

# Cysyllte Dyffryn Clwyd

## The magazine of the Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area January/February 2021

I've been reflecting recently on the seasons. If asked what is your favourite season I'm sure I'd get different answers.

Some will say spring, watching the trees begin to bud, the scent of daffodils and hyacinths, the sound of bird song as it gains a new vigour, the sight of fresh born lambs in the field and the hum of lawnmowers as people return to their gardens. It is a season of hope and new life.

Some will say Summer, lazy days spent in the sun sipping pimm's and lemonade, holidays and trips to the beach, the garden in full bloom. It is a time of laughter and joy.

Some will say Autumn, the beauty of the changing colours, a time of harvest and of reaping the benefits of the hard labour. It is a time to slow down, a time of relaxation and of fellowship.

I don't think many will say winter. Winter is the season associated with parting and with death. The flowers are all gone, the tree's bare, the birds flown south fleeing the cold and the animals hide in hibernation. It is a time of darkness, wet and miserable. When I sat down to write this, the snow was covering the land like a shroud, giving a sullen hush, a silence that spoke of isolation. It is a time of retreat, to hide behind closed doors and huddle round the fire praying for the spring to come. It is a time we wish would pass.



Winter might be a time that we wish would pass, and yet it is essential. Without winter there can be no spring. In the winter it might feel like nothing is happening, and yet beneath the snow, beneath the hard frozen barren soil, there is much going on. Deep below amongst the roots, the plants are preparing, gathering their energy ready to burst forth into spring. Without this time of preparation there would be no spring.

It might have felt for the past year that we've been in winter, hidden away, locked down, unable to do much. And yet, beneath the surface so much has been happening, preparing, gathering energy and plans that we can burst forth with renewed vigour into spring.

During this time we've seen Llangynhafal begin and finish the repairs to their church. A project of renewal which has been 10 years in the waiting has been given faculty permission and we have a date in March for beginning the works which include toilets, kitchen and enhanced worship space.

Llanbedr have undergone repairs to the organ and making their electrics safe. The church yard has begun to be cleared and the 600 spring bulbs are beginning to grow and the new outdoor meditation and worship space is taking shape.

In Llanynys there are plans for securing the car park for the church and creating a community space as well as working in partnership with others to see the old pub turned into a place where pilgrims can come and stay.

Clocaenog began a new Forest Church, looking at how we can worship outdoors and connect through creation to the creator and there are plans for more of this across our Mission Area.

Plans are in place to complete the work in Llanellidan for them to finally enter the 'Pilgrim Church' scheme.

Llanfair have registered and are working towards becoming an 'Eco-Church' and Llanbedr have become the first in the Diocese to obtain a Bronze award.

And of course we have been finding new ways of connecting with each other and our communities.

We have also committed across the Mission Area, in partnership with our Diocese, to a review process of our mission and ministry. This involves looking at all our plant (church buildings, halls and parsonages), our finances, our attendance figures and prayerfully and imaginatively planning on how we will build for the future.

The review process will provide us with an overview of what we have as a mission area, the challenges that we face, and a set of recommendations for the future. Some of these recommendations will be hard as we face a reality we shy away from, some will be encouraging the good work that already takes place and some will challenge us to break new ground as we move from a maintenance to mission. During Lent our weekly chapter meetings will be working on a MAP, a mission action plan. This will be not only about our overall vision but discerning firm and measurable actions which we will then carry out. There is an open invitation if anyone wants to join us for this, at present we are meeting on Zoom, but in ordinary times we meet in person in St Peter's, Ruthin on a Tuesday morning.

However hard the last year has been, spring is coming, hope and new life await. Just as the snow drops and daffodils herald the changing of the season, so I look forward to the visible signs of our Church springing forth from its winter slumber with renewed energy and vigour and our plans coming to fruition.

A big welcome to Dan Morgan who has joined Dyffryn Clwyd on placement as an Ordinand in training for Ordination.



And in July we will be welcoming Natasha Quinn Thomas as a full time Curate after she is ordained Deacon at the beginning of July.

