

# MONMOUTH • Gwanwyn • Spring 2019

# Grapevine

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THE CHURCH  
IN WALES



## Grapevine Editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of Grapevine!

I hope you love the vibrancy and detail of our front page image? I'd love to take the credit, but it was actually designed by a student at one of our schools! Each year, we invite a different school to design a Christmas and Easter card – and the entries are always absolutely fantastic! So well done to 10 year-old Caitlin Collett, Bishop Childs CinW Primary School! To see the 2nd and 3rd place designs, turn to page 7.

This edition is very much a celebration of all the brilliant work which is happening across the diocese – and hopefully it will bring a smile to your face and a warmth to your heart to see that so much is being achieved across our parishes. From Prayer Spaces in schools to the expanding work in helping support homeless people locally, it's clear that there is plenty of good news out there!

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# Helping and supporting those who find themselves homeless in our diocese

This years' Lent Appeal focusses on the work of churches supporting and assisting the homeless locally, especially through night shelters.

The work of the night shelter in Newport is now well established. Each year, 14 different churches offer food and shelter to the homeless during the Winter months. The shelter is organised by Eden Gate who, for the first time, is offering a Summer Shelter during the rest of the year at their premises in Newport.

Eden Gate recently issued this bulletin: "As always, we are extremely grateful to our partnering churches and everyone who has been involved; we couldn't run the night shelter without you. So far this year we have saved more than 722 nights sleeping rough and accommodated 44 people, 41 male and three female. We are currently supporting four individuals to access Christian Residential programmes outside the area; please uphold this work in prayer. We have successfully supported seven people into move-on accommodation. This gets harder each year, with Universal Credit and criminal convictions contributing to the challenges of resettling people successfully. Please pray for us as we take this work forward and extend the night shelter throughout the year."

For the first time this Winter, churches in Monmouth operated a night shelter on three nights a week for up to six people. They hope to be able to expand the project in future years.

Reverend Catherine Haynes, explains: "Monmouth churches came together some two years ago to help address the increased need to help rough sleepers and those facing homelessness in Monmouth, especially during the Winter months. We looked at ways in which we could use our church buildings to put what our faith teaches us into practice and provide shelter and a welcome for those who need it most."

Following lots of discussions with the local council and police, as well as support from the local community, the doors finally opened in January.

Three local churches are involved. Each venue has a team of volunteers - the evening shift makes a hot two course meal for the guests and makes them welcome; the night shift ensures that the guests are safe through the night; and the morning shift makes breakfast and makes the venue ready for its daytime use.

Rev'd Catherine, adds: "Guests come in all shapes and sizes, but all are referred through the Local Authority Housing Options Team who assesses their vulnerability and needs. Safety is a top priority and guests sign an agreement to keep both themselves and the other guests and helpers secure. We aim to provide food, warmth and comfort in a safe but relaxed atmosphere."

The project has been very successful this year and was praised by Gwent Police for the sound policies and partnership work underpinning the scheme. The team hope to build on this success next Winter by continuing its work with Monmouthshire County Council to provide secure long-term accommodation for those in need as well as emergency shelter in the cold Winter months.

The funds donated to this year's Lent Appeal will help support the night shelters in Newport and Monmouth. We would also like to hear of any other projects in the Diocese working with the homeless to see if we can also support them.

Cheques should be made out to 'Monmouth DBF' and sent to - Diocesan Lent Appeal, 64 Caerau Road, Newport, NP20 4HJ. We would ask that any Gift Aid is claimed by the local churches and passed on to the Lent Appeal.



Testing a bed



Getting a bed ready

# Girls' and boys' choirs now singing from the same hymn sheet

The girls' choir at Newport Cathedral is going from strength to strength with its first choir tour planned for this Summer.

Musical Director, Dr Emma Gibbins has nurtured the choir from its formation just a few years ago to the 22-strong group it is now.

Breaking with tradition and setting up a group from scratch hasn't been easy, but Emma wouldn't have it any other way.

