

St Francis Weekly News for MOTHERING SUNDAY [The Fourth Sunday of Lent] 14th March 2021



This newsletter 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?

OH DEAR...

As most of you will be aware, during the week a very large hole opened up in the playing field next to Frere Road Community Centre.



Probably twenty feet deep, the council have spent much of the latter part of the week looking into it – and work will begin very soon on filling it with cement and aggregate etc to ensure a swift return

to the field being a playing space once more.

Anyone who has lived in or around Norwich for any length of time will be accustomed to rather large craters suddenly appearing – and at least this one was in a relatively safe place with no damage to anyone's life, home or livelihood.

It is, however, a bit close to home and it has given me a wakeup call in terms of realising how the natural world is very often a force way beyond our control – and that sometimes all we can do is stand back in awe and admit our vulnerabilities!

And talking of forces beyond our control – in recent days we have discovered an additional problem with the church building.

Substantial cracking has appeared to one of the supporting piers in the main body of the church and we are now in the situation where we can do nothing other than await a building expert to tell us what is happening – and what will be needed to put the problem right.

In the meantime, never has the phrase 'watch this space' been more apt...



This picture of the cracking shows the top part of the supporting pier and the window frame that appears to be pulling away.

Unfortunately the crack extends from the bottom of the wall to the very top – and between wall and window daylight can clearly be seen

ST FRANCIS WINDOW THIS WEEK...

Revd Winnie and gang have been busy making posies for Mothering Sunday. This has got them thinking about the fact that although lots of people enjoy Mothering Sunday, there are probably lots who might be feeling sad.

Having read what Fr Tracy has written in his Curate's Corner about Jesus asking us to be kind, generous and to play our part in making the world a better place, Revd Winnie, Brother Eeyore and Piglet are on the lookout for opportunities to give and help wherever they can...



Revd Winnie, Brother Eeyore and Piglet have realised that being church is all about looking out for need and, in Jesus name, helping where we can.

LENT 2021



This week Fr Tracy's Curate's Corner explores Christian giving. And as we turn our attention to giving alms we are aware that this year St Francis has not launched a Lenten Appeal as is usually the case. However, we remain committed to supporting our charities and we suggest you may want to support either of these:

Church Mission Society or
East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH)

If you would like to make a Lenten donation to any of these, please contact the Vicar or our Treasurer, Deborah Lechmere; or bring your donation into the church any weekday morning 10am – 12pm.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER DAY



Re-introduction of Socially Distanced Worship

As from the Wednesday of Holy Week, 31st March, we will be resuming a weekday service of Holy Communion.

The service will be a said service in the Book of Common Prayer tradition and will take place at 11.30am.

On Good Friday the church will be open between 11.30am – 3.30pm. Prayers will be said upon each hour, with accompanying readings and a short meditation

Easter Day will see us returning to congregational worship for the first time for many months – as usual the service will be a celebration of Holy Communion [Common Worship] and will begin at 10.30am.

We look forward to welcoming you to some, or all of these very special, and much anticipated, services.

A MESSAGE FOR WOODSIDE HOUSE CARE HOME



WITH LOVE FROM US ALL

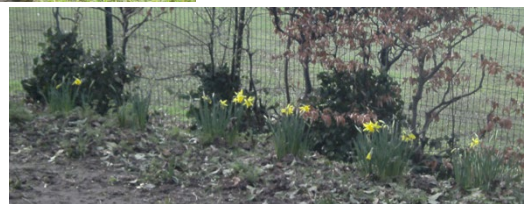
If you would like to send a message to Woodside House to let them know we're thinking of them, please use the email below or pop it through the vicarage door

GET CREATIVE!

Margaret has sent in some spring daffodils as her contribution to 'Get Creative' this week.

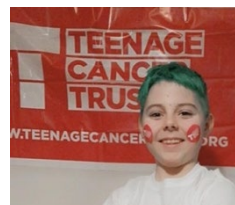


Isn't it wonderful how daffodils can brighten up the darkest and dullest of places!



