

Newydd

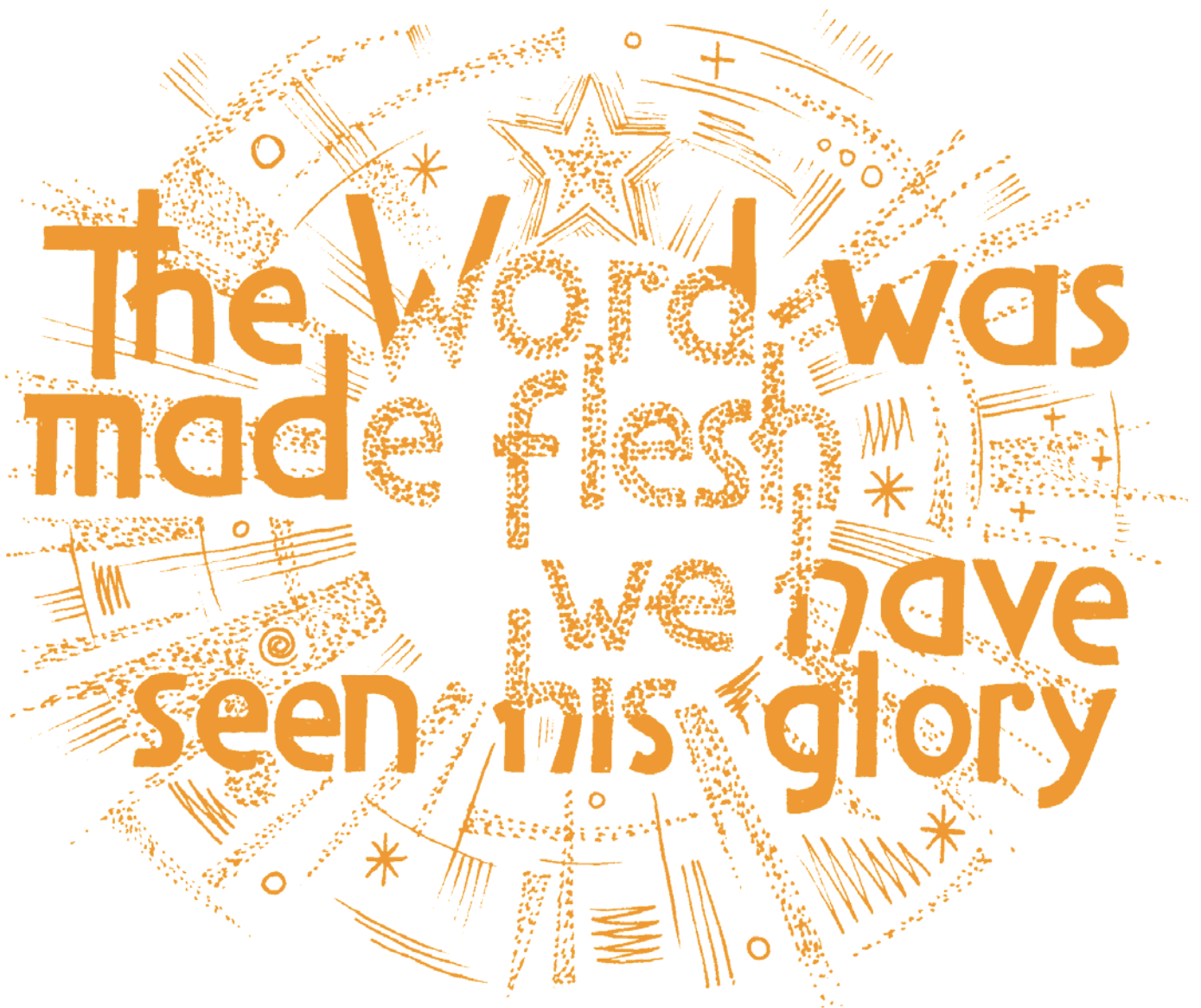
60p

The Parish Magazine of The Rectorial Benefice of Aberavon
A registered charity

www.parishofaberavon.org

St. Paul's Centenary Year

December 2011



For times of our Christmas services see page 11

Dyfrig R Jones of Cwmafan Funeral Directors



Funeral director
Clive Manchipp

(Advanced Certificate in Funeral Directing)

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SA12 9BD

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when it matters most



From the Rector

rector@parishofaberavon.org
01639 883630



I would like to begin this month on a very personal note, and offer sincere thanks for the most humbling and amazing support that you showed me and my family when my father died suddenly at the end of October. It has been very much appreciated by us all.