She explains: *"With its strong musical tradition and a full choir of men and boys, forming a girls' choir was a change to Newport's tradition, but it was part of the cathedral clergy's vision for some time."*

*"In fact, establishing a girls' choir was in the job specification when I applied, so there has been huge support from the whole community from the start."*

*"Seeing how much the girls get out of it and how much they are contributing and bringing to the cathedral makes it all worthwhile."*

Emma knew there would be an interest and enthusiasm from girls by the shouts of 'it's not fair' when she would visit local primary schools to recruit just boys!

But how did she encourage girls to take this interest to the next level and 'give it a go'?

She explains: *"I would speak at assemblies in local primary schools to explain about the Cathedral and the choir, emphasising social trips, choir pay, and choir tours... and, of course, squash and biscuits at break time. It's a great advantage if there's a current member of the choir at the school who is confident to stand up in assembly and talk about how much they love the choir. I normally take some choir robes along too for a bit of dressing-up, sometimes even getting the head teacher to put a robe on!"*

*"I would then invite any children who are interested to stay behind after assembly to 'do a bit of singing', since the word 'audition' could be off-putting. Increasingly I find that the children don't sing in*

*school assemblies, so trying to find something they know can be tricky. Most of them have never seen a piece of sheet music before and many are astonished to discover that they have high notes in their voice that they hadn't realised were there."*

The 'successful' children are then invited to a six-week 'taster session' at the cathedral.

Emma says: *"I write to the parents, emphasising the free musical training, singing to a professional standard with adults, having fun in a disciplined environment, developing good team work, development of skills and attitudes which transfer positively to school work and other activities, development of self-discipline, confidence, and commitment."*

*"The contact time in the school auditions is so limited and singing in a classical style so alien to many of them, that I like to be able to give them a chance to find out more over a period of a few weeks. It also allows me to assess their suitability and see how they respond to learning in the choir environment."*

Both the boys' and girls' choir are recruited from pupils in years 4-9, and Emma has found that it has been building up the girls; confidence has been challenging.

She explains: *"Even at this age, I've found that girls are much more worried than boys about making mistakes, and more conscious of what people will think if something's not quite right. The younger boys have always been much more willing to just give it a go. I think familiarity with repertoire, thorough rehearsing and lots of encouragement have helped and it's wonderful to watch them continue to grow in confidence. They are already looking forward to their first choir tour next summer."*

From the first in-take of recruits in October 2015, when the girls rehearsed once a week for one hour, the girls have gradually stepped up their



commitment, and from September 2018, the girls and boys have equal commitments each week of two choral services and one weekday rehearsal.

So what has been the most rewarding part of forming a girls choir and growing it?

Emma says: *"Introducing church music to a lot of children from a huge range of social backgrounds, many of whom might never have come across classical music or the Anglican Church, and many of whose parents simply wouldn't be able to afford to pay for music lessons. I believe strongly that music is a hugely powerful part of the church's outreach to young people."*

*"The enthusiasm with which all the choristers, girls and boys, approach the music is wonderful. Anyone who thinks that classical music doesn't appeal to children just needs to attend a Cathedral Choir rehearsal!"*

The girls' first tour kicks off on 24-28th July when they will sing in Chester Cathedral.

Musical Director, Dr Emma Gibbins puts the girls through their paces



# Community helps save its local church



St Peter's Church, Llanwenarth Citra

Five years ago, St Peter's Church in Llanwenarth Citra, Abergavenny, was faced with the prospect of closure if it could not carry out essential work to its roof. The 16 or so regular worshippers were told they would have to find nearly £200,000 to carry out the work.

The Grade II listed building, parts of which date back to medieval times, had been deteriorating for years and the stone roof tiles above the nave and chancel were

falling off, leading to water damage inside. The tower was also unsafe and needed to be stabilised to hold up the floor and prevent the bells from falling down.

Closure, however, was not an option as far as parishioners were concerned. They organised a fundraising taskforce which set about learning how to secure grants as well as running an imaginative calendar of events to raise money locally.

The hard work paid off and today St Peter's Church re-opened for a service of re-dedication and thanksgiving for the completion of its new roof.

