

The Llynfi and Upper Afan Valleys Ministry Area Magazine



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From Your Vicar

A Warmer Church

September has arrived, and in church circles that usually means two things.

Firstly, the diary suddenly seems to fill up again.

Secondly, we begin that great British conversation: **“Is it cold enough to put the heating on yet?”**

There will inevitably be somebody who thinks it is freezing, somebody else who thinks it is positively tropical, and another person who says, “Well, in my day we just put another coat on.”

You can never win!

This year, of course, heating has been particularly on my mind because the new heating system at St Michael's is expected to be installed during September. After all the planning, fundraising, discussions, paperwork and waiting, it will be wonderful to see the project finally becoming a reality.

And I am sure that once it is working, nobody will ever complain about the temperature in church again.

Well... perhaps that is asking for a miracle even beyond my faith!

But thinking about heating has made me wonder about something else.

What actually makes a church warm?

Obviously, having a building in which you can sit without losing all feeling in your fingers is a very good start.

But surely a warm church is about much more than temperature?

A warm church is one where somebody notices you when you walk through the door.

It is somewhere where your name is remembered.

Somewhere where somebody asks how you are — and actually waits long enough to hear the answer.

It is somewhere where children are welcomed, rather than merely tolerated.

Somewhere where the person who hasn't been for six months can walk through the door without having to explain themselves.

Somewhere where the person who doesn't know when to stand, sit, kneel or say "Amen" doesn't feel embarrassed.

And perhaps most importantly, it is somewhere where people discover that they are loved by God.

September always feels to me like a second New Year.

Schools return.

Groups and activities restart.

Church diaries become fuller.

People come back from holidays.

The evenings begin to draw in.

There is a sense of life returning to its normal rhythm after the summer.

And for some people, September brings exciting new beginnings.

A child starts school.

A young person begins college or university.

Someone starts a new job.

Someone moves into a new home.

But for others, September can feel very different.

Perhaps summer has brought bereavement, illness or disappointment.

Perhaps somebody is returning to an empty house.

Perhaps money is tight and the thought of winter approaching brings anxiety rather than excitement.

Perhaps someone simply feels lonely.

And that is why the warmth of the Church matters.

Jesus did not spend his ministry creating impressive buildings or complicated organisations.

He noticed people.

He stopped for people.

He listened.

He ate with those whom others ignored.

He welcomed those who felt they did not belong.

Again and again, the people whom society had pushed to the edges discovered that there was a place for them with Jesus.

That surely remains part of our calling today.

Sometimes we can make church far more complicated than it needs to be.

We worry about programmes, rotas, meetings, money and buildings — and, yes, occasionally heating systems!

All of those things matter.

But they are never the reason the Church exists.

The Church exists to share the love of Jesus Christ.

And often that happens in remarkably ordinary ways.

A cup of tea.

A telephone call.

A lift to an appointment.

Sitting beside somebody who is grieving.

Remembering someone's name.

Asking how the children are.

Inviting somebody to come along.

Noticing when someone is missing.

None of those things sounds particularly dramatic.

Yet those small acts can change someone's day — sometimes even their life.

One of the great challenges of Christian faith is that we cannot simply talk about God's love.

We have to show it.

There is little point telling somebody that God loves them if everything about the way we behave suggests that we would rather they weren't there.

So perhaps this September, alongside all the things restarting in our churches and communities, we could each ask ourselves a very simple question:

How can I make things a little warmer?

Maybe that means speaking to someone we don't usually speak to.

Perhaps it means inviting someone for coffee.

Perhaps it means volunteering.

Perhaps it simply means slowing down long enough to notice the person standing beside us.

Because eventually autumn will arrive properly.

The nights will become darker.

The temperatures will fall.

And somewhere, inevitably, somebody will ask:

“Can we put the heating up?”

Hopefully, at St Michael's at least, the answer will soon be yes!

But perhaps our greater prayer this September should be:

“Lord, warm our buildings where necessary — but above all, warm our hearts.”

Make our churches places of welcome.

Make our communities places of kindness.

Help us to notice those who are lonely or struggling.

And wherever we go, help us to carry something of the warmth and love of Christ with us.

Because a truly warm church has very little to do with the thermostat.

It has everything to do with the people.

Every blessing for September,

Rev Rick



Dear Friends!!

Entertaining Angels unawares!

One of those surveys which some newspapers love to publish claimed recently that a large number of British people believe in angels – almost as many, in fact, as claimed to believe in God. They didn't tell us what people meant by 'angels'. I suspect quite a few were thinking of young children who die, who are often now said to be 'angels, up there'. They're not, of course. They are transformed human beings. Be that as it may, when Christians celebrate the feast of St Michael and All Angels later this month, there will be many of us, inside and outside churches, who will wonder exactly what or who we are celebrating.

Most simply, the word in the New Testament means 'messenger'. An 'angel' is a being who brings to us God's message or his help. In the Bible, angels are variously described. The familiar notion of wings and flight comes from a

vision given to Isaiah in the Temple when he was being called as a prophet. The angel Gabriel, who told Mary that she was chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, is not described at all, but his words are recorded in detail. Angels speak to people in dreams (Joseph, the husband of Mary, for instance) and Jesus spoke of 'angels' who particularly care for children ('guardian angels').

St Michael's influence extends both high and low because he is the prince of the angelic host. He is ready to slay the dragon as we read in the book of Revelation. He is armed to fight for light and right over might and darkness.

When we sing the Sanctus in the Eucharist, we are affirming that our worship here on earth is caught up in the worship offered by the angels in heaven. They praise God around His throne of glory, but they are also agents of His care and guidance in our lives. Leading them is the Archangel Michael, and we celebrate his feast with all the angels on 29th September.

For some people angels seem to be an everyday part of their lives, and there is a whole industry of angelology - not to be confused with angiology which is the study of arteries and the circulation (which angels, of course, would never need as they don't have blood or flesh for that matter!).

