
came forward, bringing five more talents, saying,
"Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I
have made five more talents." His master said to
him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you
have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you
in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your
master."

And the one with the two talents also came forward,
saying, "Master, you handed over to me two
talents; see, I have made two more talents." His
master said to him, "Well done, good and
trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a
few things, I will put you in charge of many things;
enter into the joy of your master."

Then the one who had received the one talent also
came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you
were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow,
and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I
was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the
ground. Here you have what is yours." But his
master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You
knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and
gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to
have invested my money with the bankers, and on

my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

REFLECTION FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT

In this country, right now, we have a huge problem with homelessness. I mention it because, at the same time, there is a huge boom in what is sometimes, rather nicely, known as 'buying to rent'. What this really means is that people have taken to investing in property portfolios which are then rented out to maximise their investment. I use the language that I hear being used, by the way.

Maximising an investment can mean creating houses of multiple occupancy – not my language again. In my own language, that means squeezing as many people in to one house as you can to get as much money as you can. The net result of this is that property prices continue to increase such that those at the bottom cannot afford to buy, or to rent, and if they do rent, one slip up in the repayment of a huge monthly burden means – homelessness.

I remember some years ago having a conversation with somebody who was a multiple landlord and asked him how he felt that this was socially responsible. He replied that he was perfectly justified by today's gospel reading, the parable of the talents.

In case you aren't clear, a talent – at the time of Jesus – was a huge sum of money. So in this story, a master – a slave owner, actually – has given three of his slaves some money to look after for him until he returns from a journey. It's an unusual story, in that you would expect the first two slaves to get it wrong and then the third to get it right. In this story though, the ending is more tragedy than comedy. The first two slaves make an increase on the money they have been entrusted with, and as a reward the master lets them keep it. The third slave safely buries his money and gives it back to the master. The master is angry with this third guy, and gives his money to the first slave who has now made more than the others. Meanwhile, the poor third guy gets consigned to some kind of oblivion.

Well I'm sorry, but I've always felt sorry for the third guy. I can't for the life of me see that what he did was so wrong. After all, Jews listening to this story

at the time would have known that lending money for profit (as suggested by the master in this story) was forbidden by the law of Moses [Deuteronomy 23:19]. Usury, as it was called, was considered to be at best antisocial and at worst deeply damaging to the community. Who then was the most righteous? I would have said the third guy.

Another interesting thing is that in some translations, at the beginning of this story it says '*for the kingdom of heaven is...*' which seems to set up the scene.

If this is the case, then surely the master is Jesus. When he returns there will be a judgement. This leads to nearly every interpretation of this story being about making the most of our gifts, talents, spirituality, whatever, and then God will be pleased with us; if not, we will be consigned to some sort of hell. There isn't much room to manoeuvre: if this is a story about the kingdom.

Amazingly though, the phrase '*for the kingdom of heaven is...*' is actually a much later addition by translators to try and tie this story into the chapter. Firstly with the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that appears immediately before, and secondly with the description of the kingdom of heaven that follows.

We must then at least *consider* the possibility that in this parable, Jesus may not have been talking about the kingdom of heaven at all!

If we re-cast the master not as Jesus but as the ruler of *this* world – then the story takes on a fascinating new interpretation. The parable then turns into a warning from Jesus to his disciples. It is a warning of what happens to, and perhaps even more so what *will come to happen*, to his disciples if they are righteous and faithful. They will be judged, vilified and ostracised; not for their wickedness and sloth, but for their righteousness. And not by God, but by the world.

All of a sudden, when I saw this, the parable made a lot more sense. I mean no disrespect to all who will be bound to totally disagree with me, but I feel called to share my thoughts with you.

Do consider this one last point, though. There is a line in this parable that has always bothered and bewildered me. 'For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.'

Why am I bothered by this? Because it doesn't sound much like the kingdom of heaven to me. As

Jim pointed out last week, the preceding parable of the wise and foolish virgins can be interpreted as being about equality. Agree with that or not, Jesus' description of the kingdom that follows today's gospel reading most certainly is about equality or more specifically the need to pursue it and to care about those who are less fortunate than we are. This is where God's judgement seems to be focussed rather than the judgement of the master of the slaves, which is focussed on gain.

As the slave master says, 'For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.' This is certainly the case where financial capitalism is unregulated and accompanied by a total lack of social responsibility.

