



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.

Fairtrade

This is Fairtrade fortnight. As well as 25% off selected lines at their online shop, www.traidcraftshop.co.uk they have some activities to mark the event. Please find attached two - a crossword and a quiz. Traidcraft and other Fairtrade groups have been encouraging us to be good stewards of our planet since the 1970s and have been actively supporting sustainable products as an alternative. How about each of us looking out for the Fairtrade mark in the supermarkets and making an extra effort this fortnight to add some products with the Fairtrade symbol to our shop?

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Following Welsh Government and Church in Wales guidelines we will not be opening on 7th March, instead we are aiming for Palm Sunday. Hopefully by then the restrictions of Level 4 will be lifted, the pressures on the NHS a little lighter and more people will have been vaccinated. Let's hope and pray that this time we can continue on an upward trajectory towards a more permanent 'normality'.

At the start and in the middle of this, there were worries that because of the restrictions placed on public worship, people's faith would suffer and Church attendance would then, as a consequence, decline. However, a recent survey (September 2020) by the Roman Catholic Church in Britain found that in a sample of 2,292 lay people and priests in the Catholic Church, 65% of those questioned said that the experience had made them more thankful, 33% more hopeful (compared with 15% less), and 59% more neighbourly. In relation to God 54% said it made them more prayerful (12% less) and 50% closer to God (9% less).

One way of looking at this is to see what has happened as a test of faith. That is how James saw it in his letter:

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4).

And Jesus too pointed to the fact that the seed that fell on rocky soil died away in the heat of persecution, because it had no root. And the seed that fell among the weeds were overwhelmed by the worries of this life (See Matthew 13:1ff)

Our faith as professing Christians has been put under severe trial. Like the Israelites in the Wilderness, who we truly put our faith and trust in will become evident. God has been sifting His Church during this time, perhaps because there are more trying times ahead. But take heart, if what the results of the above survey are saying is true then what we will find at the end of this is a leaner but more spiritually healthy Church. A Church fit for purpose, and one which can be more mightily used by God.

God bless,
And keep on, keeping on

Mark

Deanery Lent Course

Last Sunday was the first of four sessions of the Deanery Lent Course organised by Revd Jonathon Wright, vicar of St Peter's, Cockett and led by Revd Tony Berry. The aim of each session is to look at how the four gospels record Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Last week we explored and discussed (in break-out rooms) Mark 8: 27-38 where Jesus predicts His death.

About 40 people from churches throughout our deanery from Ystalyfera to Clydach, as well as Morryston and Swansea, took part. It was good to meet people and share our thoughts. The remaining sessions, at 4pm on Sundays, are:

28 th February:	The teaching of Jesus (Matthew 18)
7 th March:	The power of Jesus
14 th March:	The nature of Jesus

It's not too late to join the course. To receive Zoom log-in details email this address: priest@cockettparish.org.uk

Margaret Lamb

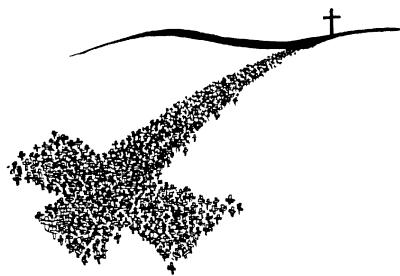
This newsletter is available on the Parish website: www.stjamesswansea.org.uk
St. James Sunday Services on YouTube are available here:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNVea6r8mEr_KnOkSv6qQA/
The Vicar's New blog can be found here: sonofzebedee.blogspot.com

Five Questions

1. **What is your name?** Margaret Dawkin
2. **Where were you born?** Cwmafan, a small village in the Afan Valley
3. **What is your earliest memory of Church?** Sunday School at Penuel Baptist Chapel, Cwmafan - as a very young child hearing 'stories of Jesus'.
4. **When did the Christian faith become important to you?** I was baptised in 1963, aged 15yrs, at Penuel Chapel and was married there a few years later. My faith began with those 'stories of Jesus' and developed slowly with a greater knowledge and understanding of church and the Scriptures - just a gradual realisation of the importance of the Christian Faith to my life.
5. **What is your favourite Bible verse/s and why?** Matthew 11 v.28. *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* In sad and difficult times - there is always someone to help carry your burden.

Don't Quit by John Greenleaf Whittier

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure comes about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell just how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit —
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.



The Friendship Quilt

As you know, members of St James' have supported SASS since the group started to use our Parish Centre for the Friday Drop-ins in January 2017. Over the past year, Sandra Morton and I have continued to help with the work involved in supporting our asylum seeker and refugee friends, and your donations have been gratefully received.

The Hay, Talgarth and Brecon group, who, pre-pandemic, hosted awaydays for SASS, is hoping to involve asylum seekers, refugees, friends and supporters in a community project to make a quilt. Packs of individual squares with embroidery threads are ready to be distributed to anyone who



would like to take part. Everyone is asked to embroider an image relating to friendship - the image of a dove is an example. The squares will be returned to Brecon where a quilter will sew them together and, hopefully, the quilt will be sold/raffled to raise money for SASS. Please contact me if you are interested .

Margaret Lamb (phone 0771991 6704)

Contact information

For all contributions to the newsletter please email the Vicar, Mark, at:
stjamesuplands1@googlemail.com
Home phone number: (01792) 470532

First Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Readings

Genesis 17: 1 - 7, 15 - 16;
Psalm 22: 23 - end;
Romans 4: 13 - end;
Mark 8: 31 - end

Wave of Prayer

We all want to meet up in person again and although Zoom has been useful it has not been good for everyone. In January, our Mothers' Union branch decided not to renew our membership but to wait until we are able to meet again and at that point decide what we want to do.

I had agreed already to observe this year's Wave of Prayer on 20th February and, at Margaret's suggestion, I asked for some Zoom participants. This year's service coincided with the start of Lent so was particularly relevant. I was delighted that Eleanor, Margaret, Janet, Sonia and Myra (who was celebrating her birthday) joined me on Zoom for a short service to remember and pray for our prayer partners. We took it in turns to light a candle for our partners and then we held our candles aloft during the final prayer.

We have all been affected by this pandemic, but with vaccines and the lifting of restrictions, we are luckier than most and during our Wave of Prayer it was very moving to reflect on how difficult life can be in many deprived areas – and that's before Covid struck. Here's hoping we can meet soon,
God Bless, Dreena