But most people, even very devout ones, have never knowingly encountered an angel, I guess. However, the New Testament tells us that in 'showing hospitality to strangers' some of us have 'entertained angels without knowing it'. Clearly wings and eyes of flame are not obligatory. Just human care. "Oh, go on, be an angel and make me a cup of tea!"

The Angels in the picture are available to come home with you from St Cynwyd's Church at a cost of £3 - £3.50! Please

consider rehoming as they'll make lovely Christmas presents and decorations!

Love & Prayers Vicar Bev

A letter from your Curate....

Dear friends,

I hope that you have all had a good August. The weather has been very kind to us and we have had an unusually sunny Summer. Now that the summer is almost over there are new beginnings just around the corner. As we enter September and we ease into Autumn, children start new schools, classes or even after having exam results start College or University, it's all change.

Although for some, this will feel exciting, change can often feel frightening or daunting. I had the exam stress in my household this summer and Katie is starting a new chapter of her education, which she is excited about. Now comes all the new items to buy, uniform, bags, pencil case, books etc. I used to love September when I was in school as I loved all the new pens, pencils and note books (I still do!).

As well as new beginnings, we see God's creation coming into a new season. The summer plants dying and the shoots of new ones coming through. Autumn is one of my favourite seasons with the different colours of leaves and plants and the cold crisp air. This reminds me of the song by The Byrds, *Turn, Turn, Turn* (are you singing it?). Of course, the lyrics are based on Ecclesiastes 3:1. This passage of scripture tells us that there is a season for every activity under the heavens. This reminds us that seasons change and new phases of our lives begin. Most

importantly God is with us through all of these changes, whether good or bad. He is there in our times of joy and our times of sorrow and is there to support and calm us when we feel anxious when entering a new chapter of our lives.

We have listened to what the people of Maesteg want to change and in our consultation - they said they wanted somewhere for the youth to go which is safe. So we are setting up a Youth Hub in St David's Church every Wednesday in term time 5-7pm, to be the safe space for the Youth of the area to congregate. Somewhere for them to meet with friends, play some games and have a chat and as the season changes, somewhere for them to keep warm.

Are you the person who can help support us with this change, would you like to begin something new? We are looking for volunteers who can support this new Youth Hub, to make them a cup of tea, be a friendly ear or simply just to be that kind face they see.

If you would like to get involved, please let either Rev Rick or myself know.

Heavenly Father, As we step into this new season of change, we ask for your guidance and peace, help us to let go of the past and trust the new path that you are creating for us. When the way forward feels uncertain remind us that you are always there, giving us courage, wisdom and strength to embrace a fresh start. *Amen.*

With Love and Blessings

Rev Lisa xxx

From Your Editor

Back on 4th July, with Jane away on the Gloucester trip, I sat down and watched “*Independence Day*” for the first time in decades (I know, I seem to have spent the summer watching classic 90’s films – it’s been great!). If you haven’t seen this film, it’s about aliens arriving in very big spaceships, throwing their weight about and blowing up our cities. (I particularly liked the bit where, as a global fight back begins, we briefly see Israelis and Palestinians working together at a Middle Eastern airfield. Does it really take an alien invasion to sort this region’s mess out?)

Watching the film, I found myself trying to empathise with the characters and put myself in their shoes – these people whose everyday lives are suddenly thrown upside down by the terrible events depicted. How do they process what’s happening to their world, deal with their losses and the destruction of all they know while trying to survive? How were the actors portraying these characters representing their inner turmoil (those who were taking all this tosh seriously, that is!)?

How would we react if it were *us*?

“*Independence Day*” is nothing but a silly bit of entertainment, of course, but in reality, *our* world can be turned upside down in a heartbeat. Everything we know can be stripped away suddenly leaving us reeling. In recent weeks, for example, we’ve seen people in Newbridge, Caerphilly – and in too many other places – lose their homes after a devastating fire caused (in part) by the extreme hot weather of the last few months. Are we, right now, on the verge of experiencing a terrible change to the lovely damp climate we’ve all been so used to? Are we ready for it? Is this when everything changes?

As Christians, we are called not only to put our faith completely in God, but to be prepared for anything. The Bible repeatedly advises us to be **ready** – e.g. *“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming” (Matthew 24.42)*. I suppose that how we react and how ready we are for *that* day – whatever form it takes - depends on how completely we are willing to place ourselves in God’s hands. It’s a tall order – there are things that I think I may *never* be ready to face. Nevertheless, I have begun hoarding tins of pineapple chunks in readiness for an alien invasion – so that’s a start!

Happy Times and Martians

Rhodri

Calendar and Readings for September

Sunday 6th – the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Ezekiel 33. 7-11

Psalm 119. 33-40

Romans 13. 8-14

Matthew 18. 15-20

Sunday 13th – the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Genesis 50. 15-21

Psalm 103. [1-7,] 8-13

Romans 14. 1-12

Matthew 18. 21-35

Monday 14th – Holy Cross

Numbers 21. 4-9

Psalm 22. 23-28

Philippians 2. 6-11

John 3. 13-17

Sunday 20th – the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Jonah 3.10 – 4.11

Psalm 145. 1-8

Philippians 1. 21-30

Matthew 20. 1-16

Monday 21st – Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Proverbs 3. 13-18

Psalm 119. 65-72

2 Corinthians 4. 1-6

Matthew 9. 9-13

Sunday 27th – the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Ezekiel 8. 1-4, 25-32

Psalm 25. 1-9

Philippians 2. 1-13

Matthew 21. 23-32

Tuesday 29th – Michael and All Angels

Genesis 28. 10-17

Psalm 103. 19-22

Revelation 12. 7-12 *or* Hebrews 1. 5-14 John 1. 47-51

Events in September

Tuesday 15th - Bible Study, St Michael's Crypt, 7pm

Wednesday 16th – MAC meeting, St Michael's Crypt, 6:30pm

Saturday 19th - Messy Church, Noddfa, Glyncorwg, 10:30am

Tuesday 22nd - Sanctuary in St David's, 7pm

Thursday 24th - Bingo Night, St Michael's Crypt, 7:30pm

Parish Notes



“As we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Each of us then having differing gifts according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.”

