



## **Vicar's Letter July & August 2019**

Dear Friends,

### **How Often Do You Wash?**

In a recent survey people were asked about their washing habits, here are some of the responses:

"I tried washing once, but didn't like it."

"I was forced to wash as a child, which put me off washing."

"I used to wash, but it got boring so I stopped."

"Very few of my friends wash."

"I wash on special occasions like Christmas and Easter."

"I used to wash regularly, but don't have the time anymore."

"Washing once a month is more than enough."

"I wash when I'm asked to or when I feel like it."

"People who wash are hypocrites, they think they are cleaner than everyone else."

Okay as you will gather, this isn't a real survey on washing habits, but the sort of excuses people sometimes use for not going to church.

Why is committing to regular public worship so important? Here are a few reasons:

- We're instructed to do so: 'Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing' (Hebrews 10:25)
- Worshipping Jesus together is powerful, Jesus promised that "where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20)
- We go to church not to be entertained but to worship God with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- It is crucial for faith - the early church 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer' (Acts 2:42), it is vitally important that we do the same. When we neglect public worship, it impacts our faith with Jesus.

- The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation, instead we are instructed to 'encourage one another and build each other up.' (1 Thessalonians 5:11), love one another (1 John 4:12), encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13), serve one another (Galatians 5:13), instruct one another (Romans 15:14), honour one another (Romans 12:10), and be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32).
- It is a sign of unity to the world, Jesus prayed "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21)
- For a church body to function properly, all of its "body parts" need to be present and working (1 Corinthians 12:14–20). When we don't attend worship, not only do we miss out, but we are depriving the rest of the body of Christ of our presence.
- We don't go to church we ARE the church.

Life is busy and we often find ourselves pulled in many different directions (family, work, hobbies, etc), but we must make worshipping God with our brothers and sisters in Christ a top priority. If something is really important, we find a way of making time for it, what does your church going habit say about how much you love and value God and your fellow Christians?

## New Youth Worker



We are delighted to welcome Ruth to St James in the autumn as our new youth worker. Ruth has recently graduated from Stirling University with a degree in Philosophy and Politics.

Ruth's appointment is a very exciting one, as we seek to reach out to new generations, and develop our ministry amongst teenagers and students. However **in order to pay for Ruth's appointment, we are looking for people to increase their giving to the church.**

Please prayerfully consider how much you could increase your giving, and ensure that if you are a tax payer, you are giving as efficiently as possible by Gift Aiding your donations, so we can reclaim 25p for every £1 donated.

## Andy Blake's Cornerstone & Op Shop Update

As most people will know Cornerstone and OpShop are part of the ministry of St James Church, we are open 6 days a week supporting our community. We have fantastic team of volunteers (approx. 55) but most of the volunteers are not connected to St James, which sometimes leaves shifts without any Christian volunteers on them.

If you are meeting friends for a drink, or need somewhere to go to meet a work colleague please can I encourage you to use Cornerstone. **It would be wonderful to see more people from St**

## **James church visiting Cornerstone and OpShop on a regular basis.**

Cornerstone and OpShop is a fantastic resource for serving our community and the people of Carlisle. If you want to get involved here are a few roles, and what they entail:

### ***Welcome Team \*New Role\****

We want every customer to feel valued and loved. Are you someone who is friendly and welcoming, and confident at approaching people you don't know? We are looking for people happy to sit at our 'Chatter & Natter' table and create conversation with both regular and new customers, but also someone who is able to say hello and goodbye, making customers feel valued. Excellent communications skills are vitally important, as is someone who is a good listener.

### ***Treasure Sorter***

We receive donations of goods every day, often by the bag load. Are you the sort of person who enjoys sorting through bags that could contain anything! The treasures we receive could be clothing, toys or bric-a-brac. Some items have value to them, others just look nice. We need people who have a good eye for detail; able to spot when something is broken or tatty making the item unsellable. Some people like to work on their own or as part of a team, both can be accommodated.

### ***Serving Team***

Serving our customers is one way that we can show we care and love them. It's about how we speak to our customers, but also our attitude in the way we work. The serving team help to create a friendly, welcoming and tidy environment. The serving team need to be friendly people who are flexible to the duties they may be doing. Serving customers at the tills in Cornerstone and OpShop, bag packing in the OpShop, ensuring the shops are clean and tidy, making and serving drinks.

### ***Prayer Team***

Prayer is incredibly important, especially for the protection of the team in Cornerstone and OpShop. There is so much need and suffering in our local community it would be wonderful if we could host a prayer drop in every week. We are looking for people who are passionate about prayer and seeing the Holy Spirit move in our community. Prayer and Healing training can be organised if required.

