

St Francis Weekly News for The Fifth Sunday of Easter 10th May 2020



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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

From the moment I stepped out of the door to open up the church for the first St Francis Heartsease Free Food delivery of the day it was clear that it was going to be a beautiful day!

The sun was shining, the birds were singing and I was wearing short sleeved shirt with no cardigan. It felt like a summer's day and as the day progressed we were not disappointed.

The weather held and the planned outdoor offerings were laid on without a hitch. The celebrations and commemorations were of course nothing like what they might have been – but the day, nevertheless, felt special and the hope is that everyone was able to join in one way or another.

**The Church of St Francis Heartsease
75th anniversary of VE Day
8th May 2020
11.00am – two minutes silence**



**3.00pm National Toast –
"To those who gave so much, we thank you"**

The two minute silence at 11am was observed with the ringing of the bell to start and 75 tolls to conclude what was a very special time of remembrance and thanksgiving. It was particularly poignant to observe others taking part in their own quiet way. As I stood outside the church I saw several vehicles stop for the two minutes, and only driving away when the time was well and truly over.

During the afternoon many families were out and about, all strictly observing the social distancing rules, but all of them enjoying the bunting and decorations many of the houses had festooned around and about – and at 3pm me and David marked the nationwide toast:

'To those who gave so much, we thank you' with a glass of bubbly outside the church. Under the window we laid out a table crammed with donated boxes of popcorn and cartons of drink for the children passing by.



The Empty Tomb was surrounded by 'Let it Grow' free plants and seedlings to take away [what a lovely reminder of this special day] and as ever, the Free Food table was crammed with goodies.

So, with Revd Winnie and Eeyore putting on a splendid VE Day window display and a special power point presentation playing in the other window, all in all St Francis Church really joined in the celebrations with style!



Many thanks to Bee for her art and craftwork that went toward making the window display so eye-catching.

And thanks also to Sarah for capturing the mood of the afternoon with her beautiful photographs stunningly displayed on Facebook.

VE Day around the estate



CHRISTIAN AID



The Church of St Francis Heartsease has a proud tradition of supporting overseas aid. This year which sees the coronavirus pandemic threatening the world's most vulnerable peoples makes the 2020 Christian Aid fundraising effort even more vital than it has ever been.

Too many people worldwide live without what we would consider the basic necessities of life – access to clean running water, sanitary living conditions, a safe place to live.

Christian Aid provides aid and relief to those who need it most and they need our help. Below is a message from Sue Green as to how we can donate toward this lifesaving, world changing Christian charity.

SUE WRITES: This week is Christian Aid Week (10 - 17th May). Could you give some money to help Christian Aid in their work assisting the poorest and most vulnerable in the world?

Choose one of these ways:

1) Go to their Just Giving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/norwich-christianaid>

2) Phone Christian Aid on 020 7523 2492

3) Set aside money to bring to church (and put in an envelope marked 'Christian Aid') to bring when we can meet again at St Francis Church.

Let's remember our global neighbours and be as generous as we can.

CHRISTIAN AID FUNDRAISING COOKBOOK

Paul Scarff, Treasurer of Christian Aid, Norwich, would love to receive recipes from as many churches as possible to make up a recipe book (to be sold online initially until things return to normal). Contributions to paul.scarff57@gmail.com or 14 Victoria Road, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6NT.

Love Sue

ST FRANCIS HEARTSEASE FREE FOOD

The Free Food volunteers remain as busy as ever with hundreds of kilos of food being given out on the Free Food table or parcelled out and delivered onto local doorsteps every week .

This week I thought it would be nice to feature our delivering duo Jim and Sue Green who week by week have carefully transported dozens and dozens of parcels around the Heartsease using only pedal power.



Thank you to them and a special thank you also to Eleanor [picture next week!] who plays a huge part in making not only the Free Food initiative happen, both in packing parcels and delivering [she too relies mostly on pedal power] but also coordinates much of St Francis pastoral response with innumerable phone calls and emails. See below!

