

# MONMOUTH • Gwanwyn • Spring 2018

# Grapevine

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THE CHURCH  
IN WALES

## Gan y Golgydd From the Editor's Desk

*I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name - Isaiah 45:3-5*

Wow, what a wealth of 'treasures' we have in our Diocese!

Sometimes life just gets in the way and we don't stay still long enough to appreciate all that we have. From our wonderful wildlife and nature to our rich history and architecture to the generosity and kindness of others, we certainly have an abundance!

This edition of *Grapevine* is packed with stories which will hopefully remind you of how well God provides and also how we can help to maintain and nurture what we have.

The Living Churchyard project at St Woolos Cathedral and our first Eco Church are great examples of how we are looking to protect the wonderful creation around us! Also, the fantastic projects at The Living Room and Ty-Price show just how much we are connecting with our communities.

I certainly didn't know how many hidden treasures we have dotted around our churches! The feature on p8-9 was fascinating to research and I'm sure there are many that I have missed! It would be great if you could send your photographs or unusual stories about our wonderful churches and their heritage! Please email me at [debragoddard@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:debragoddard@churchinwales.org.uk) - I look forward to finding out more.

Happy reading!

Debra



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## Lent Reflections by Bishop Richard

**R**ecently, a mother told me that her six-year-old son asked her, "Why is it that when I speak to God he doesn't reply? He's rude!"

It's a straightforward question which is not so easy to answer, as it asks us to consider how God communicates with us. But who are we talking to? It reminds us that God, in his essence, is unknowable and is utter mystery. In his nature, he is silent and yet chooses to communicate with us in many different ways. A good book doing the rounds in the Diocese at the moment is "The Way of the Heart" by Fr Henri Nouwen. He explores the nature of God and his relationship with the world and with us:

*Out of his eternal silence God spoke the Word, and through this Word created and recreated the world. In the beginning God spoke the land, the sea, and the sky. He spoke the sun, the moon, and the stars. He spoke plants, birds, fish, animals wild and tame. Finally, he spoke to man and woman. Then, in the fullness of time, God's Word, through whom all had been created, became flesh and gave power to all who believe to become the children of God. In all this, the Word of God does not break the silence of God, but rather unfolds the immeasurable richness of his silence.'*

God's greatest communicator is himself. Jesus reveals the love of God and we, as the Body of Christ, the Church, share in this revelation. The Bible, other

people and the world around us give us other forms of communication with God. But it is through the Holy Spirit that we communicate directly with God, for as Jesus said:

*'... the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.'*

John 14:25-26

The language of the Spirit is the same as God - it is silence and as our spirit, our soul communicates in the Spirit, at a level deeper than words, we understand and are comforted.

In a world of noise and distraction, it is important for us to learn how to be still and be silent for then we are closer to God in his silence. We need to teach our children as well as ourselves that the primary route into God's presence is silence; then God will not be a stranger, but a friend and lover.

In this season of Lent, offer God the greatest gift: yourself, undistracted, still and silent and be ready to receive him who is already present.

+Bishop Richard



# Lenten Appeal

Hundreds of people, both close to home and further afield, have benefitted from Bishop Richard's Lenten Appeal.

Last year's recipients were local charities The Sanctuary and iNeed – both of which do fantastic work to help refugees and asylum seekers integrate into the local community.

This year, however, Bishop Richard is looking much further afield – to our sister diocese in the Highveld, South Africa.

In launching his Lenten Appeal 2018, Bishop Richard, said: 'As you are aware, we try to support our brothers and sisters in the Highveld, our twinned Diocese in South Africa, through exchange visits, our prayers and also in financial contributions.

"Following my visit to the Highveld two years ago and subsequent visits by other members in the Diocese, I wish to focus the Lenten appeal this year upon enhancing educational provision in one of the poorest areas of the Highveld, called Mayflower."

The Mayflower School, which was opened in 2007, provides education for 120 children. However, there is not enough practical space for all the children to receive an education.

On the school site, there is an incomplete hall where there are plans for another two classrooms and an office to be built. This hall therefore will be used by the pre-school in the mornings as the school has outgrown their classrooms as well as a safe park in the afternoon. 'Safe Parks' provide the opportunity for those children who, because of illnesses in the family, have had to take up parental responsibilities and therefore do not always have the space or time to 'be' children.



Children from the Mayflower School



The current school building is unsuitable

Training of home-based carers will also take place here during the school holidays.

