

The New Times

The parish magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes



Services And Events February 2026

All are welcome to join services across the four parishes where you are sure to receive a warm welcome.

Sunday 1st February - Septuagesima

9.30am **St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.** (Morning Prayer)

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.** (Holy Communion)

Service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. Refreshments served from 11.45am-12.30pm.

Sunday 8th February - Sexagesima

9.30am **St. Cadoc's, Penrhos**

Refreshments are served after the service from approximately 10.20am onwards and everyone from the community is very welcome.

11.00am **St. Mabli's, Llanvapley** (Holy Communion)

Service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finishes.

Sunday 15th February - Quinquagesima

9.30am **St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine** (Holy Communion)

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny** (Morning Prayer)

Ash Wednesday – 18th February

6.00pm **Llantilio Crossenny.** Special service to mark the beginning of Lent, including the Imposition of ashes.

Sunday 22nd February – First Sunday in Lent

9.30am **St. Cadoc's, Penrhos**

11.00am **St. Mabli's, Llanvapley** (Morning Prayer)

Sunday 1st March – St David's Day (2nd Sunday in Lent)

9.30am **St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine** (Morning Prayer)

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny** (Holy Communion)

4.00pm **Llanddewi Skirrid Church** (Sung Evensong)

Events for Lent and St David's Day

Lent

As we travel through Lent, everyone is invited to meet together in reading and discussing a book about Pilgrimage, Suffering and Hope. It's written by Trystan Owain Hughes, and is entitled, "To Hell's Mouth and Back."

In the book Trystan explores his experience of suffering and considers how God can redeem and transform pain and disability, and explores how common experiences of pilgrimage are echoed in the challenges of our life journeys. Along the way, the reader is led to consider the journeys we all face, as we search for God's presence and hope in our joys and pains.

We will be meeting together with friends across the ministry area. To start our discussion, we will be meeting on Shrove Tuesday, 17th February at 2.30 in "Squeezing" the Ukrainian Café in Abergavenny, where we will also be able to share pancakes together!

The other dates for the Lent Discussion Group are:

Tuesday 24th February 2.30pm in Llantilio Pertholey Church.

Tuesday 3rd March 2.30pm in Llantilio Crossenny Church.

Tuesday 10th March 2.30pm in Llanddewi Rhydderch Church

Tuesday 17th March 2.30pm Llanvihangel Crucorney Church

Tuesday 24th March 2.30pm Grosmont Church.

St. David's Day

Continuing with the theme of Pilgrimage, everyone is most welcome to join in a local pilgrimage to celebrate St. David's Day on Sunday March 1st. We will be walking from St. David's Church in Llanddewi Rhydderch to St. David's Church in Llanddewi Skirrid.

The walk should take about an hour and 40 minutes –be warned it can be quite muddy!

After Pilgrim Prayers and a bring your own picnic lunch at 1pm in Llanddewi Rhydderch, our pilgrimage will begin at 1.45pm at Llanddewi Rhydderch Church and conclude with a service of sung Evensong at 4pm in Llanddewi Skirrid Church. You don't need to have done the walk to join in the service! For further enquiries, please ask Revd. Heidi.

A Very Special Birthday Is Announced!

Sixty and still preaching with panache – who could it be?

As the calendar flips to February, we are thrilled to celebrate a milestone that's as golden as the sermons we hear on Sundays. Our beloved vicar is turning 60 on 1st February! With a heart full of grace and a quick wit that never fades, our vicar continues to inspire and uplift us all. We celebrate this joyous occasion in wishing Heidi many more years of wisdom, laughter and divine guidance. Celebrating this truly miraculous event with the following ditty:



Celebrating Heidi at 60

Sixty years young – though you would never guess,
With wisdom to spare and sermons to bless.
A vicar with sparkle, with laughter and grace,
Often seen mid-sprint between holy place to place.

Her cassock flies heroically on Sundays in motion,
Dividing parishes with saintly devotion,
A blur of blessings, bread and communion wine,
Arriving at the next venue..... yes phew just in time!

And just before the service, a final check mate
Asking the churchwardens "is my bow sitting straight?"
Even in chaos, with bells about to ring,
There is time for elegance, Heidi's unusual signature thing!

She plays organ and piano with effortless flair,
An accomplished campanologist that makes even angels stare,
Music follows wherever Heidi is found,
From gentle chants to joyful Sunday sounds.