Today, in this city, there are parishes where people who are in the top 1% of the wealthy live right next door to those in the bottom 1%. This is in the one developed country with the biggest gap between

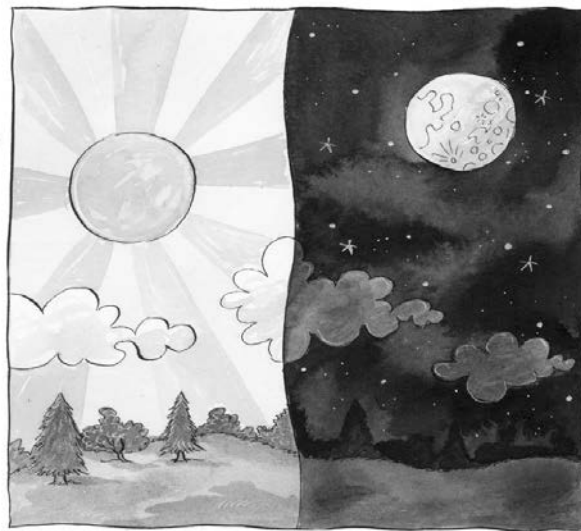
rich and poor at the moment: the UK. At the same time, in this city, people are homeless. Many are crushingly poor. Many are in need of food banks.

However you may prefer to interpret the parable of the talents, surely you must agree that this situation is wrong.

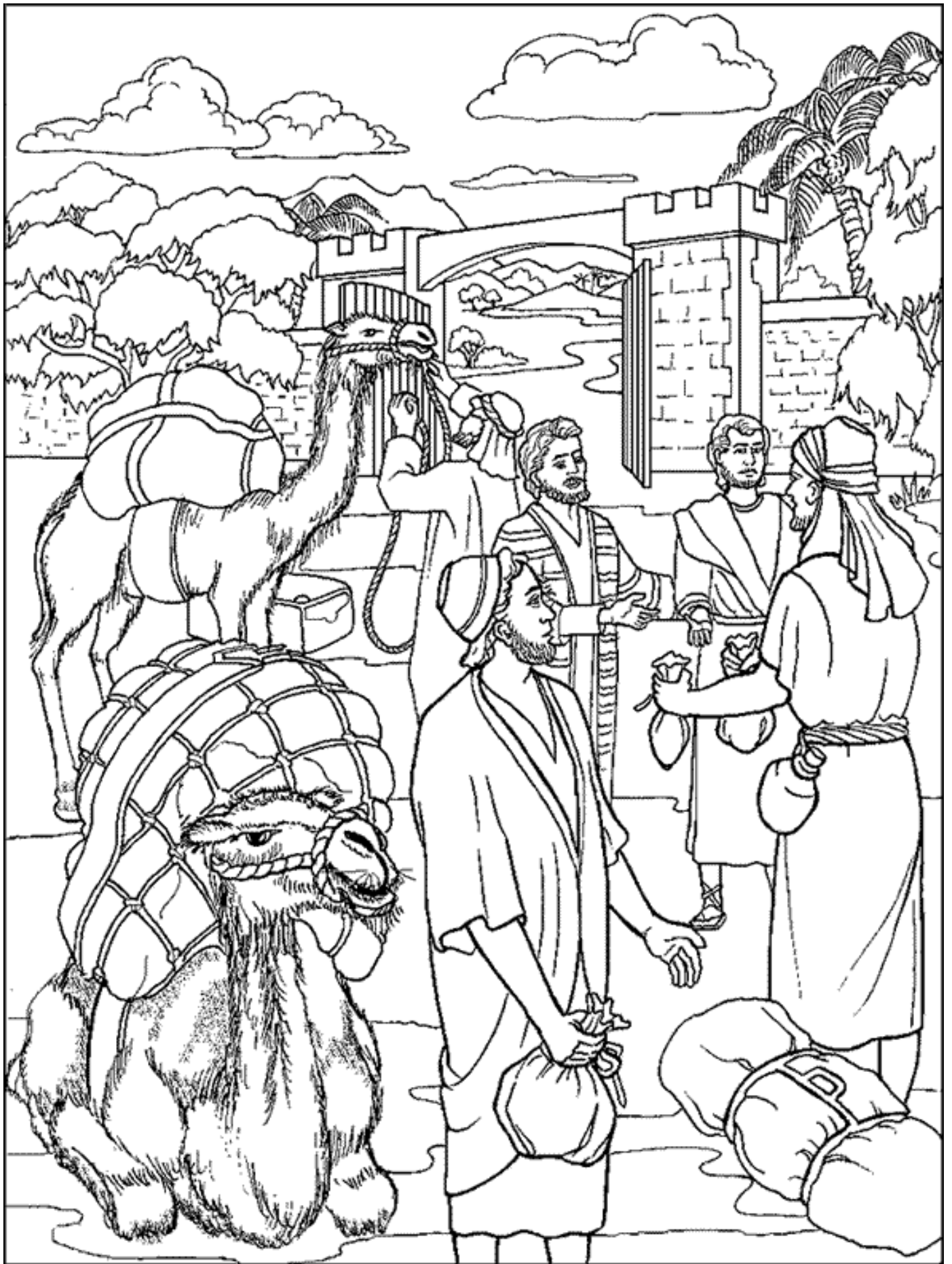
Bringing about the kingdom is bringing about social justice and equality. It is about feeding people. It is about kindness to strangers. It is about looking after and praying for the sick. It is about visiting the prisoner. And it is also about working to put an end to homelessness.