Bishop Richard believes the hall will not only serve the school but also the surrounding community.

He said: "I have stood in the middle of the hall which consists of a base, upward supports and a roof. There are no walls, no windows, no doors, no furnishings and no electricity because funding ran out several years ago. The cost of realising the vision of building the hall, of completing the classrooms and office, is £12,000. I believe as a Diocese, we can raise that amount through our Lenten giving."

To find out more about how to donate please contact [Veronica.cottam@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:Veronica.cottam@churchinwales.org.uk).

**Please note** - cheques for this worthy cause should be made out to the 'Bishop's Mission and General Account' and sent care of Mrs Veronica Cottam, Bishopstow, Stow Hill, Newport, NP20 4EA along with a note marking it for the Lenten Appeal.

## Your generous donations have helped initiatives such as The Sanctuary Project in Newport.

The project is now open five days a week and is developing a range of activities to help refugees and asylum seekers.

These activities include a woodwork project which will turn recycled pallets into planters which will be donated to local schools and community venues. The project is also hoping to secure an allotment, which means the planters can be donated complete with homegrown flowers!

However, it is the demand for English classes which is growing.

As Project Manager Sarah Croft explained: "English classes are provided purely by a volunteer led team which is challenging. We have used your donation to employ a part time ESOL teacher, George is a refugee himself from Uganda, he was a headteacher in his home country and had volunteered with us for three years teaching the men. On receiving his refugee status in 2016 he ended his volunteering with us in mid 2017 to concentrate on securing employment. We are so pleased to welcome him back in a paid role which he is able to complete alongside his other employment commitments at a local college."

# Bishop's Audit

Many of you may have started to hear the words 'Bishop's Audit' being used around the Diocese and wondered exactly what this is all about. So, we thought it was about time you 'heard it through the grapevine'.



## Why is the Bishop's Audit happening?

The Bishop would like to encourage every parish, in every Ministry Area, to have a vision for its future. Where do you see your church in five years' time?

The audit process enables the Diocese to help Ministry Areas to have a strong base for development and growth and help churches be sustainable and fit-for-purpose in the 21st century. The underlying purpose of this process is not about decline but about an ability to move into models of ministry that will be appropriate for future generations and that will enable more people to come to know God.

## What is the Bishop's Audit?

The Bishop's Audit is intended as a health check for Ministry Areas. Ministry Areas are a vehicle to make disciples and are not simply an organisational exercise. The Bishop's Audit process was requested by the Ministry Area Leaders so that they could ensure the new Ministry Areas grow and develop on strong foundations. We are carrying out five audit processes each year, over a five-year period. The hope is that this will be on a five-year rolling cycle in the future years.

The process is designed for the Bishop and Diocesan Officers to meet a wide range of people within each Ministry Area. There are two opportunities for people from every parish to share their thoughts and hopes for their church, asking for the help and support that they need. Firstly, the Bishop leads a team to visit each church in the Ministry Area and then the Diocesan Officers hold an evening meeting with



the parish officers. Following this consultation and information gathering stage, a report will be provided setting out a number of recommendations for each Ministry Area. This report will cover everything from worship, buildings and finance, to mission, young people and communications.

The Bishop's Audit is intended to be a challenging and wide-ranging process. The Bishop will be asking his people to reach out in their communities and to help grow the Kingdom of God. Lay people will be encouraged to get more involved in their churches and communities, becoming the people that God call us to be. Whilst some parishes and Ministry Areas will be faced with some hard choices about the future and sustainability of their church building, the Diocesan team will be there to help and support them. During the first year after a Ministry Area has had its Bishop's Audit, it will be the priority for support and grant-funding so that they have the best start embarking on the Bishop's recommendations. The Diocesan staff will also help and support Ministry Areas in implementing the recommendations that have been made by providing advice and resources, to empower churches to embrace the future.

So far, Usk and Lower Islwyn Ministry Areas have had their Bishop's Audits and Magor and Newport East Ministry Areas are part way through the process. The next Ministry Area that the Bishop will be visiting is Bassaleg in Spring 2018.

# 'Life for people, life at its best'

The first thing you notice when you visit The Living Room (apart from the gorgeous smell of cakes baking) is the warmth of the welcome you receive. Celebrating its two-year anniversary in April, the project based in the Parish of Bedwelly and New Tredegar has gone from strength-to-strength, even winning a Caerphilly Business Forum awards in recognition of the contribution it makes to the rural community.