## **Goodbye to Dylan**

Sadly, 31st January sees Dylan complete his period of formational ministry with us as Assistant Curate in Dyffryn Clwyd MA, rooted within the Ruthin churches.

This is further compounded by the fact that we are unable to meet in person to say our farewells and express our gratitude for all that God has been able to do through all that Dylan is and the many gifts he has shared with us.

One only ever leaves one's training parish once, we hope Dylan's time with us has been happy and memorable.



## **From our Youth and Children's Chaplain**

'The Denbigh and Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Areas partnered with Home-Start in December 2020, to make up 20 hampers to support local families who may struggle between Christmas and New Year, when support services are harder to access and Christmas has financially taken a toll. The hampers included cupboard staples and sweet treats – as well as tea, coffee and hot chocolate – games, colouring books and seasonal magazines; co-op vouchers and toiletry essentials alongside nail polish, masks and wipes. Many people showed extraordinary generosity in donating money and goods, and young people from across the mission areas wrote Christmas cards for each hamper, telling families about our hope in Jesus at Christmastime and always. We may not be gathering physically, but the Mission Areas are still finding ways to show Christ's love. Lockdown does not stop us from being the church - praise God!

I'm really blessed to have been able to play a part in this and so moved by how extravagantly people have given their money, resources and time (in the space of about 10 days!) to make this a reality'.

**Esther Andrews Youth and Children's Chaplain –  
Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area.**

## **Archbishop of Wales to retire in May**

The Archbishop of Wales, John Davies, is to retire in May after four years as leader of the Church in Wales.

Archbishop John, who will shortly celebrate his 68th birthday, has also served as Bishop of Swansea and Brecon for the past 13 years. The 13th Archbishop of Wales, he was also the first Bishop of Swansea and Brecon to be elected as Archbishop. He will retire from both roles in May.

During his tenure as Archbishop, John Davies led the Church in Wales as it reached its centenary last year and also as it faced one of its toughest challenges in responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and leader of the Anglican Communion, Justin Welby, paid tribute to his wisdom and skill, describing him as a “valued colleague”.

## **Seek and you shall find**

Some years ago, now, I spent my annual leave visiting India and one of the places on my itinerary was Ranthambore National Park. The park is one of the most famous former hunting grounds of the Maharajas of Jaipur and today is a major wildlife tourist attraction that draws the attention of many photographers and lovers of nature. Spread over an area of 392 sq. km, Ranthambore is well known for its tigers and is one of the best locations in India to see the majestic creatures in their natural habitat. Whilst in Rajasthan, I decided to seek out a few big cats for myself... For me, this involved quite a discipline: setting the alarm for 5am [unheard of in my regular experience!], washing and dressing appropriately for the bitterly cold mornings [it's surprising how many layers one can fit on – and still be glad of the blanket offered by the hotel!], chatting to my fellow ‘dawn’ travellers [I'm not usually conscious enough to string more than three words together at such a time in the morning!] and trusting that our expert driver and guide will lead us in the right direction... ‘Seek and you shall find...’ Returning to the hotel after my first [unsuccessful] visit to spot any tigers I have to admit to being quite envious of the couple who, visiting another zone, had seen a female tiger and her two cubs! [“Why them and not me!?!” I said to myself.] During the evening visit to the sanctuary things became more exciting! We saw the rotting carcass of a ‘kill’ in one place and the clear [massive!] paw prints of a tiger on another section of road. There is definite evidence of a big cat in the area. Perhaps now is the time... ‘Seek and you shall find...’ This session, however, was no more productive at spotting any tigers! As sad