Romans 12. 4-6a

As September arrives bringing with it a sense of normality - the weather cools (hopefully), the kids and teachers shuffle back to school (who said “Hooray”!?), and Christmas arrives in our supermarkets (yup, sorry!). We hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and managed to keep as cool as possible.

After a break over the summer, the Tuesday evening activities recommence this month with ***Bible Study*** continuing to study the “seven toughest questions about the Bible” at St David’s Church on the 15th. The ***Sanctuary*** service is on the 22nd also

in St David's. If you haven't tried any of these before, then it's never too late – a warm welcome is assured!



Messy Church will be resting this month as many of our volunteers are away this month however it will return in October in the Noddfa Community Hall, Glyncorwg, on Saturday 17th October at 10:30am. This is “a way of being Church for children, families and others based on creativity, hospitality and celebration.” If you would like to volunteer to help in any way then please go along on the day – again, you will be warmly welcomed!

If you can't make it to church on a Sunday, then please don't forget our regular weekday Eucharist services at St Cynfelyn's, Caerau, every Tuesday at 10am, St Michael's every Wednesday at 10am and the St David's 'Baps'n'Chats' every Friday at 10:30am.

Advance Notice - Harvest Festival

A United Harvest Festival service will be held at St Cynwyd's Church on Sunday 4th October. Please note that there will be ***no other services in the Ministry Area on this Sunday.***

As in previous years, if you are able, rather than the traditional Harvest offerings, donations for the Food Bank are requested. The Food Bank is currently in need of:

- ✓ Tinned Meat (Corned Beef, Ham etc)
- ✓ Tinned Fish
- ✓ Tinned Veg (carrots/peas/potatoes etc)
- ✓ Tinned Soup
- ✓ Tinned Meatballs
- ✓ Tinned Curries/Curry Sauce jars
- ✓ Tinned Fruit

- ✓ Biscuits
- ✓ Sweets/Chocolates
- ✓ Jam
- ✓ Toiletries Male & Female

The ***Harvest Supper*** will follow on the following Wednesday, 7th October, at St Michael's Crypt. This will include a three course meal, entertainment and all the usual shenanigans. Please speak to Delyth or Sue in plenty of time to ensure a ticket!

'Bake-Off' Cake Competition

The baking whizzes of the Ministry Area certainly produced the (baked) goods on Saturday 8th August – the day of the inaugural Bake-off competition. The array of cakes, scones and shortbreads on display at St Michael's Crypt were enough to bring yearning rumbles to even the sternest of stomachs! So it was no easy task for our judges, Rev Rick and Hilda Jane Jenkins to decide on the winners. Yet it was a task they tackled with admiral bravery and stoicism, sampling each delicacy on offer with a professional air, some murmured debate and approving "*mmm!*"s.

Among the many cakes were some truly spectacular creations including depictions of an owl, Noah's Ark and a 'Ruby Sparkle Mountain'. Sensibly, the judges decided against sampling the Eco teams offerings which included holly, ivy, deer poo and mealworms (intended to feed garden animals).

A good number of parishioners (both bakers and curious spectators) came along to enjoy the occasion over a cup of tea and a natter – the tension in the air was palpable as the judges came to their verdicts. Which were...

🍪 *Best Victoria Sandwich - **Sue Thomas***

🍪 *Best Scone - **Mair Morgan***

🍪 *Best Shortbread - **Tony Mullins***

🍪 *Best Welsh Cake - **Lynne Hodges***

🍪 *Best Decorated Cake - **Sue Thomas***

🍪 *Best Fruit Decorated Cake -*

Margaret Harrison

🍪 *Best bought but Decorated Cake -*

Pat Blackwell

🍪 *Best Eco Cake - **Eco Team***

🍪 *Vicars Choice Award - **Tammy***

Beshella

And finally ...

🍪 *The Star Baker was **Sue Thomas***



Following the competition, Rev Rick presented his co-judge with a wonderful bouquet of flowers, the inevitable raffle was held and Tony Mullins auctioned off the cakes to the highest bidders. The scones, welshcakes and shortbreads were shared among those present (a bit like the Feeding of the 5,000, only with less fish!).

Congratulations to all the worthy winners and to anyone who submitted a baked product (each and every one of which was thoroughly enjoyed!). A huge Thank You to everyone who came along, took part or helped...



...make the day so much fun including host Tony and learned judges Rev Rick and Hilda Jane. Thank you also to Rev Lisa for her organisation of the event and for marshalling all the baked products and bakers!

I'm already looking forward to next year, when I may well submit/inflict my 'Pineapple Right-Way-Up' cake – watch this space!!!



Mothers' Union



August is generally the 'down time' month in the Ministry Area – but not so this year with Mothers' Union. August this year has turned into an eating extravaganza.

On Sunday 9th August, the Mary Sumner themed service in St Cynwyd's Church was, I'm sure, enjoyed by all, and likewise the refreshments that followed. What an amazing woman and what a brilliant idea that was so blessed by God.

On Wednesday 12th August, Sue & Co enjoyed the Deanery Afternoon Tea in The Orangery, Margam Park - by what I hear, a good time was had by all. Sue reports: "Members adorned our 'best frocks' and headed to Margam Orangery for afternoon tea. This had been arranged by the Diocese to celebrate 150 years of MU. It was an amazing gathering of over 250 members, all enjoying catching up with friends and eating a wonderful array of cakes, pastries, sandwiches and drinking copious amounts of tea!"



