

St James' Church, Uplands

NEWSLETTER - 4th July 2021

Goodbye - Hello!



It's a big week in the life of the parish! Last week the church bade farewell to Rev Mark Williams and Hazel after nine years of faithful ministry. Having listened to Mark's final sermon, I was moved by his exhortation that 'we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God,' (Matt 4:4). It is so important as Christians that we are listeners - listening to God's words in scripture, and listening out for how he speaks to us through others. Our prayers and best wishes are with Mark and Hazel as they find their new place in God's kingdom.

It's a rare event that a vicar leaves one week to be replaced the following week. But I am absolutely delighted to be starting in St James' this week. Thank you to all who have been in touch already to welcome us to the parish - we're greatly looking forward to getting to know you. Having lived in Uplands and Brynmill for the last 28 years, it has been a long-held dream of mine to come and minister here, and I am excited by the delights and challenges ahead!

Hit the ground kneeling

It's often said that a new leader needs to 'Hit the ground running'. I've been reading a book by Archbishop Steven Cottrell, 'Hit the ground kneeling', which advocates a different and rather better approach. It starts with the simple humility to say, 'How is God working here?', and then listening to God and others in prayerful conversation. Then ways forward can be discerned, which are in tune with what has gone before, but move us on in God's plans for us.

With that in mind, I'm keen to start talking to people as much as possible. Visiting, coffee mornings and so on are difficult in Covid times. But 'where there's a will there's a way,' and so if you're happy to have a chat in your garden, go for a coffee, zoom or join me for a dog walk (I can supply the dog), let me know - I'd be delighted to!

Singing

As I write, we are hoping to be able to sing on Sunday, but it is unlikely we will be able to do so. Welsh Government say that we can sing in church subject to a risk assessment (done!) and if the local caseload is below 50 per 100,000. It's 63 and rising at the moment. If we can, further instructions will be given!

Zoom Bible Study and Contact Details

All through lockdown, I have run a Zoom bible study for the ministry area on Thursday afternoons between 1.30 and 2.45pm. All at St James are very welcome to join: contact Ian at ianfolks@gmail.com, or 07597 522359. Mobile is better than landline. Ian's rest day is Friday.

A bit about us...

Ian is originally from Cumbria, and came via a spell in Hampshire to Swansea University in 1993. Following 17 years in the social care and disability field, he trained at St Michael's College, Cardiff between 2013 and 2016. Since ordination he has led Christ Church, Sandfields and been part of the clergy team at St Mary's. He is passionate about Christians deepening their discipleship, and supporting people who experience mental health issues, which has led him to found the project 'Call to Mind' - calltomind.org.uk. Don't get him started on music, cricket or Tottenham.

Vanessa and Ian have been married for 24 years after meeting at Swansea University. Originally from Pennsylvania, she works at the National Museum in Cardiff, is an MS Society volunteer and sings with the Swansea Philharmonic Choir. We have two children: **Daisy** who turns 15 today (happy birthday!), loves Japanese Anime, and **Amelie** who is 6 and enjoys Rainbows and Stagecoach. We also have Willow, a Cavalier spaniel.

A prayer for St James' Church

Our readings and teaching for the next month will focus on St Paul's wonderful Letter to the Ephesians. This prayer is based on it - please join in praying this for our church.

Heavenly Father,
Strengthen us in our inner being with power through your Spirit
That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith
As we are rooted and grounded in love.
And give us the power to comprehend the height, breadth and depth
Of the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge,
And so may we be filled with all the fullness of God.
We know that you can accomplish more than we can ask or even imagine
Through the power at work within us.
To you be glory in this church and in Christ Jesus through all generations: Amen! (Eph 3:14-21)

Rev Ian Folks