

St James' Church, Uplands

NEWSLETTER - 8th August 2021

Lament - a language of prayer



Today's Psalm, number 130, is an example of lament. 'Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord', which a setting for many moving choral pieces - 'De profundis'. Over half of the psalms are laments, either from an individual or community standpoint.

Lament is a language of prayer. In it, someone lays bare before God their problem and their feelings about it, sometimes in the starkest terms. The depths of the writer's experience are explored. The feelings

and experiences are legitimised and never dismissed as unimportant or lacking in faith.

Quite the reverse, in fact. Real faith faces the pain, brings it to God, and typically sets the experience alongside the unchanging nature of God's grace and mercy. The truth of God's nature doesn't change our experience, but it does shed a hopeful ray of light on it. This approach journeys with God through our pain, rather than running away from God because of our pain. In the course of a life of faith, it is essential that we learn to speak this language in times of suffering and loss.

Covid has been an exceptionally hard time for individuals and communities. We have lost many things, and been denied our usual means of human and spiritual comfort. What would your psalm of lament, either for you or for the church, look like? How would you describe the losses? And how would you talk about God's grace and redemption in it?

Congregational Meeting and Easter (or Michaelmas) Vestry

Because of Covid, our usual constitutional pattern of Easter Vestry meetings, Parish Church Council (PCC) elections and so on has been on hold since spring last year. We will hold an informal meeting for the whole congregation after church on Sunday 5th September, where I'll set out some of my aspirations for the parish, (I will probably preach a very short sermon that day!), and encourage active involvement in contributing to and achieving our vision together. We will then have an autumnal Easter vestry meeting on Sunday 26th September, where we will elect PCC members and a People's church warden. Please pray about whether God may be calling you to serve in one of these roles.

Annual leave

I will be on leave after Thursday 9th August, returning on Saturday 21st August.

Gwasanaeth Cymraeg - Welsh Service

We're pleased to announce that the 9am Welsh service will re-start on 5th September, and as before will be held on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month. Services will usually be led by Rev John Walters, Rev John Anthony and occasionally by Archdeacon Jonathan. The hall will be the venue for the service to get around the need to clean between services.

Wednesday service

We hope to re-start the Wednesday service on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, beginning on 8th September. This is subject to confirmation.

Mother's Union resources

Ruth Roberts from St Mary's Mother's Union will order any cards, gifts, diaries etc for St James. Please let Dreena know on 07530 413555.

Social Distancing and Singing

I would value your input on how you feel about returning to sing. Welsh government have changed their guidelines to say that singing should only take place when transmission rates are 'low', but are not stating what 'low' means! **They also say that 2m social distancing should continue to be observed if we are singing, and singing should be with masks.** In practice for the short term, we may face a choice between a) reducing social distancing to 1m (and therefore remove the need to book) with no singing, or b) keep 2m social distancing and booking, but start singing again. ***Please let me know if a return to singing, or reduction in social distancing, would affect your ability to come to church.***

Housing required - we have been asked to see if anyone in the church could provide a room paid at the going rate for a Christian man (wife is a curate in Bolton), who has just secured a job in Swansea University having been made redundant in Bolton. If you can help, please see Ian or Leighton.

A prayer for St James' 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