Leap of faith
New approach to ministry in education

Inside
Help us solve the mystery
Putting passion into Easter
Value of the written word

My Dear Friends,

As you can see, Croeso has undergone a total transformation. It had existed in its old form since its inception in September 1999. It was initially produced to welcome me to the diocese as a one-off but was so well received that it became our regular newspaper. Before that, there just used to be a quarterly newsletter from the bishop’s office. You might think that with the advent of Ipads, Twitter and Facebook, there would no longer be the need for a diocesan paper of this kind. Yet whilst national newspaper sales continue to fall, local newspaper circulation is on the increase. In other words, people still value the written word about local events and happenings which is why Croeso has been revamped. It is the diocesan newspaper where your contributions are welcomed and valued. What happens in one part of the diocese might help another part with some of the issues it faces and it makes us all realise that the Church of God is bigger than the sum of its parts.

Both those things have been brought home to me in a striking way since the death of my wife, Hilary, on 15th January 2016. First, the number of letters and cards I have received from the diocese and beyond has been overwhelming. Perhaps it is because people realise that I am not that savvy about social media. I suspect, however, that when people want to express what they really feel, there is no substitute for the written word.

Thank you to all who have written so movingly. The number has been so great (almost a thousand letters and cards) that I cannot possibly reply to each one without devoting the next month solely to the task, so I hope you will forgive me and accept this as a way of thanking you for taking the trouble to write. I have been deeply touched by your care and concern.

Secondly, I have realised afresh that the Church of God is a church that is already united because we are one in Christ. No matter what our differences or diversities, there is more that unites us than divides us. In spite of differences of viewpoints within the Anglican Communion about all kinds of issues, church partnerships, links and visits continue, because a relationship with God, and with those who profess faith in Him, are far more important than anything else. Communication and relationships abide whereas divisions and differences are ephemeral and transient. The fact is that links between very diverse dioceses across the globe have continued in recent years, even though the views they may hold on doctrinal and ethical issues are poles apart. In other words, lines of communication have continued to be kept open and that is a sign of grace and the realisation that in the end, whatever our differences, we are all made in the image of God.

Yours in that same love

---

Refugee Crisis – what we are doing

By Revd Chris Reaney, World Mission Officer

More and more people are asking what we can do to help as the horror of war continues in Syria. Twelve million people are internally displaced and four million people are displaced globally migrating to Turkey, Jordan and beyond.

Sadly, national attitudes grow harsher towards refugees at a time when the “jungle” camp in Calais is ever expanding with new migrants arriving daily. However, the Diocese of Llandaff is involved in the following:

- Through our membership of Cyfôn, refugees and asylum-seekers are being supported by partnerships including that with the Welsh Refugee Council, and initiatives such as the Trinity Centre in Cardiff.
- Through a partnership with Citizens Cymru and with local authorities the Church in Wales is offering vacant properties to house refugees from Syria. One family is already being housed in a diocesan property.
- Parishes and individuals are supporting appeals by Christian Aid and the Diocese of Europe (via the United Society (USPG)) www.weareUs.org.uk/europe to aid refugees in Greece through supporting the relief work of the Greek Orthodox Church.

We ask that you not only continue to support these initiatives, but also to hold all those affected by conflict in your prayers. Please pray for justice, comfort, strength and for all those who suffer to know the love of God.
Exercise your power to change society – Archbishop urges

The Archbishop of Wales has urged people to vote in the National Assembly elections and exercise their power to change society.

Dr Barry Morgan has also called on churches to hold debates between those standing for election in their communities by staging hustings ahead of the May 5 elections.

He said, “Our right to vote is not something we should take for granted. It was a hard-won right, and one which millions of people in the world still don’t enjoy. By voting and being active in politics we exercise our power to change society.

“Churches can play a key role in encouraging people to vote and take an active interest in politics. Hustings give us the chance to scrutinise those who seek to represent us, those whose names will be on our ballot papers, and to hold them to account.”

A package of online resources to help churches engage with the elections and encourage people in their communities to take part has been put together by Cytun, the Churches Together in Wales organisation. The dedicated website includes guidance and advice for organising hustings, a register for events they are organising and briefing papers on key policy areas.

It also includes two specially made election films put together by churches in Wales in which two key issues of housing and rural poverty are highlighted. Housing support worker Laura Major who struggles to find shelter for the homeless people in Cardiff is featured in one of the films. She describes the issues she faces in her day-to-day work and then puts her questions about them to candidates for each of the four main parties standing for election – Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru.

Gethin Rhyds, Cytûn’s National Assembly Policy Officer, says, “The new website gives guidance on the legal and practical aspects of arranging hustings while the films are ideal as discussion starters in groups or even in worship. There are also briefing papers on seven key election topics, including questions which can be put to candidates at hustings or on the doorstep.

“Churches have a long tradition of encouraging democratic engagement by their members and by the wider parish. This especially involves arranging hustings so that each of the candidates in a constituency, region or police force area can come along, set out their case and answer questions in a politically neutral venue. Churches are ideal hosts for such an impartial event, as most other organisations which arrange hustings have a political agenda.

“Hustings are usually arranged ecumenically within a constituency, as this maximises impact, publicity and attendance – and means that candidates don’t become fed up with attending too many similar events! It’s not too late to get together with others to organise hustings in your own constituency.”

The Revd Jan Gould who will be hosting hustings again at the Church of Resurrection in Ely said she believed it was very important that people had the chance to hear all the candidates.

