

February 2017

The Rector writes:

REVIVAL – New life, new hope!

As I sat down to write this letter I has just noticed an article in the Daily Telegraph that Monday 16th January is designated as 'Blue Monday!



‘In 2005 Dr Cliff Arnall, formerly of Cardiff University, came up with a light-hearted formula for predicting the gloomiest day of the year based on various factors. His equation suggested that the third Monday in January was when unhappiness peaked. Credit card bills are a big problem after Christmas, snow, ice and floods are causing worries, and many feel a lack of motivation. But Dr Arnall said that this year could be even more depressing than usual because of Trump and Brexit causing uncertainty and increasing our fears for the future, and sadness following the recent deaths of childhood heroes such as George Michael and Carrie Fisher and so many other celebrities, many in their 50s and 60s, which has also worried people by reminding them of their own mortality.’

The remedy for such depression is a suggestion that we need to revive our spirits to think about happy times and the good things that we have in life.

Sometimes it is easy to get depressed about the state of the Church, as declining congregations, falling numbers of clergy and financial challenges cast doubts and fears over the future of the life and worship of our churches too. Perhaps we need to revive our spirits too!

Revival is not a new concept in the church. The Bible narrative in the Old Testament records a number of revivals within the history of God’s people. The Protestant Reformation in the 17thC in

Europe, the Methodist revival of the 18thC in England, the Great Awakening in 19thC America are all examples.

For many years I have belonged to church organisations that seek renewal, and my prayer has always been for renewal in the church. Just before Christmas, I received an e-mail from Jon Sargent, a member of our congregation, who raised the subject of praying for revival at St Martin’s. Jon reminded me of the last great revival in these islands:

‘Large-scale revivals, such as the Hebridean Revival of 1949 and the Welsh Revival of 1904, are well documented, but it is probably true that smaller episodes of renewal are constantly taking place in churches, towns and villages all over the world. Sometimes the most obvious outward sign is of new people coming to faith, but these times are also characterised by the strengthening and renewal of the faith of people who were already followers of Christ, often for many years.’

Jon also reminded me that:

‘The one thing that these movements have in common is that they are rooted in prayer’

So a thought and a challenge for the New Year – would you be prepared to come and pray for revival/renewal in our church. It would be good if a few of us could give up ½ -1 hour a week to pray together and wait upon God. If you could do this (or maybe you already are!) please let me know. Watch the weekly notice sheet for more details.

Yours in Christ,

Reverend John, your Rector.