Rev Leah Philbrick heads-up the community coffee shop, but admits it was scary to take on such a project and believes its success is hugely dependant on the team of dedicated colleagues and volunteers who contributed to its set up and on going activity, without them The Living Room wouldn't exist.

Rev Leah said: "We have a fantastic team of volunteers – God tends to send the right people at the right time! Yes, there are challenges and sleepless nights but you have to focus on your faith and remember that God is at work."

The Living Room is inspired by Jesus' promise of 'Life for people, life at its best'. It aims to provide a kind of 'living room' which will lead to lasting improvements in health and well-being of its communities. It does this through offering to one another the gift of time – in a beautiful and hospitable environment, where skills and confidence can be developed and solutions found to the challenges we face.

Housed at a former pharmacy building in the town, close to St Dingats church in New Tredegar. The Living Room feels like a hub of the community. From poets to toddlers, the morning I spent there was inclusive, bustling and friendly. Even those who didn't come through the doors, stopped to read the notices on posters in the window.

Rev Leah, said: "This is where life is! I think lots of projects have been set up to 'fix' communities in the Valleys and failed. It is easy to get bogged down and feel trapped in the negative story – yet our vision is to love your community – whatever it looks like. Grabbing hold of the immense love of God and seeing with Kingdom eyes that we have a bigger and better story. A place like this gives hope to communities."

The need for a 'hub' outside the church walls had been talked about long before Leah arrived as Community Chaplain towards the end of 2014.

She explains: "St Dingats was becoming unsustainable to provide the really good community work being done and needed to be refurbished. In the meantime they were incredibly brave to look for another space – it could scare a lot of people. But working with Rev Rosie Dymond and the team, we have accomplished more than we could have hoped for at the outset.

"The parish has always had really good relationships with the local council and a good track record with engaging with other organisations generally and a grant from Caerphilly Regeneration Fund kick-started the project and provided funds to refurbish the building and secure running costs."

From poetry and curry nights, whittling sessions, back massages, Wednesday walks to selling out food festivals, the Living Room is already developing a busy diary – but the activities are being developed in support of the wider Making Spaces Project, which has also recently won national recognition from the Christian Funders Forum Award.

As Leah explained: "The Making Spaces Project isn't about one place or one activity - is a spiritual framework, a pattern for life, ministry and mission, which creates space to explore life in all its glory – space for prayer, space for listening, creative space, green space etc. Now the Parish has three church buildings: St Dingats, St Sarnan's and St Peter's, and a hub in the community, each uniquely placed to reach out in different ways.

"For example, our Wednesday Walks reawaken our love of creation and brings us closer to the heart of God and our poetry nights give us space to explore our creative side – but also to express feelings and share stories with others which maybe we otherwise wouldn't."

Leah hopes to develop and encourage more activities at The Living Room and that it continues to be a place of hope for the community. She also hopes to see the Making Space Project open new spaces for encountering God throughout the Parish. She said: "We can all focus on the negatives and the areas where we are struggling and let that be our story – or we can focus on our hope in Christ and our potential, gathering friends and community around the transforming story of the Kingdom. I know which story I would want to be part of!"

Rev Leah (l) shares a cuppa



Tapestry reflects creative space

Volunteers Diane and Julie make great cakes and soups

The Living Room

# A wealth of history across our churches

The Diocese of Mornmouth has 171 church buildings and all have some features of beauty or interest. Some are open and welcoming to visitors, others are kept locked outside of service times. Sometimes our churches will be simply the shelter for our mission activities, but they can also be a powerful missional tool in their own right.

Many of our churches would have been awe-inspiring to the surrounding populations when they were built and are still breath-taking for us today. These buildings retain a special atmosphere that cannot be found in any other type of buildings. We have a responsibility, as guardians of these churches, to keep the buildings open so that locals and tourists alike can encounter the deep spirituality these churches retain. They offer a sanctuary of peace that is rare in modern life.

If we look after our buildings well and keep them open to visitors, they could be places where people who do not usually attend church services can encounter God.

Rev Dean Lister said: "Ave people likely when they enter your church, to react like Jacob did at Bethel (Genesis 28.17), *"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven."* Theologian Paul Tillich said that a church building should enable the experience of the presence of holy... even before anything else happens within the space.