The sense of excitement and anticipation felt by so many people at this time of year - and especially felt by so many children in our nation - is not something that is shared by everyone.

Whilst so many people really cannot wait for the arrival of Christmas, there are those who dread it; for, with the coming of this season when many are filled with a jollity they don't display at other times of the year, there are those who feel lost and alone, sad, isolated and unhappy.

Those who live alone, those who have fallen out with family and friends, those who have suffered the loss of a partner through death and those who are struggling with worries and concerns they have yet to share with anyone, may find it almost impossible to be a part of the 'fun' or 'joy' in which others seem to revel.

The whole Christmas experience appears to be portrayed in the media, and in popular thought, as a time when

everyone has to be together with those they love, sharing in a happy occasion that surrounds itself with lights, tinsel, singing, drunkenness and a surfeit of food and noise.

The reality of course is that Jesus came quietly into a broken world of suffering and pain almost unnoticed to offer not false sense of joy but a real hope, and not a false sense of well being that depends on external things, but a real strength that reaches deep into our being and sustains us even at the worst of times.

And it is good to remember that it is not just the birth of the baby called Jesus who does this, but the fact that the very person of God becomes human in the womb of Mary: a human yet divine person who also suffers and feels alone, and who through death brings glory in a way people did not understand then, and fail to understand now. The birth we celebrate with such joy at this time of year leads us unwaveringly to the cross, and on that journey shows us the reality of human living in all its sorrows as well as joys. Through birth, death and resurrection new hope is given to every generation for all of eternity, and new strength is offered if we choose to accept God in our lives, and learn to love Him and the way he calls us to live.

But it is also worth remembering and pausing to reflect that so many people who will display joy and exuberance at Christmastide will actually be living lives that to outward appearance, and to our eyes, will seem to be filled with so much pain and suffering that joy and exuberance may be regarded as contradictory and odd.

The poor who are genuinely starving each day; the homeless who fear the next bombardment of their village by soldiers; the victims of war and violence everywhere, and those falsely imprisoned or at the point of death may seem to have nothing to shout about in praise: and yet often it is they who proclaim the love of God the loudest and most sincerely. For somehow, in the midst of their own suffering, they still have an understanding of what the coming of this baby in a manger at Bethlehem really means.

Yet, before you get the wrong idea, and think it is only in places of civil unrest and disaster that people have hope, there are thousands of people in our own country who, although to our eyes seem to have no reason to rejoice because of their circumstances, yet still do proclaim the love of God in word, in song and in deed.

Such people can teach us all something very important about what it means to

be at one with God, and to know his loving care for us: a care which is there in bad times as well as good, and which comes not just through seemingly miraculous faith but through the loving support that is offered and received by and from ordinary human being like you and me: a love that reflects that profound and remarkable love that God

has for us, and which brought him to birth through the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, in that stable in Bethlehem.

This is a love that never leaves us alone, and which is offered to us each day as we approach God in prayer and worship, especially at the Altar.

Christmas is a truly remarkable time, and whatever the circumstances in which we find ourselves, because of God we really do have cause to be joyful, expectant and hopeful.

Remember these words from St Matthew's Gospel:

"All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, '**God is with us.**' "

And as St Paul says, if God is with us who can be against us?

With prayers and good wishes,

Nigel Canine



A Biblical reflection on giving

by Fr Matthew

A friend posted something on Facebook recently saying that they were on the platform at Kings Cross Station waiting for a train and that if they waited long enough on that platform they might see Harry Potter. You see the platform they were on was the platform featured in the closing scene of one of the Harry Potter films where Harry encounters the deceased Dumbledore. My friend posted the comment in such a way that friends could leave suggestions for who might actually come along if he waited and waited on that platform. I remarked that Jesus might actually come if he waited there long enough. I was trying to be a bit quick witted but my friend outwitted me saying that he encountered Jesus all the time!



Genesis chapter one tells the story of how God created the world. God looks at his handiwork, the earth and sky, the land and sea, creatures of the air and deep and humankind and sees goodness. I'm convinced the reason God saw goodness is because his creation is the image of the creator himself.

Let that thought take hold of you for a moment and apply it to yourselves, your family, your home, your work and your community. God looks at you his created work and by some remarkable work of His, sees himself. This can revolutionise our understanding of faith, that God is not simply in the church and in Christian people but at work in pubs, clubs, schools, hospitals and everywhere. In deprivation and privilege, in grief and joy, in addiction and in healing, aspects of God's image can be found.

