

## Sunday 20th October 2024 St Luke, the Evangelist

The Pearl of great price

“... the Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man is looking for fine pearls, and when he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has, and buys that pearl.”

I was listening to a podcast recently called “Sacred”. In it the presenter interviews a wide variety of people from Archbishops to writers, from environmentalists to philosophers, from atheists to the devout, from politicians to television personalities. During the interview the presenter tries to find out what the guest holds as sacred, that which has most, or even ultimate, value for them. The presenter interviewed a man called Dr Martin Shaw (not the actor!). He is an author and a mythologist, which, I gather, is basically a storyteller. He likes to tell stories, not for mere entertainment, but which throw light on the deepest human questions about meaning and significance, and purpose, about what it’s all about.

Dr Shaw recounted how he had rejected the Christian faith after a childhood of church-going, but became a Christian in later life. He also talked of the consequences this had for him. Many of his friends felt betrayed. Some even said, “I can’t be your friend any more”; others said, “You’ve lost your mind.” Martin had become a “God botherer” and the consequences for him, both professionally and personally, were great.

However, as he observed: “I knew there would be porcupine quills aimed at my kidneys. And that was just how it was. Because it is the pearl of great price, and I’m prepared to pay it.” For him, his Christian faith is like a fine pearl, and the cost of possessing it is worth the money.

This set me thinking and provoked a number of questions which I’d like to share with you. How do we see our faith? Is it for us a pearl of great price? Or have we become complacent, and perhaps a bit blasé about it all? It’s easy to do so. Many of us have gone to church for a long time, perhaps all of our lives. We come to church week in and week out; we say the same familiar words. Are we just going through the motions? Saying the words of the liturgy without really thinking about them, not really thinking about our faith at all.

To change the image, are we like the Church at Laodicea as described in the book of Revelation: “I know what you have done; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth!”

Strong words, to be sure. Perhaps we have lost sight of just how precious a pearl we possess. Perhaps we have become lukewarm. Perhaps we have lost our first love. We are reminded, though, that our faith is like a fine pearl, or to change the image yet again, to use a picture that Jesus himself used, we have treasure in heaven.

From our Christian perspective, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the treasure. He is treasure because he loves us and cares for us, and has laid his life down for us on the cross. He is treasure because in him and through him we find forgiveness of our sins. He is treasure because he has the words of eternal life. He is treasure because he offers us meaning and significance and purpose. He is treasure because he gives us hope. Jesus is treasure not because he will make us rich, or make life easy, or take away all our problems, but because through him, and only through him, our deepest spiritual needs are met.

It is certainly true that with such treasure we may remain poor in worldly terms. Not for us great riches and the finest life has to offer, perhaps, and yet he offers something that is more valuable than all of that. I’m grateful to Martin Shaw for reminding me that we have this lovely pearl that is our Christian faith. Perhaps you are too. If we have lost our first love then let us ponder the riches of our faith and recognise afresh what a priceless pearl we possess.

As a footnote, I was also struck by his phrase: “. . . it is the pearl of great price, and I’m prepared to pay it.” That set me thinking, too, but perhaps that is for another reflection.

*A prayer to finish:*

God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Rev’d Alan Maunder

## READINGS

### COLLECT

Almighty God, you called Luke the physician, whose praise is in the gospel, to be an evangelist and physician of the soul; by the grace of the Spirit and through the wholesome medicine of the gospel, give your Church the same love and power to heal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen**

### A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 35: 3-6

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 147:1-7

Response: **O praise the Lord, Alleluia!**

Alleluia. How good it is to make music for our God:  
how joyful to honour him with praise.

The Lord builds up Jerusalem:  
and gathers together the outcasts of Israel. **R**

He heals the brokenhearted:  
and binds up all their wounds.  
Great is our Lord and mighty in power:  
his wisdom is beyond all telling. **R**

The Lord lifts up the poor:  
but casts down the wicked to the ground.  
Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving:  
make music to our God upon the lyre. **R**

### A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. Do your best to come to me soon, for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds. You also must beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message. At my first defence no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

2 Timothy 4: 5-17

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### The Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! **Alleluia! chose you from the world, to go and bear fruit that will last, says the Lord.**

Alleluia, **Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord**

The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."' "

Luke 10: 1-9

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

### Post Communion Prayer

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, open our minds to understand the Scriptures and our mouths to proclaim forgiveness in the name of him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**


