



**Sunday Podcasts** of each Morning Prayer are available after the service on YouTube. The address is at the bottom at the page.

### **More on prayer**

Intercessory prayer: to build a bridge for my neighbour, so that they may come home to the Father."

*Mother Basilea Schlink*

Prayer is the raising of one's mind & heart to God. *St. John of Damascus 8th century*

"Anyone who wants to be always united to God must pray often and read the Bible often. For in prayer it is we who are speaking to God, but in the readings it is God speaking to us." *Isidore of Seville 7th cent.*

### **Can you help with any of these?**

We need saucepans and frying pans, mortar & pestle (grinding spices), shopping trolley, men's underwear and socks, jeans, sweatshirts (small sizes only), toiletries: hand wash, shower gel, toothpaste, hand cream. Please contact Margaret Lamb on 07719916704 or Sandra Morton on 01792 473569 . Thank you so much.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

From next month I have been given the pastoral oversight of the Parish of St. Nicholas, Townhill in addition to my own responsibilities as Vicar of St. James. Just how this will impact how things are run in St. James is yet to be seen. But it will affect us. Two congregations instead of one. Two sets of services. Changes are inevitable if I am to cope with the extra responsibility. I will keep you informed of any changes that will need to be made.

Why is this happening? The Church in Wales has been in slow decline for a number of years. In response a report was commissioned and a panel of 'experts' employed to sit on it. The result was a list of fifty recommendations aimed at reorganizing the Church. One of them was the recommendation that the Church do away with the parish system—one Vicar per church or churches—and replace it with Ministry Areas. Slowly these have evolved in our Diocese and the latest part of that process involves the reorganization of Swansea Ministry to include the parishes of St. Mary, St. James, St. Gabriel, St. Barnabas and St. Nicholas. The eventual aim is that all these will be served by a team of clergy and laity. This means that no longer will you be guaranteed to have the same person leading your service every week. Instead you will be led by any number of different people—clergy or worship leaders—depending who is on the Rota.

For some this has been hailed as progress and an important step forward, For others it is yet another step in the wrong direction. Whatever our opinions— and I have my own—it is inevitable, with four out of the six bishops in the Church actually imposing the changes on its clergy and parishes.

In fairness our bishop has not done that, preferring to let things happen gradually and with everyone's full cooperation. But this can't last forever otherwise Swansea and Brecon will be out of sync with the rest of the province. And so small steps are being taken as clergy leave or retire. Hence Townhill coming under my oversight. And so be warned, "times they are a changing".

God bless. Mark—Vicar of St. James with pastoral oversight of St. Nicholas, Townhill.

### **Normal service is resumed**

Last Sunday's service was cancelled because our son Ben was asked to take a Covid test having lost his sense of taste. As a consequence Hazel and I had to self-isolate. We are pleased—and relieved—that the test came back negative and so we can once again resume our Sunday services. Thank you everyone for your prayers—they worked.

### **New podcast—A time to speak**

Starting this week we will be beginning a new series of podcasts entitled: 'A time to speak' and featuring a number of invited guests speaking on various topics to do with the Christian Faith. Episode 1 Prayer and Place can be found at the same YouTube channel as below.

### **More jokes**

A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

Two boys were walking home from Sunday school after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?" The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your dad.

**St. James Sunday podcasts on YouTube are available here:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNVea6r8mEr\\_KnOkSv6qQA/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNVea6r8mEr_KnOkSv6qQA/)

## Sunday Collect—Trinity 18

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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. **Amen.**

## Sunday readings:

Isaiah 25.1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4.1-9; Matthew 22.1-14

## Modern art

A Swedish bishop was coming to the end of his ministry. It was decided it was time to paint his portrait for the gallery of bishops in the palace. The diocese rather bravely decided to commission a modern artist. He painted the portrait and then the great day of unveiling arrived. The painting was uncovered in front of the bishop and a group of dignitaries. Everyone went quiet. On the canvas were hundreds of abstract patterns, colours, shapes and the vague outline of a head right in the centre.

‘Bishop, what do you think?’ they asked.

He replied, ‘Matthew 14.27—’Take heart, be not afraid, it is I.’”



## An experience?

In a recent Diocesan Bulletin I came across the following article entitled: “New initiative to help attract more visitors to your church”. You can imagine that my interest was piqued. I read on:

“The National Churches Trust has developed an initiative to help churches create new ways to encourage visitors to their buildings.” So far so good. But then:

“It is inviting churches in the diocese to get creative and develop some exciting days out, which it will promote on its website. It is also offering training to help churches get involved.

The trust's Linda Patrick said: “Whether they are having a day out, on holiday or coming from further afield, today's tourists and visitors want something really special. They want to feel part of the place they are visiting. They are seeking an experience.”

The article continues by explaining what an ‘experience’ is: “Experiences can be as simple as a guided walk between two churches and could include: a guided cycle ride visiting three churches and sampling the best of local produce; an afternoon tea party in a church with live music; church tower visit to see the sights on guided town tour; artistic workshops or classes....”

In fairness the Trust exists to support “places of worship of historic, architectural and community value used by Christian denominations throughout the UK”. But other than physically getting people into our buildings—and possibly putting some money into the collection box in the wall—I really don't see the value of such an ‘experience’.

Surely churches exist to help people ‘experience’ something much more valuable. The love, forgiveness and salvation of God. That, more than anything else, is surely why they are there?

## Contact information:

For all contributions to the newsletter please email the Vicar, Mark at: [stjamesuplands1@googlemail.com](mailto:stjamesuplands1@googlemail.com)

Home phone number: (01792) 470532

The Parish Website can be found at: [www.http://www.stjameswanssea.org.uk/](http://www.stjameswanssea.org.uk/)

## The Social Dys-Dance: A dance for a Pandemic

The Social Dys-Dance

Here we go:

Allemande left and  
Do-si-do.

Keep your distance,  
Two meters apart,  
The length of two sheep  
Or a farmer's hay cart.

Step off the pavement,  
Smile in your mask,  
Put out your arms  
And let them go past.

Balance on left foot,  
Sanitise hands.  
Elbows touch elbows;  
A comical dance.

Eyes on the shelves,  
We go round the shops;  
Following arrows,  
We trip and we hop.

Feet getting tangled,  
We skip and we prance,  
Wave arms like windmills:  
A Social Dys-Dance!

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September 2020

## Acts of the Apostles

Just a reminder that every Tuesday there is an hour's lesson on the Acts of the Apostles on zoom with the Vicar. If you are interested email him at the address below.

## Important dates

11th October—10.30

Morning Prayer—St. James

13th October—7pm

The Book of Acts Zoom Bible Study.

15th October—7pm

Congregational Zoom Meeting.

## Parish Mission Statement

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...and your neighbour as yourself.

Matthew 22:37-38