*"The cost of the repairs was eye-wateringly beyond our means," says Pip Hassall, a church warden who stepped in as a project manager. "However, if we had not been able to get the roofs fixed, the church would have closed – that concentrated peoples' minds."*

*"We are a pragmatic congregation which has been fully behind the project. We moved out into the church hall while the work was being done but no one complained."*

While Pip began to learn a lot about filling in forms for grants and funding, other members of the church

threw themselves into fundraising events. These included bingo evenings, plant sales, open gardens, a barn dance, hog roast, a promise auction, Yoga taster day and a concert of choral music. They also set up a Just Giving page online and appealed for individual donations. Enough money was raised for work to begin in May 2018 and thanks to the hot dry summer it was completed quickly.

*"The fundraising events were brilliant at bringing together people from across the community," says Pip. "People who don't attend our services also got involved, not just supporting events but organising them too. Everyone was very supportive – I think we all value the church which has been in the heart of the community for so many generations."*

Once the roof was repaired, the inside walls which had been damaged by water ingress had to be replastered and repainted with breathable paint.

*"Raising money for this project has been hard work but worth it to see the beautiful new roof we have and to know that our church is now dry inside," says Pip. "It has been a privilege to meet and work with the skilled people who have worked on this project."*

Grants for the work came from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Churches Trust, the Headley Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Church in Wales, The Welsh Churches Trust and the Diocese of Monmouth. It was carried out by conservation builders, Taliesin Conservation under the watchful eye of expert conservation architect Stefan Horowskyj of Morgan Horowskyj Architects.

Before the work was completed, parishioners hid a time capsule in the roof in a tin box. The box included a Sunday paper; a local paper with the story of the church's Open Roof Day; a pound coin with a leek on it; photographs of the church, events and its congregation; a copy of the diocesan magazine; a pew leaflet; a green book of common prayer and a note of explanation about the parish and roof repairs.

The thanksgiving service was led by the Rector, Canon Mark Soady, and the Archdeacon of Monmouth, Ambrose Mason. The preacher was the Revd Dr Jean Prosser, the project advisor.

Fr Mark said, *"We have got to this point today because the community rallied round and helped us to raise the monies necessary to match fund the grants we had been promised. It has been great to see how local people have rallied to save their church – I am very grateful to them."*

Dr Prosser said, *"This church is for all of us, inside and out. This building is where we celebrate and mourn where we bring our troubles and joys and just by standing here, cared for, filled with light and music, it stands in the community for active Christian belief and life. This project has done more than replace the roof – it has also reached out into the community."*

The work on St Peter's is not finished yet though. The next phase of the renovation project is to repair the tower, put in an accessible WC and small servery, move the vestry and rehang the two bells. Parishioners hope once all the work is done the church will be able to be used more widely by the community, particularly for concerts as it has an excellent acoustic.

## Diocesan School Easter card competition

This year Bishop Childs CinW Primary School was invited to help us in designing the diocesan Easter card. Bishop Childs are celebrating two very positive recent school inspections (Estyn and Religious Education/Section 50) where – along with strong leadership and outcomes – it was celebrated that: *"the school is a calm and nurturing community"* (Estyn Report, 2019). How true!

At Easter, in the midst of bunnies, chicks and daffodils, we want to recognise the real meaning of this season of hope which underpins the whole reason for our church and faith. This is something that the Meaningful Chocolate Company (<https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/>)

also aims to do and so we are delighted that they continue to sponsor our annual competitions by providing delicious prizes for our top artists!

The entries were varied and showed great talent and effort but, with great difficulty, the winning design was selected – that of Caitlin Collett (Year 6, age 10) – well done, Caitlin! Her design depicted elements of the Good Friday journey and the resurrection as well as rootedness in God's Word with the Bible. We loved the strong use of fiery colours to bring us hope in this Easter season!

Second prize goes to Lili O'Shea (Year 6, age 10) for her amazing use of colour and inclusion of many of the key elements of this season – bread and wine

from the last supper, the rolled away stone and we especially loved the heart on the cross depicting Jesus' love for us all.

Third prize goes to Amur Al-Hammad (Year 4, age 9) for his meticulous attention to detail through an innovative storyboard design.

Thank you and well done to all the children from Bishop Childs who participated in the competition – it is clear that the Easter message is well promoted by you all!