If you have something that you would like us to consider for the newsletter please feel free to send via email revdjanetwyer@outlook.com or post a copy of your submission through the vicarage door. [100 Rider Haggard Road] [Not the original please, we cannot guarantee safe return]

WELL DONE ADAM!

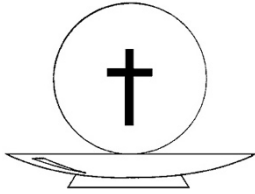


Congratulations Adam on raising £405 for the Teenage Cancer Trust – and a big thank you to everyone who supported him in raising funds for this very important charity.

CHURCH OPENING

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT OPEN FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP UNTIL EASTER DAY.

However, the church is available for individual prayer every weekday 10.30am – 11.30am.



If you would like to spend some time in the church or would like to make enquiries about receiving Holy Communion please do feel free to contact:

Revd Janet – 07368 832294
or
Fr Tracy - 07834 845623

If you would like to join in with Sunday Worship we continue to broadcast via the St Francis YouTube channel. Just search for 'St Francis Heartsease YouTube'

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COMMIT TO BEING A MEMBER OF THE ST FRANCIS HEARTSEASE CHURCH FAMILY?

Everyone in the St Francis Heartsease Parish is a part of our church family, but we will shortly be revising St Francis Church Electoral Roll.

If you would like to formally become a part of the family and commit to all that entails, all you need to do is complete a simple form and return it to the Church Office.

We will be sending out forms in due course – but if you would like to know more, please get in touch.

HOME GROUP

Throughout Lent Jim Green will continue to offer folk the opportunity to get together via a Zoom Room every fortnight on a Wednesday evening.

The forthcoming date is:

March 24

Joining Jim and the group who meet regularly is an ideal opportunity to try something different as a way of observing Lent and deepening bonds of fellowship.

As ever the times are 7- 8pm, and the format is very simple: chat, catch up with each other, read a Bible passage, pray for each other.

Please email Jim for further details and he will be happy to make contact and pass on all you need to know, including the zoom link address. His email is as follows: jimpiecrust@gmail.com

NEIGHBOURHOOD NOTICE BOARD

A WARNING!

One of our older residents has recently had a very upsetting experience relating to answering a locally placed advert for a jobbing gardener.

After completing less than four hours work in her garden and the promise of a replacement metal garden gate, our dear friend parted with £600 to someone who is very obviously preying on our older community.

Please, please, please seek advice before engaging anyone to carry out work in your home or garden – and never, ever give work to anyone on the basis of just an advert carrying a name and mobile phone number.

If you have a notice you would like included under the noticeboard – please email your piece to revdjanetwyer@outlook.com or deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com

PASTORAL CARE MATTERS

Please remember you are not alone, if you would like a chat or if you need some assistance of any kind, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Our contact details are as follows:

Revd Janet: 07368 832294

Fr Tracy: 07834 845623

24/7 Answerphone: 01603 431259
[checked daily]

There is also someone available in church weekday mornings if you would prefer to talk to someone face to face.

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

If you are feeling overwhelmed, low, stressed or anxious – Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust have launched a self-referral service available online:

www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/get-support/selfreferral

or by phone: 03300 123 1503

[Mon – Fri 8am – 8pm]

wellbeing
Helping you live your life

ST FRANCIS FREE FOOD



If you live on the Heartsease we can offer help if you or someone you know needs support with emergency basic food provision. Just call in or leave a message on our answerphone

HELP AND SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED



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



cma
Heartsease
Community Money Advice

Now open

We have trained debt advisers

We can also help you before you get into debt

Please call 07765739987 and leave your name & number

Or email heartseasecmacentre@outlook.com



Supported by:
Company of Actuaries Charitable Trust Fund
Paul Bassham Charitable Trust





THE CURATES'S CORNER



Following on from the last two week, I'm referring to this month's posters outside the church drawn by Norfolk artist Edith Chadwick. One suggests what we should be doing in this season, and this week I'm thinking about 'almsgiving, our weapon against the world'.