Not sure what role you would fit into? I would love for you to come and try out some of these roles before committing, just speak to me and we can arrange this.

So far this year we have found that Cornerstone is being used by more and more people in need. Our food bank has been very popular which has resulted in us having to tighten up on how often we issue food parcels to people. We have recently partnered with Aldi who offer us their surplus food once a week. The suspended coffee scheme now includes cakes and we are finding dozens

of people come to us each week for a suspended coffee/cake.

The OpShop is very well supported with us having to organise regular Jumble Sales to help reduce the amount of bric-a-brac we have in our store rooms. We could actually do with more space to display all the wonderful things people have donated! The clothing donations have also increased and we have been blessed to receive lots of good quality branded clothing. If there is something you need and we don't have it on the shelves, please ask, as we have more items in our stock rooms, than on the shelves.

Earlier this year Cornerstone was voted one of the Top Ten cafes in North, East and West Cumbria, which was brilliant. I am delighted to report that Cornerstone has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Community Project of the Year category in the Cumberland News Community Heroes Awards 2019. We will find out on July 4th if we have been successful. To be shortlisted is a great honour, and a testament to the commitment and hard work of all our volunteers.

Through the work of Cornerstone and OpShop lives are being transformed, friendships are being made and people are exploring Christianity and turning to Christ. We are feeding the hungry, providing good quality items at very affordable prices and helping to reduce isolation and loneliness.

To end my report I wanted to share some comments from both customers and volunteers of why they choose to spend time with us in Cornerstone and OpShop.

'It's nice to create the sense of community we have lost in Denton Holme'

'God's presence is in Cornerstone, so this is a way people can connect with God, without knowing him personally.....yet'

'I volunteer to meet new people and I like the company'

'You feel like you're making a difference'

'I volunteer because it gets me out of the house, it's a lovely team'

'I volunteer here because it helps my community'

'If Cornerstone didn't exist the community would suffer'

'It's a nice and friendly community environment near where I live'

'It's fun!'

'I come here for the social aspect, to meet people'

A special thank you to everyone who supports the work we do, and to all our volunteers in both Cornerstone and OpShop.

I look forward to welcoming you to Cornerstone and OpShop soon.

God Bless Andy

## **Intern News**

In July we say goodbye to Libby and Justine, who have been our interns for the past year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all that they have brought to St James during the last eleven months. Please pray for Justine as she starts studying International Relations in Geneva this autumn, and for Libby as she searches for employment. There will be a farewell party for Libby and Justine at Cornerstone on Friday 12th July at 7.30pm, with an interactive quiz and buffet - if you would like to join us please speak to Andy.



as they prepare to join us in the autumn.

In September we look forward to welcoming two new interns to St James, Inna (on the left), who is 22 years old and just graduated from university in Taiwan where she has been studying Philosophy, and Maria-Kristiina (on the right) also 22, who has just graduated from Bible College in Estonia. Please pray for Inna and Maria

## **Community Fun Day**

On Saturday 31st August we are holding a community fun day in the Parish Centre from 1pm to 4pm. Amongst the activities arranged, will be the 'Big Fun Bus', a converted double decker bus with slides, ball pool, bean bags, disco lights, and sound and games console. In addition there will be refreshments, stalls, music, and plenty of other fun activities.

We are looking for volunteers to help in the planning of the fun day, and to assist on the day. If you can help please speak to either myself, Andy Blake or Kate Davidson.

## **St James Men's & Women's Group**

I am delighted to report that after last month's appeal, Gary Martin and Paul Crooks have kindly agreed to help co-ordinate the St James Men's Group. We hope to run monthly men's events, details will be published in our weekly e-bulletin and newssheet, as well as in here.

In addition to a men's group, one of two people had said to me that they would like to see a similar group set up for women in St James (not ignoring the excellent work of the Women's Fellowship & the Ladies Guild). If there are one or two people who would be willing to co-ordinate a women's group please get in touch with me.

## **Mission Community News**

On Thursday July 18th at 7pm the Revd Matt Martinson will be licensed by Bishop Emma as the new Priest in Charge of Holy Trinity and St Barnabas Team Ministry and St Luke's. Matt has a



very interesting testimony having served time in prison for armed robbery, where he became a Christian. Following his release from prison he began training for ministry and was ordained in 2010, he joins us from the parish of St John's Bransholme in Hull. Matt is married to Haley, and they have a 19 year old son, Seth. Please hold Matt and his family in your prayers during this period of transition.