“It’s a really good opportunity to hear from your local representative about their position on local issues affecting your community. At our last hustings we asked people to submit questions in advance and then supplementary questions were added on the night.

“Hustings aren’t difficult to arrange – we had a great turn out last year and it was a really good night which is why we are doing it again.”

All the information can be found on the website at www.cytun.org.uk/elections2016. Further help and support is available from Gethin Rhyds gethin@cytun.org.uk or 029 2046 4204.
Could you help solve a mystery that goes back to the World War One?

Parishioners from a Vale parish believe that the organ in their village church was made from parts of a World War One plane – but they have no idea how they got there.

The instrument was donated to St Curig’s Church in Porthkerry, in 1920 as a memorial for local soldiers who died in the conflict and during recent repairs a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) insignia was discovered inside.

Although very excited by the discovery, parishioners are completely stumped about how recycled parts from a fallen biplane found their way into their church organ.

The discovery was made by carpenters working on the renovation who unearthed timber, complete with red, white and blue circles of the RAF symbol, which appears to be from a section of wing which had been used as an internal slat.

One theory is that the wood could have come from a plane that may have crashed during World War One but there are no records of any plane crashes in the area in the years leading up to the donation.

The Revd Melanie Prince said: “We were very excited about our discovery. When the organ was opened up, one of the target roundels that you find on RAF planes was found.”

Mrs Prince added that the village “would love to know more” about the organ’s construction. “We were just delighted because the organ is there to remember the lost of World War One. To think the organ is partly made from a World War One plane is just amazing.”

Worshippers at the 13th Century church believe the plane came from a nearby airfield, but records show no airport was built in the town until 1942. The only military airfields in Wales in the 1920s were set up 100 miles away in Pembrokeshire and 200 miles away on Anglesey.

The Royal Flying Corps was the airborne arm of the British Army from 1912-18, before it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service to create the Royal Air Force.

Looking for Nina

Do you recognise this book or do you know the family of Nina Davis who was awarded it as a Sunday School prize from St Dyfrig’s Church, Cardiff at Christmas 1904?

Edie’s Disobedience by Winifred Fenn was recently unearthed in a house clearance in North Kent by Mr Alan Smith who is hoping to trace Nina’s family.

Tucked inside the front cover is a notice explaining that the book was a prize from St Dyfrig’s Sunday School and awarded to Nina Davis of class VI at Christmas 1904. The teacher was Miss Frances and the vicar was the Revd Hector A. Coe.

“I recently acquired some old books after a house clearance and this was one which stood out. I would love to know the book has gone back to its ‘rightful’ owner,” said Mr Smith, who lives in Kent.

“It is in fabulous condition for a book which is now 112 years old! The note in the cover gives it a real history and I would be more than happy to pass it onto Nina’s relatives free of charge.”

St Dyfrig’s Church, was built in the Arts and Craft style and constructed in two stages between 1888 and 1904. It stood on the corner of Wood Street before being closed in the 1960s and demolished in 1969.

Anyone with information about the book can contact Mr Smith through Alison Young at alisonyoung@churchinwales.org.uk

Open invite to all parishes

Parishes are invited to Llandaff Cathedral on Maundy Thursday, March 24, at 11am as clergy attend to renew their vows.

“All parishes are invited to the Chrism Eucharist at the Cathedral. It would be good to see you,” said the Archbishop.
Memorial planned for vicar and Labour activist

A memorial to a much loved former Cardiff vicar is planned for the church where he served for more than 30 years.

The late Revd Bob Morgan, who was vicar of the Church of Resurrection, Ely, for three decades and also leader of South Glamorgan County Council for more than 20 of these years, is to have a lasting memorial erected in his name.

Taking the form of a glass screen the memorial will completely separate the Lady Chapel from the main body of the church. It will create a quiet space for prayer and also a space where parents and toddlers can meet during Sunday worship while still being able to hear the service.

Mr Morgan, who died four years ago, aged 83, had spent nearly all of his ministry at the Church of Resurrection. His former parishioners decided that they wanted to erect a memorial in his memory in recognition of the work that he had carried out in the area over so many years. In his early years he raised £10,000 to repair the church and put its finances in good order.

Later on – whilst also involved in local politics - he had a weekly column which ran in the South Wales Echo.

Parish priest the Revd Jan Gould said, "Many people in the Diocese will remember the late Revd Bob Morgan. He was renowned as a Labour activist and at election campaign times could be seen canvassing around the parish wearing his cassock with a red rosette showing prominently.

"Many people in Ely still refer to him as “A Legend”, and love telling stories of the things he did around the parish for the people of Ely. But as the leader of the Council the impact of his work reached much further than the parish boundary, and that was all too plain to see at his memorial service in the Church of the Resurrection after he passed away. All the great and the good of Welsh Politics were there as well as a wide range of community representatives from the parish and beyond.

"The proposed screen will save on heating bills as only the Lady Chapel will need to be heated for midweek services once the space is enclosed, whereas the whole church has to be heated at present.

"As befitting a Lady Chapel the screen will have the words of The Magnificat written across the glass. This screen is a project that Mr Morgan had wanted to undertake himself but never got around to, so it is seen as a fitting memorial to him."

The appeal to raise funds for the work, which it is estimated will cost around £23,000 is underway, and if anybody in the diocese who remembers Mr Morgan would like to contribute, any donations will be gratefully received.