Tuesday 18th August – yet another Deanery Celebration in the Watermill, Bridgend, again to celebrate the 150 years of the Mothers' Union. Any Deanery event is like 'the gathering of the clans' and there's always a lot of chatter, with everyone catching up on each other's news but, again, a good time was had by all.



Our next meeting is on **Monday 14th September** – so don't go turning up on the 7th, as the Crypt will be locked and worse still – no refreshments!

Please keep in your prayers the sick and the lonely, and for those, whose every day is a struggle.

Take care and God bless

Lynne

Christian Aid

In last month's magazine, we appealed for money for Venezuela, and I'm very pleased to say that the total of £675.00 has been donated.

So, from all the CA Team – A huge “Thank you, for your generosity.”

Venezuela is no longer in the news, as other catastrophes and world events have now taken over the news slots, but please pray the prayer below, that the people may not be forgotten.

Prayer for the people of Venezuela

Loving God,

When the earth trembles and homes fall to dust, hold our hearts, God.

When grief shakes families to the core, hold our hearts, God.

Send our hands and feet to help however we can.

Our sisters and brothers in Venezuela live this now.

God of love and mercy, may we match your love in the way we respond - now. *Amen*

Take care and God bless

Lynne cc CA Team

Sadly, no sooner had the above item been received that the dreadful news broke of the disaster currently unfolding in Nepal. I'm sure that you were as shocked as I was by the images of the flood on the news. The following is taken from the Christian Aid website. You can read the full article at christianaid.org.uk.

What's happening in Nepal and Tibet?



On 26 August, a devastating flash flood occurred in the Bhote Koshi River, created by a powerful surge of water and debris from upstream, reportedly caused by a landslide. There are fears

that further floods could cause more destruction.

Entire areas have been cut off. Travel has been brought to a halt in parts of the country. More than 800 people are missing, including workers, tourists and pilgrims. Families urgently need clean water, food, shelter and medical care. Rescue and evacuation operations are underway, but remote communities remain cut off, and local authorities are struggling to cope with the scale of the disaster.

Christian Aid is releasing emergency funds to our trusted partners in Nepal, ensuring that support is going to communities most in need – especially with emergency shelter, food, water and sanitation, and other vital support.

Please Donate and support people in need in the coming weeks and months.

Methods of payment:

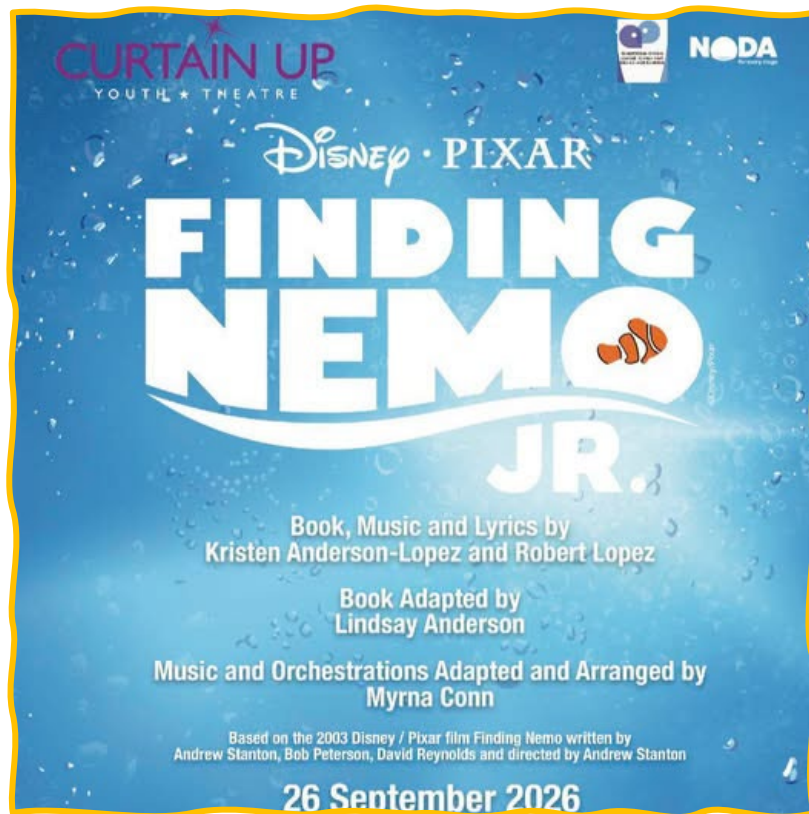
- Cash at your place of worship
- Bank Transfer – Credit Union Account – Sort Code 09-01-54
Account number 27833280 quoting 15533
- Cash at the Credit Union office, in Talbot Street, Maesteg

Direct to Christian Aid:

- <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>
- Call **020 7523 2269**

Thank you.

Curtain Up Youth Theatre presents...



“You’re gonna need a bigger Town Hall!”

Don’t miss your opportunity to catch the young talent of the area at Maesteg Town Hall in Curtain Up’s presentation of “*Finding Nemo Jr*” on Saturday 26th September. There are two performances at 2.30pm and 7.00pm.

This show tells the fishy story of the adventures of a clownfish called Marlin and his new friend Dory and their journey through the ocean to find his missing son Nemo. Sorry to *carp* on, but don’t hesitate to *skate* down to the Town Hall – the *plaice* to be! - to book your *perch*. It’s sure to be an uplifting treat for your *sole* and you’ll humming the *tunas* for weeks! (I’m so sorry!)

We wish all the *current* young members and Ruth, Sarah, Sue, Clare and all their helpers every success. Every*fin*’s bound to go swimmingly!