**Dr Annette Daly**  
Diocesan Director of Education



# The value of school prayer spaces in supporting children's well-being

The first week of February (4th-10th) was marked as Children's Mental Health Week in the UK. This is particularly relevant to us in Wales as we prepare for the launch of a new curriculum that has, as a key underpinning, a focus on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all the children in our schools. One of the new Areas of Learning Experience being outlined is that of Health and Wellbeing with a key focus such that: "Our physical, social and cultural environments are connected to our health and well-being."

School communities are already well aware of the impact their school environment can have on the children in their care. In our diocesan church schools, the Christian ethos underpins this context and is especially manifested in the provision of spaces, in classrooms and hallways, for prayer and reflection.

For this issue of *Grapevine*, we asked our schools to find out from their pupils how the prayer and reflection spaces in their school make them feel. These two pages provide a word cloud snapshot of their replies ... and some photographs of our diocesan school prayer and reflection spaces.

We are exploring options in liaising with Prayer Spaces in Schools (see <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/>) to help us review and refresh our school prayer spaces to further enhance the benefits for our school communities. We are very interested in liaising with people in our parishes and local churches who can help develop and support this initiative and we encourage contact from anyone who is interested in getting involved in supporting their local school.

**Dr Annette Daly**

Diocesan Director of Education

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Yr1 writing prayers to hang on the whole school prayer tree at Raglan CinW Primary School



Yr4 pupils at St David's CinW Primary School



Prayer time at All Saints CinW Primary School



Reflection area at Ponthir CinW Primary School



Reflection area at Bishop Childs CinW Primary School



Tying prayers to the prayer tree at Henllys CinW Primary School



Yr1 pupils using the prayer space at Magor CinW Primary School

Do you want to connect with children, young people and families in your community?

As part of our strategic direction in the Diocese of Monmouth, one of our key priorities is working with children, young people and families. We are keen to work with people in our diocese who want to do this too, in whatever way and with whatever time possible.

There are many ways of putting this ministry into action within parishes and a lot of great work is already happening. However, our ready-made communities of children, young people and families are guaranteed to be found in one place – schools – and we could do a lot more here, with your help.

If you are interested in getting involved in supporting a school in your local community, please contact us at [educationmonmouth@cinw.org.uk](mailto:educationmonmouth@cinw.org.uk) for information on how you might do this. There are many options from becoming a (church) school governor, to helping with Open the Book\* and everything in between! There is training and support for all of these – no previous experience or teaching background necessary.

These are all hugely impactful ways of us linking with all the children, young people and families in our diocese – within their school communities. We look forward to hearing from you!

\* see: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/>

Thanks to Magor CinW Primary School; Bishop Childs CinW Primary School; Raglan CinW Primary School; Ponthir CinW Primary School; St Mellons CinW Primary School; St Davids CinW Primary School; Henllys CinW Primary School; Osbaston CinW Primary School; All Saints CinW Primary School and Blaenavon Heritage CinW Primary School for their contributions.



Work is progressing well at the Mayflower Project

## The Mayflower Project in the Diocese of the Highveld is taking shape

Last year's Lent appeal raised £20,000 to develop a building in Mayflower in the Highveld to provide extra classrooms for the local Childhood Development Centre and a community hall, on a site alongside the local Anglican Church.

Work began at the end of January this year and the news is that the building has progressed at an astonishing rate – already up to ceiling height with window and door frames in place. Phase 3 of the building project is already underway which involves fitting a kitchen, toilets and floor screeding. The building is expected to be completed by May and it is hoped the blessing of the new Community Hall will take place in August or September.

Our work in the Highveld has been supported by HABSR (The Highveld Anglican Board of Social Responsibility) and its programme Manager Penny Heard.

Penny has moved to another position within the charity and we look forward to working with new programme manager, Thabiso Mthembu.



The pupils from Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales Primary School pictured with the vicar, Father Julian Gray and their teacher Mrs Tracey Pugh in front of the modern stained-glass window.

## A class of Abergavenny primary school children has been enthusiastically taking part in a living history project

Pupils from Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales Primary School were invited to visit Bettws Chapel by Reverend Julian Gray, to witness the restoration work about to take place at the medieval place of worship.