St Paul writes to the Corinthians saying:

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:

“They have scattered abroad their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

Your giving week by week is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, people will praise God for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

The 1984 Book of Common Prayer quotes the great prayer of King David

All things come of thee,

And of thine own do we give thee.

We are reminded that all that we possess our time, our talents, our homes and material possessions are gifts given to us through God's grace, we are God's handiwork, his creation who he blesses in order that we might be a blessing to others. God has made an investment in you, he may have invested money or financial resources, he may have invested gifts of leadership or organisation, he may have invested a passion for something in particular. The important thing is that we use all these gifts to do something for God and the way we do that is by serving others as the Church.

God resources, that is he gives us everything we need to engage in the mission he has called us to. Our task is to take what he has given us and find ways of using it to build his Kingdom. Our financial giving is a part of our mission as a church, it requires our hearts and minds to be focused not on what our money can do for us but on what the money we have can do for others, thus pleasing God. The passage from Corinthians continues: "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

The parable of the talents is featured prominently in both Matthew's and Luke's Gospel. It tells of a wealthy man who goes travelling. Before he goes he entrusts portions of his money to three servants according to the abilities they have. To the first servant he gives five talents, to the second he gives two talents and to the third one talent. On his return he asks his servants how they had done with the financial gifts they'd been given. The first two servants had each doubled the money given but the third had only the same amount as was given to him by the Master. It was this third servant who was rebuked. You see, the first two servants took the gifts given to them and used them purposefully they invested wisely and produced abundantly as a result.

As we face the coming of new year in 2012, let us reflect on all the gifts we possess including our finances. Let us dream of how our Church might serve our community in Jesus' name and how we might help resource those dreams. Over the year to come challenge yourselves as the master challenged his servants to take the gifts they were given and apply them so that mustard seeds become mountains and the Kingdom of God grows.

Messy Church

It will be Christmas Messy Church at our next meeting on Sunday 11th December at 3pm at the Parish Centre. Please come along and join in the fun. Our next meeting to discuss preparations for January will be on Monday 19th December at 10am at the Parish Centre.



Côr Afanedd Christmas Concert

Cor Afanedd's Christmas Concert will take place on Saturday 10th December at 7pm at St Mary's Church. Tickets £8 and £10 for patrons, available from Bernie Henderson on 01639 760735 or you can pay on the night.



Côr Serenata Charity Christmas Concert

There will be a Christmas concert in aid of Breast Cancer Wales on Saturday 17th December at 7pm at St Mary's Church with Cor Serenata and the Aberavon Male Voice Choir. Tickets £5 available from Kerry Joshua on 07904084888 or Marie Williams on 01639 770833.



Glan Afan School Christmas Carol Concert

As usual St Mary's welcomes Glan Afan School for its annual Christmas Carol concert, which this year is on Wednesday 21st December at 7.00pm. This is a real highlight of the year and the church is usually packed. It is a wonderful start to Christmas for so many people, as the standard of singing and music is so good. Tickets are £5 each and are available from the school on 01639 883964



For times of our Christmas services see page 11

The Faithful Departed

The following have received a Christian Funeral:



- Brian James
- Elizabeth Blodwyn Joseph
- Elsie Pote
- Gordon Ernest Oxley
- Arthur Desmond Thomas
- Ken John
- Ronald David Whittingham
- Jane Enid Harris

Please pray for them, and for their families and friends who mourn their loss.

Baptisms

Please pray for

- Nina Rose Chanfi
- Mason James Lewis
- Tyler James Cameron Lewis



Remember also, in your prayers, all parents and godparents.

Communicant figures for October 2011

2nd	152
9th	143
16th	139
23rd	84
30th	137

St Mary's 200 Club

The winner for November is Denise Tamlyn.

St Agnes' Manyfold

The winners for September are 128, Avril Williams, £50, 6, Laura Howe, £40 and 24, Dilys Rowlands £25.

Teddy Bear's Christmas Bazaar

A huge thank you to everyone who worked so hard to help us raise over £2900 at the bazaar in November. It was a great boost to church funds.



Porthcawl Ukulele Band

Everyone had a great night on 25th November, and really enjoyed the music and the singing. The whole atmosphere was one of joy and exuberance, and we raised over £300 for church funds. Many thanks to the band and to everyone who came along.