## The Norman Arch – St Woolos Cathedral, Newport



The pillars, most agree from their style, are Roman, and may have been brought from Caerleon to reuse in creating the arch around 1080.

The Cornithian capitals display a complex series of naive carvings which have never been satisfactorily interpreted. Only two sides are seen, and it looks as if large leaves have been cut away to introduce religious subjects such as, on one side, the Creation, and the Trinity, on the other, possibly, a representation of the expulsion from Paradise. A quite different interpretation sees the carvings as a series of scenes depicting Noah and the Flood.

The church was, around this time, given to the Abbey of Gloucester, so it may have been the monks who created or commissioned the archway, and the nave itself. The decorations on the arch itself are remarkable for their state of preservation, which seem accounted for by the fact that it is an internal entranceway and thus has never been subjected to the forces of nature. If you visit the cathedral, pause and examine the carvings... perhaps you can perceive yet another interpretation!

## Tombs at St Mary's, Chepstow



St Mary's Chepstow contains an interesting collection of tomb and mural monuments, two of which tell fascinating stories of royal and political intrigue. Within the west porch is the tomb of Henry Marten, close friend of Oliver Cromwell, and signatory to Charles I's death warrant. Marten was imprisoned in Chepstow Castle, in the tower that still bears his name, until his death in 1680.

The tomb of Henry Somerset, (2nd Earl of Worcester) and his wife Elizabeth Browne is large and impressive attesting to their wealth and status. Elizabeth Browne was Lady-in-Waiting to Anne Boleyn and testified against her, claiming she engaged in numerous adulterous acts with men including Mark Smeaton, Henry Norris and even the Queen's own brother, George Boleyn. Intriguing, shortly after helping to convict the Queen, and while Anne Boleyn was locked in the Tower of London awaiting her execution, Elizabeth Browne gave birth to a daughter and named her Anne. Perhaps in memory of the Queen she betrayed.

## Healing stone at Christchurch



The inscription on the stone translates as: "Here lie John Colmer and Isabella, his wife, who dies in the year of the Lord 1376, upon whose souls may God have mercy. Amen"

The stone was claimed to have healing powers and until the 19th Century, sick children and others were

brought to the church and lay upon the stone all night. Cox, the Mornmouthshire historian, records that the sick pilgrims were cured of their afflictions. Another traveller, Donovan, writes that he visited the church in 1803 and saw a young man in a night-cap lying on the stone, surrounded by his family and friends, who were praying for his recovery.

## Stained glass window depicting an atomic bomb at St Peter's, Llandeudaud



On the North wall, the window "The Risen Christ in glory" – 'I have set before you life and death, therefore choose life', was dedicated in 1963 as gift of parents of a serving soldier in World War Two. An unusual feature is its depiction of the mushroom cloud of an atom bomb.

It is striking design, described as "The risen Christ in glory, over a darkened world, contrasted in powers with that of an atomic explosion (the mushroom cloud). Designed and made at a time of fear and uncertainty in international relations, it is a positive statement of the triumph of faith, hope and life."

## Box pews at St Mary's, Nash



The spire of St Mary's is a landmark for many miles around. The tower is unusually located on the north side of the nave, however, the glory of this church is the interior fittings. The

church features a complete set of 18th Century furnishings – box pews, a three decker pulpit (with sounding board) and a Western Gallery. Box pews were replaced by bench pews by the mid 19th Century and only a few examples remain across the country.

## Wooden Jesse Figure at St Mary's, Abergavenny



This world-famous carving, which dates back to the 15th Century, now sits beneath a specially commissioned commemorative window.

The Jesse Effigy is a larger-than-life figure which once formed the base of an intricate construction depicting the lineage of Jesus Christ - a direct descendant of Jesse, father of King David.

So-called 'Jesse figures' and 'Jesse trees' are not uncommon in stone and stained glass, but the Abergavenny example is the only wooden one in the UK – and possibly the world.

It was carved from a single piece of oak around the time Columbus was heading out into the undiscovered world beyond the Atlantic and would originally have been around 9 - 10 metres tall.

## Medieval wall paintings at St Cybi's, Llangybi



The original stone building was considerably enlarged in the 15th Century, and large wall paintings adorned the walls, probably dating from 1450-1480. Fascinating alterations have been made to the church over the centuries, including the paintings, which have been painted over and text written over time and cleaned.