When the work is finished there will be a book which will list all the donors, as well as including memories of Mr Morgan that people send in. Donations and/or memories can be sent to Mr Gareth Glover, 6 Rhiwderyn Close, Cardiff CF5 4TR (cheques payable to “Parish of Glanely” and envelopes clearly marked “Memorial Screen Appeal”).

Mr Morgan’s daughter the former MEP, Baroness Eluned Morgan, is married to the Revd Dr Rhys Jenkins and his son David is a church warden in Canton.
Messing around in the Vale

Members of three different churches in a Vale village have joined together to launch a new Messy Church.

The ecumenical venture between Anglicans, Baptists and Roman Catholics in Peterston-super-Ely shows how the churches of St Peter’s, Croes-y-Parc Baptist and St Francis Roman Catholic Church, Ely are working together as part of the Church in Wales’ 2020 Vision strategy for growth.

Messy Church, which is growing in popularity throughout the diocese, centres around adults and children gathering together to do arts and crafts, enjoy a short story, song or prayer and then share a meal.

Around 35 adults and children met together in the community hall for the first Messy Church in Peterston super Ely.

With Advent as their theme, they enjoyed making wrapping paper, sheep and travelling Mary biscuits.

“Our first Messy Church was a lot of fun and everyone is looking forward to the next one. It’s a small village with a lot of young families and it makes sense to work together,” said diocesan lay training officer and one of the co-ordinators Mrs Julie Davies.

Canon Martyn Davies, Pastor Tom Pridham and Deacon John Mullin who work together on many ecumenical projects were also delighted with its success and believe Messy Church will be a valuable new ministry tool in reaching out to children and young families in the area.

Canon Davies said, “It’s really important for the children and their families to see us working together as Christians in the community. Messy Church provides us with a fun way of witnessing and sharing the Gospel message with people of all ages. It is great to see the children learning about their faith in such a fun and messy environment!”

Mrs Lesley Cox, the Regional Co-ordinator for Messy Church and Children’s Adviser to the Diocese said, “We have a number of Messy Churches in the diocese which operate on an ecumenical basis. I think that this is really positive and exciting. It certainly makes sense for Christians of different denominations to work together in their communities.”

Peterston/Ely Messy Church will meet once every half term on a Thursday after school.

For more information please contact Canon Davies - fr.martyn@sky.com 01446 760498

Messy Church Meet Up (for teams to share ideas):

- Tuesday, April 19, 7pm to 9pm, St Peter and St Paul’s Church, Cimla, Neath - focus on storytelling with storyteller Martyn Payne.
- Wednesday, May 11, 7pm to 9pm, St Catherine’s Church, Pontypridd.

To book call Briony Davies on 01656 868668 or email brionydavies@churchinwales.org.uk
Easter eggs are part of the fun and excitement of the end of term, as children in schools across Wales learn about Easter customs and traditions.

Yet for many schools, Holy Week will give an opportunity to think more deeply about the events that sit at the heart of the Christian story.

At Pendoylan Church in Wales Primary School in the Vale of Glamorgan, the children have been on a journey to Easter that began on Ash Wednesday, when the whole school gathered in the local church for the traditional service of ‘Ashing’. Canon Edwin Counsell is the Director of Education for our diocese and also one of the clergy looking after the parishes in the East Vale. “The relationship with the school in Pendoylan has built up over the years,” he says, “and it being a church school means that the children’s experiences in the church are backed up by their learning in school.”

But he sees the importance of Christian faith in the wider lives of the children, not just as part of the school curriculum; “I want the children to see faith as a part of life, rather than something that happens in isolation,” he says, “and I want them to think about the issues that it raises, playing a part in the choices and decisions they make each day.”

Fr Edwin also realises the impact that good experiences in school have on the children’s families. “I’m often struck by the number of families who tell me that they have started thinking about issues of faith, or challenging their personal values, because of things that their children have said to them.”

During Holy Week the whole school will take part in a Passion Play, starting with the younger children waving palm branches in the school hall, remembering Jesus coming into Jerusalem. Older children will then re-enact the Last Supper and make the journey to the Garden of Gethsemane. Finally, Jesus will carry his cross to the church where the school will join with parents and parishioners to remember the Crucifixion and the Resurrection…with a few special effects to make it memorable for the children!

For Fr Edwin, the school celebration of Holy Week adds another dimension to everything else going on in the parish. “It allows the school to be part of everything that Christians are celebrating at this time of year, while the children can find Jesus at the heart of the Easter story.”

He also has one final tip for anyone working with children in Holy Week, “I always tell the children that Easter eggs have to be smashed open with a loud shout of ‘Alleluia, Jesus is risen!’, because if you do that, the chocolate contains no calories at all…and this always seems to go down well with their mums and dads as well!”

Croeso asked some pupils: “Why have you got that cross on your forehead?”

Here’s what they said.

Cadan Rees, 11, “If you have done bad things in the past then you can say sorry and people that you have done the bad things to may forgive you.”

Neve Riddick, 11, “The cross is for Ash Wednesday – it’s when Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and 40 nights.”

Ella Cole, 9, “It’s for Ash Wednesday – they used to burn a little cross – it’s from those ashes.”

Georgia Howes, 9, “Ash is supposed to be good for cleaning stuff – it’s good for the soul and it cleans the soul.”

Schools are putting some Passion into Easter
It's Ash Wednesday and the Revd Dr Mark Dimond is standing on a chair in front of a class of Year 8s in a design technology lab. Not because he's been caught napping by the teacher but because he's pretending to be Jesus on a mountain top in the desert. It's the start of Lent and Mark has set himself the challenge of getting teenagers to think about temptation.