PASTORAL CARE

As I mentioned last week a big part of church life is ensuring that every single person connected with the church feels that not only are they a part of the church family – but that they are seen and listened to. Spiritual wellbeing is paramount, but physical and emotional well being is important too.

Everyone is of equal importance, and where someone's well being is vulnerable it is the responsibility of the church to try and assist in any way possible. That includes taking up issues on behalf of individuals or groups who might be struggling in terms of having their voices heard by organisations or institutions.



It was recently brought to our attention that some families on the estate were struggling to access the School Meal Replacement Voucher Scheme introduced by the government to help families cope with providing additional meals for their children whilst schools are closed.

After identifying the issue Eleanor contacted Adam Giles [City Councillor for Crome Ward] who very swiftly took the matter up and was able to give us the good news that any family experiencing difficulty accessing the vouchers can contact the relevant school direct and that the school is then required to do all they can to resolve the issue, providing printed vouchers if necessary.

If you or anyone you know is still experiencing problems relating to these vouchers please get in touch and we will take it further.

In terms of providing the best possible pastoral care for St Francis parishioners we are indebted to both Councillor Adam Giles and Councillor Alan Waters for their support and assistance at this very difficult time.



In times of stress and anxiety it's always good to know that help and support is always available.

This is just a gentle reminder that we are always ready to listen if you need to talk. [07990 576118]

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In these difficult times someone might just need one of them...

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

St Francis Free Food: 07990 576118

[Other numbers are listed at the back of the newsletter]

WORSHIP & PRAYER

It is with a feeling of deep relief that I am able to pass on the good news that Vicars are now officially permitted to enter their churches to pray and to celebrate Holy Communion albeit behind locked doors.

These past few weeks have been particularly difficult for me in that whilst able to access the Church building to oversee St Francis Heartsease Free Food I have not been officially allowed to enter the sacred space that is St Francis Church to pray.

It has been a very interesting experience to pray a lot in the Bell Tower before and after ringing the bell – but one that I can now put behind me as I stand in our beautiful church space or sit in the Chancel and offer up prayer throughout the day. Alleluia!

Rest assured I will be praying for the day to come swiftly when when we can all be there together again.



A WORD FROM THE VICAR

Friday 8th May is not only the anniversary of VE day, it is also the day when the church commemorates the life of a very important Norwich woman.

Mother Julian was the first woman to ever write a book in the English language and she is also now regarded as one of the most influential female spiritual writers of all time.

Her book 'Revelations of Divine Love' written in the late fourteenth century carefully documents a series of visions she experienced when seriously ill and tells us what God revealed to her through those visions.

It took her many, many years of prayer and self denial to reach the point where she was able write the book – but in the course of her struggles she became a great source of inspiration and spiritual support to the many people of her day who went to her window to seek advice. They could not go to her door, simply because she didn't have one.

As an anchorite, someone who chose to live a solitary religious life, she was walled up in a small cell which was attached to her parish church.

So, no doorway, just three windows. One to look into the church sanctuary to observe and take part in the daily Holy Communion that took place there; one where her food was passed through and the third which was open to the world – the one where people could call through the curtain to seek her help.

And seek her out they did, because Mother Julian spoke of wonderful things – like God's love for us; his tender care for all that he has made; his promise of hope. Life changing knowledge for them – and life transforming for us as well.

Mother Julian's book is a beautiful expression of her love for God, her dependence upon the grace of God received through Jesus and the hope and promise she received from him.

Julian knew what it was to suffer; she had lived through times of plague and social unrest, she knew what it was to be alone – she knew what it was like to struggle.

And yet her faith, her prayerful way of being and her utter reliance upon God enabled her to live a solitary life of prayer and to pass on the greatest of all gifts – the gift of God given hope.