You can book your tickets: <https://www.awenboxoffice.com>

Services for September

Tuesday 1 st	St Cynfelyn's	10am	Holy Eucharist
Wed 2 nd	St Michael's	10am	Holy Eucharist
Friday 4 th	St David's	10:30am	Eucharist/Baps&Chats
Sunday 6 th	St Michael's	9am	Holy Eucharist
		10.30am	Holy Eucharist
	St John's	9.45am	Holy Eucharist
	St Cynwyd's	6pm	Holy Eucharist
Tuesday 8 th	St Cynfelyn's	10am	Holy Eucharist
Wednesday 9 th	St Michael's	10am	Holy Eucharist
Friday 11 th	St David's	10:30am	Eucharist/Baps&Chats
Sunday 13 th	St Michael's	9am	Holy Eucharist
		10.30am	Holy Eucharist
	St John's	9.45am	Holy Eucharist
	St Cynwyd's	6pm	Holy Eucharist
Tuesday 15 th	St Cynfelyn's	10am	Holy Eucharist

Wed 16 th	St David's 7pm Bible Study
Friday 18 th	St Michael's 10am Holy Eucharist
	St David's 10:30am Eucharist/Baps&Chats
Sunday 20 th	St Michael's 9am Holy Eucharist
	10.30am Holy Eucharist
	St John's 9.45am Holy Eucharist
	St Cynwyd's 6pm Holy Eucharist
Tuesday 22 nd	St Cynfelyn's 10am Holy Eucharist
	St David's 7pm Sanctuary Service
Wed 23 rd	St Michael's 10am Holy Eucharist
Friday 25 th	St David's 10:30am Eucharist/Baps&Chats
Sunday 27 th	St Michael's 9am Holy Eucharist
	10.30am Holy Eucharist
	St John's 9.45am Holy Eucharist
	St Cynwyd's 6pm Holy Eucharist
Tuesday 29 th	St Cynfelyn's 10am Holy Eucharist
Wednesday 30 th	St Michael's 10am Holy Eucharist
Fri 2 nd October	St David's 10:30am Eucharist/Baps&Chats

Bingo Nights!



Have you tried our fantastic Bingo Night's yet? Why not join the merry band of dabbers who meet in St Michael's Crypt every month (bar December)? There are five houses, amazing prizes to be won, a raffle (always a raffle!) and a reasonably stocked bar. These evenings are always a lot of fun and, over the year, generally raise over £1,000 for Ministry Area funds. Master of the Balls is the redoubtable Mr Tony Mullins, who says, "It's fun, it's fellowship and it's much needed finance for our Ministry Area!"

Usually, things run very smoothly, but inevitably now and again something goes awry, such as during the August meeting, when a resounding, deathly hush fell over the Crypt as the Bingo machine's comforting rumble and rattle suddenly ceased! Not to be put off, Tony turned to his mobile phone's Bingo app to continue the evening's entertainment. (There was a collective sharp intake of breath when Tony's 'phone seemed to run out of battery, but it turned out to be a false alarm!)

Hopefully, the machine will be restored in time for the next house – but never fear, if not then the trusty internet will be available (and all 'phones fully charged!). The show must go on – on **Thursday 24th September** at 7:30pm, in fact. See you there!!



"A Poor Man's Mount Everest"

On Saturday 12th September, Rhys Williams, son of Ceri Williams, will be taking on the formidable climbing challenge in

honour of his late father, Robert Charles Williams.

“My Dad was a thrill seeker and had a great love of fitness,” says Rhys, “To honour this, I will be taking on the challenge of climbing Garth Mountain in Maesteg (a favourite walking route for me and my father) 35 times in a day to simulate ascending and descending Mount Everest.

“The money raised will go to the Llynfi and Upper Afan Valleys Ministry. This will allow them to maintain the memorial garden of St Mary’s where there is a bench to remember my Dad and towards any musical equipment that they may wish to purchase. The memorial garden is open to the public for enjoyment and reflection and it is my hope that any musical equipment will open the ministry's venues to the wider community.

“Although I will be chasing daylight, anyone is welcome to join. See you at Garth-Everest!”

Rhys aims to raise £5,900 – if you would like to contribute, then please visit his JustGiving page at

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/a-poor-mans-mount-everest-robert-charles-williams

Thank you!

For Your Prayers

We ask for your continued prayers...

- For Rev Rick, Rev Bev and Rev Lisa and their ministry among us.
- For our Lay Chair Pat, Wardens Sue, Gail and Tony, the sub-wardens and members of the Ministry Area Council. For everyone who plays a part in the running of the Ministry Area in any way.

- For those who are suffering in need, grief, anxiety, distress or who are unwell in our communities.
- For those in our country and the wider world affected by the summer's wildfires, who have lost their homes or lost their lives; for those who have been risking their lives to fight the fires and protect local populations and their homes.
- the floods in Nepal and Tibet, the earthquakes in Venezuela and other natural disasters, who have lost their lives, their homes or loved ones; For those working to rescue the trapped or to provide relief.
- For those suffering due to war, instability and strife in our world; For those who are working towards peace, security, justice and the dissemination of truth in our troubled times.



News from St Cynfelyn's



It was a pleasure for so many of us to gather once again for a United Eucharist service on the morning of Sunday 30th August, worshipping together once again in the beautiful surrounds of St Cynfelyn's Church which had so recently been closed. This was the first Sunday service at St Cynfelyn's in over a year and we thank God that we are now in a more stable financial position so that both this church and St David's are back open and serving their communities again.

The service was led by Rev Bev with Gail Jackson, Polly Duffield and Heather Edwards providing the readings and Rev Rick leading the intercessions. We are grateful to Ryan Wood who lent his considerable musical skills to the service on the organ.

Thanks to the members of St Cynfelyn's for preparing the church, supplying the refreshments and welcoming members of the other congregations of the Ministry Area so warmly.

If you enjoyed worshipping in St Cynfelyn's, don't forget that there is a Eucharist service held here every Tuesday at 10am – it would be lovely to see you!

