

The New Times

The parish magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes



Find out what is happening in our churches and communities



A beautiful picture of Penrhos Church and the Congregational Chapel cemetery in Llanvapley
Why not pay a visit to see the crocuses and daffodils



Services And Events March 2026

All are welcome to join the any of the services where you are sure to receive a warm welcome.

Sunday March 1st St. David's Day

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

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

This 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.

1.30pm Llanddewi Rhydderch Church Meet for Pilgrimage walk to Llanddewi Skirrid.

4.00pm Llanddewi Skirrid Evensong. Preacher Archdeacon of Monmouth Ian Rees

Tuesday 3rd March

2.30pm Llantilio Crossenny Church Lent Book Study.

Saturday 7th March

9.30am – 3.00pm Quiet Day at Ty Mawr Convent led by Trystan Owain Hughes. Please bring your own lunch.

To book your place please contact Mary Heading maryheading.nmma@outlook.com

Sunday 8th March Lent 3

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

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

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

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service.

6.00pm Evensong Llantilio Pertholey Preacher Revd. David Williams reflects on Pontius Pilate Facing the Truth about Jesus.

Tuesday 10th March

2.30pm Llanddewi Rhydderch Church Lent Book Study.

Sunday 15th March Mothering Sunday Lent 4.

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

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny** (Service for Mothering Sunday).

6.00pm Llantilio Pertholey Evensong Preacher Revd. Heidi Prince reflects on Mary Mother of Jesus.

Tuesday 17th March

2.30pm Lent Book Study. St. Michael's church Llanfihangel Crucorney.

Sunday 22nd March Lent 5 Passion Sunday

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

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

6.00pm Evensong Llantilio Pertholey. Preacher Revd. David Roberts reflects on The Thief on the Cross Redemption at the last hour.

Tuesday 24th March

2.30pm Lent Book Study Book at St. Nicholas Church Grosmont.

Sunday March 29th Palm Sunday

9.30am Joint Service for Palm Sunday - Penrhos.

6.00pm Evensong Llantilio Pertholey Preacher Revd. Julian Gray reflects on The Centurion.

From the Vicarage

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for making my transition into my 7th decade such a happy and memorable occasion.

It's strange to think that I had just entered my fourth decade when I came here in 1997 –and Gwen was a mere twinkle in my eye!

So much has happened over the years – life and death, and you have been such wonderful and faithful friends throughout it all.

From a youthful vicar to a vintage vicar, thank you all so much for your love and friendship. I count myself very blessed indeed to minister both among you and alongside you.

With love and heartfelt thanks,

Heidi. X



News from the Four Churches. St Cadoc's, Penrhos

The latest monthly "Drop-In" in St Cadoc's Church took place on Friday 20th February. Around 15 brave folk sauntered inside on a cold late winter evening, with their favourite tipples and nibbles.

Circulations and conversations soon heated up with discussions such as, local potholes and ensuing car damage, roads covered in water too deep to safely drive through, lambing, Greggs frozen sausage rolls, and the carpet of crocuses in the churchyard. Following a glass or two, a mini quiz proved a great success, and glory claimed by the rightful winning team. But we were all winners in the end, as every day is school day! Ask a teacher!

As we left, many of us saw the new crescent moon, noting its position as "lying on its back", with the tips of the crescent pointing almost straight up, appearing like a "bowl" or "smile".

It is believed by some to be "holding rain", a so-called wet moon, signifying more wet weather to come. Maybe the fact that the following two consecutive days were dry, belies this old tale. Let's hope so, and no doubt we will still be discussing this at the next "Drop-In".



The next Penrhos Drop Inn will be on **Friday 27th March** 7 to 9pm please bring your own drink and maybe some nibbles to share and we will provide the glasses.

Come along and join in! Look forward to seeing you.

Leannndre Fellows & Pip Rumsey

Upcoming events for April

18th & 19th April, Marilyn Anderson has her garden opens from 2-5pm. The teas will be in aid of Llanvetherine and Penrhos Church. Longhouse Farm, Penrhos. NP15 2DE. Any offers of help or

cakes on either day would be very much appreciated or please come along and visit her beautiful gardens, the tulips last year were stunning.

St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine

January's Fundraiser

The draw took place in January at the Hog's Head with many prizes staying locally and some going further afield. Two went to the Vale of Glamorgan, one to Sheffield and Hereford. Thankfully the person from Australia who bought a ticket was not successful otherwise the warden would have had to travel and deliver. Better luck next year. The church committee is most grateful to everyone who bought and sold tickets, donated prizes and helped make the event a financial success.