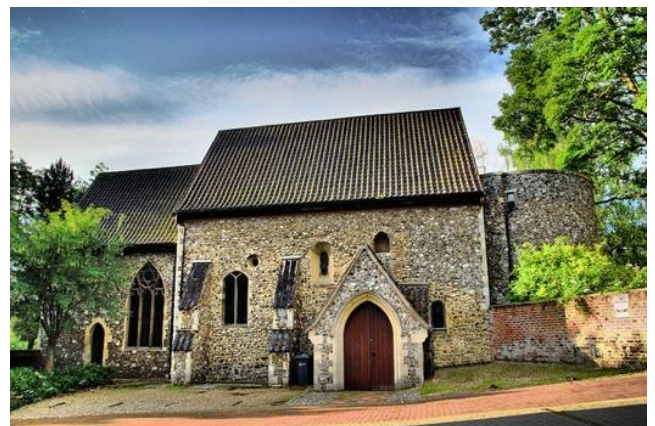
'All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well'. Those few words of promise, revealed by God to Mother Julian of Norwich is perhaps one of the most quoted phrases in the English Language – how wonderful it is that it was a Norwich girl who spoke them, and how much more wonderfully they have travelled down through the centuries to us.

And they are, of course, especially relevant for us as we find our way through these times of worrying disease, social uncertainty, and personal isolation.

All shall be well – and indeed they shall.

Like Mother Julian we may be living in an unfamiliar way, quite possibly, like her, completely isolated – cut off from those around us; but we are not alone. God is with us, and God's promise is as alive and relevant now as it was when Mother Julian first heard them breathed by the Spirit into her soul.

All shall be well.



Mother Julian's Church in King Street was destroyed by bombing during WWII; the rebuilt St Julian's Church has a Shrine dedicated to Julian.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

In Mother Julian's time the water supply from wells and other sources was so risky that people drank brewed small ale rather than risk illness and possibly even death by drinking the local Norwich water.

Times have changed in Norwich – but in other parts of the world nothing much has changed at all.



For many, not only is gaining access to water hard, dangerous work – all too often the only water available is contaminated with life threatening pollution. Thankfully, among their many other projects, Christian Aid is working hard to bring fresh, clean water supplies where they are need the most.

Sunday 10th May is the first day of Christian Aid week and a good day to think about how we here at St Francis can support the fundraising effort. How about 10p in a pot every time we flush the lavatory; fill the kettle; wash our hands – get ourselves a glass of water? I think we might be surprised at how quickly the funds would add up...



Oh, and just to keep you up to date, Revd Winnie has a new job at St Francis...



God's peace and blessing be with you and yours

Revd Janet

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Rob, David B, Paula, Gill, Karen, Maegan, John R & Bee, Colin, Lynn, Pete, Lauren, Fr Brian, David and Hazel L.

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

We remember with love 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 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 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Risen Christ,
your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and
the life: grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

GENESIS 8: 1 – 19

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals
and all the domestic animals that were with him in
the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth,
and the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep
and the windows of the heavens were closed, the
rain from the heavens was restrained, and the
waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end
of one hundred and fifty days the waters had
abated; and in the seventh month, on the
seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest
on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued
to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month,
on the first day of the month, the tops of the
mountains appeared.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of
the ark that he had made and sent out the raven;
and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up
from the earth.



Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the
waters had subsided from the face of the
ground; but the dove found no place to set its foot,
and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were
still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out
his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with
him. He waited another seven days, and again he
sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came
back to him in the evening, and there in its beak

was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that
the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he
waited another seven days, and sent out the dove;
and it did not return to him any more.

In the six hundred and first year, in the first month,
on the first day of the month, the waters were dried
up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering
of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the
ground was drying. In the second month, on the
twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was
dry. Then God said to Noah, 'Go out of the ark, you
and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives
with you. Bring out with you every living thing that
is with you of all flesh — birds and animals and
every creeping thing that creeps on the earth — so
that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful
and multiply on the earth.'



So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and
his sons' wives. And every animal, every creeping
thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the
earth, went out of the ark by families.

PSALM 31: 1 - 5

- 1** In you, O Lord, I seek refuge;
do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.
- 2** Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me.
- 3** You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,
- 4** take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.
- 5** Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

ACTS 7:55-end

But filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'

But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him.

Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'

When he had said this, he died.

1 PETER 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

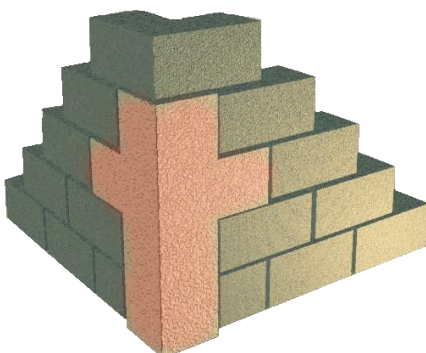
'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner',

and

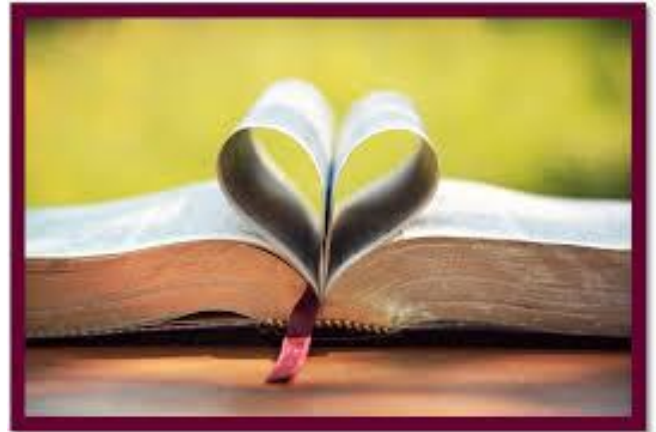
'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.'



They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

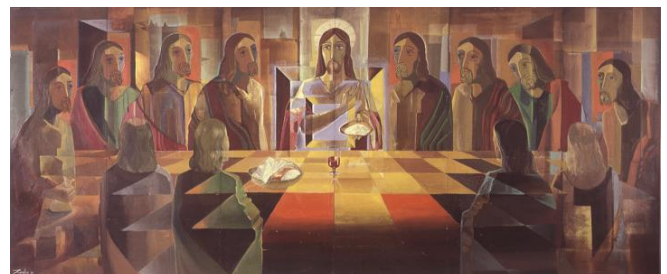
But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



JOHN 14:1-14

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'



Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?'

The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

REFLECTION FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

This week our Gospel reading takes us back to the last supper and the point where Jesus has told the disciples he will be leaving them. They are understandably dismayed at the prospect and Jesus' words are words of reassurance, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

He goes on to say that there is plenty of space in his Father's house and he is going to prepare a place for them. When Thomas asks "how do we get there?", Jesus responds "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". Like many of Jesus' sayings this needs some further explanation to help us know what he means.

I am the Way. If you've ever been to a strange place and had to ask directions it is slightly helpful to be told "turn left at the pub, right at the cricket field and right again past the railway bridge. Much more helpful is someone who says "Come with me and I'll show you".

When Jesus says "I am the Way" it is this second type of help he is offering. He himself has gone through life before us, experiencing all its ups and downs. More than that he has suffered unimaginable pain on our behalf and by doing so has created the way for us to be reconciled to God. He doesn't just point out the path, he takes us by the hand, leads us along it and walks with us all the way.

I am the Truth. In this world of fake news and seemingly endless false claims, this is a very important statement. We all know how much of a difference it makes when we find someone we can really trust, whether friend, relative or even a good plumber who will always get the job done.

In his life, work and teaching Jesus demonstrated complete integrity and trustworthiness. He was always prepared to speak the truth even when it was unpopular. He also lived a life entirely consistent with what he said. More than that, he revealed to us the truth about God. He can say to

Philip "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (meaning God).

I am the Life. Elsewhere in John's Gospel Jesus says "I have come that you may have life in all its fullness". By his death on the Cross Jesus has dealt with the sin which separated humans from God and has opened the way to life. The promise is life eternal with him. This means the life we are currently living is given a new dimension when we live it with him and we are promised eternal life in his presence after we die.

