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Weekly letter – 1 September 2024

James 1:17-27 - First Fruits of His Creatures

Actions speak louder than words. That's a proverb that James would have agreed with: 'be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves' (Jas 1:22). It's the way that Matthew describes Jesus wrapping up his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.' (Matt 7:24)

James is traditionally thought to be the brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15) and the book has a Jewish Christian feel, with lots of practical wisdom for living out our faith. 'Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, for human anger doesn't produce God's righteousness.' (Jas 1:19-20) he might have said, 'count to 10 before you respond.'

There are only a couple of references to Jesus, and none to his dying and rising, but that doesn't mean that James lacks statements of faith. He calls God the 'Father of Lights' or creator of sun, moon and stars, but although their light changes with the days and seasons, there is no 'shadow of turning' with God.

All good gifts come from God and God's purposes giving us 'birth by the word of truth' as the 'first fruits of his creatures.' The beginning of John's gospel talks about the world coming into being through the Word, and in Genesis 1, God speaks the words of creation. We are new creations through the good news alive in us, which has echoes of Paul, 'So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation' (1 Cor 5.17).

The 'first fruits' were the first part of the harvest offered to God as a sign that the whole is offered to God. Being the 'first fruits of his creatures' reminds us that we are part of creation, accountable to God, not separate to creation to exploit it for our own ends. The wider church recognises 1st September as the Feast of Creation and the time between now and the Feast of St Francis on 4th October is known as 'Creation Time' when we are encouraged to think about our place as part of creation and as God's partners in caring for creation. It will take us up to Harvest.



Let's live as people growing towards the light of God, as part of God's wonderful creation, ready to live out our faith in what we do.

Simon

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Simon Walkling. We will celebrate Communion. Bible Readings: James 1.17-23: Mark 7.1-23

First Anniversary

It's a year since Simon's Induction Service to the Christ Well Pastorate and the Swansea Region took place. Where has the year gone!

We thank Simon for the leadership and care he has given us, and also say thank you to Sue for sharing her expertise and help with the children, and other Christ Well activities. Happy anniversary. God Bless.

Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Uniting Church, Sketty

Prayers for every household – we will pray for Manor Road 37-71

Exam Results

Well done to all our young people who had good results in their exams, and best wishes when the new term or new adventure starts. God Bless.

Children's' Weekly activities

As the new school year begins the children's weekly activities will also recommence. Please pray for the Leaders and children who will attend Thursday Club and Brownies.

SATURDAY – 31st AUGUST

COMMUNITY LITTER PICK AT CWMBWRLA PARK 11am-12 noon.

**Meeting at the car park. Come and say hello and help out.
Adults and children's litter pickers available.**

Tea and Chat - Tuesday, 3rd September - 2-4 pm

A Request for Help from



Swansea Foodbank is the largest Foodbank in Swansea which operates over seven distribution centres in St Thomas, Uplands, West Cross, Penlan, Mayhill, Gorseinon and Clydach. This year, Swansea Foodbank has provided emergency food for 14,000 to people in crisis, both those living in the areas of greatest deprivation and to those in other areas who find themselves in crisis.

We deal with over 300 referrals every week with numbers rising significantly in the run up to Christmas, Easter and during the summer school holidays.

Christ Well has been very generous in supporting the foodbank with weekly food and monthly cash donations and we are very grateful for your support. Demand for our three-day emergency food parcels has been rising, but during the cost-of-living crisis, donations of food have fallen. We now purchase over a third of the food that we distribute.

While many people donate food at our collection points, if they are taxpayers, a financial donation using gift aid can increase the value of their donation. £10 a month, or £120 a year, is worth £150 to Swansea Foodbank once gift aid is taken into account and that extra £30 could fund two additional three-day emergency food parcels. Financial donations can be made online from our website: at <https://swanseafoodbank.enthuse.com/Donate#!/>

Every week, Swansea Foodbank gets through hundreds of carrier bags, even though we encourage foodbank clients to bring their own. If you have any spare, please consider donating them by placing them in the Foodbank box in the church.

We are very grateful for your continuing support and keen to make sure that our Foodbanks continue to have enough food for people who are in a crisis situation.

For the first day of Creation-tide

(Lectionary Readings: Song of Solomon 2.8-13 and Psalm 45.1-2, 6-9
Deuteronomy 4.1-2: 6-9 and Psalm 15: James 1.17-27: Mark 7.1-8, 14-15, 21-23)

Thank you God, God for the beginning and the future,
for your good and beautiful creation;
for winter and summer, rain and sun,
grapes on the vines and fig trees juicy with fruit.
Thank you for the bloom of flowers and the song of birds,
for voices to sing your praise at seedtime and harvest
from sheer joy at all that is created.

Thank you, God who made each one of us,
to be part of this good and fruitful creation;

for the desire that makes us sweet with longing,
the love and tenderness for which you have made us.
Thank you for the glow of human skin,
for the joy of love made flesh and for lips to kiss, and sing
in praise of the goodness of all that you have made.

Thank you, God who calls us to do what is holy and right
for your good and wonderful creation;
for the real hope of renewing all things for future days,
the assurance that love will win and creation be restored.
Thank you for your call to be better, to 'arise',
to honour and cherish as sacred all that you have made,
and to turn our hearts always only to what is good.

Susan Durber (URC Prayer Handbook 2024)