Coffee Morning and Nearly New Sale

Thanks to everyone for the support of the event at Holy Trinity last month. These things are always hard work, and everyone's contribution was much appreciated.

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support during Cliff's recent illness and subsequent passing. It is at times such as this that one appreciates the closeness and friendship in our church.

My family and I would also like to especially thank Fr. Nigel and Fr. Ben for the lovely service conducted on Monday 31st October 2011.

Betty Allen.

Responsibility Llandaff

Faith in Action

The total raised for the period ending the 30th September 2011 amounted to the grand sum of £1,433.79, an increase on last year. What an outstanding effort! May I extend my gratitude to all those associated with this generous donation. At the same time, may I also extend my sincere thanks to Christine Howe of St Agnes', Joan Richards of Holy Trinity and Mary McCarthy of St Mary's and of course the Church officials for all their hard work in administering this initiative.

Llandaff now has a new look Board for Social Responsibility under the leader of the Reverend Jonathan Durley. The money you raised helps to fund a large range of services which seeks to help children, families and parents often living in difficult circumstances. There is now an emphasis on social responsibility in parishes, and it is hoped that parishes will be helped to see how they can serve the local community. If you would like to support this Benefice initiative and put your faith in action, then please contact your Church representative who I am sure will be more than please to provide you with further information. Please at this Christmas time "spare a prayer" for the children and young people who are at most risk and are in need of help.

Anthony Llewellyn, Benefice Co-ordinator.

Christmas Services 2011

Christmas Eve

Saturday 24th December

A service for children and young families

10am at the Parish Centre

The Parish Carol Service

3.30pm St Agnes' Church

The First Mass of the Nativity

6.30pm Holy Trinity

11.45pm St Mary's

Christmas Day

Sunday 25th December

The Christmas Morning Mass

9.15am St Agnes' and St Paul's

There will be no public Evening Prayer today.



Other weekday masses

The Second Day of Christmas

St Stephen the First Martyr

Monday 26th December

10.00am St Agnes'

The Third Day of Christmas

St John the Evangelist

Tuesday 27th December

10.00am St Paul's

The Fourth Day of Christmas

Holy Innocents Day

Wednesday 28th December

9.30am Holy Trinity

11.00am St Mary's

The Fifth Day of Christmas

Thursday 29th December

10.00am St Agnes'



Christmas Services 2011

The Naming & Circumcision of Jesus.
The Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God
Sunday 1st January 2012

10.30am Benefice Mass St Agnes'

*This will be the only service in the Benefice all day.
There will be no public Evening Prayer*



Other weekday masses

The Ninth Day of Christmas Monday 2nd January 2012 (A Bank Holiday)

10.00am St Agnes'

The Tenth Day of Christmas Tuesday 3rd January 2012

10.00am St Paul's

The Eleventh Day of Christmas Wednesday 4th January 2012

9.30am Holy Trinity

11.00am St Mary's

The Twelfth Day of Christmas Thursday 5th January 2012

10.00am St Agnes'

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Friday 6th January 2012

7.00pm St Agnes' Sung Mass



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You drink - we drive

At the St Mary's Parish Centre

Rhieni a Plant

Pat's

Parent and Toddler Group



Every Monday
from 1.15pm to 2.45pm

Every Thursday
from 9.30am to 11.30am

All are welcome

Regular visits from:

Language and Play
Health care advice

In the garden

by Avril Williams

From December to March, there are for many of us, three gardens. The garden outdoors; the garden of pots and bowls in the house and the garden of the mind's eye.

Katherine S. White (writer) 1892 -1977

Now that the days are shorter, there is a little less to do in the garden. The lawn can still be mown on a dry day with the blades set high. It is also wise to ensure outdoor taps are lagged and if you have a pond, a ball will prevent water from freezing. Trees and shrubs can be planted provided the ground is neither waterlogged nor frozen. Consideration could be given to planting scented winter shrubs such as *Viburnum bodnantense* and *Lonicera fragrantissima*. The Christmas box which is an evergreen shrub will tolerate dense shade while producing a wonderful winter scent. Now you have the opportunity to repair, treat or replace trellises, fences and arches and if you wish to improve your vegetable garden for next year, the winter is the best time to double dig and incorporate in the soil some good compost. Pots full of winter pansies and wallflowers cheer us and indoors *Hippeastrums* or *Amaryllis* brighten up a dark day with their spectacular flowers and *Hyacinths* remind us Spring is only around the corner. There is an abundance of information available for planning next years garden. The "R.H.S. Gardening through the Year: Your Month by Month Guide" by Ian Spence is interesting and useful, as are the "Gardening Expert" series of books by Dr. D. G. Hessayon.