Her diary is sacred and ultimately feared,
"Did I write that in?" "Was it last week or is it next year?"
Events appear, multiply and delete with glee,
Holy stationery wrapped in coloured mystery.

Heidi loves all creatures great and small,
From garden birds to the mouse who wanders in her hall,
Nature is her sanctuary, peaceful and free,
A place of solace where she finds her decree.

So here is to our dearest Heidi – sixty and shining,
With faith that is deep and a schedule that needs refining,
May your coffee be strong, your churchwardens be kind,
And everything makes it into your diary.....eventually, in time.

Happy birthday, Heidi our vicar, our friend,
May joy, cake and laughter never quite end.



News from the Four Churches.

St Cadoc's, Penrhos

Christmas at St Cadoc's is always beautiful and this year was no exception. Lea and Sue have these memories to share with you.

The Carol service.

T'was the night before Christmas (well 5 nights to be exact) as villagers, friends and families arrived for a 6pm start at St Cadoc's Church, Penrhos, for a feast of carol singing, prayers and readings all led and conducted admirably by Pip Rumsey.

Her polished debut, giving the homily and delivering the Christmas message to all gathered was only outshone by her faultless conducting of when we should sit, stand or kneel. Well done, Pip!

The church had been lovingly decorated by volunteers and a huge thank you was extended to Mrs Margaret Parry for faultlessly playing the organ and enchanting the youngest members of the congregation. We were grateful to Richard and Fiona Cleeve for once again, kindly opening their

barn up at High House and warmly welcoming everyone in to roaring fire, full table and drinks, following the service.

The event is a much-awaited diary entry for most of Penrhos and surrounding area, allowing that rare chance to sip, smile, and gather, and to share festive joy before the Big Day itself.

Lea.

The Christmas Day service.

Christmas Day dawned bright and clear and we decided to walk to Church. The countryside looked sublime in its wintry magnificence and, as we approached St Cadoc's, the bells rang out to greet us. What a joyful way to celebrate this Christmas Day! At last, the tower was on full show; the scaffolding had released its tight embrace to reveal its old red sandstone beauty.

The atmosphere amongst the churchgoers was happy and convivial. We were led in worship once again by Pip, who took us through a charming service with a perfect blend of smiles, anecdotes and prayer. Joe Adams played the organ with gusto and skill, encouraging the congregation to sing at the top of our voices. The rendition of 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' by the Manchand Family Choir (featuring parents, Emma and Kevin and their children, Emma's sister and her niece) was the icing on the proverbial Christmas Cake.

Thank you to everyone, including Margaret and Richard Price (Churchwarden) for making this a very special Christmas time.

St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine

December was a very busy month in Llanvetherine. The Llandewi Skirrid Village Hall was packed on 6 December for a Christmas Bingo Night in aid of St James's church, organised by Janet Phelps to whom very many thanks. There could be no doubt how much everyone enjoyed themselves and many thanks to John Davies for his expert Calling.



The joyous Christening of Eloise Seren Lucy took place at St James's church on Sunday 14 December. Rev Andrew was helped during the Baptism by Eloise's older sister Izzy surrounded by her Mum and Dad, godparents, and many family and friends.

The church was packed with children and their parents and families for the Nativity and Carol Service on the afternoon of Sunday 21 December. Lloyd Hughes Jones gave a splendid clear narrative of



the Nativity Story readings, and the carols included Little Donkey. The children then performed the Nativity tableau beautifully by an alternative rendering of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, accompanied by Lloyd on his guitar. Many thanks are due to the children, Emily Bailey for her guidance, to Shirley and David, Sally, Verity and Jess for making it all happen and refreshments, and to Margaret Parry for playing the organ.

The Christmas Morning Holy Communion service was led by Revd Andrew and was well attended. Andrew preached on the theme of Peace and Reconciliation following the recent, and at one time unthinkable, joint laying of wreaths by the Duke of Kent and President of the German Republic in the Coventry Cathedral ruins, attended by British and German soldiers. Following the massive destructive conflict of WW2, looking to present times, no matter how challenging we can truly hope for reconciliation in the modern world if we learn from the past and work at it.

We are pleased to report that work on the tower at St James has now been signed off by the architect and the prolonged process of dismantling the scaffolding is now in progress. There's still a lot more work to be done on other parts of the church."

