



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.'

More on prayer

Our prayers lay the track down on which God's power can come. Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails.

Watchman Nee

To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ...

Richard Foster

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

After last Sunday's announcement may I be the first to congratulate Ian Folks on his appointment as Vicar in the Central Swansea Ministry Area with pastoral responsibility for Swansea Christ Church and Swansea St James. I have known Ian since his ordination to the ministry and our conversations together over that time, although infrequent, have led me to believe that in him you will have a diligent and enthusiastic priest who will serve you well. Naturally he will have his own ideas about growing and developing the churches under his care but I am pleased that he and I share important core values which gives me both confidence and a certain amount of relief that St. James will be able to move forward and build on some of the things I have been trying to do under God during my nine years with you. You will be in good hands.



Just as I welcome Ian, so we say goodbye to our bishop and archbishop John Davies. Time will tell how successful his ministry has been over his years with us but personally I have found him very kind, pastorally sensitive and enormously supportive over the years I have known him, first as Dean of Brecon Cathedral, then Bishop of the diocese and finally Archbishop of Wales. Each of these roles has been very challenging at what has been, and continues to be, a difficult time for the Church. Having served for a short time under him as Area Dean in Penderi and briefly as Area Dean of Swansea and attended staff meetings, I know first hand what he has had to deal with during that time. I am sure we will all want to wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Until a successor is appointed, the Bishop of Bangor, Andy John - someone who I served with as team Vicar in Aberystwyth - will be given oversight of our Diocese. Please pray for him and for the appointment of a bishop for our diocese who will be able to lead us forward in faith, outward in mission and evangelism, and upward in spiritual growth.

Although Sarah Harris, who will be ordained deacon in June, will not be directly involved with St. James but you will, I am sure, see her from time to time, and so we warmly welcome her as well. As was announced last week she and her husband Jeremy will be living at 1 Ffynone Drive - no longer now known as the Vicarage - and takes up her position as Assistant Curate across the Central Swansea Ministry Area based at St. Mary's. One little bit of trivia, I know her husband Jeremy from watching the Swans. Like Hazel and myself, he is a fervent supporter and sits about seven seats from us on the next row down!

One final thing. As I have said before, please be aware that there will be changes in service times and service patterns. Even with an extra curate the Ministry Area has to cover five churches. This cannot be done without rationalising the service timetable. An announcement will be forthcoming in the next few weeks about what this will mean for St. James.

God bless you all,

Mark

Back to Church

Now that Wales is moving to Covid Level 3 on Monday 3rd May it is the time to return to live worship again at St James. And because the most vulnerable have had their vaccinations I think that it is now safe to start sharing Holy Communion again, albeit in one kind only i.e. bread.

Please note that the same system of booking your place will be reintroduced so you will have to contact Leighton - direct please - by email or phone if you wish to attend. His mobile number is: 07914526977 and his email: leightonlfrancis@yahoo.co.uk

Although details have yet to be worked out it is probable we will follow the examples of other churches, like St. Mary's, and give people their communion in their pews.

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

Hymns and their stories: What a friend we have in Jesus.

In 1844 a young Irishman, Joseph Scriven, had completed his college education and returned home to marry his sweetheart. As he was travelling to meet her on the day before the planned wedding, he came upon a horrible scene - his beautiful fiancée tragically lying under the water in a river bed after falling off her horse.

Later, Scriven moved to Canada and eventually fell in love again, only to experience devastation once more when his fiancée became ill and died just weeks before their marriage. For the second time, this humble Christian felt the loss of the woman he loved.

The following year, he wrote a poem to his mother in Ireland that described the deep friendship with Jesus he had cultivated in prayer through the hardships of his life.

The poem was published anonymously, at first under the title, "Pray Without Ceasing." Ten years later, he finally acknowledged this well-loved text had been written by him and his friend, Jesus. In 1868, attorney Charles Converse set the text to a tune and renamed it "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

Instead of thinking God was punishing him, Scriven cherished God's friendship through all of this hardship - a friendship he discovered in prayer.

May we learn that our relationship with God will grow the same way—in prayer.

Prayer and revival

I have been reading about revivals and was stirred by the following story in America, in 1857 when the US was at both an economic and spiritual low.

Thousands of merchants were in despair as banks failed and railroads went into bankruptcy. Factories were shut down and vast numbers of people were thrown into unemployment. Attendance in churches had dwindled and there was a cynicism among many concerning faith in God. It was in the midst of this spiritual crisis that Jeremiah Lanphier had a vision to start a noontime prayer meeting at a mission in Fulton Street, in New York. He went to great lengths to advertise the prayer meeting. His first meeting was held on September 23, 1857. When the doors opened at noon, no one came. At half past twelve, one man's footsteps could be heard coming up the stairs. Soon another came and then another and finally a total of six people arrived.

By 14 October over a hundred people were coming to the prayer meetings. Other buildings were needed to accommodate the large numbers of people attending. Churches began to open their doors, but they weren't large enough as there were now thousands coming to these prayer meetings. By March 1858 Burton's Theatre, which could hold up to 3,000 people, was filled to overflowing. Soon other buildings were requested around New York to house the prayer meetings, which had spread like wildfire. Within six months, 10,000 people were gathering daily for prayer, in New York. The prayer meetings also spread throughout New York State and eventually across the entire nation. It is believed that one million people became followers of Christ at the prayer meetings during this prayer revival.

Leonard Ravenhill wrote in his book *Why Revival Tarries*:

"Poverty-stricken as the church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of PRAYER. We have many organisers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few PRAY-ERS."

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Collect

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings

Genesis 22: 1 - 18

Psalm 22: 25 - end

1 John 4: 7 - end

John 15: 1 - 8

Prayer

When we pray, remember:

1. The love of God that wants the best for us.
2. The wisdom of God that knows what is best for us.
3. The power of God that can accomplish it.

William Barclay

Prayer is surrender - surrender to the will of God and co-operation with that will. If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.

E. Stanley Jones

Keep praying, but be thankful that God's answers are wiser than your prayers

William Cuthbertson

Contact information

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

Home phone number: (01792) 470532

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