The chair stint succeeds in capturing their attention, enabling Mark to make a seamless leap from a story of devils and angels to practical suggestions on how Year 8s could change their ways over the next 40 days. He hands out small stones he has painted Lent purple (with the help of his young daughter), each marked with a white cross. Every pupil is given one, along with a piece of paper. The giggling has stopped now and heads are down, as everyone writes what one thing they could do every day during Lent to get closer to God. As the bell goes, they pocket their stones as a reminder of the changes they could make in their lives, and leave the lab relatively quietly.

Mark is one of 16 clergy from two neighbouring Welsh dioceses who take it in turns, on a rota basis, to visit one of Cardiff's largest secondary schools - St Teilo's Church in Wales High school - every day. They are visits which take place over and above the usual school assemblies and services that happen in all church schools. Whoever is on duty arrives at the school at 10am and stays for two hours, chatting to pupils, leading classroom worship sessions and offering pastoral counseling to those who need it.

It's a scheme which was set up last March, by the dioceses of Llandaff and Monmouth, as St Teilo's straddles both dioceses. It followed a request from the school concerned about pupils' pastoral welfare after a major redevelopment which saw it move into a state-of-the-art building and expand to 1,500 pupils. Now, a year on, the scheme is proving so successful that the Archbishop of Wales is considering expanding it to other schools. He sees it as an effective way of ministering to teenagers – that increasingly elusive demographic in today's church.

"Persuading teenagers to turn up to church on a Sunday morning has never been easy, particularly now that there are so many competing activities available," says Dr Barry Morgan. "Their needs, however, are greater than ever, with rising incidences of depression, poverty, anxiety and self-harm. That is particularly evident in areas of social deprivation, such as the east of Cardiff, the catchment area of St Teilo's. So this scheme takes clergy into school to meet teenagers where they are instead.

"Clergy are there principally to tackle the hurting-points, which, in a school of this size, can be many. Sometimes it is easier for pupils to talk with someone from outside the school. Clergy offer a listening ear, a change of pace or an alternative perspective in an otherwise dynamic school environment."

"I am delighted this scheme is up and running and has been so successful in that clergy have been willing to engage and the school has benefited. I hope it will spread in other parts of the diocese as well. The
church has not always been all that good at engaging with young people and this is one effective way of doing that.”

Headteacher of St Teilo’s, Ceri Weatherall, is equally enthusiastic. She describes the scheme as “wrap around care from faith”.

“On the front of the school is a huge curve and on the curve in massive letters it says St Teilo’s Church in Wales High School,” she says. “If I had the finance I would light those letters up in the night so that every car passing on the A48 below us recognises that this building is not only a school but it is a faith school and it is what it says on the tin.

“When we moved to this new building we moved into a socially deprived catchment. Many of our children did not attend a place of worship, let alone an Anglican church. We set up a food bank in school but there was also a very clear pastoral need.

“I didn’t want faith to be something that we forced children to respond positively to. I wanted faith to be caught, not taught. So with that in mind we wanted to do something that was pro-active, to raise the profile of the church that underpins and fortifies the faith message and delivers a Christian message.

“We put worship in the centre of the morning because we value its purpose and the message it gives us as a school. A priest arrives every day half-an-hour before that worship slot and they leave half an hour after it. Their visits start with a walkabout – just being visible, speaking to children they have started to engage with and building relationships with others. Children are on the move and say ‘hello’ to them and it has become a very warm relationship that’s casual, not formal, and is accepted by the whole school.

“The priest then conducts a form worship with a different year group every day, stimulating discussion with 30 learners. I had somebody yesterday tell me – ‘Wow Miss, I learnt about Lent and I know what Lent is all about!’ which is lovely. After that worship time there is an opportunity for individual learners or small groups to see the priest, to sit, talk or just be listened to. Relationships are slowly built and fortified as a consequence.”

Mrs Weatherall admits setting up the scheme was itself a leap of faith. There were the inevitable nerves on both sides.

“At the beginning the clergy were nervous and I was a bit nervous about them going into a classroom. I didn’t know whether it would work. But the feedback I get from our learners is very positive. And I hope we have allevied clergy fears that children between the ages of 11 and 18 haven’t got horns and tails but are young people with whom they can work and engage!”

Mark Dimond, who, as the Archbishop’s chaplain, organizes the clergy rota, agrees that most of the clergy weren’t sure what to expect at first.

“When Archbishop Barry asked me last year to organise a team of clergy to visit St Teilo’s to help out with pastoral care for pupils and staff, I thought that it would be hard work persuading busy people to take on an extra task,” he says. “However, it took no time at all to raise interest – clergy were very positive as they were keen to engage with young people and we quickly had enough volunteers to ensure that every day of each term we would have someone visiting the school.

“Nerves were inevitable, of course. Many clergy didn’t have much experience of being put in front of 30 pupils, let alone lead a 20-minute worship session for them. For some of us, including me, it was a challenge, but once you got the measure of your audience, the second visit was a lot easier.

“Each cleric brings something different to the school. Clergy might engage with pupils about ethical issues, introduce a traditional prayer format, encourage the class to collaborate on the design of a thematic poster, or allow time for silence in front of a solitary candle. One cleric is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Magicians and literally brings his bag of tricks.

“We talk informally, offer possible options to rigging issues pupils may have, or even just play a game. It is remarkable how you can play chess and talk at the same time! We hope in any case that pupils feel a bit better about themselves when they leave than when they come in.”