Shirley and David can remind me if I've missed anything out or alert me to any errors. I'll send a separate report next month about the Christmas Draw which has been unavoidably postponed from 16 to 23 January.

Andrew Dawson

St. Mabli's, Llanvapley

Llanvapley held its Carol Service on Sunday 21 December and welcomed a large congregation. The service included readings and carols. The readers were once again excellent and the singing joyous. Each year, the church committee nominates a charity to support, and this year it chose St Bridget's Church in Skenfrith. St Bridget's had once again suffered significant damage following the arrival of Storm Claudia on 14 November. The Church Committee invited Chris Mitchley, a member of the Skenfrith congregation, to speak about how the community coped with the flooding and the ongoing work to restore the church. A sum of £225 was raised at the service to support the Church.



Welcome to Anwen!

Despite not having a service on Christmas Day service there was a lot to celebrate as news came through from Berlin that Tom Taylor (eldest son of the vicar's churchwarden) and Ricarda Evens welcomed baby Anwen Taylor Evens into the world at 22.22 in the evening. Both grandparents were delighted and it wasn't long before they were able to jump on a plane and meet Anwen for the first time. Anwen was 8lb 8oz and is doing really well and is expected to pay her first visit to Llanvapley in March.



St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny

Christingle Service

Our Christingle service was gloriously full to bursting with children of every age, which meant the church was alive with rustling, giggling, and the very serious business of sneakily eating the sweets before the candles even made it past the first verse of Away in a Manger. As we sang, I caught the faint but unmistakable aroma of... singed hair, a reminder, dear reader, that Christingle brings light, joy, and the occasional unexpected new fringe!

Huge thanks, as always, to Val and Jane Cooke and Lauren Hughes for providing the Christingles—beautifully prepared and clearly irresistible to small fingers. And special applause to Jill Formaggia for constructing a magnificent gingerbread house, surely worthy of a National Building Award and on a par with Sir Norman Foster himself, architectural brilliance and edible - what more could we ask for? A joyful, slightly sticky, and very memorable Christingle indeed!



Poppy Crafter Appeal

At Llantilio Crossenny church, the ladies are very busy making poppies to put towards a Poppy Waterfall to go inside the church for Remembrance in November. Please see the attached poster giving details what the crafting event is all about and the next session will be on Monday 2nd March at 10.30am. If you would like to knit or crochet poppies it would be wonderful. Come along and join us for a cuppa and a chat and/or get your needles out.

All help will be gratefully received. For further details please contact marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk



Reflections on leading Morning Prayer: Our Journey in Faith

Marion, Ros and I were appointed lay Worship leaders last August. Several of our cohort are leading services already including Pip in Penrhos, so I felt propelled to offer to do something for the January service.

It was still the season of Epiphany and that suggested to me the theme of pilgrimage - our journey in faith. The Three Wise Men were arguably the first pilgrims, and as I pictured them walking, or on camels, the seed of an idea grew. We began the service with walking, mindful of one step after another, making our short journey from the entrance of the church to the Chancel where we sat. We were led by three wise women in the shape of Marion, Myfanwy and Ros and we walked not towards a star but the candlelight. The service began with Myf lighting the central candle around which stood three figures from our nativity - those three wise men

I hoped to have a reflective service and to involve other members of the congregation. We started with some music - John Taverner's 'Mother of God' sung by Voces 8 - This led into a period of silence where I invited everyone to be aware of the presence of God.

Apart from hymns and the Lord's prayer, we said the psalm for the day in a call and response way. Sean gave our scripture reading and then we sang 'Our Lord Hear my Prayer' the beautiful Taize song that paved the way for intercessions by Ros - and these really touched my heart.

The service concluded with 'The Journey of the Magi' by T.S. Elliot read by Heidi, a vicar's blessing and dismissal and notices from Marion.

We were a small number, and I was delighted that Pip and Les came. I personally enjoyed the service, and the experience of putting it together. I realised how much thought was required in the planning, the making of the service sheet, and practical arrangements on the day. I ran everything by Heidi of course, and she came up with one of my favourite poems 'The Journey of the Magi' to read. I was keen to involve other members of the congregation and thanks to all of those who contributed: The three wise women! Heidi and Margaret who coped with the need to transfer from the organ to piano because of electric problems! It was lovely to have Sean there, and Lin who kept us on track with 'Oh Lord hear my prayer'. As usual Marion provided good coffee and she and Ros provided cakes. And a big thank you to those who came, put up with the cold, and joined me in morning prayer with a difference!