## **Keswick Convention**

The Keswick Convention starts on July 13th and runs through to the 2nd August. The theme for this years convention is 'Longing'. We are very fortunate to live so close to one of the leading Christian conventions not in Europe, and I would like to encourage you to take the opportunity to visit the convention, and partake in the excellent Bible teaching and worship that is available. For full details of the speakers at Keswick visit [keswickministries.org](http://keswickministries.org).

## **Catch Up With Talks Online**

We record all our Sunday sermons from the Parish Church, which can now be downloaded or listened to again via our website, go to [www.stjamescarlisle.org.uk/resources/talks/](http://www.stjamescarlisle.org.uk/resources/talks/).

## **Youth Weekend Away in November**

We are organising another youth weekend away at St John's in the Vale Youth Centre for our young people from St James on the weekend of Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th November (please note this is a change to the previously advertised date). Please keep this date free, we will be sending out more information about this weekend away in the coming weeks.

## **Link With Sola**

On Pentecost Sunday we signed a partnership agreement with Sola Church in Norway, in which we agreed to

- stand together in mission and service
- include each other in prayer, by exchanging subjects for thanksgiving and intercession
- arrange for exchange and visits that will forward the Church's Mission in both congregations.

The three key areas we seek to cooperate on are:

- youth ministry
- community engagement



*Left to right the signatories of the agreement: Svein Ragnvald Tjora (Chair of Sola Parish Council), Morten Sandland (Vicar, Sola), Simon & Julie Graham*

- fresh expressions

Carlisle Diocese and Stavanger Diocese have had a close link for many years, but we are the first two churches from these dioceses to form a local link. Please pray for Sola Church, especially as they begin work constructing a new church building in the heart of the community.

## **Bishops' Roadshow**

Bishop James would like to invite you to attend one of the roadshows taking place in Carlisle on Wednesday 17th July, 7.00pm at St John the Evangelist, Carlisle

The roadshow is an opportunity to explore how, as local church, we can work together to give everyone in Cumbria the opportunity to discover more of God and God's purpose for their lives, in the midst of the very real challenges facing many local churches in terms of finances, buildings and ministry.

The roadshows will also be a fantastic opportunity to meet and welcome to the Diocese our new Bishop of Penrith, Bishop Emma, as she begins her ministry of serving and blessing the Church across Cumbria.

During the roadshows we will be joining in worship with those from across the county and discussing important issues such as: the financial realities facing the Cumbrian Church; how we can work together to resource the Church and put it on a strong footing for generations to come, and the vision we believe God is giving us for Cumbria.

The event is aimed at anyone in a leadership position in the local church or interested in exploring our vision for the future Church in Cumbria. It would be wonderful if there was good attendance from members of St James Church. Please RSVP via email to [BHevents@carlisediocese.org.uk](mailto:BHevents@carlisediocese.org.uk) and include (1) your name, (2) the parish you are from and (3) that you are attending the event in Carlisle.

God bless

Simon

## EVENTS DIARY

- ⇒ Wednesday 3 July, **Prayer & Praise**, Parish Centre, 7.30pm
- ⇒ Thursday 4 & Friday 5 July, **The Mega Jumble Sale**, Cornerstone, 9.00am-4.00pm
- ⇒ Thursday 4 July, **Belong**, St Barnabas Rectory, 7.00pm
- ⇒ Saturday 6 July, **Prayer in City Centre**, 10.00am-4.00pm
- ⇒ Sunday 7 July, **Bring & Share Lunch**, Parish Centre, 11.45am
- ⇒ Friday 12 July, **Justine & Libby's Leaving Do**, Cornerstone, 7.30pm
- ⇒ Saturday 13 July, start of **Keswick Convention**
- ⇒ Saturday 13 July, **Messy Church**, Parish Centre, 4.00pm
- ⇒ Wednesday 17 July, **Bishop's Roadshow**, St John's London Road, 7.00pm
- ⇒ Thursday 18 July, **Licensing of the Revd Matt Martinson**, St Luke's, 7.00pm
- ⇒ Saturday 20 July, **Church Fell Walk**, meet at Parish Centre at 9.00am
- ⇒ Thursday 25 July, **Leisurely Lunch**, Parish Centre, 12.30pm
- ⇒ Thursday 25 July, **PCC Meeting**, Parish Centre, 7.30pm
- ⇒ Saturday 24 August, **Wedding of Adam Smith & Michelle Lovatt**, St James, 2.00pm
- ⇒ Thursday 29 August, **Leisurely Lunch**, Parish Centre, 12.30pm
- ⇒ Saturday 31 August, **Community Fun Day**, Parish Centre, 1.00pm-4.00pm