Best wishes, David.

St. Mabli's, Llanvapley

Church heating

If you look through the minutes of the Parochial Church Council from a century ago, you will find several payments for oil and coke - oil for the lamps and coke for the stove. There are no records of how effective these were, but we can safely presume the church was both lit and warm.

Since then, electricity has come to the village. Light bulbs replaced oil lamps; gas heaters were installed in place of the stove, and these were later superseded by electric heaters. While the church no longer has any difficulty with lighting, heating remains a challenge.

The building is not large, yet during the cold, dark days of winter it has proved difficult to raise the temperature to a comfortable level even when six 2kW heaters are switched on two hours before a service. Despite this, our congregations have continued to thrive, but the church would very much like to improve the situation.

We have already introduced blankets, and it has been noted (with some amusement) that members of the congregation have been quietly bringing hot water bottles. We have discussed the issue with the Ministry Area Council and have visited Penrhos Church to learn about the options they are considering. Possible solutions include heated pew cushions, under-pew heaters, or diesel-powered systems.

With any luck, a suitable solution will be found, otherwise, we may yet have to order another load of coke or a few more candles!



Church and churchyard maintenance

Following the introduction of the Ministry Area, St. Mabli's Parochial Church Council (PCC) was abolished. Since then, it has been unclear who holds responsibility for several matters that were previously overseen by the PCC.

The church remains responsible for its finances, and members of the congregation (formerly recorded on an electoral roll) have identified problems with the skirting board in the chancel and resolved to address them. A quotation has been obtained from a firm in Crickhowell and has now been accepted.

The Diocese has recently published Churchyard Regulations for 2026. The regulations state that churchyards are the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council (which is the Ministry Area Council). Some churches have church committees and it is not clear if they have any part to play in churchyard maintenance. This matter will be raised at the Ministry Area Council meeting on Tuesday 17th March, 7.00pm at St Michael's, Llanvihangel Crucorney.

St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny

Good news is that the charity **Pipe up for Pipe Organs** is very keen to restore St Teilo's pipe organ to its former glory. The charity is led by Martin Renshaw, who lives in London and has already expressed how much he loves this organ. This year, Martin hopes to restore 26 organs to full working order, and he would very much like ours to be one of them.

The charity will take care of the necessary paperwork for the grant application and will oversee the work itself. It's called a "Sleeping Beauty Grant."

If the application is successful there will be no cost to the church. The only stipulation is that visiting members of the public will be welcome to play the organ should they wish to do so.

Silent Meditation Update

Meditation sessions at Llantilio Crossenny Church have been going now for a year!

I went to Prinknash Abbey in Gloucestershire on Saturday for a day 'Sitting with Christ and Buddha': Journey into Lent with the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart and the renowned Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. Chris Whittington (Director of The School for Contemplative Life) who led the day started by reflecting on the Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday:

'But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you'. Matthew 6 v.6

You would be very welcome to join this little group - as often as you wish. Just arrive by about 8.25am for an 8.30am start. We sit in the Chancel of the Church, and the time of meditation begins with a short reading or poem, prayer and then about 1/2 hour of meditation - silent prayer. Any questions, do ask me.

Dates for March: Tuesdays 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th 8.30-9am

Jenny Goodwin 07891 016768

Ecumenical Lent Walk



Please join Julie Lunt (from Llanarth Catholic Church) and Jenny Goodwin (from Llantilio Crossenny Church in Wales) on an 'ecumenical' walk between our two Churches. We would start at Llanarth and then walk to Llantilio where we will have refreshments.

Weather permitting the walk will take place on the morning of Friday March 20th - start time to be confirmed.

If you'd like to come let either Julie or me (WhatsApp 07891 016768) know and we can keep you posted about start time, and in the event of bad weather if we need to postpone.

We'll rehearse the route first, and will bring first aid things, but please take responsibility for yourself. Boots, waterproofs, drinks, and snacks, walking poles.....

More details will be emailed near the time.

Jenny and Julie



Eco Church Update

Eco Church — Spring Is Waking Up

As the days gently lengthen and the first brave flowers begin to appear in our churchyard, we are reminded that creation is stirring once more. Spring doesn't rush; it unfolds quietly and faithfully — and Eco Church invites us to do the same.

Eco Church is more than a badge or a checklist. It is our shared commitment to care for God's creation in practical, hopeful ways. It's about tending what has been entrusted to us — our land, our resources, and one another.