as this was, I thoroughly enjoyed travelling through the rolling hills of Ranthambore teeming with all sorts of other creatures: birds of all shapes, sizes and colours fluttered in the clear fresh air, antelopes munching on the lower branches of the trees and languid crocodiles lurking in the waterholes. The beauty of the national park was a welcome contrast to the hustle and bustle of the cities and spoke to me of peace, tranquillity and reassurance. At times our guide and driver would stop the jeep, survey the surrounding and even listen out for 'clues' – the 'panic cry' of certain birds warning of tigers or even the tremulous roar indicating that there's a big cat around. I can still remember falling silent, 'bathing' in the beauty of the surroundings and in the stillness anxiously waiting for signs of that 'presence' just beyond where I was... Perhaps this dawn we'll come face to face ... The experience of searching for tigers in Ranthambore got me thinking about the life of faith and the role of prayer within it. Prayer is a conscious decision to seek God. It demands great discipline, setting aside space and time to 'be' with God. [The church throughout history has marked such 'hours'. We in our Mission Area meet 'virtually' every morning at 10am. Why not join us if you can, when you can?] Praying, like searching for tigers, can take place on our own but there are definite benefits of joining with others. We can share our experience and insights, support and challenge one another. [Facebook even gives us a space to 'Comment'] As I was reminded, there is a real joy to be found in participating in a common endeavour. [Perhaps this Lent you will join with others from Cytun for discussions on Tuesday evenings? Ordinand in training, Dan Morgan and myself invite you to join us on Zoom for a weekly opportunity to talk, think, pray and grow in our searching for God. This first session begins on Wednesday 23rd February. More details will be on our Sunday Notice Sheets and social media platforms. Huw and the MAC & SMT plan to explore the book, "Moving from Maintenance to Mission following Divine Renovation" by Fr. James Mallon over this period as well as Cytun Ruthin offering a virtual Lenten gathering each Wednesday. Prayer, seeking God's will, listening to God's voice is foundational for any growth – whether in our local church community, the Mission Area or the diocese. Perhaps, as we contemplate the places around us we can spot 'clues' of God's presence at work – in the lives of particular individuals and groups. As we pray perhaps we need to 'listen out for God's call' – God's challenge to engage with those parts of our community who feel 'outsiders' or sense God's delight in those ways we're already reaching out with love and service. Prayer can be a time to celebrate as well as be challenged! My hunt for tigers in

Ranthambore also prompted me to recognise the value of a good guide and we have a diverse range of ways to be guided in our spiritual journeying this Lent. We're not searching for tigers but something far more important - for God's call upon our lives and the lives of our churches. But, rest assured – Jesus promises us: 'Seek and you shall find!'

**Stuart Evans**

### **Ruthin Town Churches Christmas Celebrations**

With the Town Churches limited opening/availability due to social distancing and many services traditionally attended by the wider as well as the Church community not being able to take place because of the Pandemic, we decided to rethink how we marked Christmas this year. Although people were unable to come to Church in their usual numbers, we came up with lots of initiatives to mark this major Christian festival.

Elaine's idea of a 'pop up Christmas postcard' was constructed by local handyman Tony Dallolio, transported by local 'man with a van' John and I am sure you will agree expertly painted by Georgia Grimaldi, a stalwart scenery painter for the Ruthin Panto Society. It was attached to the main Church gates as a focal point from the square. Many people enjoyed photographing themselves and we had some lovely feedback from Maria of Gamlins Solicitors:

"Whilst I sit in my office with the windows open, I hear through the window cheers and giggles (and often squabbling) about who is going to be whom, I want to be Mary!! I don't want to be by the Donkey!! Parents asking toddlers not to move before the picture is taken, then having to do another 'CHEEEEEEESE' re-shoot ..... and each and every single time, each child shouts "please sanitise before and after use" (a sign of our year!!).



It's been a joy hearing such fun outside remembering the true meaning of Christmas."

The community has worked well with local shops in Ruthin hosting a "Spot the angel" competition. 20 Angels made by our congregations were placed in shop windows in order to encourage footfall and support of small, local businesses. Competition forms could be purchased for £2 and

much fun was had by families wandering around town trying to find them all. This benefited church and raised money for our diocesan chosen charity: Domestic Support Units in North Wales.



Thanks to the generous donation of over 400 oranges from John Jones family butchers, Tesco, Coop and Aldi every primary aged school child in Ruthin and Llanbedr participated in our “Christingle in a bag” project, culminating in children and their families being invited to a massive ‘virtual’ zoom Christingle service on Christmas Eve which was a great success. It was a race against time to deliver the Christingle components to schools when First Minister Mark Drakeford brought forward the end of term at short notice. We had an impressive

(socially distanced) production line going on in the Space at St Peter’s, with much friendship and laughter, whilst being serenaded by David practicing festive Carols on the Organ. I am sure Fr Dylan must have wondered why Iggy wouldn’t eat his dinner that evening.....it was because we were all feeding him dolly mixtures (don’t tell him!).