Jesus goes on to say "No-one comes to the Father except through me." Christianity is the only faith that tells the story of a God who loved us so much that he came down to share our human life and to die to renew our relationship with him.

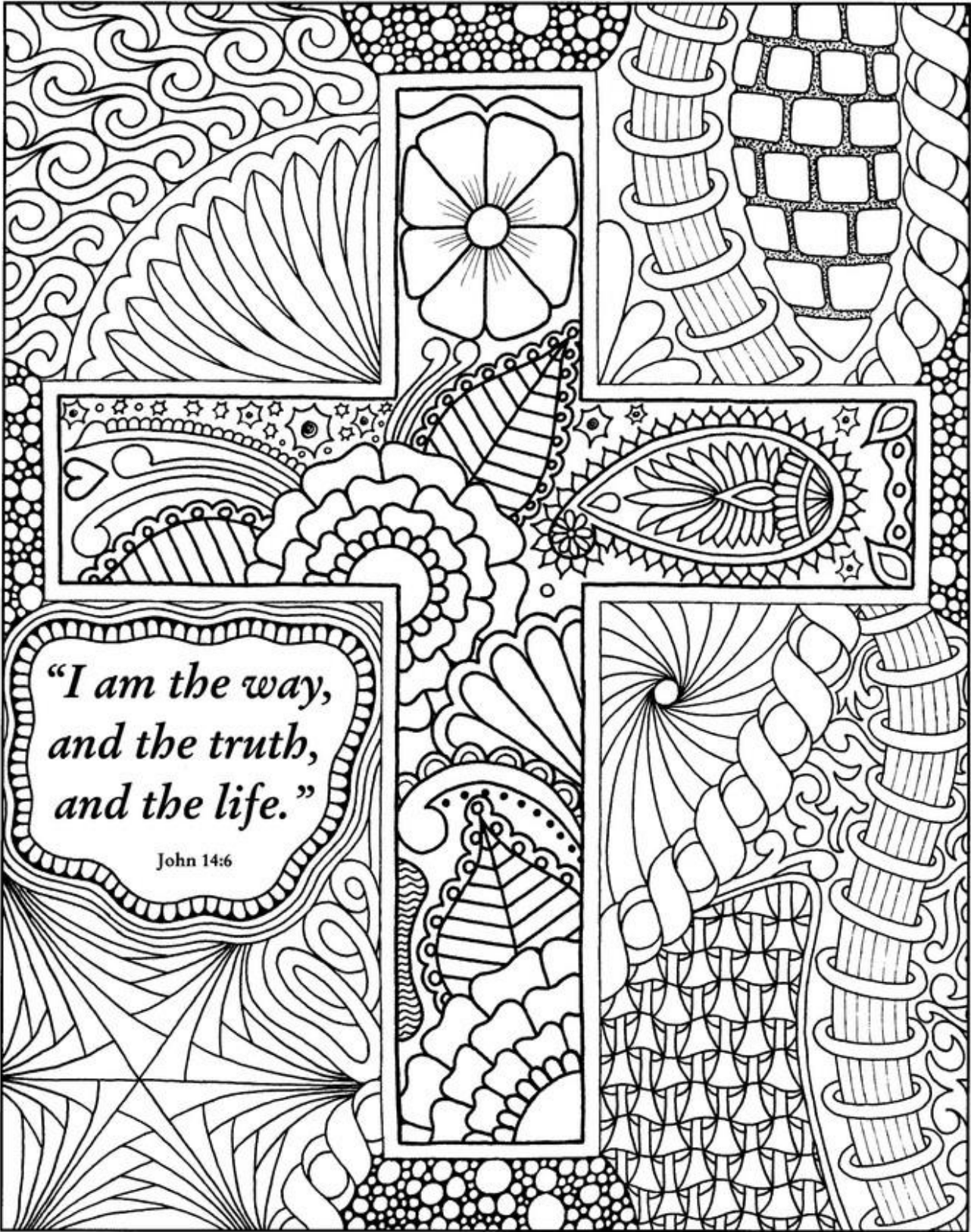
Finally we have the promise "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it." This doesn't mean that adding "in Jesus name" to every prayer request means that we will get what we ask for. It means that as our relationship with Jesus deepens and matures we should be able to listen for his voice guiding our thoughts and prayers so that what we ask for is in accordance with his will rather than in line with our own wishes.