Reminder of what we are doing to make a difference:

Across our parish, Eco Church activities include:

- Encouraging wildlife-friendly areas in the churchyard
- Planting flowers for bees and pollinators
- Improving recycling and reducing waste
- Being mindful about energy use in our buildings
- Supporting sustainable and Fairtrade choices
- Creating opportunities to learn and reflect together

None of these actions are grand on their own. But together, they form something powerful, a visible sign of gratitude, responsibility and hope.

Why It Matters

For us as individuals, Eco Church gently reconnects us with the rhythm of creation. There is something deeply grounding about planting a seed, noticing birdsong, or seeing light linger a little longer in the evening. It reminds us that growth takes time. That renewal follows winter. That hope is woven into the natural world.

For us as a community, it draws us closer. Working side by side in the churchyard, sharing ideas, encouraging small changes at home — these are simple acts that strengthen fellowship. Caring for creation becomes something we do together.

As Spring Begins...

Look for the snowdrops pushing through cold ground.

Notice the buds forming on trees that only weeks ago seemed bare.

Listen for blackbirds at dawn and the rustle of new leaves.

Spring is preaching its own quiet sermon: nothing stays barren forever.

☐ **We meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 9.15am.**

Whether you can spare an hour or simply want to come along and see what we're about, you would be very welcome. Every pair of hands — and every hopeful heart — makes a difference. There will be tea/coffee and cake.

Come and help us nurture creation, together.



Monday 2nd March
10.30 - 11.30 am ✂

Llanvapley Pavilion ✂

Come along if you enjoy crafting, knitting, crochet, sewing or whatever you enjoy!
A poppy waterfall for inside Llantilio Crossenny church is a proposed project but you can do your own craft too.



£2 to include tea/coffee & cake

For further details please
contact Marion Ashton
at marion.ashton@llantilio.org



LLANTILIO CROSSENNY
CHURCH

PLANT SALE

4th May 2026, Bank Holiday
Monday at 2.00pm

It is that time of year again, if you have planted too many seeds, or divided up some of your clumps of perennials, can you bring them along

Not only plants for sale but there will be cakes and refreshments too!

Reflection

Winter does not end loudly. It softens.

The mornings are still cool and the earth still quiet, yet something underneath has already begun. Roots are stirring. Light returns earlier each day. The air carries a different promise. What looked still was never truly lifeless. Beneath the frozen ground, life was preparing its return.

Spiritually, the end of winter can feel like the soul after a long season of waiting — prayers whispered into silence, hope held gently, questions resting without answers. And yet, even in winter, God was working beneath the surface.

Easter reminds us of something beautifully simple: bad times do not last forever. When things feel dark, new life can still come. When we experience loss, there can still be hope. The stone was rolled away from the tomb to show that fear and despair do not have the final word. What looked like the end was actually a new beginning. Easter tells us that God can bring hope and life out of even the hardest moments.

Spring whispers what Easter proclaims — life returns. Always. Not because we force it, not because we strive harder, but because renewal is woven into creation itself. God designed the world to rise again.

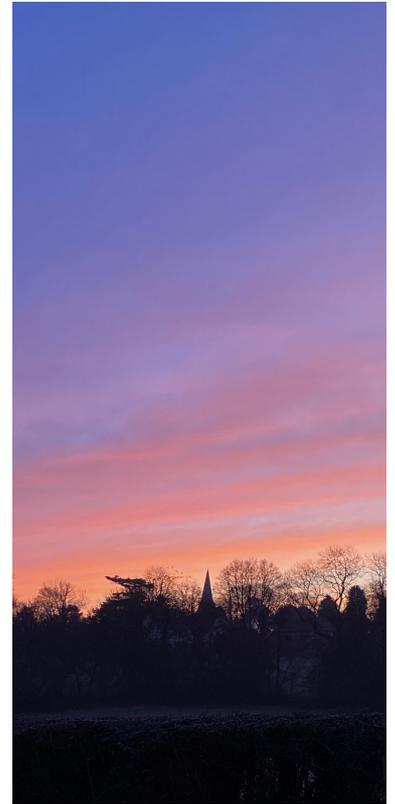
Bare trees begin to bud. Bulbs push through cold soil. Birds sing before the leaves appear. They do not question whether spring will come; they simply respond when it does. Perhaps faith is like that — not striving, not forcing, but turning our faces toward the light when it appears.