If you wish to find out more about the plants and plant finders who have fuelled our obsession with gardening "The Tulip" by Anna Pavord gives us the history of the tulip from its discovery, to the time when it broke the financial institutions when the bulb became so desirable and so expensive. Another interesting book is "Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession." it contains stories about Linnaeus, and of Joseph Banks who sailed with Captain Cook and founded Kew Gardens.

For Ideas on planning and colour read Christopher Lloyd's "In My Garden: The Garden Diaries" which captures the ethos behind the beauty of his garden at Great Dixter.

(All the above would make a welcome Christmas gift to the avid gardener.)

In the wildlife garden this month Badgers and Foxes are less active and Hedgehogs and Bats will be hibernating. Toads and Grass snakes hide away under ground and the Common Frog rests on the bottom of the pond. In the garden and you might see a Blackcap looking for berries. Robins begin to sing in earnest now with the males marking out their territory in readiness for the breeding season. There are few insects about with the exception of gnats dancing to attract females. However you may find Tortoiseshell and Peacock butterflies wintering in your shed.

Do keep filling the feeders and water bowls during the winter, the birds will really appreciate it.

Have a Peaceful Christmas.

Thank you

To all my friends in the Benefice for their cards and best wishes on the occasion of my birthday.

Barbara Townsend.

A big thank you to all those who gave donations to the Gleision Colliery Miners Fund.

Linda Lewis

New Years' Day *Sunday 1st January 2012*

The Naming & Circumcision of Jesus

**There is only one Benefice Mass
at 10.30am at St Agnes' Church
and there is no Evening Prayer**

Police Station *Opening Times*

Since 14th November the Port Talbot Police Station is only open to the public Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm & 1:40pm to 5pm.

This does not mean police are not working out of the station just that it is not open to the public.

It also reflects the fact that the vast majority of people do not visit the police station in person but use the telephone to speak to the police service. You can still dial 101 at any time for non emergencies or in emergencies 999.

We send our good wishes to

all who are ill at home and in hospital, especially those who have been unable to get to church for some time. We do remember you in our prayers.

Christmas Greetings

Jim and Jean Patterson would like to send their good wishes for a holy and happy Christmas to all their friends in the Benefice.

Church Army

Once again this year we encourage you to place one card on the board in church to all your friends, and make a donation in the plate or box at the back of Church to help the work of the Church Army with the young single homeless in Cardiff.

A monthly prayer diary

Week	Monday	Tuesday
1	Glan Afan Comprehensive Sandfields Comprehensive	The Police Service The Fire Service Those who work in the prison service and live in our parish
2	Sandfields Primary Tir Morfa Primary	The Ambulance Service Air Ambulance
3	Traethmelyn Primary Glan Y Mor Primary	The Coastguards The Lifeguards Mission to Seafarers
4	Tywyn Primary The pupil referral schools	The Magistrates The Magistrates' Clerks

A monthly prayer diary

Week	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	<p>Swn Y Mor</p> <p>Ysbryd Y Mor</p> <p>Talbot Court</p> <p>Plas Cwm Carw</p> <p>Maes Y Bryn</p> <p>Mozart Court</p>	<p>Job Centre Staff</p> <p>Citizens Advice Bureau</p>	<p>Health care staff</p> <p>General Practitioners</p> <p>Alternative therapists</p> <p>Forge Centre staff and clients</p>	<p>Post office workers</p> <p>Royal mail delivery services</p>
2	<p>The homeless and roofless</p>	<p>Councillors and Council Officials</p> <p>Those who work in leisure services</p>	<p>SNAC</p> <p>Opticians and Dentists</p>	<p>Pharmacy staff and delivery personnel</p> <p>Shop workers and security staff</p>
3	<p>The Parks, cemetery and crematorium staff</p>	<p>Traffic Wardens</p> <p>Taxi Drivers</p> <p>Bus Drivers</p>	<p>Neath Port Talbot Hospital</p>	<p>Farming community</p> <p>Local employers</p>
4	<p>Communities First</p> <p>The Renewal Area Team</p> <p>Utility Maintenance staff</p>	<p>Those who work in the steelworks</p> <p>Local construction workers</p>	<p>Youth work in the area, and youth workers</p> <p>SA12 Youth Club</p> <p>Uniformed organisations</p>	<p>Refuse collectors and recycling depot staff</p> <p>Those who provide veterinary care in the community</p>