Fr Dylan was a great sport, supporting Ruthin Forward dressed as an Elf for their Santa’s grotto event held in the grounds of Ruthin Castle and St. Peter’s were able to loan them Santa’s sleigh to add to Santa’s authenticity. Fr Dylan has started a tradition now



and I look forward to seeing which Clergy will take his place as the Elf next year!!

[Is this what is meant by an ‘Elf warning’!?)



On 21<sup>st</sup> December it was Ruthin Town Churches turn to host the travelling nativity expertly made by Tad Huw. We had great plans for a fun filled action packed event, including utilising the skills of Christine Ellis to help us locate the Star of Bethlehem which was due to make a seasonal appearance for the first time in 800 years. There was to be an opportunity for people to light a candle in memory of a lost loved one (socially distanced, of course) to replace the annual 'Light up a life!' St. Kentigern's service which was unable to take place in the usual way this year.

Sadly, due to Wales suddenly being placed into 'Lockdown' on 20<sup>th</sup> December we had to cancel at short notice but managed a scaled down zoom event. Although we were unable to 'find' the star of Bethlehem because of the clouds we were able to chat and pray together.

Thank you to all those who contributed so generously with their time, ideas and talents to make the above events happen. These, together with the streamed services, carols and lessons have made for a memorable Christmas with people in the community being given lots of diverse opportunities to get out and about sharing and embracing God's love.

**Jayne Greening.**

### **A few words from the Pastoral Network Team**

Our Clergy and Pastoral Assistants have truly felt the brunt of this 'closed doors' scenario. We visit, call by, travel from place to place, home to home, to offer a listening ear and to bring God's love and comfort to anyone who needs it. We feel as though our work, but certainly not God's love and comfort, has been taken away leaving a feeling of helplessness. However, we are busy phoning church members throughout the whole of our Mission Area ensuring everyone knows they are being thought of, checking they receive the weekly newsletter and offering follow up calls during the weeks to come. Some families really are struggling to cope with the restrictions imposed on life just now and often put on a brave face. There's plenty of help ... just get in touch with us. Comforting the recently bereaved is especially difficult as many pass long lonely days with memories of their loved ones sadly lost. Babies arrive, blissfully unaware of this strange world so we're congratulating new mums and will look forward to many a joyful baptism when restrictions ease. The technically minded are hard at work learning new technology and have established a regular patter of on-line worship. Services are becoming quite theatrical with mood lighting, music and other props! They've improved drastically since the first shaky videos...one of which was entirely upside down! Now it's just like being in church, with music, an order of service, hymns to sing along to and above all, we can still pray

together. It's wonderful to know that church' attendance' has grown significantly through on-line worship and we need to keep hold of that once this difficult time has passed. Join in a post service Sunday paned...it's amazing how real it feels! So although our work isn't quite following its previous pattern, we can still offer a listening ear, add in some words of comfort and hopefully spread the word across our Mission Area that God is always listening to you.

*"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand."*  
Isaiah 41:10

### **DIARY OF CHRISTMAS 2020 AT LLANBEDR CHURCH**



Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. Members of the church and residents of the village met up at the Old St Peters Church to set up the scene for the Traveling Nativity, it was a wet and windy day and everything was carried and set up by 4pm when visitors started arriving the path was lit by fairy lights and oil lamps took them round the church and into the front of the church where carols were

being played, they were offered a mince pie and drinking chocolate, visit the Nativity Scene and light a candle returning through another entrance and make their way down again. Stewards were in place to ensure safety distances were observed throughout. At 5pm Tad Huw walked down to the slate garden and blessed the tree and lights as other trees were switched on in the village.

At 7pm it was time to bring everything back down and it was still wet. We returned at 10.00 am on the 5<sup>th</sup> to take down lights etc and the Nativity scene was taken to Llanynys.

Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> Members decorated the church for the Nativity and Christmas services and a tree was decorated with white lights, a small crib was set up as the travelling nativity was outside.

Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> The three wise men arrived at the church and were taken down to the crib by Susan Hudson, Hazel Roberts and



Gwenda Williams while the carol WE THREE KINGS was played. The morning worship service was in the hands of Debbie Sawyer.

Jan 5<sup>th</sup>. Owing to the announcement that the church would be closing for public worship the Tuesday Eucharist service went on- line with the three kings being carried out of church by Tad Huw and family to the outside crib. A lovely service.

We now look forward to seeing the bulbs that were planted in the autumn coming to bloom in the church yard in next few weeks. The outside Alter and seating that Tad Huw has made are now in place making a peaceful area to sit or pray and enjoy this tranquil area.

**Gwenda**

### **Outdoor Advent Service at St Hychan's Church**

We were very pleased to be able to open St Hychan's Church for 'Covid Safe Sunday Worship for a few weeks at the end of 2020. As the church can only accommodate six 'household units' safely, we were unable to hold our traditional candle lit service of Nine Lessons and Carols in December.



The outdoor service of Readings and Advent Carols was a huge success and even the weather was kind to us that evening. The churchyard looked stunning lit by flaming torches, trees decorated with fairy lights and Huw's very impressive Nativity Crib as the centrepiece. As we were outdoors and socially distanced we were allowed to sing the carols (quietly). What a joy! The evening ended with hot chocolate and mince pies served to the thirty people who were all so pleased to have been able to book a place at this event.

Thank you Father Huw for all your time and effort in making this service so special for us all. It will be long remembered as a ray of light and hope during these difficult times.

**Evelyn and Judith**

## A Poem from St Garmon's Church, Llanarmon-y-Ial

St Garmon's Church stands on a hill  
Which starts by the river that once worked the mill.  
It's in the vale same name as Yale,  
Who went away on far off day  
And endowed a college in the U.S.A.



The Church is built of stone and wood  
And for centuries has stood  
Against the storms and gales that blow  
The sunshine, rain, frost, and snow.  
Double-naved, heavy timbered roof,  
Of its age there is plenty of proof.

Push open the creaking door,  
Cast your eyes on the slate slab floor,  
You get the feeling this Church is old,  
It has no elaborations of marble and gold,  
The pews and pulpit are quite plain  
But it is a place of worship just the same.

The brass chandelier has a story to tell  
About Valle Crucis Abbey before it fell,  
Plaques on the walls for people once well known,  
Old crusaders carved out of stone,  
A simple altar made out of wood,  
Beneath a stained glass window of the shepherd good.

But there are many signs  
The church keeps up with modern times,  
Carpet runners on the floor,  
Organ with an electric blower,  
Flood lights high above the seating,  
Oil fired central heating.

With decor of a delicate taste  
To go outside there is no haste,  
Kneel down and say a prayer  
For those people who with loving care  
Kept the Church family strong  
When without a vicar we were so long.

There will be weddings, christenings, funerals too,  
As old members are replaced by new.  
Let us pray for centuries more  
People will pass through that old door.  
In sacred ground where many rest  
St Garmon's Church by God is blessed.

R.I.P. Ken Lewis

### **News from St Garmons**

They talk about life being a journey but the last 10 months feels more like a roundabout in that we're back where we started in March albeit with more knowledge about coronavirus. There was talk of a new normal but that has changed from month to month. Can we have the old normal back please? 2020 started off so promisingly with Tad Huw and his family arriving and his licencing on St David's day, after that it went downhill fast. St Garmons church remained closed until July when thanks to Tad Huw's tireless efforts we reopened for private prayer. We were then given permission to restart services and for a while until the firebreak lockdown we hosted a Saturday Pilgrim Mass, which the congregation embraced as a temporary measure. After the lockdown we restarted Sunday morning services until we had to close again. During this time there has been one wedding, socially distanced of course! The poor couple having planned their special day for so long and adapting it for "the new normal" were informed by Welsh government announcement the week before that the church would be closed for the firebreak on the day they had chosen. So at the last minute they had to change the date to the Friday from the Saturday. This meant a change of priest and fewer guests since some travel plans became impossible, fortunately the reception venue could still accommodate them. However it was a lovely service in a rather bleak year. The one funeral held in church this autumn was also different, there were a few mourners allowed in the church but the village gathered outside the churchyard walls to pay their respects and members of