News from St Cynwyd's



Correspondent – Sue Thomas (standing in, with grateful thanks, for Mandy Millar while she continues to be unwell)

Thursday 6th August saw us board yet another coach for a trip. This time it was to Tewksbury Abbey to see the Jacqui Parkinson exhibition “*Threads through the Cross*”. This was an



amazing collection of 18 embroidered/textile panels depicting the life of Jesus from his birth to the resurrection. The usual refreshments were served on our journey, but with the addition of a birthday cake, as the 6th was also Vicar's birthday! We hope Vicar enjoyed his day and that it wasn't too much of a 'busman's holiday'! (See below

for some photos of the day. Also the photo on the front of this magazine.)

August the 9th is traditionally Mary Sumner Day and, as it fell on a Sunday this year, we were asked to “take over a service” to celebrate 150 years of Mothers' Union. We “took over” our 6pm service in St Cynwyd's and what a wonderful celebration it was. A huge thank you to everyone who joined us.



With August holidays drawing to a close and the evenings getting darker, I have a challenge for all knitters and crochet lovers! I am appealing for more poppies. In addition to our display of cascading poppies inside the church, we have agreed to make a display to hang around the war memorial for Remembrance Sunday. The British Legion borrowed our display for Armed Forces Day and the sight of them all hanging on St David's railings was very touching and much appreciated by so many.

Looking forward to October... St Cynwyd's will be hosting the United Harvest service on Sunday 4th October at 10:30am. Then the Harvest Supper will be held on Wednesday 7th October in St Michael's Crypt. Delyth and I will have tickets on sale soon.

It was lovely to see Maureen able to join us once again for services. Please remember our members unable to join us on Sunday evenings, praying also for Mandy who remains in hospital.

If anyone has any news they wish to share please let us know.

Sue



“Guardians of Llangynwyd – Caring for Sacred Ground”



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News from St David's



Correspondent – Lynne Hodges

August has been the 'fallow' month in all our churches, as we've enjoyed (or not) the beautiful warm weather and the long sumptuous days of summer, and we can now look forward to the beautiful autumn when all our church activities will burst into action again with renewed vigour (well, that's the plan!).

Re-commencing in St David's Church on 26th August will be the Youth Hub. Although to date this event is a 'slow burner', when the cold, dark nights draw in at least the children will have somewhere to go from 5-7pm every Wednesday, where they can play table tennis and table football or just chill out and make use of our free Wi-Fi. Please pray that this initiative will be successful and that the youngsters will enjoy what is being provided for them.

During our Friday services throughout August, we have enjoyed the company of Charlie, Maisie, Elijah and Jesse – but, sadly for us from September, Maisie is returning to school and both Charlie and Elijah are starting school – so our 'anthem' hymn that we've sung each week – '*If I Were a Butterfly*', will be sung for the last time this week, until we welcome them back in Half Term Week, (and we're just getting to grips with the actions – that's the adults, not the children). We pray that both Charlie and Elijah will enjoy



school, and the parents (and grandparents) will have a well-earned rest. All is not lost though, as I'm sure Jesse and Elis will soon 'find their feet and voices', and be an integral part of our worship - we are so blessed.

Last month, Josh's christening was celebrated in St David's Church - the start of a beautiful Christian life and, on 12th August, prayers were said in church for Gill (before going on to the main service in Coity Crematorium) – celebrating the end of a beautiful Christian life. Rev Lisa officiated and, although short, the time spent in Gill's spiritual home, was both moving and meaningful and will remain in the hearts for many for a very long time.

The wake afterwards was also held in St David's Church, and I'm sure Gill would have enjoyed the beautiful 'Afternoon Tea' provided by her family.

It was pleasing to hear from many of the people present, how lovely it was to spend time in the church that Gill loved.

We've had a couple of birthdays in St David's Church this month – too numerous to mention (and I may miss someone),
 but just to say "Happy Birthday" to you all, we hope you had a wonderful day.

As we watch the news, we realise that the world is in a bit of a mess, but we must continue to pray for world peace and accept that, in God's time, it will come. Please also pray for the sick and suffering of the world, that they may know the peace that only Jesus can give to carry them through their sad time.

Onwards and upward to Autumn, and the re-commencement of our Tuesday evening events in St David's Church... hmm - A thought has just come into my head – St David's Church is like a bag of Liquorice Allsorts and



you may not like all that's provided, but I'm sure you'd like at least one - give it a try!

Contemporary 2nd Tuesday of the month (from October)

Bible Study – 3rd Tuesday

Sanctuary - 4th Tuesday

Eucharist/Morning Prayer/Café Church (not in any order).

Take care and God bless

Lynne

News from St John the Baptist



Jane Proctor, correspondent from St John the Baptist, Glyncorrwg.

St John the Baptist Church has had a quiet summer although the monthly congregational meetings have continued, as has the grass cutting (thank you Viv) and plans have been made which will see us busy during the autumn and winter.

The boiler has been fixed, however not needed since but we will be warm in the coming months and throughout the winter, whatever the weather.

We are negotiating with the Gleemen to stage a male voice choir concert in late October or early November. Then October will see the first of what we hope will be our monthly coffee mornings. November will combine Coffee Morning with a Christmas Tabletop Sale whilst December's Coffee Morning will

provide an opportunity to create a floral tribute to loved ones no longer with us.

Currently our thoughts and prayers are especially with Gerry as he recovers from his fall and subsequent operations - Gerry you're wished a successful, speedy recovery. Also, we think of Joyce now residing in Ty Nant Care Home, we look forward to staying in touch during our monthly visits.

We thank the Lord for the strong community spirit within our congregation and the support we receive from the whole clergy team.

Eco Team Harvest Prayer

Lord,

At this time when farmers and growers are harvesting the crops we give our thanks for the earth in which those crops grew, the sun that gave them light and the rain that watered them. Father thank you for the rich and bounteous land in which we live. The crops that spring from that land feeding not only us but used to feed the abundant wildlife seen in our surroundings.