Christmas Celebration Concert

Presented by

Port Talbot & District Amateur Operatic Society's
Youth Theatre

&

Sounds Familiar Mixed Choir



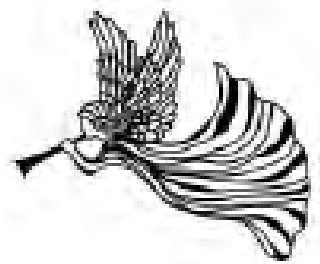
Saturday 17th December, 2011

St. Theodore's Church, Port Talbot

7pm



**All Welcome
Entry by Donation**



Following the concert, a selection of hot, cold and alcoholic drinks will be available for purchase in the church hall.

Photo caption competition



Fr Matthew invites you to submit a caption for this photograph which he took late in November in St Agnes'. Please write your ideas on a piece of paper and put them in an envelope marked "Photo caption." You can hand them to the wardens or even put them in the collection plate before 18th December. Fr Matthew will judge the entries and the winner will be announced on the weekly pew sheet after Christmas. There will be a small prize for the best caption.

Congratulations

To Pat and Arthur Crofts who celebrate their 43rd Wedding Anniversary in December.

Holy Trinity 200 Club

The winner for October is Marina Williams.

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2011

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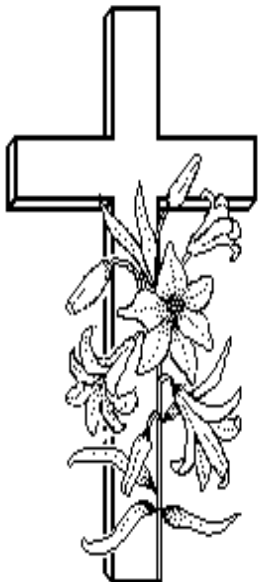
**Fibromyalgia Support Group
South Wales**

***hold meetings regularly at Saint Mary's Centre
the 2nd Tuesday of each month
12.30 pm - 2.30 pm***

Refreshments available - Everyone Welcome

For any inquiries please contact:

Yvonne Singleton 01639 681468 or Linda Cardy 01639 769097



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Daily Scripture Readings

5th December 2011	Isaiah 35: 1-10	Luke 5: 17-26
6th December 2011	Isaiah 40: 1-11	Matthew 18: 12-14
7th December 2011	Isaiah 40: 25-31	Matthew 11: 28-30
8th December 2011	Genesis 3: 9-15. 20	Luke 1: 26-38
9th December 2011	Isaiah 48: 17-19	Matthew 11: 16-19
10th December 2011	Ecclesiasticus 48: 1-4. 9-11	Matthew 17: 10-13
12th December 2011	Numbers 24: 2-7. 15-17	Matthew 21: 23-27
13th December 2011	Zephaniah 3: 1-2. 9-13	Matthew 21: 28-32
14th December 2011	Isaiah 45: 6-8. 18. 21-26	Luke 7: 10-23
15th December 2011	Isaiah 54: 1-10	Luke 7: 24-30
16th December 2011	Isaiah 56: 1-3. 6-8	John 5: 33-36
17th December 2011	Genesis 49: 2. 8-10	Matthew 1: 1-17
19th December 2011	Judges 13: 2-7. 24-25	Luke 1: 5-25
20th December 2011	Isaiah 7: 10-14	Luke 1: 26-38
21st December 2011	Song of Songs 2: 8-14	Luke 1: 39-45
22nd December 2011	Samuel 1: 24-28	Luke 1: 46-56
23rd December 2011	Malachi 3: 1-4. 23-24	Luke 1: 57-66
24th December 2011	Isaiah 9: 2-7	Luke 2: 1-7
26th December 2011	Acts 6: 8-10; 7: 54-59	Matthew 10: 17-22
27th December 2011	1 John 1: 1-4	John 20: 2-8
28th December 2011	1 John 1: 5 – 2: 2	Matthew 2: 13-18
29th December 2011	1 John 2: 3-11	Luke 2: 22-35
30th December 2011	Genesis 15: 1-6. 21: 1-3	Luke 2: 22-40
31st December 2011	1 John 2: 18-21	John 1: 1-18
2nd January 2012	1 John 2: 22-28	John 1: 19-28
3rd January 2012	1 John 2: 29 - 3: 6	John 1: 29-34
4th January 2012	1 John 3: 7-10	John 1: 35-42
5th January 2012	1 John 3: 11-21	John 1: 43-51
6th January 2012	Isaiah 60: 1-6	Matthew 2: 1-12
7th January 2012	1 John 3: 22 - 4: 6	Matthew 4: 12-17. 23-25

Christian Aid & USPG thanks for the harvest donations

Dear Mr. Howe,

Thank you for the generous donation of £195 which you kindly forwarded towards the work of Christian Aid. Many thanks also for forwarding the sum of £116.71 on behalf of Tywyn Primary School, Port Talbot. We have today written to the school to thank them for their kindness.

