

St James Parish Newsletter

24th January 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

This week I want to include something written by my friend Steve Bunting, Vicar of St. Thomas, Swansea. It is a salutary reminder that the virus does not discriminate on the basis of age. Everyone is vulnerable. Recently he wrote:

“So the Buntings didn’t have the Christmas we were planning for. Just before Christmas me and Rachel (my wife) both started having a cough and I started having flu-like symptoms. I deteriorated quite quickly and was constantly shaking. We went for a Covid test, me in my pyjamas, to the Grand Theatre hoping I wouldn’t see anyone I knew. I did, and their response was....flip you look like you’re dying. We both knew it would be positive.

On 23rd Dec. I couldn’t move from the sofa, had begun to hallucinate every time I shut my eyes and my body was cramping from top to bottom. Rachel called the doctors who said they couldn’t do anything unless I basically stopped breathing. I didn’t move and deteriorated Christmas Eve and Christmas Day until Robert Smith dropped off an oxygen meter.

On Boxing Day it had dropped to 85% and Rachel called doctors again and after 47 minutes on hold, they called an ambulance. 2 hours later the ambulance arrived and I was taken to Morriston. Chest X-rays, ECG, oxygen up the nose and untold syringes of stuff in both my hands, I was admitted into a makeshift ward-area in the GP Out-of-hours. I was looked after by an awesome nurse all through the night. On the following morning, I was admitted to the ward where I remained until New Year’s Eve on oxygen and all sorts of stuff in drips, syringes, pills and injections. The consultant was calm and reassuring, that they knew what they were doing and had learnt so much since March. The nurses had to wear PPE anytime someone on the ward pressed their buzzer for attention. They were so awesome, kind and caring. We just take them so much for granted. I was eventually let out when I had been off oxygen for 24hrs and at that point three people were already waiting for my bed. I have been told it will take around a month to get strength back.

The reason I share this, and I do it reluctantly, is because I just want people to realise how random this virus is. How normal people, and younger people can be completely wiped out by it. How dangerous it is. Please wear masks and be sensible. Several times I was fairly convinced I was going to die. Thanks so much to those who were praying, I could feel it so strong in hospital....you know who you are. Thanks for those who sent pyjamas and stuff to the hospital as I went with nothing. Thanks to Rachel who in the middle of it all was trying to look after me, Charlotte and herself while battling the virus herself. Thanks also to those people who kept Christmas dinner going led by Deborah Sharpe. Thanks to Jesus for being awesome. And thanks to the

NHS, who saved my life. I would swap my car for the vaccine tomorrow”.

We need very much to bear this in mind when we come to make decisions about when to start services again.

God bless,
Mark



Our 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

Sunday Podcasts

of each Sunday Morning Service are available after the service on YouTube.

A time to speak

Parish Podcast on the YouTube channel.

The address for both is at the bottom of the page.

This week I am pleased to welcome the Rev Stuart Bell as our guest preacher.

You don’t have to know what is ahead if you have God and He has you.

Even when we cannot see the why and wherefore of God’s dealings, we know that there is love in and behind them, and so we can rejoice always.

J.I. Packer



HAND WASHING



RESPIRATOR MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCING



MEDICAL CARE



SELF-ISOLATING



RESPIRATORY HYGIENE



HEALTHY EATING



INCREASE IMMUNITY

THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ON THE PARISH WEBSITE:

www.stjamesswansea.org.uk

St. James Sunday Services on YouTube are available here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNvea6r8mEr_KnOkSv6qQA/

The Vicar’s New blog can be found here: sonofzebedee.blogspot.com

Five Questions

1. **What is your name?** Sarah Olive Evans (née Lewis)
2. **Where were you born?** The Salvation Army Nursing Home, North Road, Cardiff.
3. **What is your earliest memory of Church?** We moved from Cardiff when I was five and my dad became the Sunday School Superintendent at Dunvant Gospel Hall. I so enjoyed all the activities and action choruses. I came to faith when I was nine just before my father died.
- 4/5 **What is your favourite verse of Scripture and why?** 1 Peter 1 v. 5 which reminds us we are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation...". This is so reassuring. It is God Himself who keeps us trusting and believing all our days. (Full verse: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time".)



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This week marks the culmination of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It involves Christian communities across the world and from almost every denomination.

The materials used for Bible Study and Prayer are prepared each year jointly by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

It was developed originally in 1908 by the American Episcopalian clergyman Paul Wattson, and Spencer Jones, the Vicar of Moreton-in-Marsh in England. (Wattson became a Roman Catholic in 1909).

The motivation behind the idea is a wish to fulfil God's desire "that all may be one" from Jesus' High Priestly Prayer in John 17 and the words of the Nicene Creed: "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church".

The Church was One Church until 1054 when it split into two: The Roman Catholic Church based, loosely, in the West and the Eastern Orthodox Church, in the East. This is how it remained until the 15th century Reformation. However since then it has continued to split and there are now approximately 30,000 different denominations, surely a source of great sorrow to Jesus who preached and prayed for unity amongst His people.

Some believe that we can still have an approximate doctrinal unity if we all at least ascribe to, for example, the Nicene Creed. And this at least does serve the purpose of helping us discern what is Christian and what is not. But can 30,000 denominations ascribe to this and still count the Church as one? Others would say that was no unity and believe that the only true unity is to return to the Church as it was for the first 1000 years. A church that was, in the true sense of the word, One.

Personally, I believe that the first position is a fudge. So many different denominations, some at odds with one another, cannot represent the unity of which Jesus was praying for. And so the only really authentic unity was to become one 'denomination' or one Church again. Will that ever happen? Well Jesus was born to a Virgin, so I guess anything can happen, if we pray and trust God enough.

Contact information

For all contributions to the newsletter please email the Vicar, Mark, at:

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Home phone number: (01792) 470532

The Parish Website can be found at: www.stjamesswansea.org.uk

Epiphany 3

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of Your saving presence:

renew Your people with Your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by Your mighty power;
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.

Readings

Genesis 14: 17 - 20;

Psalm 128;

Revelation 19: 6 - 10;

John 2:1- 11

Quick quotes

"The Church is the only co-operative society in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members".

William Temple

A church for everyone

A church decided to have four separate services each Sunday. There was one service for those people who were new to the faith, another for regular members who preferred the more traditional worship service, one for those who'd lost their faith and wanted to get it back and a service for those who had had some unsuccessful experiences with other churches and had some complaints.

The four divisions were named:

Finders, Keepers, Losers, Weepers.

A cold church

A cold Church is like butter. It never spreads very well.

Worship is about investment

You quickly lose interest in the church if you have nothing invested.