

TEAM NOTES

'Come & Sing' Choral Evensong , TODAY, Sunday, 19th November at 6.30pm in St Mary's Church. Our guest this month is Matthew Owens (formerly Wells & Belfast Cathedrals). *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!

Gift Day - the latest total from our recent Gift Day is over £24,600, which is excellent! Huge thanks to everyone who has given so far. If you haven't there is still time. We will let you know the final figure next month.

Choir Concert – Saturday 2 December - St Mary's choir are going to perform their first concert in many years at the start of December. There will be a short concert of Advent music on Saturday 2nd December, starting at 6.30pm. The centerpiece of the concert will be J.S.Bach's wonderful Advent cantata "Wachet Auf" and we shall be joined by the Cleynert String Quartet and some woodwind – all members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra who will accompany the choir and who will also play William Boyce's Symphony no 4. The programme will also include many Advent favorites, including music by Palestrina, Poston, Praetorius and our very own David Fawcett. Admission on the door is £10.

Friday Fun Club – A new weekly (term time only) club, has launched for children in school years 5-8 (aged 10-13) to meet, develop deeper friendships with each other and any school friends they invite and to connect with members of our church congregations. The aim is to create a space where our young people can build friendships, discuss their experiences of Christian life and prepare contributions to monthly family services. Meeting on **Friday evenings (from 6.30-8pm) in St Mary's Rectory Classroom**, our young people enjoy food, games and chat. Led by Berno Vierbergen, our youth minister, and supported by volunteers from St Mary's congregation, the group met for the first time in November with seven founder members. We hope things will grow from here.

All Things Bright and Beautiful takes place in St Mary's Church each Tuesday from 2.30pm – 3.30pm. A short service, for carers and those for whom they care and is dementia friendly.

Christmas Cards, all with a nativity theme, will be available for sale at St Mark's, All Saints', and St Mary's after Sunday services until early December. Five card pack for £2, profits will be donated to parish funds.

'Journeying to the Light: Daily Readings through Advent & Christmas – written by The Very Revd John Mann is now available at the Swanage Bookshop in Station Road.

Team Rector:
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REFLECTION

You can find details of the readings elsewhere in this newsletter. I am telling you this because I don't want you thinking, oh yes, I know about these readings. What if you had no upbringing in the Christian faith? and of course the majority of our population has little or no knowledge of the Bible, let alone any theological understanding of it.

What if you were seeing these readings for the first time, what would you make of them? I have tried to put myself in that place. In the first reading I would be thinking this is a community heading for disaster. One word jumped out at me, complacent. The people had stopped caring for themselves or others. Someone in authority is warning them of the consequences, "your wealth won't save you and catastrophe will surround you" says the messenger.

The word that stands out in our second reading is encouragement. Remember we don't know who this Jesus is, and what is this falling asleep about? It seems that there is hope but hope for what?

And finally a severe story about a 'maverick' master and his slaves. Wealth and self-esteem seem to be at the heart of this story. Yes, the master has preferences, but the least esteemed has also been shown trust, but simply refuses to believe there is anything he can do to gain his master's favour. I need two words to sum up this third reading, self-esteem.

We have just experienced the drama of Remembrance Sunday. Huge gatherings and the contemplation of millions of lost and wounded. This is all happening in a time of world crisis where wars are raging. In a time when world finances are teetering. In a time when climate change is acknowledged, but with insufficient commitment to action. In a time when world faiths seem to have lost their way. In a time when we seem to have lost a sense of generosity of spirit.

So is there some hope? Yes, because we do read our Bibles and study them, we do recognise Jesus as Lord and that the Holy Spirit is within us and around us. Those words, Complacent, Encouragement and Self-esteem stand out just as visibly today for Christians as for anyone else.

Now is the time to take them to our heart, now is the time that they are needed like never before.

With blessings
John Cooper