**DYFFRYN CLWYD MISSION AREA**

**CHURCHES’ REPORTS 2022**





Grow Faith, Bring Hope and Demonstrate Love

**St Garmon’s, Llanarmon yn Lal**

We’re most proud of the number of families who attend regularly. Highlights were the Wedding dress exhibition which provoked a lot of conversation, the Christmas carol service put on by Cor Dewi Sant and the Crib service on Christmas Eve. Our biggest achievement is that although we’re still challenged with numbers and finance we’ve got hope now which we didn’t really have 12 months ago. Some of our new families are keen to be involved in practical ways and we’ve been told that the Church is important to the community and they will help to keep it open.

Our challenges are a dwindling older congregation combined with precarious finances. Two of the congregation attended last year’s LyCiG local course following that we’ve reached out to the community using a questionnaire, Facebook and posters. We’ve reordered the children's area to put children and their parents at the heart of the service. We’ve developed a family service and have been trying different ways to involve children without alienating the rest of the congregation, so far we’ve had positive feedback from everyone. We’ve held regular fundraising events and applied for grants, whilst this hasn’t solved our financial position it’s looking healthier than 12 months ago and as a bonus has connected with the community.

Several families with young children have started attending regularly and becoming involved with day to day running of the Church. We had no weddings last year and fewer baptisms although the previous year was playing catch-up from Covid so there were more baptisms than usual

Llanarmon has always felt slightly geographically semi-detached from the MA. We promote MA events via email (weekly notice sheets are forwarded) and posters. We also recommend particular services to individuals who may be interested e.g. Wild Church. We welcome having different clergy taking services as this can make attending services and events in other Churches less daunting. A few people have attended MA courses, Alpha, Lent Courses, LyCiG and MA services

We’ve held a variety of fundraising events this year: A joint St David’s Day and pancake day lunch, Plant sales at the NGS open garden event, Afternoon tea, the Wedding dress event, the Welsh Elvis concert, the Christmas fair, the Cor Dewi Sant carol concert. All were successful although the St David’s Day event and the afternoon tea was more successful as community outreach than financially. We advertise the events on social media and with posters and word of mouth. At present with limited resources (people) we probably are unable to increase this much although the community is very supportive and have requested more lunches and teas.

Following the survey we sent out in the summer, stating the precarious position of the Church, we’ve had offers of help and suggestions for future events. Most of our fundraising events would not have been possible without community help freely offered and the most rewarding aspect of most of the events is the contact with the community on an informal basis.

We had no particular target area until there was an initiative to move the children’s area to the centre of the church, following that we’ve seen an increase of families with children. A few families with a “Church” background have moved to the village so we’re building on this with a monthly all age service and more families have been coming. We’re also improving our hospitality with after service teas at least monthly and often more frequently.

**St Peter’s Church, Llanbedr DC**

The highlights of our year were the Easter services which were lovely, the Christingle service which was enjoyed by all, and the Diocesan conference which we found enlightening and uplifting.

Our church is very fortunate to have an effective communicator who faithfully sends out newsletters to our congregation each week; this has kept everyone up to date and has been a wonderful achievement.

With donations we purchased a second hand coffee machine, which has given us and our visitors a nice drink and also boosted our funds.

For at least ten years we have wanted a toilet in our church. At last with a lot of help from Tad Huw and his team we are at the point of starting work. It has been a long and uphill struggle to raise the funds and obtain grants. We have not had a regular organist but have had input from other churches and sometimes used the phone.

In 2021 we had 5 funerals, this was down to 3 and 2 ashes in 2022. There were no weddings held in 2022 but we had 4 private christenings. There was a slight increase in attendance in 2022.

Some of our members attended other churches and their events. Two of us attended the diocesan conference online. Some members attended the lent course. The mission area letter which everyone receives weekly was an effective way of communicating events, services and news across the MA. We should continue to hold the Christmas fair and will attend MAC meetings.