Jenny Goodwin

Silent Meditation

Meditation has continued throughout the winter - sometimes with blankets, sometimes hot water bottles, sometimes two, sometimes three of us, and sometimes just me! I see it as an important thing to do, to be silent and listen, to take time to be open to the presence of God, and to keep doing it.

Laurence Freeman, a Benedictine monk and director of the World Community for Christian Meditation asks the question 'what is the role of religion?' His view is that at the heart of every religion there is a contemplative, mystical dimension: experiencing God at a level 'beyond, through and over thought and imagination'. *<https://wccm.org/wccm/the-future-of-religion/>

Do join me at 8.30am for 1/2 hour if you fancy on the following Tuesdays, in St Teilo's Llantilio Crossenny:

February 3rd, 10th, 24th, and March 3rd, and do bring a blanket and dress warmly.

Jenny Goodwin



Eco Church Update – Creation Care in Practice

This season we have continued to make small but meaningful contributions to caring for God's creation in our local environment. Two hedgehog houses have been purchased and will be placed in sheltered areas of the churchyard to provide safe nesting and hibernation spaces. Hedgehogs are now listed as vulnerable in the UK, largely due to habitat loss and human activity, so offering secure refuges is a simple yet tangible way to support this declining native species.

A new bird feeder will be installed to provide supplementary food for garden birds, particularly during colder and leaner months when natural resources can be limited. Feeding birds not only supports their wellbeing but also encourages closer observation and appreciation of the diversity of species sharing our space.

We again participated in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, joining thousands of households across the country in this important citizen science project. The count was undertaken in challenging weather again, wind and rain, which meant most songbirds remained hidden, with jackdaws and pigeons being the only birds observed during the hour. Even so, our participation contributes valuable data to national monitoring of bird populations and reminds us how weather and climate patterns affect wildlife behaviour.

These small acts reflect our commitment to stewardship, responding to the biblical call to "tend and keep" the earth (Genesis 2:15). By creating safe habitats, observing wildlife, and contributing to wider ecological understanding, we seek to honour God's creation with attentiveness, humility, and care.

Cultivating a yew hedge is a rewarding endeavour, especially when it carries the legacy of a cherished tree. After a tree preservation order was lifted on our cherished yew trees in the churchyard, I was legally permitted to take cuttings before the tree was felled due to health and safety concerns. This act ensures that the tree's lineage continues, providing a habitat for birds to nest and feed, and contributing to the ecological balance.



Yew hedges are known for their dense foliage, which offers shelter and food for various wildlife, enhancing biodiversity. Growing these cuttings on my windowsill allows me to nurture them in a controlled environment, although it requires patience as yew trees are very slow growing. Over time, hopefully, these cuttings will develop into a robust hedge, continuing the legacy of the original tree and supporting local wildlife.

Yew trees often have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) due to their significant ecological, historical, and cultural value. These trees are known for their longevity and can live for thousands of years, making them important biological and historical monuments. Yew trees provide essential habitats for various wildlife, including birds and insects, contributing to biodiversity. Additionally, their dense foliage offers shelter and food for many species, enhancing the ecological balance. TPOs are implemented to protect these trees from deliberate damage and destruction, ensuring their preservation for future generations.

Ros Jeffries

Ministry Area News

Lent Lunch Sessions

During Lent, we will be following the Archbishop of Wales' Lent Book 2026 ('To Hell's Mouth and Back' by Trystan Owain Hughes). We will have weekly meetings on Tuesday afternoons where people can come together and discuss how Lent is going and how they are finding the book that week. The meetings will be held across the Ministry Area, one meeting in each of the PDs. The first session is being held on Shrove Tuesday 2:30pm at the Ukrainian Cafe (Squeezing) in Abergavenny and will be raising money for Living Hope which gets much needed resources to the frontline of Ukraine. This will of course include Pancakes! Other sessions details are found on the attached poster.

Lent Quiet Day

Continuing with Trystan Hughes' book, we are lucky to have him join us at Ty Mawr Convent for our MA Quiet Day on Saturday 7th March 9:30am-3pm. This will be a beautiful day of calm and reflection - everyone is welcome.