As winter fades, something in us begins to thaw. Grief softens. Hope rises quietly. The heart opens, almost without noticing. Easter is not only a day on the calendar; it is an invitation — to trust that even if parts of us felt buried or forgotten, life is already moving underneath.

Spring does not rush. Neither does grace.

May this season find you gentle and open. May your faith feel simple again — steady, quiet, alive.

And as the light grows stronger each morning, may you remember you are not in winter anymore.



Community News

Llanvapley and District Gardening Club

It is with great sadness that the Gardening Club learnt of the sudden death of one of its founding members. Jan Eastment was a passionate gardener with a wealth of knowledge. She was never happier than when she was in her garden. The club was established in October 2022 and with Jan's help and enthusiasm the club is thriving with new members joining every month.

She will be sadly missed. In her memory the March meeting will begin with a minute's silence, a time of reflection. The club will also be holding a raffle with all proceeds going to the Dog's Trust which is a charity close to Jan and chosen by her partner.

The speaker for the March meeting is Stephanie Tyler from Monmouthshire Meadows Group talking about Wildflowers in your Garden. Everyone is most welcome to come along. The meeting is held in Llanvapley Pavilion at 7pm on Wednesday 4th March. There is a guest fee of £5. If you wish to join the annual membership fee is £20 single and £35 joint.



Unfortunately, our speaker for February had an accident on the afternoon he was due to come to us. He was pruning a tree and fell with a branch hitting his head. After several hours in A and E he was allowed home. He sends his sincere apologies to all club members.

There will be a Flower and Produce Show in August to don't forget to sow your seeds soon!

For further queries please contact marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk

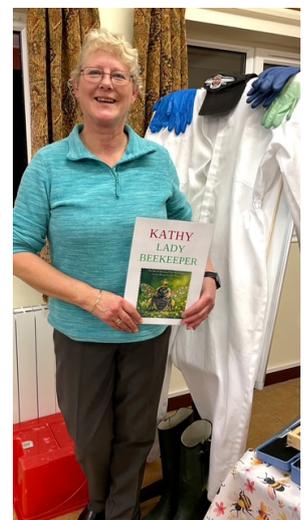
Llantilio Crossenny WI news and events

At our February meeting the President Margaret Parry, welcomed two guests then speedily ran through the business part of our meeting. We are sending crotchet flowers, to a WI member in Newbridge on Wye in memory of those who died in the Serbian wars in 1995. This is part of a project to produce a banner of 8372 flowers. Several members are also helping to produce poppies for a display in Llantilio church for Remembrance Day in November as well as supporting the "Standing with Giants" appeal nationally. The craft group will be entering the next Gwent federation competition, the Royal Welsh Competitions Day, in March. The theme for this year is "Circles, Rings and All Things Round".

Several other dates and events were noted before the President welcomed and introduced the speaker for the evening, Kathy Hague. Kathy, from Gwent Beekeepers, created a "buzzing" environment, full of "Bee" information. She circulated laminates to everyone to digest many facts and then answered numerous questions on the importance of these creatures which are essential to our global food security and ecosystem health. They pollinate over 75% of food crops and roughly 80% of wildflowers. Without bees many crops would face reduced yields, causing food shortages and higher prices.

They are some of the hardest working, most important creatures, on the planet. We discovered that there are 274 types of bee in this country and 2006 in the world. Each year the Queen bee is given a colour, which the beekeeper puts on her back, which this year is white. She performs a waggle dance to tell the rest of the colony that she's healthy and ready to lay her eggs. Bees will travel up to three miles foraging for pollen and nectar. They make it their lifelong ambition to produce just 1 teaspoon of honey! Plants to grow to encourage bees would be cornflowers, lavender, hebe, poppies, fuchsia, geraniums, foxgloves and hydrangeas. Dandelions are a good source of food for them too!

Kathy explained the behaviour and complex nature of the bee community from the Queen bee to the drones (males) and worker bees (female). She has kept bees for three years and is passionate about their care. She brought along examples of the equipment needed to be a beekeeper ranging from the protective suit to a small hive. She is setting up 2 hives at Llantilio Pertholey Primary school this year as part of the school woodland garden project. She promised to update us on her progress at a later date. The sharing of her wealth of knowledge on this subject was very much appreciated, and the members made a welcome donation to the project. Verity thanked Kathy for such an informative talk. Questions were still being asked whilst refreshments were being served as it was so interesting. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th March at Llanvapley Pavilion at 7pm when Mary McLellan will talk on Women and Heart Disease, the risks, symptoms and prevention. All are welcome.