'Alms' is simply an old fashioned word to describe a gift that might be given to someone less fortunate than oneself, and indeed, it can be shown to derive from a Greek word that means 'pity', in this case in the sense of taking pity on someone else and being kind and generous towards them. The term may still be familiar from the expression 'alms houses', housing provided for free to the poor of the parish perhaps as the result of a kindly bequest. This is in itself a reminder of the Christian origin of the concept of the welfare state, a fact that is now neatly airbrushed out of our history.

Giving to those less well-off as a divine principle is well established in other religions besides Christianity of course, and to Jesus, a Palestinian Jew living in the first century, the idea would have been very familiar from its prominence in the Jewish culture of that time.

This season of Lent is traditionally a time when we, as Christians, give alms; but we are also expected to do so to some extent at all times. Jesus is very clear about the matter. In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about giving alms at the beginning of chapter 6 as if doing so is perfectly natural and expected; he is much more concerned with warning us against being vain and showing off when we do so, and advises us to give alms in secret. This means that, when we do give, we ought to try as much as possible not to flaunt it. In our poster illustration, we see a young woman placing something into a box; that's about the spirit of it, even if the picture looks very old fashioned to us today.

There is another moment in the gospels when Jesus is clearly moved by the giving of alms. In Mark 12 and Luke 21 we find the story of the widow's mite, as it is often referred to.

A 'mite' is a very small coin of little value, and the story is about a widow who gave a few pennies to the temple surrounded by rich people who were giving much, much more. Jesus however is sufficiently moved to point her out. He knows that her contribution is huge, as those few pennies are all she has, yet she has decided to give them to the temple, and, by association, to God.

This idea of giving alms has another side to it, and that is in the way it relates to what we do in church. Roman Catholics and Anglicans (members of those churches stemming from the Church of England of which St Francis is a part) make a strong association between giving on the part of the congregation and the action of holy communion. This is called the 'offertory', when a collection plate is passed round the community and brought to the altar where it is blessed by the officiating priest, and then becomes part of the 'offering' of bread and wine which is to become the mystical body and blood of Christ. This is hugely significant and is well worth further thought. It is a reminder of the fact that everything we do matters, every little thing we do can make a change.

It's also worth thinking about why we might consider almsgiving as 'our weapon against the world'. I think this once again relates to the idea so prevalent in the message of the gospel that we must turn our backs on material distractions. In our poster, the young woman giving alms is contrasted with her friend who has decided to spend her money on fashion accessories for herself. We all fall into this trap so often – I know I do. As Jesus said, we cannot be the servant of two masters. We cannot serve God and wealth (see Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13).

Finally, I should remark on the tendency to think of 'alms' as being 'money', which is not at all surprising given the story of the widow's mite! 'Alms' need not be financial; we can give our time and our effort just as well. When we telephone someone we remember out of kindness, when we deliver some shopping, when we help an elderly stranger who is struggling, all of this is also 'almsgiving' – so even if we genuinely cannot afford to give much in financial terms, we are still able to do so in body and spirit.

At this strange and frightening time of a Lent in pandemic, what could be more appropriate?

Every blessing

Fr Tracy

A WORD FROM THE VICAR

This Sunday is the fourth in Lent – and traditionally this is the day when the church celebrates Mothering Sunday; the day when the Lenten disciplines are lightened [Laetare Sunday] and we all enjoy some little luxuries as a way of acknowledging the gift of 'Mother Church' the expression of God's love here among us on earth.

Over the years the festival has been taken over as a day when we say thank you for our own mothers, with many industries and businesses making a great deal of money out of selling expensive goodies that supposedly express the depth of our love for our mothers.

Over the past twelve months when so many families have been separated, gifts may well be pounced upon as a way to show our affection – but I bet that mothers everywhere would gladly exchange a gift for a hug every single time if given the choice this year.