We give thanks for the farmers and all the workers who provide our food produced from those crops and for those who prepare the food for our plates. God bless them and help them to understand they are appreciated.

Help us O Lord to nurture and care for this land as custodians before passing its care to the generations of the future, may we teach them to look after it too.

Amen



News from St Michael's



Correspondent – Jane Mullins

*“By all these lovely tokens, September days are here.
With summer's best of weather and autumn's best of cheer.”*
(Helen Hunt Jackson)

At the time of writing, the weather has begun to change and with the days getting shorter, our thoughts turn to autumn and the Harvest season which will soon be upon us. The Feast of Michael and All Angels, the day which acknowledges our patron saint, is on Tuesday 29th September with Harvest celebrated on Sunday 4th October in St Cynwyd's Church. As in previous years, instead of fresh produce, donations for the Food Bank will be gratefully received.

Congratulations to everyone who took part in the Ministry Area Bake Off - everything looked delicious, so I am sure that it must have been difficult for the judges, Hilda Jane Jenkins and Vicar, to choose the victorious bakes. Hearty congratulations to all the individual winning bakers and to the Star Baker, Sue Thomas.

20 Years Later...

In 2006, Ryan Wood formed a small choral group to perform in a concert to raise money for Cancer Research. Twenty years

later, many members of that original group, along with new choristers, are still singing with that choir, which is, of course, Noteworthy Mixed Choir. They are celebrating their 20th anniversary this year with a concert at St Michael's Church on Saturday 5th September, the venue where they first sang together. For this special concert, they will be joined by the renowned Welsh tenor Trystan Llyr Griffiths, with the evening to be hosted in style by the inimitable Beverley Humphreys. The concert starts at 7pm and tickets are £10 and can be bought online from ticketsource.com/noteworthy, from choristers or you can pay at the door.

New Arrival

Congratulations to Steffan and Ilona Morgan on the safe arrival of their second baby, a little boy named Ollie Ceri who was born on 6th August. We send our fondest love and very best wishes to you both and all the family, especially Sophie Anna, who is now a big sister, on this joyful occasion.

Bingo

Our fundraising efforts continue with the regular Bingo evening which this month will be held on Thursday 24th September at 7.30pm and as usual a warm welcome is extended to 'dabbers' old and new to join us at the Crypt for this ongoing fund raiser.

Finding Nemo

Curtain Up Youth Theatre are inviting everyone to join them on a colourful underwater adventure as they present their production of '*Finding Nemo*.' It is the story of Nemo, a young clownfish, who lives in the Great Barrier Reef, with his father,

Marlin, but is curious about the wider world and decides to leave home and go on a journey of exploration. Like all adventures, danger is lurking nearby and when his son is captured, Marlin sets off on his own adventure across the ocean to 'Find Nemo'. Best wishes to Ruth, Sarah, Sue, Clare and all the members of Curtain Up for their production of '*Finding Nemo*', which will be performed at the Town Hall on 26th September at 2.30pm and 7pm. Tickets are priced £12 or £10 and can be purchased online from www.awenboxoffice.com or from Maesteg Library.

Exam Congratulations

August is always a tense month for those waiting anxiously for the outcome of their exams, so congratulations are sent to all those who successfully negotiated the minefield of their GCSE and A level courses and received their results last month. Hopefully you have all received the grades required to progress in your education or to go on to your chosen careers. We wish all of you, a happy and successful future.

Going Platinum

Our warmest congratulations are sent to David and Iris Brown for their Platinum Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on 11th August. This rare milestone - 70 years! - is apparently only reached by less than one percent of couples and obviously signifies a lifetime of love and commitment. As we know, before they left Maesteg for the sunnier climes of Exeter, David and Iris were faithful, longstanding members of our congregation for many years and were very involved in our community and in church life in numerous ways. Indeed, David served on the church committee, was a hardworking fundraiser, a faithful

sidesman and served both as a sub warden for St Michael's and as a Parish warden. Hope you both had a wonderful time, celebrating your 70th anniversary, sharing memories of your wedding day and enjoying this very special occasion with family and friends and we wish you continued health and happiness.

And the Murderer is....

The annual get together of St Teresa's Church is about to begin, but it looks likely to be ruined by rivalry among the clergy and congregation. This culminates in the apparently accidental killing of a church member... but was it an accident? Who was the intended victim and who could possibly be the killer?

The answer to all these questions will be revealed at the Crypt when the St Michael's Players present, '*Trouble at St Theresa's.*' Yes, the usual troupe of ham actors are returning to present another Murder Mystery Evening, complete with intrigue and the inevitable raffle. Tickets are £12 which includes a two-course meal and will be available soon. Whodunit? Come along to the Crypt at 7pm on 16th October and find out...

Happy Birthday

Happy birthday to our very own St Michael's Day baby, Hilda Jane Jenkins. This year will be a special occasion for HJJ as she celebrates her 90th birthday on 29th September. As we know, she has been a faithful member of our congregation for many years, serving as a committee member, a Eucharistic Assistant, member of the bell ringing team and has been a tireless fundraiser. It was Hilda who suggested and introduced the very special Epiphany service along with the incomparable Epiphany Feast to the Parish, which possibly became one of

the most anticipated events of the church calendar for many years.

Over decades, she has organised countless theatre trips to Stratford, fundraising evenings such as the hilarious Venetian Night, and her most recent venture, the very successful, profitable Silent Auction. Hilda, however made a most significant and notable contribution to the Parish when she undertook the writing of the centenary history of St Michael's. In his foreword to that publication, Vicar Bernard Thomas succinctly summed up her special qualities, writing: -

“Hilda Jane Jenkins is no ordinary layperson. She has great skills, many of which have become very evident in the last 10 years of fundraising at St Michael's. This work is evidence, if such were needed, of her literary skills. This publication is a perceptive insight from the pew into the life of St Michael's – it's architecture and fitments, services and associations, its clergy and people, past and present, all masterfully illustrated from classical poetry and prose. We owe her a great debt of gratitude for the time and effort she has, as always, made freely available to the cause.”