Hard evidence of the success of the scheme, Mrs Weatherall suggests, is the number of pupils signed up to a “Friends of Jesus” course, set up by the school chaplain, a member of the RE department.

Father Mark’s last port of call at St Teilo’s on Ash Wednesday is with three Year 9 members of the school’s student chaplaincy team – Peter Holdstock, Oliver Smith and Matthew Tyler-Howells. The team was set up three years ago and now has eight members.

“Pupils find it very helpful to see clergy, to talk privately about things that are going on in our minds – things we need to talk about,” says Matthew. “Everyone needs to talk – teenagers can be less confident and find it difficult but it is important for us.”

“Anything can be going on in their lives that they need to talk about,” adds Peter.

“It’s nice to think people are there who you can talk to, who will listen to what their story is.”

“We’re trying to make St Teilo’s more of a church than a school,” says Oliver. “Which may sound a bit silly but actually lot more powerful learning is a lot positive as it is now – I’m sure of that.”
‘The true meaning of Christmas’

A Christmas Day lunch provided for more than 70 people in Aberdare who would otherwise have been on their own was so successful that it will be held again this year.

More than 90 volunteers from throughout the Cynon Valley answered a rallying call for help when St Fagan’s Church in Trecynon decided to stage a festive community meal at the community hall.

Everything from food for the Christmas meal itself to transport, gifts and decorations were donated by businesses and individuals from throughout the local community.

“It really brought the community together and it was great to see how it came to fruition from just an idea. Although the event was hosted by the parish – the volunteers who helped to make it happen came from all over and from beyond the parish congregations. We are definitely planning to do it again this year,” said the Revd Richard Green, Vicar of St Fagan’s Church.

Cathedral marked 75th anniversary of Cardiff blitz raid

The anniversary of a Nazi bombing raid which left 165 people dead and badly damaged Llandaff Cathedral was marked by a special service.

Despite happening 75 years ago, memories of the raid on the night of January 2, 1941, are still clear. The Cathedral’s roof was torn off and extensive damage caused in what turned out to be the worst attack on any UK cathedral, apart from Coventry.

While the Cathedral was almost destroyed, no one on the site was killed as the Dean and the head verger, who had been on fire duty inside it at the time, managed to escape. However, elsewhere in the city that night the blitz killed 165 people and 427 more were wounded with about 350 homes destroyed.

A vigil of prayer, thanksgiving and reconciliation to mark the anniversary was held at the Cathedral in January.

Following the raid, Llandaff Cathedral underwent a major programme of restoration and it was another 17 years before the whole building was back in use. A memorial chapel to the Welch Regiment was constructed and Sir Jacob Epstein commissioned to create the figure of Christ in Majesty which is suspended above the nave on a concrete arch.

The place where the bomb fell, just outside in the grounds of the Cathedral, is now a garden of remembrance for those who have died, and is marked by a stone memorial.

Colander worn as head protection

Dear editor,

I thought you might be interested to know that my grandfather Dean David John Jones was the dean who, with the verger, was in the Cathedral on the night it was bombed. We were always told that grandfather was blown out through a door but the poor verger was blown against the lectern and was injured. I might add that grandfather was wearing a colander on his head as protection because my grandmother would not let him go down unless he did. We still have the colander in the family.

His daughter, my mother, Nest Jones was married to my father Nicholas Assheton in the Lady chapel being the only part, I understand, that was useable on May 15th 1947.

As grandfather served in the Cathedral and at the training college, St Michaels, for some years the Cathedral is very much part of our family history and he and my grandmother are buried in the graveyard. I am ordained and use the sick communion set that my grandfather used so the Church in Wales is in my blood although I live and minister in Essex.

With best wishes,

Cecilia Hawkes
Area Dean of Dunmow and Stansted Deanery, Diocese of Chelmsford
Welcome aboard! Jesus Airlines flies children to Bethlehem

The Christmas Eve Christingle service at St David’s Church in Neath has gained a reputation for its originality and fun.

With a different child-friendly theme each year (previous years have included Frozen and Doctor Who) the service has become a ‘must see’ event for families in the parish.

This year the congregation were transported to Bethlehem by the Rector ‘Captain’ Stephen Ryan and cabin crew members the Rev Lynda Newman and the Revd Sister Wendy Tayler, aboard the specially chartered ‘Jesus Airlines’.

Touching down back in Neath, everyone agreed it really was a first class service!

Pilgrimage around the Archdeaconry

A trio of pilgrims from Llandaff Cathedral enjoyed a tour of four churches in the Archdeaconry of Morgannwg.

Their first port of call was St Michael’s, Beddau which was the newest of the four churches visited, having been built in 1936. They were welcomed by the Archdeacon of Morgannwg, the Venerable Christopher Smith, who described St Michael’s as a little ‘gem’ due to its beautiful and unusually shaped stained glass windows and tower.

The three Friends of Llandaff Cathedral - Pat Willmott, Daphne Townsend and Joyce Lloyd - journeyed on through the Cynon Valley to the oldest of the four churches, St John the Baptist in Aberdare.

Here they met up with Fr Robert again who pointed out the many beautiful features including the Lady Chapel with its stunning painted ceiling and impressive screen. They were shown many treasures including the ornate vestments housed in the vestry.

After a light lunch the group left Aberdare to motor on to Ystrad Mynach where they met up again with the Archdeacon and Canon Steven Kirk.