I know I would - much the same as I would love to be able to see my mother again. In common with many, many people, my mother is no longer with us. She died in 1980, and although she got to see me married ['It'll never last' she said – sometimes mother's don't know best] very sadly my mum never saw our children born, nor got to marvel at the big grown up people they have turned into.

Although I took it for granted at the time, I know now that we were very fortunate to have been given the gift of children, over the years I have watched the sadness of many of my friends as they struggle in a world where having children is taken for granted, and their pain just isn't seen.

That's the problem with the world's view of 'Mother's Day' – it has become a day when huge numbers of people feel excluded and often very sad that they cannot join in with what is being celebrated.

Well, the good news for us is that Mothering Sunday in Church excludes no one – and is, in fact, a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for anyone and everyone who has ever loved and cherished us. It is also the day to recall that Mother Church is here on earth to nurture all God's children, to encourage them grow into the people God created them to be – and help them to know that they are loved beyond all knowing. A hug from God in fact!

May you know God's tender and compassionate love enfolding you this Mothering Sunday and always - Revd Janet

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We continue to pray for Woodside House Care Home who are finding these times particularly difficult. Please ask that they know that God's love is with them as they continue to live through sad times and the current restrictions.

We pray too for those who are in need of prayer at this time: Joy; Lorna; Evie; Rodrigo; Huggy; Megan; Christine; Stephen C; Margaret T; David & Cynthia; Maegan; Tom; Riley & his mum and family; Jeanette, David & Grace; Paula.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Pete; Doreen; Rosemary; Sheila; John; Shirley; Fr Brian, Hazel;

We pray too for all NHS and NSFT Staff.

We remember with love Derek; Stephen Webster; and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

A PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or feeling isolated. 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 MOTHERING SUNDAY

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of
your presence
to bind together and to heal; 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.

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast you feed us in this sacrament with the food of eternal life: help us who have tasted your goodness to grow in grace within the household of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

EXODUS 2:1-10



Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.

The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months.

When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river.

His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river.

She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it.

When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him.

'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said.

Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?'

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.'

So the girl went and called the child's mother.

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.'

So the woman took the child and nursed it.

When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son.

She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

A SONG OF ST ANSELM



Gather your little ones to you, O God,
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.

Jesus, like a mother
you gather your people to you; ♦
you are gentle with us as a mother
with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride, ♦
tenderly you draw us from hatred
and judgement.

You comfort us in sorrow
and bind up our wounds, ♦
in sickness you nurse us,
and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying
we are born to new life; ♦
by your anguish and labour
we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope
through your sweet goodness; ♦
through your gentleness
we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead, ♦
your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us; ♦
in your love and tenderness remake us.

In your compassion bring grace
and forgiveness, ♦
for the beauty of heaven
may your love prepare us.

Gather your little ones to you, O God,
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.

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.

2 CORINTHIANS 1: 3 - 7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering.

Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.



JOHN 19: 25b - 27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'

Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'

And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.



REFLECTION FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

According to the gospel of John, Jesus said: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35).

According to the first letter of John, 'since... we know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So, we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. (1 John 3:16).

These are things that we might associate with the idea of motherhood – with their willingness to put their children first, before everything else.

In our gospel reading today we are told about Mary, the mother of Jesus, standing at the foot of the cross. Although John is the only one of the evangelists, the gospel writers, who tells us this story, it isn't at all surprising really, is it?

Today is Mothering Sunday; a really beautiful and ancient Festival honouring both Mary the mother of Jesus and the church: the Mother Church. Mother church may not be a term that is used much nowadays, but that is how people were taught to

think of HER – the church – as a mother. And so, by extension, Mothering Sunday is a time when we also honour mothers. Those who are mothers now, our own mothers too, even if they are no longer with us. Even if we've never known them. And in fact it can get complicated, depending on our family circumstances, our family history. I haven't forgotten that some people do not have children, that some women cannot be mothers, and that some other people have painful family backgrounds.

Whatever your situation, I invite you to kneel with me in your minds.