This is particularly difficult at this present time when prayers for Covid-19 to disappear do not seem to be being answered, or at least not as quickly and easily as any of us would wish. I don't really have a good answer for this except that my experience is that God is trustworthy and will answer prayers in a way that is best for us even though it may not look like that at the time.

That is one thing that the various prayer stations we have prepared are there to reflect and help with. The Psalms chosen show a wide variety of feelings and moods but they all reflect on the trustworthiness of God, and we are encouraged to pray persistently and faithfully even when there is no immediate sign of an answer.

So I think that Jesus words at the start of this reading are well worth taking to heart. In these troubled times he says to us "Let not your hearts be troubled, Believe in God, believe also in me. He is the one who will guide us and walk beside us on life's journey. He is the one who we can trust absolutely. He is the one who offers us life in all its fullness. He is the one who demonstrates how much God loves us and he us the one who promises to hear and answer when we pray. So when we do feel troubled let's turn to him for comfort, help and support.

David Lechmere (Reader)



*"I am the way,
and the truth,
and the life."*

John 14:6

Name



John 14.1-14

Jesus tells his friends that he'll be with them for ever as he shows them the way to his Father's house.



Family time

Talk Look at John 14.1-14 together and talk about what the room Jesus makes ready for you might be like.

Do Go in to each room of your house, talk about what you do there and how Jesus can be involved in those aspects of your life together.

Pray As a family, join in this 'Breath prayer': as you breathe in, silently say, 'Jesus thank you . . .', as you breathe out, silently say, ' . . . that you are always with me.'

Activity time



Draw yourself walking with Jesus.



Can you use these letters to start each line of a poem about how Jesus is with you?

I a m t h e w a y



Use your finger or a pencil to follow a path through the labyrinth. Jesus says he'll be with us whether we're lost or get to the other end easily.