They toured Holy Trinity and were impressed at its high quality refurbishment which included the transformation of an old storeroom into a quiet room. This room called the ‘All Saints’ Room’ was so named as stained glass windows removed from the now demolished All Saints Church were installed into light boxes during the revamp.

After an inspiring Evensong the ladies made their way home to Llandaff having enjoyed a lovely welcoming day meeting many people from within their own Diocese and touring four beautiful churches.

Archdeacon Christopher said, “It was a pleasure to be able to show the Friends around the archdeaconry and to see some of the incredible buildings right here in our own diocese.”

Travel to Taize

Places are available to join this year’s annual pilgrimage to the ecumenical monastic community Taizé.

This is open to young people aged between 17 and 29-year-olds and runs from July 30 – August 8.

The pilgrimage to Taize in the Burgandy region of France offers a unique opportunity to meet and worship with thousands of young Christians from all over the world. The cost will be £200.

Please contact Revd Jan Gould if interested on 029 2067 9833 or jan.gould2@btinternet.com

Hardship grants are available – speak to Jan if you need help towards the cost.

Re-internment of medieval bones at Llantwit Major

Medieval human remains which were uncovered during excavation work on the Galilee Chapel in Llantwit Major have been re-interred in the churchyard.

Four full skeletons and 980 mixed human bones were discovered during preliminary excavation work on the Chapel. The bones are believed to date back to Medieval times between the 10th and 16th centuries – and include males and females of various ages.

Following the service at St Illtud’s Church the remains were carried in procession to the graveside, passing through the Galilee Chapel, and re-interred in the churchyard at a location on the Chapel’s north side.
Here he tells us how he became chaplain and what his role entails.

“Working for a large company such as Tata Steel gives anyone with aptitude the chance to progress and change careers. I joined the steel industry eleven years ago in April 2005 and since then I have enjoyed a varied career which has allowed me to follow my faith and help others.

I began as an export team leader, and moved to system control before becoming a Manufacturing Support Facilitator, which basically means supporting management and teams wherever there is a need.

I then moved to Training Coordinator, which is still my day job for half the week. The other half of the week I work as chaplain for the Tata Steel Hub, which covers Llanwern, Orb works, Port Talbot and Trostre.

Now I ask you where else would you be able to find such a wide career path without having to change companies?

Before taking on the ministry as chaplain, I was a union representative so I spent time discussing conflicts and alike with the management team. I have always tried to find the middle ground between management and the unions.

Throughout my career I have never hidden the fact that I am a Christian and have a ministry outside of work. I am a Monmouth diocesan Evangelist minister and a diocesan Eucharist minister.

I became involved in chaplaincy through leading the Remembrance Service and the Workers Memorial Service at Llanwern – and when the previous company chaplain left, I was asked to take on the role and was licensed by the Bishop of Monmouth at Tata Steel, Llanwern in May last year.

We have a vast diversity of people working within Tata Steel, many faiths and cultures, there are Hindu, Muslim, Christian to name but a few. We all have one thing in common, we are a proud bunch who look out for each other.

If we see a colleague in trouble we all try to help. We support the local communities close to the works and have good relationships throughout.

Those outside of the industry can be forgiven for thinking the company is only made up of steel workers, but the industry offers so much more from engineers, steel operators and electricians to sales and marketing, and at all levels including apprentices and graduates.

Since the recent announcement of redundancies at Tata in South Wales, many churches have come forward to offer help.

I praise the Lord for the ministers and their teams in Port Talbot from all denominations, who have come forward and set up various services, including providing listeners for those who are in need due to worry and stress as well as local CAP (Christians Against Poverty) services such as debt counselling.

In my role as chaplain I go out to the men and women in their workplace and am very much there for them for their mental and spiritual well being. I am also on call 24/7 for any accidents and am the spiritual link between the company and the families in the case of any bereavement.

In times of crisis my role as a counsellor comes to the fore such as with the job losses when people need someone to turn to. I can relate to this as I have been made redundant myself twice in the past and it is my faith that has got me through.

What is happening to the steel industry today is not the fault of Tata, or the employees, both are trying their hardest to ensure there is a future for a UK steel industry. But the world is getting smaller, and we are facing a worldwide economic crisis that is having an impact on many industries around the world.

Please would you pray for Tata Steel and its employees.”
Dear all,

As you may know the Archbishop kindly granted me a three-month sabbatical last year to visit various Celtic regions and holy sites around the UK and abroad. This wonderful opportunity enabled me to create and build links between Llanilltud Fawr and other historic Celtic communities and sites. I’ve had time to write whilst on my travels, working on a study course based on the theme of pilgrimage.

Here’s a round up of some of the places that I’ve been to in Wales, Northumbria, Scotland, Ireland and Brittany.

It all started very fittingly with our custom of a Rogation walk around the nine churches of the Llantwit Major Benefice, which some of you may remember as you accompanied me! The next stop was rather grand as I had the unexpected privilege of attending a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace – quite a treat! Perhaps the invite was as a result of HRH The Prince of Wales’ visit to our Galilee Chapel at St Illtud’s Church the previous year. He was certainly impressed by how we had transformed the 13th century chapel from a roofless ruin into an award-winning new visitor centre which houses 1,000-year-old Celtic crosses.

After my brush with Royalty I journeyed north to visit Durham Cathedral and their “Galilee Chapel”. The cathedral dates from 1083 but building continues with their fundraising LEGO cathedral - the 177,112th piece being added by me! After that it was a short trip to Holy Island Lindisfarne before a long haul to Whithorn in southwest Scotland, where the earliest known monastic site in Britain was established during the early part of the 5th century (yes, this makes it older than Llanilltud Fawr!)