The Grade II listed building is in urgent need of a new roof and work will start on replacing the worn Welsh slates this month. The children took the opportunity to pay a recent visit to sketch the chapel and learn about the fascinating history from Father Julian. They will make two further visits, one while work goes on and the other when the project is completed. On their second visit they will place their artwork in a time capsule to be placed in the roof space for future generations to discover.

More than £30,000 has been raised for the first phase of restoration work to begin through community fund-raising events such as the vicar's sponsored 47-mile, nine-hour cycle ride from Brecon Cathedral to St Woolos in Newport, aided by grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, National Churches Trust, the Welsh Church Act, the Monmouth Diocese, the Church In Wales and the All Churches Trust. Other work detailed for the second phase is decoration, repair of the boundary wall and replacing the floor, making a total cost of around £50,000.

### 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.**

The dates for the **2019** services are:

**11th May • 13th July**

**14th September • 9th November**

All services are at 9.30 a.m.

**All welcome**

### Gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn Esgobaeth Mynyw

Cynhelir gwasanaeth Cymraeg bob deufis, ar ail ddydd Sadwrn y mis, yn **Eglwys Sant Thomas, Overmonnow, Trefynwy.**

Dyma ddyddiadau gwasanaethau **2019**:

**11eg Mai • 13eg Gorffennaf**

**14eg Medi • 9fed Tachwedd**

Mae'r gwasanaethau i gyd am 9.30 y bore

**Croeso cynnes i bawb**

## Pupils learn about the creation story

Children in Cwmcarn Primary School have been learning all about the creation story through Godly Play – and loving it!

Every week Reverend Marion Redwood visits the school to help encourage the children and staff think about the big questions of life and explore different aspects of faith and belief in God.

The Godly Play resources include the objects and scripts needed for each session and provide guidance and structure for teaching through storytelling. This opens a wonderful opportunity for children to explore ideas for themselves and develop their own understanding of God.

Rev Marion, says: "Every Friday in our individual classes, we have shared together the journey through the six days of its making, cementing together the gift of God's love and the beginning of all things good. Remembering too, just as God did, to bless each new day, hands, our hands, of all shapes and sizes following his example and to give thanks.

"We reflected then on the Seventh day and the need to take time out to appreciate and to give thanks for being able to make our own mark on creation and the love we need to show to help keep it safe and alive for future generations to enjoy.

"It has been truly amazing, and every class added its own identity as we explored and learned together. I very often hear the words, 'Well, they just don't want to know.' Too often, sadly, we assume and get it so wrong. Our children and staff, in our very own little corner of the world have shown the very opposite, from the youngest to the eldest they have been a great source of inspiration. Every Friday I leave our little school with my heart overflowing with great thanksgiving and hope for the future.

"Thanks be to God as he continues to bless the work of our hands."

To find out more about training available in Godly Play and the resources available from the Diocesan Office, please contact either [rachelnelmes@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:rachelnelmes@churchinwales.org.uk) or [vickibrackpool@churchinwales.org.uk](mailto:vickibrackpool@churchinwales.org.uk)

## Maundy Money



Maundy Thursday, the Thursday of Holy Week, commemorates the foot-washing at the Last Supper as described in the Gospels.

Traditionally in the United Kingdom, the Monarch distributes Maundy Money to selected senior citizens: one man and one woman for each year of the Queen's life. Originally the Monarch used to wash the feet of paupers, but this part of the tradition ceased in 1689. Since then the Monarch has handed out coins during a Church Service.

Over her reign HM Queen Elizabeth has often attended such services in one of the great provincial Cathedrals. This year however the Service is to be held in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. She will distribute specially minted coins to 93 men and 93 women from across the United Kingdom.

The names of the intended recipients were submitted some time ago by the Bishop of each Diocese. For Monmouth the recipients are Carlyne Benavides and Sandy Blair.

