



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 Sunday Morning Services are available on YouTube as are the Parish Podcasts 'A time to speak.'

Joke

Ordinand to bishop: "Bishop, that was a great sermon you just preached, but sometimes I couldn't tell when you were talking about God, and when you were talking about bishops."

To which the bishop replied: "Young man, in your situation, you would do well to blur the distinction."

Laughter

Laughter brightens the eye, increases the perspiration, expands the chest, forces the poisoned air from the least-used cells, and tends to restore that exquisite poise or balance which we call health.

O.S. Marden

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

In "The Last Days newsletter," Leonard Ravenhill tells about a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village, who walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronising way, one tourist asked, "Were any great men born in this village?"

The old man replied "Nope, only babies."

It is an amusing story but it points to one very important truth about the Christian life, namely, that we all need to grow and develop spiritually towards full maturity. In the letter to the Hebrews the writer bemoans the fact that all too many Christians had failed to take this seriously. He writes:

"Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again! You need milk, not solid food!" (Hebrews 5: 12)

This is in stark contrast to God's intentions that as members of the Church, The Body of Christ, we are to be:

"built up until all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4: 12-13).

Being 'born again,' or baptised or even confirmed, is not the end of our Christian journey, just the beginning. We need to grow and mature in our faith, able to explain the simple truths of our faith should others ask us. Great people like good Christians all started as babies, but they grew. So must we.

God bless and keep safe,

Mark

Living Streets Latest

This weekend sees the launching of various projects through Uplands Living Streets. Saturday 24th sees members of the team joining with residents of Victoria Street and Windsor Street to help clear the back lane running between them. Residents have already made huge progress in ridding it of rubble, rubbish and brambles to make a useable community space. Anyone is welcome to turn up for a socially distanced work party from 10.30a.m. on Saturday. Bring secateurs/ garden bags/ thermos/ face masks and be inspired about what can happen when people come together.

Secondly from 1.30p.m. on the triangular green on The Grove there is a residents' consultation about exactly what people would like to see in terms of benches, planting, paths and traffic calming in the area. With Neil Barry who is a horticulturalist working with Swansea Green Spaces.

Thirdly sees the launch of a crowd funding scheme to raise money for benches and planters and wildlife information boards in the area. Swansea Council have already approved the scheme and will be making a substantial contribution, subject to us raising a threshold amount.

Details are on these links. Please check them out.

<https://www.facebook.com/Onwards-Uplands-103687878519101>

<https://www.spacehive.com/onwards-and-uplands>

It is wonderful to see people committed to making our area a greener and more pleasant place.

Jenny

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 blog can be found here: sonofzebedee.blogspot.com



The Lighthouse

The story is told of a group of men who had been sailing in the Atlantic Ocean when they came too close to shore and crashed against the rocks. Out of concern for other sailors in similar conditions, the surviving group determined to build a lighthouse to warn others of the impending dangers ahead. Those who did not see the light were rescued by those who had built and operated the station.

As it happened, those who crashed and were rescued had a common bond, so they began to hang out at the station to share stories and time together. As they worked and drew more people in, the rescue station began to evolve. With so many people there became greater need of improved facilities. They began installing more comforts to accommodate their gatherings, put together a few fundraisers to pay for improvements and they even inserted plaques around the place to commemorate those who had served so faithfully.

In time speakers were brought in to help people adjust to their new lives in the rescue station. They were taught how to rescue people, the benefits of rescuing people and of the need to start other rescue stations up and down the coast. The more they met the more they built and added on and got together, but in doing so they spent less time actually rescuing people. "I don't want to get wet!" "It's cold out there!" "Can't we hire someone to come in and watch for people so we can continue our meetings?"

Sounds an awful lot like church doesn't it? So often the Lord's churches begin with a great desire to do the right thing and make a great impact on other lives, but then as more people come in, more and more time is consumed with administration and organizational needs than with reaching out and dragging others out of danger. It is easy to become consumed with our own needs rather than those for which we were created. It happened in Jesus' day and it is happening in ours. But, enough is enough. The world has had enough of what they have come to accept as Christendom and the results are telling.

Hymns and their stories:

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Robert Robinson was what you would call an "unruly child." At only eight years old his father died, and he was raised by his loving mother. In spite of Robert's intellectual giftedness, he had a penchant for mischief. Robert's mother sent him off for an apprenticeship when he was only 14, but once he got out of the home his life got worse. Instead of working and learning, Robert chose drinking, gambling, and carousing with the wrong crowd.

Caught up in his reckless life, Robert and his friends decided to go to an evangelist meeting one night just to heckle the preacher, George Whitfield. Sitting in that meeting, however, Robert felt as if the preacher's words were meant for him alone. He couldn't shake the feeling that God wanted him to surrender his life and serve him.

When he was twenty, Robinson gave his life to God and entered the Christian ministry. At the age of 22, he wrote the song "Come Thou Fount," for his church's Pentecost celebration. It was written as his own spiritual story — a story of pursuing pleasure and joy, and only experiencing it when 'Jesus sought me.'

Millions of believers can relate to Robinson's testimony — 'Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,' and the glorious testimony, 'O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!'

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Collect

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Readings

Genesis 7: 1 - 5, 11 - 18

Genesis 8: 6 - 18

Genesis 9: 8 - 13

Psalm 23

1 John 3: 16 - end

John 10: 11 - 18

Luther on Prayer

When Luther's puppy happened to be at the table, he looked for a morsel from his master watching with open mouth and motionless eyes; he (Martin Luther) said, 'Oh, if I could only pray the way this dog watches the meat! All his thoughts are concentrated on the piece of meat. Otherwise he has no thought, wish or hope.'

Luther's Tabletalk

If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.

Pray as if everything depends on God, then work as if everything depends on you.

The fewer the words, the better the prayer. To have prayed well is to have studied well.

And finally by John Bunyan

He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day.

Contact information

For contributions to the newsletter please email the vicar, Mark, at stjamesuplands1@googlemail.com

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