The earliest painting is thought to date from 1480 and depicts a warning to Sabbath breakers illustrated by the tools of various trades of the period in the centre of which is the figure of Christ.

Another painting shows St Michael and the Virgin Mary with the scales of justice and mercy between them. This was partly obscured by a later mural of an open book showing the Ten Commandments.

Another mural shows the Apostles Creed which was cleaned and restored during the 1960s.

## Roman altar at St Stephen and St Tathan, Caerwent



As you step through the porch door of St. Stephen's and St. Tathan's, Caerwent Parish Church, you will notice two ancient stones, with latin inscriptions. The larger stone referred to as the Paulinus stone.

Also a smaller stone set in an alcove. This stone is believed to be an Altar Stone dedicated to the God, Mars Ocelus. The Altar stone is thought to belong to a Roman military officer.

The inscription reads: 'DEO MARTI OCELO AEL AGVSTINVS OP VSLM'

Translates to:

'For the god Martius Ocelus, Aelius Augustinus the Opto, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.'

# Ty Price Hall

## - it's a community thing!

The new Ty Price Hall at Overmornow is certainly living up to its vision of being more than a church hall – by becoming an invaluable resource shared with its community.

In fact, when it opened last July, Bishop Richard didn't 'bless' the building, but commissioned the congregation and the people to use the hall as a resource for building a community of love and service.

Rev Canon David McGladdery said: "The church's the name we use to give identity to those who are united in a passion to share our belief that God's love is able to bring about change. Change for the better in society – where people are accepted, included and loved, forgiven and healed.

"Our job, as the Church of Christ – the Jesus Movement – is to find out what God is doing, in our localities and join in.

"Ty Price will help us in serving this community of Overmornow – finding out what are our community's needs and giving practical help and practical support to help strengthen our community life together."

The old church hall at St. Thomas' had become unsuitable for its renewed vision of serving the community and was in a poor state of repair. After almost 10 years of prayer, fund raising, planning and successful grant applications, it became possible to demolish the old hall and rebuild it in a way that would provide a pleasant, comfortable and practical facility to enable God's people of St Thomas' to do God's work.



The lovely lunch club ladies

Rev David, said: "We were very grateful for the support from the Welsh Government who awarded the project £340,000 grant and the amazing efforts of the whole congregation and the other local generous donors."

Ty Price named after The Rev Canon Norman Price, who was vicar of St Thomas, in Overmornow, for 29 years from 1963 to 1992. He was the last vicar to refurbish the old hall as a community resource (but certainly not the last vicar who wanted to develop the hall further). Norman is remembered for saying two things, often: 'Show people God's love and you won't go far wrong. It is all about love.' And, also: 'Remember, have faith!'

Rev David, said: "These are good words to hold on to, as we begin our project of serving the community.

"It is all about sharing that LOVE, spoken of by Canon Norman Price, after whom, we have chosen to name this community resource."

Ty Price already has a packed diary of events including lunch clubs, drop-in sessions, open youth work, senior citizens group, councillor surgeries, homework club, MIND groups (mental health support), Homestart (support for families), coffee mornings, church activities and more.

To find out more about what's going on visit [www.typricehall.co.uk](http://www.typricehall.co.uk)

Bishop Richard blessed the community, not the building



# Welcome to the team

A new face has joined the Diocesan team – A well, maybe not new to some of you!

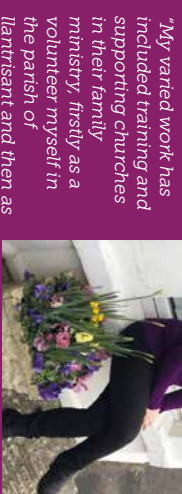
Grapevine would like to welcome back Vicki Blackpool who has returned as a part-time Children, Youth and Families Ministry Advisor – after several years away to raise a family.

She says: "My heart is still in mission and sharing Jesus with those around us on a day to day basis through the way we live our lives out as well as through other means such as services, studies in cafes and beyond. I am excited to be returning to the diocese after a couple of nudges from God to apply for this new role. I'm looking forward to joining in with what God is doing in the diocese and seeing lives transformed through the little steps we can take to engage children, young people and their families in community and bring a sense of belonging that is real."

Born and bred in Bristol, Vicki came to Wales in 1998 for university in Pontypriod where she studied, RE, Creative Writing and Media Studies and never went back over the water!