With regards to fundraising activities, our church has been busy! Details below:

April: Coffee morning £327

May: Plant sale with cakes and tea £900

May: Coffee morning with plant sale £930

July: Summer fair£270

July: Sale of Liverpool FC football shirt£400

Oct: Ecofest £414

Sept: Coffee morning £600

Nov: Christmas fayre

Total raised £4091

Coffee machine March to Dec £900

The congregation has raised £8,000 for our reordering project

Events which involved the community including the commencement of a song school and an adult choir. We had a meal in the community hall for St David’s day, the Queen’s jubilee and Christmas. Pilgrimages were conducted to Old St Peter’s church and around the Mission Area visiting Llanynys and Llangynhafal churches.

The wild church has been successful in attracting families. Llanbedr was the venue for the Ecofest which attracted all ages and was a great success.

Events are advertised on Facebook and the Llanbedr webpage, as well as in the MA newsletter, the MA Facebook page and website, and communication also happens via residents in the village.

**St Cynhafal’s Church, Llangynhafal**

Highlights of our church’s year include a number of fundraising activities, such as the Christmas Christingle service led by Rev Natasha, to which many families and locals came. The Elvis concert was a great success. We held cream teas each Saturday for the month of August with a dog show on one of the days. World day of Prayer service which was followed by a Frugal lunch. Seder Supper, A quiet day at the start of Lent 2022. We ran a healing Pilgrimage from Llangynhafal to Llanbedr Church in August 2022. We took part in Open Churches Denbighshire Historical buildings.

Online / Zoom; LYCIG Course which was led by Tad Huw (leading your church into growth) with our Mission Area group of Churches.

Club Cynhafal; Children’s craft activities and family service led by Natasha.

Café Cof: Dementia friendly support group lay led meeting every Monday Morning.

Having now had the Church building reordered, we now have a fully fitted kitchen/place to prepare hot drinks and food space to serve and eat together around comfy chairs and tables with two internal toilets and wheelchair friendly access. The newly created space allows members of the wider community to join us not only for a Church service but for community outreach such as our own Café Cof.

Growth has roughly stayed the same on a Sunday service and the same goes for weddings/funerals.

However, with the reordering of Llangynhafal Church, it has led the way for us to use the building on other days of the week, to grow and for people to come inside our building for other reasons through activities as mentioned above.

Three members of our Church, together with five others from Dyffryn Clwyd MA, joined in a week-long offsite Pilgrimage to Walsingham as part of our Mission Area Led by Tad Huw. We then partnered another group of pilgrims all under St Asaph Diocese, sharing a week of Christian teaching, communion and fellowship. On our return we have encouraged others to go on a day retreat or pilgrimage week.

We need to encourage/support one another to come to the MAC meetings and to feedback to others as to what is going on in each other’s Churches.

Our Mission Area Wardens do always try and let the other church members know what is going on either by email or on a Sunday in person.

Further fundraising activities planned for 2023 include, but are not limited to:

The possible return of the Elvis Concert or a similar event

Cream Teas throughout the month of August 2023

Starting monthly Frugal lunches from Autumn 2023

A coffee morning in Gellifor community centre on a Saturday this year.

A few of our Church members also belong to the local weekly walking group in the village and the monthly open circle. They are able to invite others along to Church events.

Having started Café Cof, our Dementia-friendly outreach Café, we are advertising as much as possible and trying to involve volunteers from the local area to come and join us.

Club Cynhafal is running once a month for young children and families on a Sunday morning. Café Cof tends to serve an older age group over 50’s. Our concerts / summer cream teas have attracted all ages of our community.

**St Mary’s Church, Cyffylliog**

One of the biggest highlights and achievements last year was our Christmas carols service, Christmas tree competition and Father Christmas also providing the catering for the local show. Our big achievement was having local people helping us, and both events were well attended by the local community.

One of our challenges is to have toilets and catering facilities. These facilities will encourage more activities to take place at the church and alternative use of the church. We have had sketches drawn up for our own purpose and approached Clocaenog Wind Farm Trust seeking a grant, but at present we have been advised to contact DCC for advice on the project and we will in the near future contact Imogen, the MA Administrator, for advice on the project.

