



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

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.

Long sermons

The Revd Jack Jones, a vicar known for his lengthy sermons, noticed Ralph get up and leave during the middle of his message. He returned just before the conclusion of the service.

Afterwards Revd Jones asked Ralph where he had gone. 'I went to get a haircut,' was the reply. 'But,' said the vicar, 'Why didn't you do that before the service?' 'Because,' Ralph said, 'I didn't need one then.'

Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God.

Oswald Chambers

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Lent has officially started and I hope that those of you who have access to the internet were able to mark Ash Wednesday in some way.

I appreciate that there are those who would have wished for something more—like a zoom Ash Wednesday Service or even having the church open for a short service for a sprinkling rather than a marking with ashes. But given the current state of things and the woeful inadequacy of Zoom to produce anything approaching any kind of religious feeling or atmosphere, we have had to pass this year.

But the essence of Lent is not, nor has it ever been, reliant on one day, but 40 days. Not one service or act of worship but a season of self-discipline and self-denial. This too is worship—where we offer all that we are to God, loving Him with all our heart, mind soul and body.

Israel of old came under intense criticism and censure from God through the prophets because they kept offering God their sacrifices but not their hearts. It was all outward show and religion. There was no faithful commitment to God or true repentance and willingness to change. And so Psalm 51—a favourite Lenten Psalm—admonishes us:

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17)

Any worship is meaningless if the heart is left untouched. And so I would say to everyone that that it is how you keep a Lent that will please God. It would be good to symbolically mark the start of Lent with ash on our foreheads, but provided your heart is right with Him and your repentance and acts of self-discipline are sincere then that is what He is looking for, not just in the season of Lent but every other time as well.

God be with you all,

Mark

Five Questions

1. **What is your name?** James Anthony Lamb
2. **Where were you born?** Old Colwyn, Denbighshire in 1947
3. **What is your earliest memory of Church?** Being christened at the age of 6 in St John's Methodist Church in Colwyn Bay. Very soon after we started attending St. Paul's Church (Anglican) where I was a member of the all male choir and a server. So Sundays were very busy with an 8.30 Communion, 10.00 sung Mattins and on the 1st Sunday of each month at 11.00 sung Holy Communion was celebrated Sunday School was in the afternoon and the sung Evensong was at 6pm.
4. **When did the Christian faith become important to you?** See above, but I do remember my confirmation service and the whole ceremony led by the Bishop of St. Asaph.
5. **What is your favourite Bible verse/s and why?** Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 13, v15. *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”.*
I have often heard these words at the many wedding services I attended as a choir boy (we were given half a crown for singing at these!), but I remember them especially at my wedding to Margaret in St Mary's Church in Doncaster.

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

Eco Church: BBC Article

In a recent BBC article we are told that both the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis have spoken out about the climate crisis in recent years. The article also highlighted the thoughts of some young Christians who have said that they want to see more action in their own churches.

According to the BBC a recent survey of young Christians suggested that a large proportion of young people questioned were concerned about climate change, but around two-thirds had never heard a Sunday sermon on the issue. BBC News reported that they had heard from young churchgoers on their thoughts about faith and the battle to halt climate change. You can listen to the video here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-56001191>

Living Streets

Uplands Living Streets is interested in how we can continue to enjoy the more traffic-free streets that we've got used to in lockdown, so that where we live is safer and less polluted for people of all ages, and people have greater opportunities to live, meet, shop and eat in pleasant surroundings.

The ideas Living Streets wants to progress in Uplands include a new Walter Rd cycle route, a 20mph speed limit through and around Uplands, a front garden planting scheme to 'green' our environment and help to nurture a sense of community, and reclaiming Gwydr Square from traffic, creating more space for people, better parking arrangements and supporting local businesses to thrive.

We need your views on these and any other ideas you may have to make Uplands the best it can be – environmentally, socially and economically. If you support the idea of a cleaner, safer, more walkable Uplands and would like to be involved in this new local group, or would like to join our mailing list, please get in touch.

They are running a free zoom event to be held on Saturday 27th February . It is run by Eventbrite in terms of (free) ticketing. Just a mechanism to not make the zoom code too public and possibly open to misuse. The event has guest speakers such as Angie Bettany from Hoogah/ Room to Grow and Neil Barry from Swansea Community Green Spaces project.

<https://www.uplandslivingstreets.org> for the update and <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-growing-meeting-for-uplands-swansea-tickets-136300870573> for the community growing event on Sat 27th Feb at 10.30am.

A step too far

Father Brian, an elderly Catholic priest, was speaking to Father Karl, a younger priest, saying, 'You had a good idea to replace the first four pews with plush bucket theatre seats. It worked like a charm. The front of the church always fills first now.' Father Karl nods, and the old priest continues, 'And you told me adding a little more beat to the music would bring young people back to church, so I supported you when you brought in that rock 'n' roll gospel choir. Now our services are consistently packed to the rafters.' 'Thank you, Father Brian,' answers the young priest. 'I am pleased that you are open to the new ideas of youth.' 'All of these ideas have been well and good,' comments Father Brian wisely. But I'm afraid you've gone too far with the drive-thru confessional.' 'But, Father Brian,' protests the young Father Karl, 'My confessions have nearly doubled since I began that!' 'Indeed,' replies the elderly priest, 'And I appreciate that. But the flashing neon sign, "Toot 'n Tell or Go to Hell" cannot stay.

Contact information

For all contributions to the newsletter please email the Vicar, Mark, at: stjamesuplands1@googlemail.com
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First Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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 9: 8 - 17;
Psalm 25: 1 - 9;
Ephesians 6: 10 - 21;
Mark 1: 9 - 15

Christian humour

Mrs Marble, a Sunday School teacher, was describing that when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom she turned into a pillar of salt, when little Percy interrupted. 'My mummy looked back once while she was driving,' he announced, 'and she turned into a telephone pole.'

A narrow escape

The Rev Douglas Johnston was not the best of drivers. One Sunday he was driving home from church when unfortunately, he had a minor bump with a cyclist. The poor man was knocked off his bike into the ditch. The vicar naturally stopped his car, got out and profusely apologised and gave the cyclist his calling card saying that if he could ever be of help, then the man should not hesitate to ask. As the man rode home he looked at the card which said, 'The Revd Douglas Johnston is sorry he missed you today.'

Importance of prayer

God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil. *E.M. Bounds*