She lives in Caerwent with husband Laurence and children Hannah (aged 5) and Joshua (aged 3)

Vicki explains: "We moved here to follow God's call to plant a missional community out of The Bridge Church, Chepstow. Between us we have worked in various denominations and so have a grasp on a variety of approaches to 'church' and are passionate about sharing resources across denominations where possible.



Vicki is looking forward to bringing a sense of belonging

Wales, mostly made up of volunteers. After that, I joined the diocese as Children's Advisor in 2011 and got to know a few of you back then."

To find out a bit more about Vicki, Grapevine asked her what book she was currently reading and what is her favourite piece of music?

"Talking about books is interesting, as of late with young children around, I've had little time to read and complete a book that isn't for children! I'm currently reading, A Secret Garden by Kate Forde (this one may be a record, nearly a year since I started) and Slow Church by Jon Patten which is a great read in reimagining church and questioning provision over relationship.

"We love to listen to The Bend Collective as a family and because of that 'My Lighthouse' has taken on significance for us. Listening to a 5 and 5-year-old sing/shout it at the tops of their voices on the school run is quite something!"

Vicki can be contacted at [vickblackpool@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:vickblackpool@churchinwales.org.uk)

# WANTED!

## Volunteer School Admission Appeals Panel Members

Are you interested in education and want to get involved?  
Do you have excellent listening skills, have the ability to put people at ease and make balanced decisions?  
Would you like to become involved in an important, impartial service?

The Governors of Church in Wales Voluntary Aided schools are responsible for convening appeals hearings if requested by a parent or carer whose child is refused admission to their school. The Mornmouth Diocesan Education Service recruits and trains individuals to sit on appeal panels for these schools and is currently inviting applications from individuals who would like to volunteer for this service.

The appeals panel service is an essential and valued service on which schools rely in order to organise independent appeals hearings.

For further information please contact Miss Libbie O'Brien on Tel: **01633 267490** Email: [libbieobrien@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:libbieobrien@churchinwales.org.uk)

# People and places



All Age Eucharist run by Club Rock at **St Mary's in Magor**, retold the Transfiguration of Jesus as only they can!

Disciple James tried to find the top of the mountain using his mobile phone sat nav only to find he had no signal and Disciple John lost his map. They witnessed the glory of Jesus and and wanted to build shelters for Him, Elijah and Moses by ordering Ikea flat packs.



Staff and pupils at **Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales** visit Rev Julian to mark Ash Wednesday.



**The three parishes of Newport North Ministry Area (St Mary's, St David's and All Saints)** joined together to seek a common vision statement during a brilliant Vision Day led by Dr Eeva John.

*"Something's afoot in this community.. a holy and active presence, breaking barriers, enriching lives through Faith in Jesus"*



Welcome to Georgia and Sarah who have joined the newly formed **Cornestone Community**. Based in the **Cyncoed Ministry Area** the aim of The Cornestone Community is to enable young people to explore and re-imagine monastic religious life in 21st century Cardiff. Drawing on the Franciscan Tradition, the Community will commit to a lifestyle of contemplative activism, combining prayer and contemplation with an active response to the needs of the local community.



The Ministry areas of **Raglan, Usk and Goytre**, have joined together to run a series of Big Saturday Breakfasts in the Memorial Hall in Usk.

The whole community, young and old are invited to come along, meet friends, old and new, and enjoy a cooked Monmouthshire breakfast free of charge.

Over 200 people regularly come for a cooked breakfast, which is served by volunteers and clergy from across the Deanery in this fantastic community initiative.



A group of modern-day monks took to the streets of **Abergavenny** on Ash Wednesday.

Members of the **Holywell community** talked to shoppers about Lent and marked them with the sign of the cross.



Welcome to Rev Sue Pratten who has been licensed as vicar and leader of **Caerleon Ministry Area**. Sue has come from Caerphilly, but knows Newport well having been a teacher in the area for many years.

Wish wish her well in her new ministry.



The online faculty system has now gone live and paper applications will no longer be accepted from 31 March 2018.

For further information, please contact [kathilsden@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:kathilsden@churchinwales.org.uk)



**The Tithe Barn in Abergavenny** is to become a Welsh Centre of Excellence.

Welcoming the news, Canon Mark Seady said: *"When the Church took the Tithe Barn back in to its ownership 10 years or so ago we did so with the intention of creating a her-itage centre; adding a Welsh Centre of Excellence to that seems a natural and appropriate progression."*



The Ministry areas of **Raglan, Usk and Goytre**, have joined together to run a series of Big Saturday Breakfasts in the Memorial Hall in Usk.