Your support will strengthen Christian Aid's work with some of the poorest communities in the world. For many people Christian Aid is a lifeline that sustains them in their struggle for life. Through the dedication and ingenuity of our Partners your donation is translated into food, seeds and tools, education, clean water and much more. In many communities Christian Aid is a cause for celebration and reason to live in hope.

Thank you for being part of a Partnership that makes so much possible. Please be assured that what you give does make a difference.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Williams

Head of Christian Aid Wales.

Dear Mr. Howe,

Thank you for your donation of £195 which has been allocated to the Rapid Response Fund.

As in the present crisis facing, whenever USPG gets a request for emergency help from a Partner Church, we try to act in two ways. Firstly we assess the urgency of the situation, and offer an emergency grant in response to the specific request we receive. This can happen very quickly – often within 24 hours – on the basis of limited information. The money is drawn from the Rapid Response Fund, which we hold in readiness.

We then ask Partners for a fuller assessment of their needs, and a proper budget outlining their proposals for further aid or reconstruction, and we assess that more rigorously before deciding how we can best respond. In order for this to work well, we appeal for funds for the Rapid Response Fund to cover the first emergency payment, and then look to our wider budgeting process to support the second phase.

Your contribution helps with both – it gives us the “pot” in readiness, and it underwrites the possibility of the longer-term budgeted support.

With best wishes.

Anthony McKernan, Director for Donor Engagement.

St Paul's Centre Project

As Fr Matthew said at the time, it was a cold, wet, November night when people came out to discover what the new St Paul's Centre project was all about.

The public consultation, held on 30th November, was another milestone in the bid to create a first class fit for purpose complex that meets the needs of the local community in Aberavon as well as meeting the needs of the Benefice in the St Paul's area.

With representatives from the local residents, the church and the local politicians, including AM David Rees, local Councillors and people from Hywel Francis' team, the constructive meeting helped people understand and share the vision of what can be achieved on the site of the present hall that will take us forward 50 or 60 years into the future.

Thank you to everyone who turned up, and thank you to Fr Matthew for his energetic and skilful leadership.

Flowers in church

Any donations towards the cost of Christmas flowers will be received with gratitude. Please place your gift in an envelope and put it into the collection plate on Sundays.

Dates for you diary

We are weeks away from a new year, and you will be filling in your diaries, so here are a few dates you need to note:

1st January

Sung Mass 10.30am for the Benefice at St Agnes' Church. It is the only service of the day.

6th January - The Epiphany

Sung Mass 7.00pm St Agnes'

Messy Church 8th January and the second Sunday of each month at 3.00pm in the Parish Centre

9th January and the second Monday of every month: Study Group at St Agnes'.

16th January PCC at St Agnes' 6.30pm

17th January Prayer Group at St Agnes' and the third Tuesday of every month.

21st January

St Agnes' Patronal Festival

Sung Mass 12 noon followed by lunch.

Celebrant and Preacher: Fr Alan Rabjohns

25th January

St Paul's Patronal Festival

Sung Mass 7pm at St Paul's

Preacher: The Archdeacon of Margam

The Venerable Philip Morris.

22nd February

Ash Wednesday: the first day of Lent.

Condon Funeral Service



Funeral directors

John Condon M.B.I.E.

Michael Condon M.B.I.E.

Glanafan Court Funeral Home
48-50 Margam Road,
Port Talbot
SA13 2BN

01639 883688

01639 885452

24 hour service

Support, care
and reassurance
when it matters most



Review of the Church in Wales

The Archbishop has invited four people to carry out a review of the Church in Wales as we approach the Centenary of disestablishment in 2020 we are able to carry out God's work in the next 100 years and more.

The four people appointed will visit each Diocese to hear what people think about the state of the Church, and welcome written comments. The PCC is to meet on 8th December to discuss the questions posed by the group and submit a response so that it can be seen that as wide a selection of people as possible respond to the debate.