I invite you to kneel with me and listen at the foot of the Cross with Mary and the disciple John. Because there is a deep meaning in this story, a deep meaning in this picture of Mary and John shown to us here.

Here we have a woman at the foot of the cross who totally believes in Jesus her son.

Here we have a man at the foot of the cross who totally believes in Jesus his Lord.

When "Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, 'He is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'She is your mother.' From that time the disciple took her to live in his home."(John 19: 26-27).

And so a new family comes into being out of tragedy, out of suffering. Through the blood and passion of the Christ a new community is formed. This is a new kind of family. It becomes what we should now think of as our own Church family. Mary and John formed the church out of their support for each other. Out of love, out of love for Jesus, out of love for one another, for all others.

We as a church are a direct follow-on of that relationship. Mary and John comforted each other. They looked after each other. They shared strength and friendship together. This is what church is really about. We are here to comfort, look after and strengthen each other – and all others.

This is what Jesus intended for us when he called into being the church from the agony of the cross. So, we see that Mothering Sunday is so much deeper than we might at first imagine. It is a time to celebrate the love of mothers but it is something else too.

It is also a time to give thanks for Mother Church, where we find comfort and support and love and hospitality. Because to be a church means to be able to take care for those whose lives have been affected by the pandemic we find ourselves in and its terrible consequences.

We may be in lockdown, but we cannot lock away our love. We must carry on phoning people who have no-one else. Phone, email those you know who are isolated. Help out with food for local people, deliver shopping for our neighbours.

Families with small children, the elderly, and the sick in our community need our service. They are in greater need than I can ever remember before. It's normal and understandable to be afraid at this time.

But we should not let fear stand in our way. We must carry on with being a family. Being like mothers. Because that is what Jesus calls us to do.

So on this Mothering Sunday, in these difficult circumstances, let's remember the call of Jesus to his mother Mary and John from the suffering of the cross. Let's remember that that is also a call to us too.

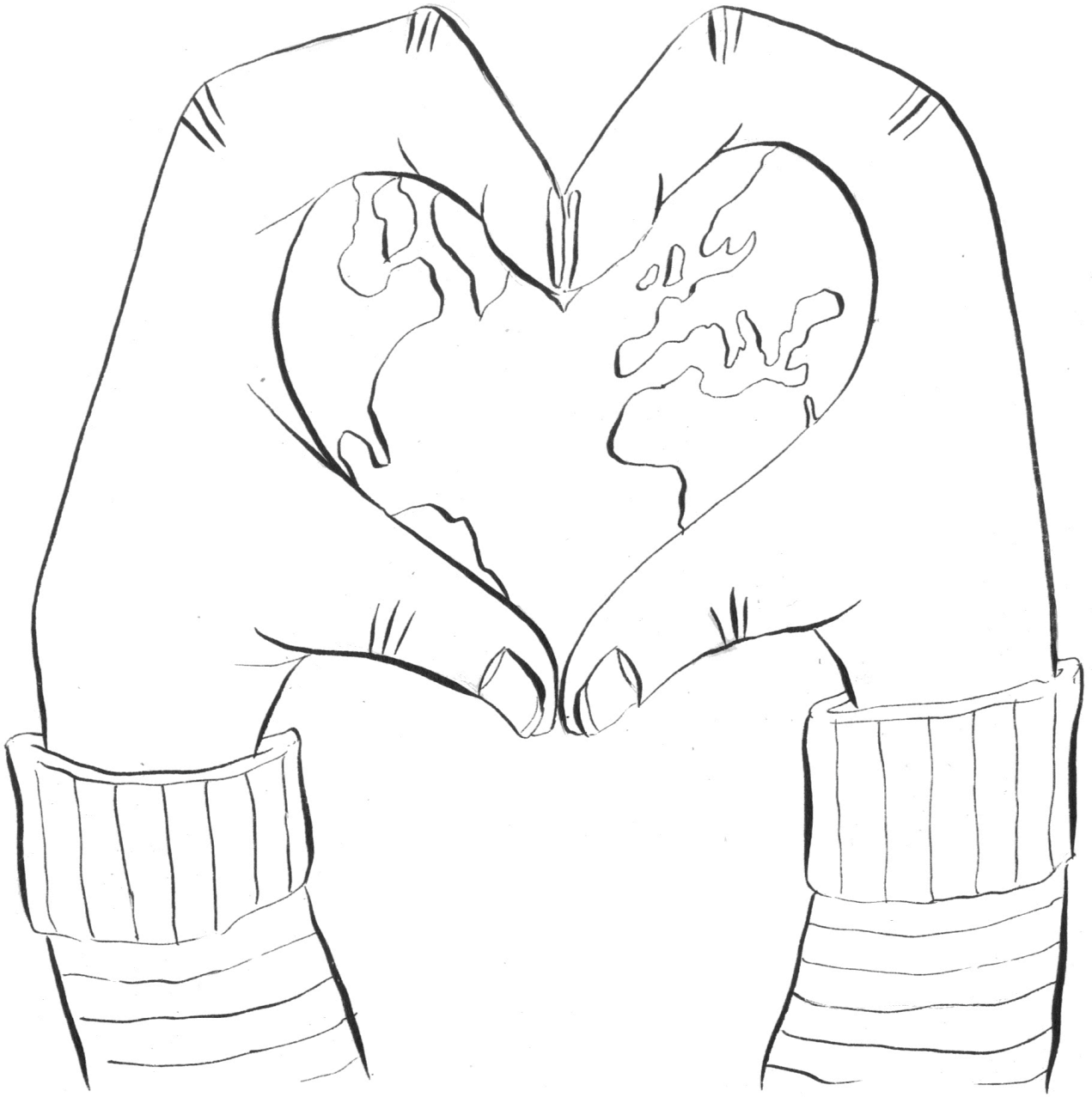
As you kneel with me at the foot of the cross, maybe you will hear His call.