Over 200 people regularly come for a free cooked breakfast, which is served by volunteers and clergy from across the Deanery.

The project was started thanks to the Bishops Mission Fund which covered initial start-up costs.



**SS Julius and Aaron in Newport** use the outside of the church as a Community Faith Space.

The space has been used to reflect on Homelessness Sunday (pictured), a nativity scene during Christmas, a Calvary at Passiontide and a St David's Day display.

This gives an opportunity for the local community to have passing moments of thought, prayer or reflection when driving past, walking by or sitting on the church wall.



When heavy snowfall made it impossible to leave the house, **St James' Church, Rudy**, brought the church to you!

Rev Dean Roberts held the first 'virtual service' delivered straight to people's inboxes so he and his parishioners could still worship together.

# Well done to our first Eco Churches!

Congratulations to Newport North Ministry Area which is the first in the diocese to receive an Eco Church Award. All three churches within the Ministry Area received the Bronze Award as part of a scheme run by environmental charity A Rocha UK which encourages churches across England and Wales to demonstrate the gospel is good news for God's earth.

Rev Rebecca Stevens, Ministry Area Leader, said: "As a ministry area (Newport North) all three churches (St Mary's, St David's and All Saints) have now reached Bronze level. This required us to consider among other things our recycling habits, placing compost bins in the graveyards, encouraging the junior church to create bug hotels, and developing our wild flower sections. It also meant that we committed to changing our light bulbs to more eco-friendly bulbs, encouraged car-sharing to church, twinned our toilets, and will be using more eco-friendly cleaning materials."

"It did involve extra work, but we involved everyone and people caught the vision and joined in quickly." A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world, both as a response to the biblical mandate to care for the earth, and as a demonstration of the Christian hope for God's world.



Rev Rebecca and the team (including three recently appointed Eco Champions) are now working towards a Silver award.

She said: "We are hoping to partner with our local schools who have Eco Clubs to take part in regular litter picking activities, and with our local WI to create another wild flower area. This will be a tougher level to meet as it will involve a lot of changes to our buildings and a greater financial commitment." If you would like to explore being an Eco Church then why not try a survey to see where you are starting from? <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

## Boost for Living Churchyard Project

A community wildlife project at St Woolos Cathedral will be expanding and developing further thanks to grant funding from the Gannett Foundation.

The Living Churchyard project provides an area of the Cathedral grounds which is set aside to encourage wildflowers, birds, insects and wildlife whilst also providing a valuable habitat for visitors.

Rev Canon Dr Mark Dimond, residential canon at the Cathedral, said: "We are delighted to have received this grant as it will enable us to continue to expand the Living Churchyard project for the benefit of both people and wildlife."

"The grant enables us to provide information sheets, signage, interpretation boards, benches, bird and bat boxes, bird feeders and insect house, as well as paying for the basics, such as tools!"

"We hope the area may also provide a resource for local schools and organisations that are interested in nature and we invite them to discuss this with

us. Activities might include nature trails, identifying trees and plants, sitting and maintaining nest boxes and feeders, studying visiting birds and maybe forest school activities or just sitting quietly to contemplate nature in God's Acre."



The cathedral is set in a grove of trees on the site of an ancient Celtic clas or Christian enclosure dating back perhaps 1500 years. Currently, the grounds are maintained by a small team from the Cathedral, but other volunteers would be welcome!

For more information about the project or to volunteer, please call cathedral Administrator Andrea Keen at [enquiries@newportcathedral.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@newportcathedral.org.uk)

## On the move

### Coming

**Rev Sue Pratten** licensed as leader of Caerleon Ministry Area.

**Ed Hodge** who will take up a role as part-time Youth Worker in the Newport East Ministry Area and funded by a Diocesan grant for 2018.

**Rev Nick Adams** - team vicar, Upper Islwyn Ministry Area

**Rev Leah Philbrick** - team vicar, Upper Islwyn Ministry Area

**Rev Jane Butler** - team vicar, Upper Islwyn Ministry Area

**Rev Brenda Jones**, Associate Priest, Upper Islwyn Ministry Area

**Rev Trevor Morgan** - Associate Priest, Upper Islwyn Ministry Area

**Vicki Blackpool** - who joins the diocesan team as part-time Children, Youth and Families Ministry Advisor

### Going

**Rev Den Richards**, retiring after 20 years of dedicated ministry in the Diocese.

Best wishes and blessings on those moving on ministry - thank you for your ministry within the Diocese of Monmouth.