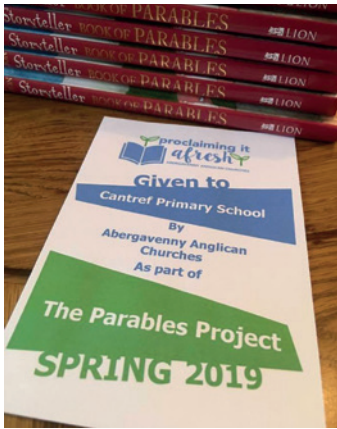
Sandy has served the Church in a wide range of voluntary lay roles and Carlyne is also an active member of the diocese and beyond. However, this invitation is very special to them both.

Sandy says: "Notwithstanding many accolades I have received in other walks of life, this nomination for the honour of receiving maundy money is the most humbling experience of my life."

Carlyne agrees: "I am just a busy retired person, as are many other in our diocese, so I feel very honoured, if undeserving, to be given the opportunity of representing the Diocese of Monmouth at this historic event, dating from 1662 and the reign of Charles II."

# Back Chat

## Pupils learn about parables thanks to innovative new project



*Pupils are learning 'earthly stories with heavenly meanings' thanks to an innovative church project to sow the seeds of faith. Brother Josh, a member of the Holywell Community in Abergavenny, explains.*

Jesus taught in parables for good reasons. The parables are easy to convey, easy to remember, and yet provide an inexhaustible source for further meditation. As earthly stories with heavenly meanings, they rely on us moving from the story to the meaning. Since the stories are so memorable, they stick with us and the possibility for their heavenly meaning to take hold is there as long as we remember them. To play on the parable of the sower, we can say that the seed is newly scattered every time one of the parables is recalled.

Scattering the seeds of faith is the aim of our new project with a school in Abergavenny. A team of clergy, lay people and the new-monastic Holywell Community are working with Cantref Primary School to retell Jesus' parables to today's children and encourage them to tell the stories in creative ways themselves. The final step of the project is to produce a book of the children's stories and pictures which will be put on display at our church, St Mary's Priory.

Our project began with a series of assembly visits led by the project leader Fr Tom Bates, myself and Br. Sebastian of the Holywell Community. These assembly visits aimed to convey what a parable is in general (we frequently repeated the phrase: 'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning'). We also introduced the children to some particular parables: the Mustard Seed, the Prodigal Son, and the Great Feast. The Great Feast was especially fun to act out with the children, - although the children's favourite part of the visits seemed to be expressing their disgust at the prodigal son's turn as a pig farmer!

My impression was that some of the children already knew the stories when we began, but that many did not. I was very impressed with how quickly all of them picked up the stories and how much they retained between visits. It was very easy to get them talking about things in their lives which related to the parables

('Have you ever lost anything?', 'What's your favourite thing about organising a party?' and so on).

While emphasising the 'heavenly meanings' of the parables, we did not neglect their consequences for our earthly actions. Br Sebastian insists that 'the messages are sometimes about acceptance, trust and helping others'. He hopes, as we all do, that telling these stories 'helps the children understand Jesus a bit better'.

Fr Tom also put together a series of lesson ideas and guidance for the teachers about the content and meanings of the parables.

After a few assembly visits had taken place, two members of our congregations went into the school to offer workshops. Diana Williams, a regional coordinator for Godly Play, has been running sessions focused at both the junior and infant levels using Godly Play methods. This approach to storytelling is highly physical and sensory storytelling and provides scope for questioning and artistic response. This creativity will, we hope, feed in to the work produced by the children in the *Parables of Abergavenny*.

The other member of our congregations who is delivering workshops is Jeremy Thomas, a local artist. Jez will be teaching some of his techniques to classes across the school. I recently had the pleasure of attending Jez's workshop with Yr4. Students produced some very interesting versions of scenes from the Prodigal Son (the pigs were again a favourite...).

All year levels of the school are participating in the project and will be producing work towards the *Parables of Abergavenny*. We anticipate that, inspired by the workshops from Diana and Jez, the younger children will produce pictures with explanatory captions and the older children will have the freedom to retell their parables using a wide range of possible genres and methods.

Our hope is that by conveying these stories to the children we are not just planting a seed but giving them a whole bag of seeds which they can sow themselves.

At the same time, the project is an expression of our churches' theme this year, Proclaiming It Afresh, which focuses on finding new ways to use the skills already present in our congregations to convey the Christian message to those around us.

**Br Josh**

Member of the Holywell Community