As my first month drew to a close I fitted in trips to Bede’s World at Jarrow, the ancient Roman/Celtic town of Verulamium, St. Alban’s Cathedral and various sites in Kent. It was across the sea to Ireland next as my second month began at Glendalough, one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited. The now ruined stone buildings tell the story of a vibrant Christian community in Celtic times. Then it was on to Trinity College, Dublin to be inspired by the Book of Kells followed by a swift visit to the ruined 6th century site of Monasterboice. Back to the UK (but still in Ireland) I found me in the city of Armagh, Ulster and at their rather “disappointing” Cathedral (apart from the walled gardens which were beautiful spiritual spaces) before the day improved considerably with an unplanned visit to the wonderful Clonmachnois which I discovered had many parallels with Llanilltud Fawr.

The third cathedral I visited in Ireland was at Kilfinora, which is said to be the oldest stone church in Ireland with its foundation dating back to 545AD. Then it was St Brigid’s Well, Kildare before it was time to cross the Irish Sea home.

But my seafaring days weren’t over as my final month began with a day trip to Flat Holm before continuing with a slightly longer boat trip to the Finistere region of Brittany. During my stay in France I followed in the footsteps of Samson to Dol-de-Bretagne, where he established his monastic community in the 6th century. Then it was on to Landevennec, a monastic community established during the late 5th century, before continuing to the Pardon at Loc Ildut - one of the churches in Brittany dedicated to Illtud. It was a very moving celebration of 50 years since the Pardon at Loc Ildut began and our common heritage inspired by St. Illtud spanning 1,500 years.

A pilgrimage to Chappelle Saint Samson in north west corner of Brittany followed before I called at Pol de Leon on the way to the ferry - the cathedral dedicated to Paul Aurelian who studied at Llanilltud Fawr and established his monastery in Brittany on this site during the 6th century. Then it was au revoir to Bretagne before heading homeward bound across the sea for Wales after travelling a total of more than 5,000 miles on land and sea during my three-month pilgrimage.

See you all soon,
Huw
Karen Kaneen is the education support officer based in the education office at Coychurch, Bridgend. She has been in post for three years and supports the work of Canon Edwin Counsell, the Diocesan Director of Education.

Q What’s the best thing about your job?
A Witnessing the inspirational work that goes on in the Church in Wales schools.

Q What’s the worst thing about your job?
A Ooh that’s tricky as I really like my job. If you press me, I suppose I’m not too keen on typing up minutes of meetings.

Q Name one thing that you think would help make the office/the diocese run better?
A Some of the diocesan schools have been exploring learning through a Lego course called “Build to Express”. It’s a great way to express what you truly think when you don’t quite have the words and a very therapeutic activity.

Maybe a Lego session each day could help?

Q What’s the most unusual thing you have had to do as part of your job?
A Bishop David and I had the opportunity to help Germaine Greer at Cardiff Station, on the way to a meeting. It was an interesting and surprising encounter.

Q If you were a biscuit what would you be?
A I think I’m a digestive biscuit. This biscuit is ok by itself, but is much improved by being combined with other things. I’m definitely a team player and am glad to be a small part in the bigger picture of what happens in the office and throughout the diocese.

Comings & Goings

Appointments

Pioneer Evangelist appointed to Neath Centre of Mission

A second Pioneer Evangelist has been appointed to the new Church Army Centre of Mission set up in Neath in partnership with the Llandaff Diocese.

Hannah Seal has been licensed and commissioned as Pioneer Evangelist in the Neath Centre of Mission, where she joins Mr Andy Settle, the Lead Pioneer Evangelist.

Hannah, 36, moves to Wales from Kent where she was the Children and Youth Assistant in the Diocese of Canterbury, based at St Mary’s, Kennington, Ashford. She has been involved in Children and Families Ministry since leaving university.

New assistant curate for Caerphilly

The Revd Andrew Highway, formerly assistant curate (NSM) of Llanishen, has been appointed as assistant curate (NSM) of the Rectorial Benefice of Eglwysilant and Caerphilly.

Leaving

The Revd Huw Butler Rector of the Rectorial Benefice of Llantwit Major has left the diocese after serving in Llandaff for five years. He returns to the Diocese of St Asaph where he has been appointed Vicar of the Parishes of Llay, Rossett & Isycoed.

Thank you to David

The secretary of a society which provides vital financial support for widows, orphans and dependants of deceased clergy from the diocese has retired after nine years service.

Mr David Llewellyn retired from WODS at the end of 2015 – with the role being taken over by Mrs Jayne Young from Fairwater. Archdeacon of Llandaff, the Venerable Peggy Jackson said, “Mr David Llewellyn has served this committee in exemplary fashion over the last nine years and we would like to thank him for his dedication and commitment during this time.”

WODS helps clergy widows and orphans by providing grants to ensure they receive a minimum level of income, after supporting clergy through a lifetime of service.

“We are very grateful to all the parishes for their continuing support of WODS through annual donations and would be grateful for any further support,” said Archdeacon Peggy. Donations to Llandaff WODS can be sent to the treasurer Jan Boyce, Diocesan Office Coychurch, Bridgend, CF35 5EH. Cheques payable to Llandaff WODS.
Elections take place this year for three key diocesan bodies - Diocesan Conference, Diocesan Standing Committee and Diocesan Board of Finance. This is a once in a three year opportunity to get the right people to represent you, with all posts running for three years.