Just after our February Meeting we heard the sudden and unexpected news of the death of one of our dearest members, Jan Eastment. A vivacious, enthusiastic and much-loved member who joined in all that was going on, she will be deeply missed.

Selby Sound Handbell Ringers

Selby Sound Bell Ringers have resumed their weekly practice on Fridays at 4.00pm in Llanvapley Village Hall.

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

Llanvapley Sports Pavilion & Village Hall

Llanvapley Village Committee is busy organising a number of events in March, including:

Coffee Morning – Thursday 19 March, 10:30am (£3 entry plus £1 raffle)

Quiz Night – Thursday 26 March, 7:00pm–9:30pm

Film Night – Saturday 28 March, 7:00pm–9:30pm

All of these events are open to residents of Llanvetherine, Llantilio and Penrhos, and it would be wonderful to see people from neighbouring parishes at the next Quiz Night. Why not speak to friends and form a team? For more information, contact llanvapleyvillagecommittee@gmail.com

Don't forget: the Llanvapley Walking Group will meet at the Pavilion on Saturday 7 March at 10:30am for a local walk. As always, everyone is welcome. There is also Pilates twice a week!

The LSSA Committee is delighted to announce that solar panels have now been installed on the pavilion roof, and the system is fully operational. Thanks go to the Community Green Energy Advisory Group for part-funding this important environmental project.

On a less positive note, the committee is expecting a significant bill in March following the reassessment of the village hall's rateable value, which has risen from £6,100 to £7,000 — adding an additional £101 to the business rates bill. The committee has also paid £145 for essential water system work required by Welsh Water under new legislation. Our thanks go to Gobion Fawr for a generous donation of £250, which has unfortunately been absorbed by the increased rates and plumbing costs.

Whitecastle Community Council – February Update

Whitecastle Community Council met on 19 February 2026 at The Hogs Head in Treadam. During the meeting, councillors agreed to offer new community planters to local residents as part of an initiative to brighten the area. The scheme will be introduced at the Llanvapley and District Gardening Club on 3 March. Its aim is to place attractive floral displays throughout the community, helping to enhance the local environment and create a more welcoming setting for residents and visitors alike.

Concerns continue regarding potholes, road conditions, signage, and speeding in several areas, including Tal-y-Coed and Whitecastle ward. The Council does have the power to solve any of

these problems but is seeking clearer communication from the Highways department within Monmouthshire County Council and is aiming to put pressure on the county council to take action.

Three footbridges over the River Trothy remain closed. The Council is pleased to announce that the replacement of the Sunnybank bridge in Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern is planned for 2026/27, with the bridge at New House Farm, Llanvapley to follow and finally the bridge at Tal-y-Coed.

The next meeting will be held on 9 April at Penrhos Church. Residents are always welcome to attend. Further information and news can be found on the council's website.
www.whitecastlecommunitycouncil.co.uk

My Final Word....Honest!

A Small Thank You and an Invitation

Over the past couple of years, I've had the privilege and pleasure of stepping in to help edit our parish newsletter while Sue took a well-earned rest or two. I didn't quite realise when I said yes how much I would treasure it.

Sitting quietly with everyone's contributions each month — the notices, the reflections, the events, the small glimpses of parish life — has felt like holding a thread that gently weaves our community together. You begin to see just how much love, care and quiet faithfulness exists within our church family.

Yes, there have been moments of rearranging text and chasing the occasional missing contributor (they do like to wander), but more than that, it has been a small act of service — and a joyful one.

As many of you know, I'll soon be moving away. It feels right to say how grateful I am to have had this role, even briefly. But it also means that Sue and Les will once again be carrying the responsibility, and it would be such a gift if someone felt able to share that with them.

The newsletter may look simple when it arrives in your hands, but behind it sits care, thought, coordination, patience — and heart. Supporting it is a quiet way of supporting the whole parish.

If you've ever felt you might like to help, even in a small way, perhaps this is your gentle nudge. You don't need to be an expert — just willing. It's a lovely job, and you won't be alone in it.

Do speak to Sue or Les if you feel even a flicker of interest. I promise it brings more joy than stress.

With much love and gratitude,

Ros

PS – FINALLY.... I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for always making me feel so welcome and truly part of this community. I never felt on the outside from day one — I truly felt I belonged. That is a rare and precious gift. I will hold you all in my heart always.