I hope, therefore, that we can take time to ponder these things in our hearts. I hope that we can pray together for those who are in need. I hope that we can keep working together, as Christian brothers and sisters, to help bring the kingdom closer.

Fr Tracy Williams
Curate



Now, brothers, we do not need to write to you about times and dates. You know very well that the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise like a thief that comes in the night. People will say, "We have peace and we are safe." At that time they will be destroyed quickly, as pains come quickly to a woman having a baby. And those people will not escape. But you, brothers, are not living in darkness. And so that day will not surprise you like a thief. You are all people who belong to the light. You belong to the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. So we should not be like other people. We should not be sleeping, but we should be awake and have self-control. Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But we belong to the day; so we should control ourselves. We should wear faith and love to protect us. And the hope of salvation should be our helmet. God did not choose us to suffer his anger, but to have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died for us so that we can live together with him. It is not important if we are alive or dead when Jesus comes. So comfort each other and give each other strength, just as you are doing now.

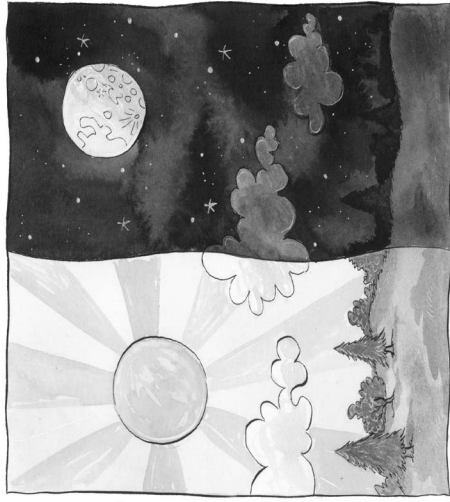


Name



1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

Paul reminds us to always remember to live as children of light.



Family time

Talk Think about the things you have done and thought today. Which were light? Were there any darkness?

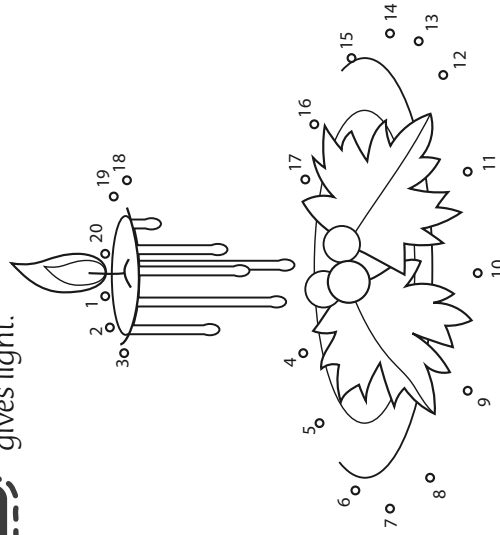
Do Every time you turn your light out at bedtime this week, pray that God would help you be a child of light tomorrow.

Pray Turn the lights out and light a candle or turn a torch on. Ask God to help you show light to the people around you this week.

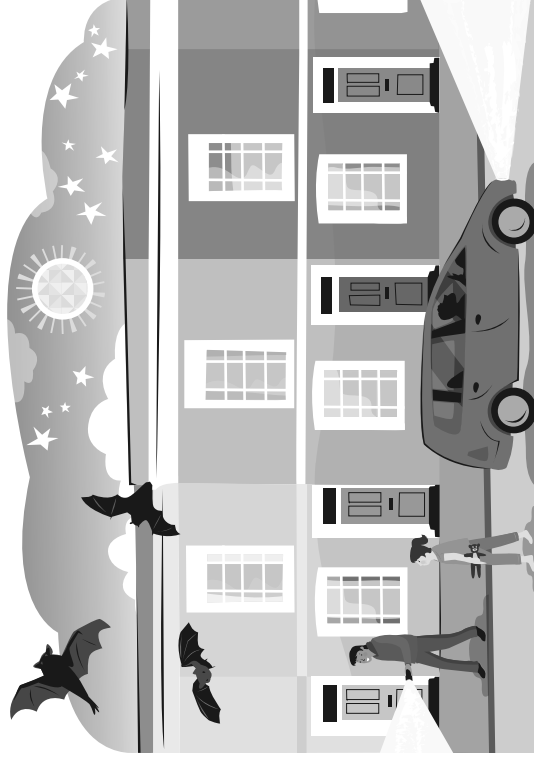
Activity time



Join the dots to show something which gives light.



Can you spot five things that don't fit into this picture of a daytime scene?



ROOTS children's Sheet

15-21 November 2020



Can you unscramble the letters to reveal three people who work during the night?

ernsu

gherfetirif

xtai virder

Name

15-21 November 2020

Colouring time

The light helps us to see clearly what we should do.