Our average weekly service growth is 125% increase. We have had new members join our congregations. Due to some Covid restrictions, Baptisms and Weddings have not increased and have averaged about the same as previous years.

Our involvement at present with the Mission Area is limited. We attend most meetings but with limited funds and in the progress of building up our attendance figures we feel at the moment we are a low priority. We have had very good support in the past from the Mission Area and are very grateful for this. Hopefully, if we can build a larger congregation, we can contribute more into the Mission Area and feel more embedded.

Our most recent fundraising events were the Christmas Carol service in the village and the catering at the local village show. Both events were very well attended by local people and contributed towards the fundraising.

Our involvement with the community is very good with all our activities advertised and attended well in the community. We have a programme of activities planned and will be involving local residents in the community to help and take part. We are trying to target all ages and attract them to the church with different activities in different types of services, mainly through special services i.e. Easter, feast of St Mary’s, harvest, Christmas etc.

**Llanfair Church**

Our main highlights include the reordering project: Completion and inauguration of the project has provided enhanced facilities for both church members and the wider community. Its full potential is yet to be realised but with increasing diversity of activities it will prove to be an invaluable asset. Parachuting Teddies: After a few years’ absence due to building works and Covid, the event was well attended and enjoyed by the whole community. Proceeds of £1,150 were in aid of the DEC Ukraine Appeal. DCMA Confirmation Service: We welcomed Bishop Gregory to church as he confirmed the candidates from DCMA. Weekly Parents & Toddlers group established.

Our main challenge is finances; we have been running a budget deficit for several years, but a recently formulated long term recovery plan should provide a surplus by 2033. The provisos to this plan include a growth in our congregation, an increase in planned giving and a programme of successful fundraising events.

We are encouraging more congregation members to sign up to Gift Direct so that there is less reliance on the plate collection at services.

Congregation numbers have remained fairly static. Sadly, we have lost a number of elderly members but have added new members who have more than compensated. Our new members are enthusiastic members of our church community, and one has become our new treasurer.

In 2022 we had 2 Marriages and 10 Baptisms (including 3 adults). This compared very favourably with the previous year when we had no Marriages or Baptisms although, of course, 2021 was the year that we were beginning to emerge from the Covid restrictions.

Most of the Mission Area meetings are held at Llanfair church and we are happy to host these. We recognise our role within the MA and trust that our unique attributes as a church community, including improved facilities and potential of growth from local housing developments, will enable us to retain our own identity under the auspices of the MA. For many of our congregation, the MA is still regarded as being a distant concept of no relevance to them, however, hopefully this will change as the benefits of pooled resources (e.g. buying and provision of advice) become embedded and recognised.

Fundraising is a major priority and during 2022 we had a few successful events:

* Parachuting Teddies which raised £1,150 towards our Ukraine appeal.
	+ Llanfair Sports Day – we had a stall at the sports day and raised nominal sums, but the main benefit was to connect with the local community and advertise forthcoming child friendly services.
	+ Indigo Performing Arts used the church to practice for their performances at the Urdd Eisteddfod and in return held a couple of Christmas shows in the church which raised over £800 towards church funds.
* A Family Bingo afternoon was held which raised over £70.

In addition to our worshipping community, we have attracted other local groups including our Parents & Toddlers Group and Indigo Performing Arts, who provide theatre type activities for children and teenagers. Church events are advertised on the village Facebook page and in the village magazine, as well as throughout the wider Mission Area. Our Parachuting Teddies event is one of the main community events in the village and is looked forward to by families. Looking to the future, we expect to see further opportunities to grow and engage with the village as new housing schemes come on stream in the next decade.

Whilst our current congregation members are mainly retired people, we are developing more family friendly events and services such as the Parents & Toddlers Group and Café Church. Café Church is proving to be a successful way of engaging with parents who are interested in having their children baptised.

