

VOLUME 12

**NORTH MONMOUTHSHIRE  
MINISTRY AREA**

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# **NEWSLETTER**



## **CONTENTS**

TAIZÉ

REMEMBRANCE

ARCHBISHOP ENTHRONEMENT

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

CRAFT SALE

MA ADVENT CAROLS

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

CHRISTMAS FAIRS

ADVENT QUIET DAY

LLANVAPLEY SUPPORT SKENFRITH

CHRISTMAS ACROSS NORTH MONMOUTHSHIRE

DATES FOR THE DIARY



## TAIZÉ WORSHIP

St Mabli, Llanvapley saw another Taizé worship service on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

Taizé is a monastic community originating from France. The worship consists of repetition of short chants, some Latin, some English. The service also includes reflections, prayers and periods of silence. It was a very peaceful and contemplative service, allowing quiet time before God. Many thanks to Philip Norman for leading the singing of much loved chants such as O Lord Hear my Prayer. Also to Rev'd Heidi who led the homily, encouraging us all to think on the saints that have gone before us and how we are all called to sainthood in some way.

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Remembrance Sunday was marked across our Pastoral Districts as we remember those who have lost their lives due to conflict. A two minute silence was held with the Last Post being played in several churchyards as poppy wreaths were laid at our war memorials.

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them."  
-Laurence Binyon*





# ARCHBISHOP ENTHRONEMENT



Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November marked a historic event within our Diocese. Cherry Vann was officially enthroned as the 15th Archbishop of Wales in Newport Cathedral. Several representatives from North Monmouthshire Ministry Area were in attendance including Father David Roberts, David Hughes Jones, Jess Graham, Emily Bailey, Mary Heading, Father Julian Gray and Father David Williams.

It was a truly special event to be a part of as Cherry was surrounded by the other Bishops of Wales and took her place on the Archepiscopal Chair. The service was followed by a reception with the whole assembly from across Wales and beyond.



# CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

Every Advent, the congregation at St Teilo's, Llantilio Pertholey fill shoeboxes with gifts to be sent across the world for children in poverty. Over 60 boxes were sent as part of Operation Christmas Child, managed by Samaritan's Purse. Huge thanks to Ann Davies at St Teilo's who diligently collects and sends these boxes each year - what a tremendous effort. You can find out more about the work of Samaritan's Purse on their website: [www.samaritanspurse.org.uk](http://www.samaritanspurse.org.uk)



# ADVENT CAROL SERVICE

Advent began on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November with a joint Ministry Area Carol Service at St Nicholas, Grosmont. It was a beautiful candlelit afternoon service where we were reminded of the hope of Christ's birth being the light in the darkness. We were joined by the MA Pop-Up Choir led by Philip Norman as well as the Kitchen Singers of Grosmont who sang a powerful rendition of Calon Lan. The first candle of hope was lit on the Advent wreath.



## DARKNESS TO LIGHT

The first Sunday of Advent was also marked with a special Darkness to Light Service at St Teilo's, Llantilio Pertholey. This special service focussed on the genealogy of Christ and we reflected on the faith and courage shown by His ancestors. The church was gradually filled with candlelight as a reminder to take the Light of Christ out into the world.





# CHRISTMAS FAIRS

We were spoilt for choice with Christmas fairs over the festive period! Bettws Chapel held their first Christmas Tabletop Sale on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November at Cwmyoy Village Hall. The Hall was full of local crafters as well as a stall by Emily Bailey our Ministry Area Family Pioneer who was offering face painting throughout the day. There were lots of freshly made cakes and we were lucky to be joined by Father Christmas who offered hand-knitted gifts to all his visitors. A very impressive total of £1480 was raised in aid of Bettws Chapel - well done everyone!



Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November also saw the return of the well established Grosmont Market in the nave of St Nicholas' Church. The space was filled with local businesses offering beautiful gifts for Christmas as well as live music and story-telling. This is a wonderful local initiative which continues to bring the community together.



The Christmas fairs continued on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December, with those of Cross Ash and Llanddewi Skirrid. Full of unique crafts and handmade gifts, some impressive raffle hampers and visits from Santa himself! Many thanks to everyone that offer their time, money and talents to arranging these fairs which continue to raise money and support our rural churches.





# ADVENT QUIET DAY

***A reflection by Dr Kay Howells on the recent Ministry Area Advent Quiet Day at Ty Mawr Convent:***

“Ty Mawr convent is a special, spiritual place, a ‘thin place’, where heaven and earth feel closer. The NMMA Advent Quiet Day was held at Ty Mawr on Saturday 6th December.



