



Friends of Swansea St Mary

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN/ WINTER 2020

Don't forget !

You can keep up to date with things going on at the church through our website

www.swanseastmary.co.uk

or on facebook ; [St Mary's Swansea](https://www.facebook.com/StMarysSwansea) or on Twitter :

[@stmaryswansea](https://twitter.com/stmaryswansea) email :

stmarysswansea@gmail.com

Dear Friend

I notice on the last Friends newsletter that I wrote about strange times and these continue as we approach the latter part of Advent and Christmas. It will undoubtedly be a strange and difficult Christmas for many of us, but we're reminded in the Christmas events of the joy of a baby born to change history. In Jesus we find hope and peace, a light shining in whatever darkness there may be. I hope and pray that you will find comfort in your faith over this period.

Whilst there is obviously a much reduced programme of things going on this year, there has still been a lot of activity since I last wrote. This has included various online services (which can all be found on the St Mary's Swansea YouTube page), including a service for Remembrance Sunday and also a Deanery Advent Service as well as twice weekly parish services. We also took part in the service online to remember loved and lost babies – the service is normally held at St Mary's. We also managed to hold a Civic Remembrance Service although this had to be by invitation only to ensure that we kept to the appropriate numbers. It was good to be joined at that service by the Archbishop though and also by the new Lord Lieutenant, Louise Fleet, and the Lord Mayor Cllr. Mark Child. Sally Goldstone who was the High Sheriff last year represented the current High Sheriff who was unable to attend. A number of other Remembrance events were also able to take place which was good.



Another encouragement is that we were able to have some music back in church, initially with just a solo singer and the organ, but now with a 'choir' of up to 6 people. The Choral Scholars were able to sing at a number of services prior to them returning home early this year for the Christmas break. It has been really good to welcome some new young people into the choir as well and we look forward to the time when the full choir can join together in song once again !



The takeaway brunch for people who are homeless or struggling continues on a Wednesday and we are usually serving about 70 meals although we have reached the 90's ! Volunteers do a great job at that and it was really encouraging to receive a visit from the Lord Lieutenant, Louise Fleet, who spent a good time chatting to those who were helping.





Christmas will be different this year and we are not able to hold either the Civic Carol Service or the Midnight Mass for safety reasons, but it's important that we proclaim the Christmas message loudly, perhaps even more important than usual. We have a couple of Christmas trees to help welcome people into the church including a 'giant tree' at the front of the church. When the picture appeared of it on Facebook



someone replied, 'You need to stop feeding the tree !'

Above is the tree at the front of the church during and after decoration and below is the tree that welcomes people as they arrive.



Whatever Christmas may bring for you, I hope you know the peace, joy and love that the Christ Child brings into the world and into our hearts this Christmas. And I hope next year will be a happy one for us all.

With best wishes and thanks again for your support.

Every blessing, **Ian Rees (Rector of Central Swansea)**

Church in Wales Darkness into Light Advent Campaign

The Church in Wales have had a campaign running through Advent this year (details are available if you search on the internet : Church in Wales Darkness into light). They invited churches to put on their lights and take pictures on Advent Sunday to show the light shining out into the communities. We were delighted to do this and one of the pictures we put on social media was this one



Finally, please excuse me repeating the following, but I hope you will understand why.

This newsletter has never been about asking for money and I'm not going to start but I think it would be remiss to not draw your attention to the challenges we, and other churches, face at this time financially. There are obviously still expenses to be met but already we have had the cancellation of a number of concerts and other bookings in church. Whilst we hope that the generous donations of individuals will be made up at some point we can't guarantee this either. If you feel able then please consider making a bank transfer to St Mary's Swansea, HSBC Account number 61705970, Sort code 40---43---31 or send a cheque for St Mary's Swansea to 50 St Catherine's Court, Swansea, SA1 1SD. If you're not able to do this at this time then please still be assured of our huge thanks for the support you do give to the church and your interest in what is going on here and again, can I ask you to please remember to encourage others you may know to think about becoming a Friend of St Mary's. Forms are available from church (please either telephone 01792 655489 or email stmarysswansea@gmail.com for a form or if you have any questions at any time).