At the last two Governing Body meetings, members have worked in groups to identify the priorities for the Church in Wales over the next nine years. The five priorities, approved by the Standing Committee and Bishops, are:

1. We must demonstrate our relevance to the Welsh nation;
2. Provide effective local leadership for all our congregations using ordained and lay people as appropriate;
3. An organisational review to ensure proper management of this local leadership;
4. A concerted effort to lessen the emphasis on church buildings;
5. Closer co-operation between those understanding financial matters and those setting new strategies and seeing new visions.

"The serious financial situation faced by the RB, the reduction in the number of clergy, the shortage of ordinand - we need this root and branch review. We can no longer rely on 'sticking plaster' solutions. This is our last chance to reverse decline, and start to rebuild the kingdom. When we receive the recommendations it is down to the

GB to be really bold, to be prepared to take swift and radical action. If this generation doesn't make decisions based on the recommendations of the Review, we will leave the next generation to face another decade of navel gazing."

-Sandy Blair (Monmouth)

"We should utilise focus groups to find out what those who don't come to church think and want. "We are blessed that the bishops take a stance on what is right, regardless of public opinion.

"The Church has become too comfortable and not prepared to take risks. We need to reclaim the heart of the community, both people and places. It is great to have the Review, but for change to take place, it needs not only to be top down, but enacted from bottom up as well. All of us have the ability to make a difference if we step out and take a risk. We need to start doing it, not just talking about it or complaining about things, but to roll up our sleeves and with prayer, step out in faith and act."

-Rebecca Stevens (under 30s)



“There are only 14 members of the GB under 40 years of age—why so few? The principle reason is the low number of young people in our churches. Reaching out to young people has to be an absolute priority for the Church in Wales. We don’t just have a missing generation, but 2,3 and 4 generations. We are losing young people at secondary school level. We need to give time and resources to reach out to young people. We need to think radically and laterally on how we can engage with the young people in our communities. St Michael’s College should prioritise practical youth work in their ordination training. We must do something urgently before we have a fifth missing generation.”
-*Trystan Hughes (Llandaff)*

Magazine 2012

The cost of the magazine for 2012 will be 60p per month. If you pay for the year it will be £7.00

Despite the huge increases in the cost of paper we are able to maintain the price at 60p for another year thanks to the generosity of our advertisers. Please support them whenever you can.

Clergy rest days

One of the very impressive things about this Benefice is the way in which people respect the clergy rest days.

Each week the pew sheet shows when we are not available (though sometimes it is because we are on a course rather than resting) and by and large you all do your best to avoid getting in touch with us on those days.

Fr Matthew and I take either a Friday or a Saturday depending on commitments, so it is not so easy to say we are always off on one day, but it is published on the roster of duty the wardens have and on the pew sheet.

Fr Ben and Jane take a Friday off most of the time.

We want to thank you all for the great understanding you show towards our rest day, and to tell you how much we appreciate the fact that you don’t worry if we are not at a Benefice function because it’s our day off.

Fr Nigel

A Happy and Holy Christmas to you all

Matthew Trickett
Jane Slennett
Nigel Canis *Ben Rabjohns*

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The Mothers Union

Mrs Joan Oxley 01639 774366

Sunday Worship

9.15am Holy Eucharist
St Agnes' Church
Forge Road

9.15am Holy Eucharist
St Paul's Church
Pendarvis Terrace

11.00am Holy Eucharist
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Place

11.00am Holy Eucharist
Holy Trinity Church
Fairway

6.00pm Evening Prayer
St Paul's Church
Pendarvis Terrace

Weekday Worship

Monday

6.30pm Holy Eucharist
St Agnes' Church
Forge Road
(10am on Bank Holidays)

Tuesday

10.00am Holy Eucharist
St Paul's Church
Pendarvis Terrace

Wednesday

9.30am Holy Eucharist
Holy Trinity Church
Fairway

11.00am Holy Eucharist
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Place

Thursday

10.00am Holy Eucharist
St Agnes' Church
Forge Road

For times of services on Holy Days please
consult the parish website
www.parishofaberavon.org

Baptisms & Weddings

Please contact the Parish Office

Monday 12pm to 3pm

Tuesday 10am to 1pm

Thursday 12pm to 3pm

01639 886740

office@parishofaberavon.org

The office is closed on Bank Holidays and
during Christmas week.

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