What is Diocesan Conference?
It has lay representatives from every parish and deanery plus all clerics who hold the Bishop’s licence, and is a key way of sharing what’s going on in the Diocese. Meeting annually on the last Saturday in September, it looks back over the previous year and forward to new and exciting ventures. It approves key diocesan policies such as the new Fairer Share Scheme, and can influence the whole Church in Wales – a 2013 motion on support for food banks went all the way to the Governing Body.

What’s expected of you
• Attendance at the annual conference
• Feedback to your church, taking back key messages
• Vote on diocesan business

How to join
• Talk to the current reps from your parish and deanery
• Check out the election information on the Diocesan website to see if you’re eligible – there’s a place for at least one lay person from each parish or Ministry Area
• Get yourself elected at your Annual Vestry Meeting or Deanery AGM

What is the Standing Committee?
The Standing Committee is elected from members of the Conference. It works with the Archbishop to shape diocesan policy, to agree changes to parish boundaries – including the creation of Ministry Areas - and to provide a diocesan response to key issues facing the Church in Wales.

What’s expected of you
• Attendance at three meetings a year plus Diocesan Conference
• An understanding of how the diocese works or a willingness to learn

How to get elected
• Talk to the current reps from your deanery
• Get yourself elected to the Diocesan Conference
• Ask your Area Dean how to stand for election at the Deanery Conference

What is the Diocesan Board of Finance?
The Diocesan Board of Finance looks after the financial resources of the Diocese to ensure that the mission of the Church can be supported now and in the future. It has an annual budget approaching £5m.

What’s expected of you
• Attendance at four meetings a year
• Experience or interest in financial or property matters

How to get elected
• Talk to the current reps from your Archdeaconry
• Check out the election information on the Diocesan website to see if you’re eligible
• Contact the Diocesan Secretary (rowenasmall@churchinwales.org.uk) for a nomination form

The Diocesan Conference pages on the Diocesan website http://llandaff.churchinwales.org.uk/dio-inf/diocesan-conference/ have more information about each of these bodies, who is eligible to join them and how to get nominated.
This year, one of only twelve men in history ever to have walked on the moon died. Edgar Mitchell was part of the Apollo 14 mission in 1971 when he walked on the moon for nine hours. In terms of scientific endeavour, being on the moon has to rank as one of humankind’s greatest achievements. Even now, our own Tim Peake is hurtling around earth in the international space-station looking at the stars, the universe - and us! Science has been integral to our survival and indeed flourishing as a species.

I am a scientist – and a Christian. Are these two compatible? Surely science has utterly dispelled the myth and superstition of a ‘God’ who created us and is looking down on us from his divine space-station. Science is inexorably unlocking the secrets of the universe. The more we find out, the more we squeeze out the possibility of ‘God’.

That’s what a new wave of atheists say. Richard Dawkins et al simply cannot reconcile the possibility of ‘God’ with the reality that we are, through the scientific method of observation, hypothesising, testing and theorising, working out the universe – even from its origins.

Maybe you can’t blame them. The church has had its problems with science. When Galileo confirmed Copernicus’ suggestion that the earth went round the sun, (not the earth, and of course us, being the centre of the universe), the church simply replied, ‘no it doesn’t.’

Charles Darwin even doubted his own faith when he proposed that natural selection was responsible for (the observable fact of) evolution.

Fortunately, the Church is growing up. Here’s the problem. Scientists who argue against ‘God’ are rejecting a ‘God’ in which Christians don’t believe anyway.

When the first Russian cosmonaut went into space, he supposedly radioed back to the motherland ‘I can’t see ‘God’ up here’. In that (probably apocryphal) statement, he highlights the difference between science and religion. God is not subject to scientific inquiry. God is not measurable using scientific methods. The Russian spaceman was looking for the ‘God’ that scientists reject – and that ‘God’ never existed.

So what do Christians say that God is if scientists can’t disprove it? Answering that question is harder than all the science ever discovered! But we can draw on our scripture, tradition and reason and be confident that God is love. God is not dependent on anything else observable. Science, like everything else, operates in God’s realm. We quite properly inquire into our existence and that of the universe in which we live because of God’s grace.

God is not subject to scientific investigation because ‘he’ does not so much ‘exist’ as is existence itself – ‘beingness’. In fact, God is the ground of our being. That isn’t a scientific statement – it is a truism of a spiritual appreciation of life – a life that is as divine as it is earthly. God loved the universe into existence and that includes our ability to observe it. (if you are interested, read Thomas Aquinas’ argument from contingency – that nails it for me!)

So science contradicts God? No it doesn’t! How can it? Science and religion talk different languages. As we discover more of the world we confirm its wondrous nature rather than deny its divine origin.

But our understanding of God comes with a health warning. We must ensure the church doesn’t do another Galileo. As we embrace science, we must accept its findings. Denying what science discovers, now as in the past, does Christianity untold harm.

The last word goes to Edgar Mitchell. In his autobiography he wrote that on his way home from the moon he felt ‘an overwhelming sense of interconnectedness.’ I fancy that he, an integral part of a stupendous scientific project, felt aware of the divine presence not only in the universe, but in science as well.

As Christians we must have confidence to embrace science, argue against the false ‘God’ that atheists correctly deny, and live in the presence of the loving God as revealed, not by science, but by the experience of the risen Christ, divine love made human.