The weather was damp and grey yet opening the door into Michaelgarth, the house booked for our day’s retreat, the atmosphere was cosy and welcoming.

The day was run by Canon Rev’d Jeremy Harris. After coffee and introductions we had morning prayer led by Rev’d David Roberts. For our first session we were initially given a series of photographs depicting the theme of the day, “*Watching and Waiting*”. During the day’s three sessions we heard bible readings, poetry and presentations on 3 of the characters in the Annunciation – Zacchariah, Mary and Elizabeth. We then had a period of time for personal reflection and consideration of some points raised by Jeremy; we were free to use any part of the house or grounds. I made my way to one of the tiny chapels near the house. It was very cold but proved to be a great space for reflection.

Just before mid-day we walked down to the chapel in the convent for the daily Eucharist service. A spiritual experience, shared by the nuns, other staff and visitors.



Our afternoon session concluded with evening prayer and the day closed around 3.00pm. For me, the opportunity to have some quiet time out of the mad rush of Christmas preparations was so valuable. The special setting of Ty Mawr, the guidance of Jeremy and the value of having set aside the time, gave me the space for reflection on the year and it’s events and to focus on all the love and support I have in my life. An altogether very special day.”

**Dr Kay Howells**

*MA Minute Secretary and Parishioner of St Michael, Llanvihangel Crucorney*



## LLANVAPLEY SUPPORT SKENFRITH CHURCH

Sunday 21st December saw many carol services across the MA. Each year Llanvapley church support a charity and this year they chose St Bridget’s Church in Skenfrith following the recent floods. The Committee wanted to acknowledge the hard work of the community which allowed the church to reopen so quickly. Pictured Chris Mitchley, trustee of St Bridget’s with Rev’d Heidi Prince.

*During the Christmas period, all our churches were incredibly busy with various services of carols, Christingles, Christmas tree lightings etc and here is just a sample of what was held (more information and pictures can be seen on the MA website and Facebook page!):*

### Christmas Tree Lighting at St Michael's

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December, the children of Llanvihangel Crucorney came to St Michael's to sing carols as we marked the lighting of the Christmas tree. The weather did not dampen spirits and the children hung their ornaments of prayer during some noisy singing of well-known carols.



### Carols at Llangattock Lingoed

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December, St Cadoc's, Llangattock Lingoed had their annual carol service joined by the Cantorion Phoenix Choir as well as a very special visitor by sleigh - well, tractor! It is lovely to see our churches still holding such an important place in our rural communities.

### Carols Under the Stars

On Monday 22nd December, our Families Pioneer Emily Bailey held Carols under the Stars at St Teilo, Llantilio Crossenny. The churchyard was strung with lights and everyone enjoyed hot chocolate and mulled wine as we sang our favourite festive songs together.



### Christmas Eve with the Archdeacon

St David's, Llanddewi Skirrid were joined by Archdeacon Ian Rees for their Christmas Eve candelit carol service. There was a full church with a mixture of readings, poems and reflections. A very generous £204 of donations was added to the £420 raised for Ty Hafan Children's Hospice.



# FATHER DAVID WILLIAMS' FIRST CHRISTMAS!

Having had the conversation several times with people that started with the words, "so this must be your busy time of year", here's a brief reflection on our first Christmas in our Ministry Area:



There's a definition of pilgrimage that describes it as 'walking with a purpose', and what a joy it has been to purposefully journey through Advent and Christmas alongside people here for a first time! As is often the way, some journeyed willingly and others journeyed wearily. However, along with many other Churches, it was a joy to find more people accessing Church over Christmas. Research nationally showed more attending, and it was truly wonderful to see teenagers as well as younger children and adults hearing the good news that Jesus brings. With re-instating Christingle services, evening open air carol singing in The Bryn village with young & old, and candlelit Carol services, as well as the usual Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, it has been such a delight to share this special time of the year with all ages. Joined by our own children and grandchildren, we are truly thankful to be living here in this beautiful part of Wales and look forward to what a new year brings!

*Rev. Canon David G Williams*

*Vicar of Llanddewi Rhydderch, Llansantffraed with Llanarth, Llangattock-juxta-Usk*

## Dates for the Diary (More needed!)

### March

#### **St David's Day MA Celebration**

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March

St David's, Llanddewi Skirrid (Time to be confirmed)

#### **Lent Quiet Day with Trystan Hughes**

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March

Ty Mawr Convent, Monmouth

#### **MAC Meeting**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 7pm

St Michael's, Llanvihangel Crucorney

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