Let's be a church family that serves, and invites, all others. Amen

Fr Tracy Williams Curate



Jesus' mother stood near his cross. His mother's sister was also standing there, with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower he loved standing there. He said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." Then he said to the follower, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this follower took her to live in his home.



Name _____



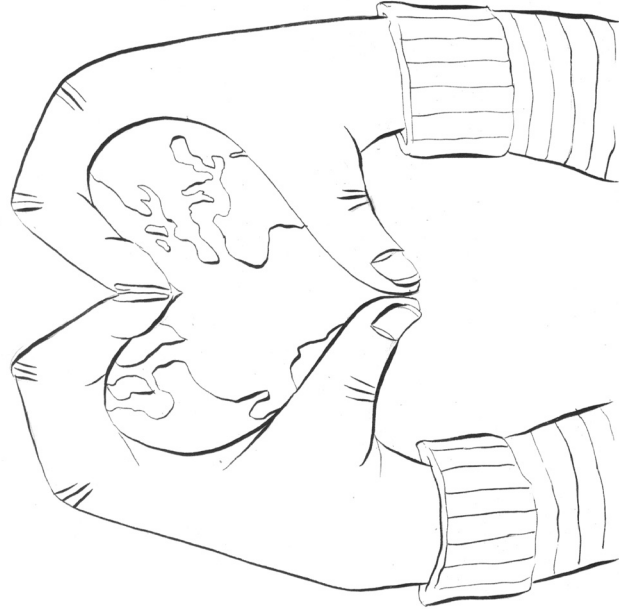
ROOTS Activity Sheet

14-20 March 2021
Lent 4



John 3.14-21

Jesus speaks about eternal life and living in the light of God.



Jesus says, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die, but may have eternal life.'



Can you come up with something to thank God for, beginning with each letter of the word 'light'?

L i g h t



In the flame, draw a way we can show the love of God in the world.



Use your finger or a pencil to follow the labyrinth path as you think about God loving you for ever. You can start the journey wherever you like.