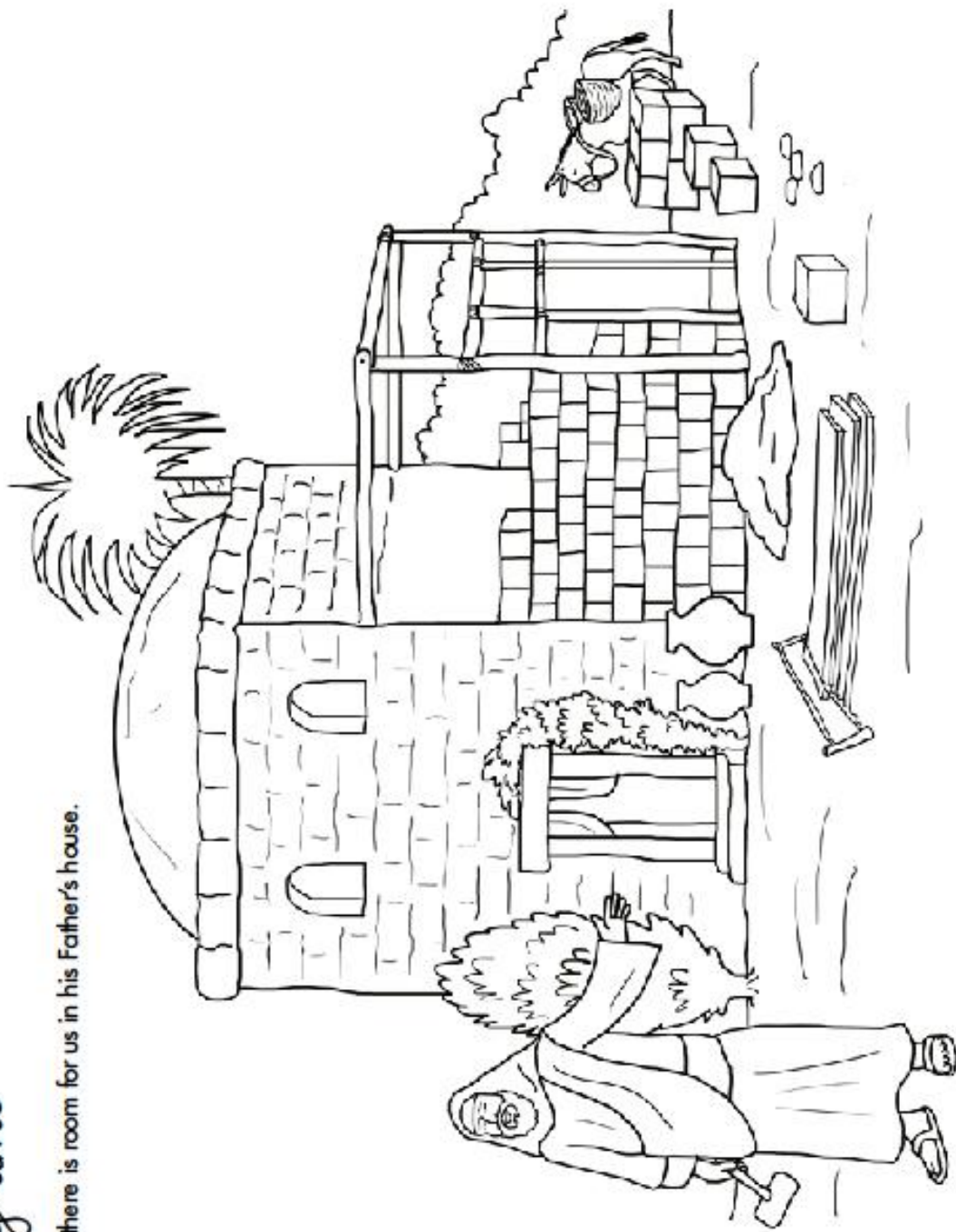
ROOTS Colouring Sheet

10-16 May 2020

Name

Colouring time

Jesus has made sure there is room for us in his Father's house.





Jesus said to his disciples, 'I will be going away soon, but don't worry, because I am going to prepare a place for you in my Father's house, which has many rooms. When the time is right, I will return and take you there, so that we can all be together.' Wanting to know where this place would be, Thomas asked, 'How will we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. I will show you the way to God the Father.' But Philip wanted Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus sighed. 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still don't recognise me?' Jesus continued, 'Believe in the Father and believe also in me, because I am in the Father and the Father is in me. If you can't do that, then look at the things I have done and you will know what God the Father is like. If you believe in me, you will be able to do even greater things than I have done. All you have to do is to ask in my name and I will do it for you.'

FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOL



USEFUL CONTACTS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

999 – Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Rescue)

101 – Police, non-emergency

111- NHS Telephone Health Advice Line

Norfolk County Council Services – for those who are vulnerable or in need of support Tel: 0344 800 8020

First Response Mental Health Helpline open 24/7
Tel: 0808 196 3494

Norwich Cruse Bereavement Support Tel: 01603 219977

Norwich Foodbank Emergency Help Tel: 0300 365 1123

Norwich City Councillors for Crome Ward:

Alan Waters Tel: 07774 229776

Adam Giles Tel: 07375 451983

Marion Maxwell Tel: 01603 615129

Thorpe Helping Hands, Community Support Service Tel: 07854 390408

Age UK Norwich Telephone Befriending 01603 496325

Age UK Norfolk Telephone Befriending 01603 785223

The Silver Line 0800 470 8090

Norfolk Association for the Disabled 01603 432900

Carers Matter 0800 0831148

Community Law Service Advice Tel: 01603 496623 or 07900 153753

Mancroft Advice Project [ages 11-25yrs] Tel: 0800 0744454

Citizens Advice Bureau Norwich Tel: 03444 111 444

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

NORCAS for those with drug, alcohol and gambling problems Tel: 01603 660070