St David Day Choral Evensong and Pilgrimage

We will be coming together as a Ministry Area to celebrate St David's Day, the patron saint of three of our churches. On Sunday 1st March at 4pm, there will be a Choral Evensong at St David's Church, Llanddewi Skirrid. We will be joined by the Archdeacon of Monmouth as well as Philip Norman's Pop-Up Choir. If you're interested in joining the choir, please contact Philip Norman: pkn@pnms.co.uk. The day will also include a walking pilgrimage from St David's Llanddewi Rhydderch (starting with prayers and Welsh cakes at 1pm) to St David's Llanddewi Skirrid in time for Evensong. If you'd like to join, do bring sensible footwear, water and potentially a brolly!

Lent Evensong

Join us for a series of Evensongs held at St Teilo's Llantilio Pertholey on Sundays 6pm throughout Lent (excluding March 1st). Each of our Lead Clergy will draw on a particular theme. Revd. Mary Moore will begin on Sunday February 22nd.

Community News

Llanvapley and District Gardening Club

February sees the days lengthening and the first signs of spring popping up in our gardens. Some snowdrops have already appeared to be followed by crocuses and daffodils and all the joys of the garden to look forward to. Although I did see a bank of daffodils in bloom in Crickhowell at the end of December!



After a break in January the Gardening Club resumes its monthly meetings on Wednesday 4th February at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion.

Our speaker in February is Jo Thompson who will be giving a presentation on Creating a No Dig Cut Flower Patch. Jo runs the awarded winning flower farm, Wye Valley Flowers, near St. Briavels. She provides flowers for special events, including the King's Coronation and runs workshops at the farm.

Everyone is most welcome to come along. Guest fees are £5. Membership is £20 single and £35 joint. Please contact marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk for any queries.

Llantilio Crossenny WI news and events.

December 2025 followed its usual convivial pattern at the Llantilio Crossenny WI. The bells rang in the festive period with our choir performing two pieces at the Gwent Federation Carol Service at St Peter's Church, Goytre. Some of us are also members of the Selby Sounds Handbells group and we were thrilled to be able to play at the service. We battled through floods to get to this magical church but it was well worth it to enjoy the company of other WI members from across Gwent at this special annual event.

A few days later we had our Christmas meeting and our very own Jan Morgan treated us to a Christmas Floristry Surprise. And what a treat it was!! Jan jingled and jangled her magic with foliage and flowers to make the most amazing swags, garlands, wreaths and floral displays. She told stories whilst delving into her Mary Poppins bag of gorgeous things and then, out of nowhere, a beautiful arrangement was produced.

What skill! What creativity! What imagination!

We were all entranced by Jan's artistry and prowess and enjoyed this exhibition of floriography at its best immensely. Effusive thanks were offered to Jan for a wonderful evening.

Jan generously donated the displays for the raffle, the profits from which were given to the Tiny Tickers Charity and Bristol Children's Hospital.

Breathless from Jan's demonstration we enjoyed mulled wine and copious food provided by the Committee, drew the raffle and shared our Secret Santa gifts.

A truly wonderful Christmas evening was enjoyed by all.

We then drew breath to prepare for Christmas and New Year with friends and family and we then needed a lie down to get over it!

Luckily help was on hand to escape from the new year inertia. Four of our members joined Phil on his monthly ramble from Llanvapley Pavilion. It was a beautiful winter's day as we ventured forth over hill and dale on this sociable walk. (The next date is Saturday 7th February at 10.30am, all welcome). Afterwards, with rosy cheeks and in good heart, a large group of us from Llantilio Crossenny WI met for lunch at the Hunter's Moon at Llangattock Lingoed. It was a lovely gathering of special friends and we shook off any post-holiday blues in a trice.

Our January date is the Annual Lunch on Sunday 18th January in Abergavenny. Our February date is 11th February, an eco-themed evening with Kathy Hague from Gwent Bee Keepers. As always, everyone is welcome to join us at 7pm, Llanvapley Pavilion.

Selby Sound Handbell Ringers

Selby Sound Bell Ringers are taking a short break but will resume their weekly practice on Fridays at 4.00pm later in February.

We would love to welcome new members for a couple of hours of hand bell ringing but with lots of tea, cakes, fun and chatter. Please contact Margaret, 01873 855207, elmsfarm@btconnect.com

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of The New Times and thanks to Ros Jeffries for stepping in as the editor while Sue Raynor is away. The next edition will hopefully appear on time! Thank you for your patience.