**Caerleon & District Branch of the Royal British Legion**



proudly present a fundraising concert featuring

**Blaenavon Male Voice Choir**  
 Featuring Soprano – Linda Tolchard

Charles Williams Primary School, Caerleon  
 7pm Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October  
 £10 per person


Tickets can be purchased from Monique Quinn Flowers, Guy's Barbershop,  
 The Goldcroft Pub, Caerleon Post Office or on the Door.  
 Doors open at 6pm.  
 Bar and refreshments available ~ Raffle with a great selection of prizes ~  
 Contactless payment accepted





 Caerleon & District  
 Churches Together  
 &  
 Pudsey Bear

**Quiz Night**  
 with  
**Bring and Share Buffet**  
 at stake is the prestigious  
 St. Cadoc's Trophy  
 Bring your team to  
**Lodge Farm Church**  
 on  
**Friday 15th November 2024**  
**6.30 p.m. for a 7 p.m. start**  
 Don't have a team? Come along and join one.  
 This is a great family occasion for a very worthy cause  
 Retiring collection for BBC Children in Need

**Celtic Evening Prayer at the Cathedral**  
 All are welcome to a service of Celtic Evening Prayer on  
 Sunday October the 27th at 4pm.  
 The theme is 'Equality' and the preacher is Revd Ruth Coombs who is Head of  
 Wales for the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.




A few photographs from the visit to St Cadoc's by Jessica Morden MP, Jayne Bryant MS and Dame Rosemary Butler. A wonderful opportunity to chat with the contractors and project management team on the refurbishment progress and share the vision for the church.



**Easyfundraising total for St Cadoc's Refurbishment Fund has now reached £2259.81**  
 Please support us today at <http://efraising.org/XW7a62zaYB>.

**Sponsor a chair total including Gift Aid is currently £8883.00. To find out how you may sponsor a chair, please go to**  
<https://stcadocscaserleon.uk/st-cadocs-church-refurbishment-appeal/checkout.justgiving.com/53lh55wm54>  
**Thank you for your continuing support.**

## SERVICES

*You are all invited to join us in our worship in person or watch via livestream on Sunday mornings from St Cadoc's.*

### Sunday 20th October

10.30am Family Eucharist Service, Charles Williams CinW primary school hall. Rachel Kendall is leading the talk.

### Tuesday 22nd October

5.30pm Church Action Committee at the Vicarage  
7.00pm to 8.00pm Archdeaconry Clergy Chapter, St Stephen's Church Hall, Pillgwenlly

### Wednesday 23rd October

10.30am Said Eucharist Service, Caerleon Town Hall  
10.30am Churches Together Memory Café, Lodge Farm Church  
7.00pm Bellringing practice

### Thursday 24th October

Worship at Charles Williams CinW Primary KS2 9am and FP 1pm  
7.00pm to 8.00pm St Cadoc's choir practice, Lodge Farm Church

### Saturday 26th October

10.00am to 2.00pm Groundforce Day, St Cadoc's Church.

### Sunday 27th October

10.30am **Bible Sunday & Highveld Link Sunday**  
Sung Eucharist Service, Charles Williams CinW primary school hall. Rev'd Sue presiding and preaching.

### Wednesday 30th October

10.30am Said Eucharist Service, Caerleon Town Hall—All Souls Service

### Thursday 31st October

10.00am to 3pm 'Welsh Places of Worship Forum' - St. Mary's Church, Tim Ford and Rev'd Sue are speakers .

### Saturday 2nd November

10.00am to 2pm Preparation for MA Stewardship Course at St Andrew's Church Hall, Lliswerry  
12 noon Holy Matrimony, Pamela Morgan and Kris Taylor, Holy Trinity, Christchurch



**GROUNDFORCE DAY**

**SATURDAY 26TH OCTOBER**  
**STARTING AT 10.00AM**  
**WEATHER PERMITTING**

**CAN YOU SPARE AN HOUR OR TWO TO HELP TIDY UP THE BORDERS IN ST CADOC'S CHURCH GRAVEYARD? JUST TURN UP AND PLEASE BRING A TROWEL AND SOME CLIPPERS IF YOU HAVE THEM.**

**AFTERWARDS THERE WILL BE COFFEE AND CAKES!**

**TO FIND OUT MORE, RING HUW ON 0784 783 4135**

## CONTACT

If you have anything you'd like to communicate to the people of St Cadoc's, please let Rev'd Sue know. Also, if Rev'd Sue can be of help to you at any time, please get in touch!

### Vicar

Rev'd Sue Pratten 01633 421485/  
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### Churchwardens

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