Enjoy this noteworthy occasion, Hilda - you are truly special and one of a kind, a timeless classic. Happy 90th birthday, HJJ!

Readers at Sung Eucharist

September 6th - Kay James / Ruth Whelan

September 13th - Claire Crawford / Enid Sian Hughes

September 20th - Pam Thomas / Rhianydd Morgan

September 27th - Ruth Bowie / Clare Isaac

100 Club Winners for August

1st Margaret Jones £30

2nd Helen Howells £15

Condolences

It was with sadness that we heard of the death of Mrs Gwenda Tarr who passed away on 25th July. Mrs Tarr was well known in our town, having lived and nursed locally, and gave dedicated service to the Llynfi valley as a well-respected District Nurse.

She had been a faithful member of St Michael's congregation over the years, especially enjoying the fellowship of the early morning services, until her health deteriorated which sadly prevented her from attending. The funeral was held at St Michael's Church on 27th August, with a eulogy delivered by daughters, Helen and Jayne, during which they shared their special family memories of their much-loved mother, including her interest in art and painting, her love of travel and her dedication to her nursing career.

The service, which was led by Vicar, was followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium, where there was a visual tribute to Gwenda during a time of reflection. She will be remembered fondly and missed by all who knew her. Sincere condolences are sent to her two daughters, Jayne and Helen, her son, Simon, sons in law Mark and Martin, her five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and all her family and friends at this sad time. Donations, in lieu of floral tributes, would be gratefully received by the family and shared between Alzheimer's Research and Dementia UK.

Thanks to Ann Jones for the following

- As we grow older, we grow both more foolish and wiser at the same time

François de La Rochefoucauld

- If people can learn to hate, they can be taught to love

Nelson Mandela

A Christian surgeon would often speak to his patients about his faith and attending church.

“I can worship God just as well in the open air,” said a patient, one day.

“And,” replied the surgeon, “I could have operated on you just as well on a table in the middle of the street.”

Book of Remembrance

We remember those whose names are written in the Book of Remembrance for the month of September.

Eira Novello Thomas	9 th July 1926 – 24 th Sept 2004
Colin John Goodwin Davies	2 nd June 1939 – 7 th Sept 2004
Albert Arthur Gibbs	29 th November 1925 – 4 th Sept 1986
Iris Williams	31 st March 1914 – Sept 19 th 2009
Cobden Price	28 th September 1931- 6 th Sept 2009
Sarah Moira Budd	28 th March 1916 – Sept 12 th 2010
Joan Hembrow	25 th January 1934 – Sept 24 th 2013

May they Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory

Out Late...

Many thanks to Rev Bev for the following...

Ron Chestna, 89 years of age, was stopped by the Police around 2am last night. He was asked where he was going at that time of night.

Ron replied, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

"Really?" the officer asked, "Who's giving that lecture at *this* time of night?"

Ron replied, "That would be my wife."

What You Should Know About Eclipses... (...That No One Mentions!)



Did you manage to catch the partial solar eclipse of 12th August? Did you get hold of some special glasses or did you make do with a hole in a piece of paper (like me!)? If you were inspired by it, here's a little food for thought regarding the phenomena of eclipses...

- ⊕ A total eclipse occurs when the Moon passes in front of the Sun. The Earth orbits the Sun, while the Moon orbits the Earth. Every now and then, their paths seem to

converge at particular points on the Earth's surface and the Moon briefly blots out the Sun.

- ⊕ The Moon is about the size of Africa. Its radius is about 1,080 miles. It's pretty big. It is 238,855 miles away from us, so it appears to the human eye about the size of a 5p piece.
- ⊕ The Sun is a medium sized star. Its radius is about 450,000 miles. Don't let the 'medium' thing fool you – the Sun is *immense* - the Earth can fit into it 1.3 million times! The Sun is 93 million miles away from us, so it appears to the human eye (should you be foolish enough to look at it directly) about the size of a 5p piece.
- ⊕ The chances of a sun and a moon appearing the same size (as a 5p piece!) in a planet's sky are... well, astronomical! It has been described as a "massive cosmic coincidence." It means that when a total eclipse occurs, we get an amazing spectacle as the Sun's corona and solar flares can be seen around the Moon.
- ⊕ Christianity doesn't really 'do' coincidence but rather teaches that God "*works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will*". (Ephesians 1:11)
- ⊕ So are total eclipses a "massive cosmic coincidence"? Or the Creator God displaying His divinity to His people with a wonderful lightshow?
You decide!

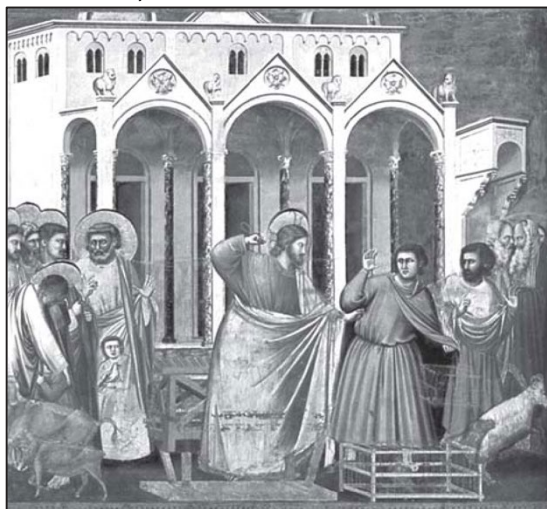
The Last Word

"Everything in life has a pattern and a coincidence is simply the moment when the pattern becomes briefly visible."

Anthony Horowitz

“And He (Jesus) overturned the tables of the money changers . . .”

Matthew 21, v12



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