Please continue to remember all who are taking on new roles or retiring from formal ministry.

## What's On

### Lay Eucharistic Ministry Training

Sessions will be held on Saturday 12 & 19 May at the Diocesan Office, Newport. For more information and to book your place please contact Liz Houghton at [momec@ciw.org.uk](mailto:momec@ciw.org.uk)

### Llandaff Festival of Prayer

**Saturday 14 July 10am-4.30pm**

**St Telio's Church in Wales Primary School**

The event is an opportunity to explore spirituality and prayer and is coming to our diocese. For more information and to book your place please visit [www.FestivalOfPrayer.co.uk](http://www.FestivalOfPrayer.co.uk)

### Safeguarding Training Sessions

**Monday 30 April 10am -12pm and**

**Monday 11 June 10am -12pm**

Sessions will be held at The Diocesan Office, 64 Caerlau Road, Newport. For more information or to book a place please contact Amelia Jarvis on **07881 016185** or email [amelia.jarvis@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:amelia.jarvis@churchinwales.org.uk)

Also, there are sessions being planned for Lay Ministry Training, Nurture Group Training and also training for churchwardens (sessions for new and experienced) so please visit our website [monmouth.churchinwales.org.uk](http://monmouth.churchinwales.org.uk) for updates.



### Welsh language services

**Welsh language services in Monmouth Diocese**  
A Welsh service is held every two months, on the second Saturday of the month, at **St Thomas' Church, Overmonnow, Monmouth.**

**Gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn Esgobaeth Mynyw**  
Cynhelir gwasanaeth Cymraeg bob deudfys, ar ail ddydd Sadwrn y mis, yn **Eglwys Sant Thomas, Overmonnow, Trefnyw.**

The date for the next service is: **12th May**  
The dates for the other 2018 services are:  
**14th July**  
**8th September**  
**10th November**  
All services are at **9.30 a.m.**

Dyma ddyddiad y gwasanaeth nesaf: **12fed Mai**  
Dyma ddyddiau gwasanaethau eraill 2018:  
**14eg Gorffennaf**  
**8fed Medi**  
**10fed Tachwedd**  
Mae'r gwasanaethau i gyd am 9.30 y bore

# Back Chat

## Easter: Make it real – Make a difference

When Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the dead, salvation was made real and He made the decisive difference in history. This and every year, Lent and Easter nudge us with this truth - so we can **make it real** in our lives and **make a difference** for Christ. Our worship focuses on this for about 90 days (during Lent and Eastertide) so that we can learn to live what it means all year round.

Making it real is a challenge for all of us - individuals, couples, congregations, Ministry Areas, as well as for the Diocese and the whole Church. True discipleship calls us to die thoroughly to pleasing ourselves, to stop serving our own purposes, to put an end to welcoming into our Churches only those who are 'like us'. Easter calls us instead to live trustingly for Christ and for others so that we really can say: 'My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ is alive in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God'. (Gal 2:20). That is the Easter Mystery - and we believe it's real.

Making it real in us can be scary and weird - at first anyway. Turning outwards and growing by listening to God, and not just to each other, happens when we put our self-centred choices to death. When we do this, we live the experience of the Easter Mystery

and make a difference for Him. We need to carry this through in how we think, speak and make decisions on our PCCs, during our Prayer Meetings and Nurture Groups - as well as in our own hearts. Making it real always involves choosing 'Self or Saviour?'. It sets us free - it restores our joy; it draws others to Christ. Perseverance in Him makes it part of who we are.

Making it real means dying to self, reaching beyond what we are used to, and often daunts us, can seem threatening, sometimes coming almost like a bereavement. But even when we feel like this we can still become the people God calls us to be, we can make a difference for Him, because in Him we find renewal and new life. At first this may feel unfamiliar - but it is always worth it.

So, as we focus on Easter this year, **how are you making this real in your life and in the congregation and community you are part of?**

**Enjoy Easter: make it real and make a difference -** for Christ in how and where you are.

**Fr David Matthews,**  
St Julius and Aaron, Newport



MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE