

- - TEAM NOTES - -

'Come & Sing' Choral Evensong at St Mary's – this evening, Sunday 18th September, with David Poulter. *Come and Sing* event is open to all singers. Arrival at St Mary's is for a 4.00pm rehearsal start. Cups of tea are provided between the rehearsal end and the service start at 6.30pm. All Welcome. Music provided. Just come and sing!

Service of Remembrance for HM Queen Elizabeth II. John Cooper is very honoured to have been invited to assist the Royal British Legion at this short service on Monday 19th September, at 9.00am, before the State Funeral.

Team Rector Induction – The induction of Revd Dr Ian Bird as Team Rector by the Bishop of Salisbury will be at St Mary's on Sunday, 2nd October at 3pm. All are welcome to attend.

10th Purbeck Christmas Tree Festival - 8th, 9th, 10th December. The Purbeck Christmas Tree Festival is back at Emmanuel Baptist Church. Booking forms to sponsor trees are available from the end of September. It's hoped that this wonderful event will be well supported by sponsors and visitors. All the usual things will be there; musical items, café, children's activities, stories in the stable, and a wonderful walk amongst the trees. Sponsors (charities, businesses, and individuals) pay for a tree, then decorate it to highlight their particular focus and take it home at the end of the festival to enjoy over Christmas. This year's theme is 'Christmas Songs'. Donations will go to Swanage Food Bank and Swanage Lifeboat. It's important to reserve your tree and book a space in good time. For further information please contact Janet Norley at administrator@emmanuelbc.org.uk or phone 01929 427706 on weekday mornings.

Swanage Churches Together has two important dates:
29 September at 2.30pm at Swanage URC. Re-opening *Open The Book*. Interested in joining the team? Contact Anne Squires on 422882 or fairlight@waitrose.com and come to this meeting!
Tuesday 11 October (NOT Thurs 13!) Swanage Churches Together Committee meeting. Coffee at 7pm for 7.30 start. Agenda and venue to follow.

Do access the Swanage and Studland Team website regularly:
www.swanageteam.com

SWANAGE & STUDLAND TEAM MINISTRY

St. Mary's – St. Mark's – All Saints' – St. Nicholas'
18th September 2022 -Trinity 14

Amos 8.4-7; 1 Timothy 2.1-7; Luke 16.1-13

You could never accuse the prophet Amos of mincing his words! He saw little need for tact and diplomacy when describing the ills of society. He wrote in the middle of the 8th century BC and is described simply as 'a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees'. His words are a cry for justice for he is the archetypal prophet of passionate anger against the questionable behaviour of the rich and powerful. The force was strong with Amos!

Scroll forward the best part of a millennium, and St Paul writes to Timothy (in today's Epistle) urging him to encourage others in making their "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions..." Lest we might interpret this as purely Paul's godly and altruistic concern for such people, he qualifies his advice with an explanation: "...so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." The proper exercise of authority and power needs all the help it can get, if it is truly to be good for the wider society as a whole. Lord Acton spoke wisely when he coined the phrase that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Today's Gospel reading (from St Luke) is one of the hardest readings to preach upon! Jesus tells the story often known as the parable of the unjust steward. It is an awkward reading, for its message commends the shrewdness of the Steward rather than anything more overtly spiritual or noteworthy. I will be preaching at St Mark's today; but perhaps the congregation at St Mary's will be especially fortunate to be hearing from an Archdeacon, who - as one still 'in harness' wielding a modicum of ecclesiastical power and authority - will surely be able to earth today's readings in something more appropriate. Whether you are rich and powerful - or merely 'a dresser of sycamore trees' – it is probably St Peter who gives a clearer and more concise message to take home today:

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God." (1 Peter 4.10).

Canon Jeremy Oakes