Cor Dewi Sant sang Alleluia, outdoors after the interment. As in all churches Christmas was different, we were fortunate to host the travelling nativity on a dryish evening early in December with our usual Christmas raffle. Our Christmas service was midnight mass with a small congregation and now we're back in lockdown! All through this time the clergy (and their family members) have been wonderful, Facebook, new website, Zoom and in-person. We've all learned new skills, mostly of the technological variety. Although what most people now know about respiratory viruses, their transmission, prevention, symptoms and treatment is equally impressive. Here's hoping 2021 will start to bring our lives back to the old normal.

**Susan Hanahoe**

### **Snowdrops**



Given the ongoing Covid restrictions we sadly can't organise an event to look at the snowdrops at Plas Draw and Segrwyd, but hopefully some are now appearing in your gardens. However, I heard a representative from the Garden House in Devon talking on the radio today and they are holding a virtual snowdrop festival at the moment. Here is the Galanthus 'S.Arnett' from their collection. If you are interested their festival is on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TGardenHouse/> and I

think you can see this without joining up. And they have somewhere you can ask any snowdrop question. Their main website is <https://www.thegardenhouse.org.uk/>

### **LENT Courses 2021**

Please join us for our Lent course this year. We will be looking at the Lord's Prayer – and how it can help us to develop our prayer life. We will be doing this online using zoom and from time to time a video on YouTube. The link is <https://fb.watch/37T1ejzNI7/> No specialty / experience required - just a willingness to explore prayer together. Meetings will be from 19: 00-20:30 on Tuesday evenings starting Tuesday February 23rd until Tuesday April 15th. Although the videos are in English we hope that there will be an opportunity for a group to discuss and share ideas in Welsh! If you would like a Zoom link to the first session, please contact me: [cymrostu@gmail.com](mailto:cymrostu@gmail.com)

# the prayer course

Dear Friends, [Cymraeg uchod]

As Lockdown continues to affect how we meet, this year's Lent study course is intended to be an online experience [you don't even have to leave the comfort of your home!]

Using the easily implemented Zoom platform and accessing You Tube videos we will spend 8 sessions exploring how The Lord's Prayer can help us develop our prayer life.

Please, don't be put off by the technology as it is very easy to use - so easy that even I can do it!

This link:

<https://fb.watch/37T1ejzNl7/>; which should lessen your appetite for what the course explores!

No specialty / experience required - just a willingness to explore prayer together.

Meetings will be from **19: 00-20:30** on Tuesday evenings starting **Tuesday February 23rd** until **Tuesday April 15th**.

Although the videos are in English we hope that there will be an opportunity for a group to discuss and share ideas in Welsh!

If you would like a Zoom link to the first session, please contact me: **cymrostu@gmail.com**

We pray that together we can find out more about what prayer means for us as Christians!

God Bless,  
STUART.

## Contacts

Tad Huw Bryant	Llanbedr DC	01824 705286
Revd. Stuart Evans	Ruthin	01824 702 068
Revd. Richard Carter	Llanfair DC	01824 703 867

### **Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area Office**

Contact details and opening times

An answer phone message can be left, outside office hours.

Email: [admin@dyffrynclwyd.co.uk](mailto:admin@dyffrynclwyd.co.uk)

Tuesday 9.00 am – 4.30 pm

Thursday 9.00 am – 4.30 pm

TEL: 01824 707 820

**Because of lockdown restrictions please telephone  
the office before attending.**

### Churchwardens

Llanarmon	01824 780 751
Llanbedr	01824 703 788
Llangynhafal	01824 790 726
Llanynys	01824 790 593
Llanychan	01824 702 152
St Peter's	01824 702 392
St Mwrog	01824 704 643
St Meugan	01824 703 505
Clocaenog	01824 750 653
Cyffylliog	01824 710 249
Efenechtyd	01824 705 790
Llanelidan	01824 750 288
Llanfair	01824 702 594