The demographic of our community will change dramatically over the next 10 years as families move into the new housing developments and we anticipate that family services will feature more prominently in our worship pattern.

**The Town Churches of St Peter’s Ruthin, St Mwrog’s Llanfwrog and St Meugan’s Llanrhydd**

We have joined together our three congregations and become Ruthin Town Churches. People have found where they are comfortable in some of the other MA churches, others are happy to attend one of the services offered in St Peter's. We now offer a more traditional Eucharist service at 9am and a more contemporary service at 10.30am, both of which are growing in numbers. This has not been an easy change for some and we are still finding our way. Numbers are good for both the traditional and the contemporary evensong.

The bell band have been busy here and in other towers. A new bell board has been purchased and will be blessed accordingly. It was wonderful for them to ring for Eva Hartshorn's 100th birthday recently.

The most difficult thing has been finding service times to suit our three congregations, and liturgy that people are happy with. Fortunately, across the MA there are services to suit every taste! Getting our heads around thinking as an MA rather than separate churches is coming. It is difficult for some of us to understand not having one Priest in charge of one church, again something we are trying to get used to and accept.

On average, numbers at our two morning services combined are not yet up to pre-Covid numbers attending a single service. This may be that people are attending other churches in the MA, and others possibly prefer to stay safely at home still. Baptisms are up, with a few of the families of the newly baptised attending the contemporary service and joining in with DIF. Weddings have been roughly the same last year, but with more booked this year.

Involvement with MA events has definitely risen, and thanks to better communication we know more about what all of our churches are organising. It would be lovely to have a combined service once a month or quarter, but unfortunately in the past numbers have proven this doesn't always mean people will join together. Not sure how we can achieve it, but we need to be thinking more as an MA not as individual parishes. On a positive note we feel we definitely know more faces and names of others across our MA!

Fundraising has been a little quiet, we have had some wonderful concerts, income from the hire of the Parish rooms, a sponsored walk by the DIF children, and a good return from the clothes bank. Festival weekend saw us extremely busy in and around church. The Christmas fair was well attended, and it was lovely to see MA friends with stalls. The raffle on Open Doors weekend was well supported; we shared the proceeds with the Quilters. Maybe a few more joint fundraisers would be a good idea as it would give us more helpers.

The stall at Ruthin carnival was well supported, and the church grounds were full during Festival Day. Links with Rhos Street School were formed when they had their Harvest service with us, and many local groups hire the parish rooms and church for rehearsals. Lenten groups and a newly formed prayer group are open for the local community to attend. Our main outreach in the community at the moment is DIF, offering company, coffee and lunch on a pay what you can basis. We have teens popping in after school most days, this may be something we can take forward in some way.

Our mission is to encourage all age congregations, for all to feel welcome and valued. To be supportive to those we know well and to listen to those who want to just chat. The main thing is that we all show a positive attitude when people arrive at church, sometimes a smile can make a big difference to somebody’s day.

**St Hychan’s Church, Llanychan**

We are proud of the way church members care for and support the church and one another. We have reached out to others in the local and wider community in a number of ways, including donating over £1,000 for Ukraine children's hospitals this year and raising funds to support Citizens Advice Denbighshire to buy top up cards for people suffering due to the increase in energy prices.

A very successful Harvest supper was held and enjoyed by all, and a well-attended special service held to mark the Platinum Jubilee of the Late Queen Elizabeth II.

Like all churches, we are concerned as to the long-term future of our church, but at present we are growing our numbers through what we can offer in the way of worship and involvement in outside community activities.

There is a perennial problem with the church organ and we have a faculty application for a project to address this.

Our numbers attending services have increased by over 50%. This is due to being able to offer a range of traditional services ie Eucharist, Morning prayer and Evensong. We are attracting people who want a more traditional style of worship.

One wedding and three baptisms were held at St Hychan's this year. We believe we are well represented in the MA. Three members are part of the Mission Area Conference. One member is part of the Pastoral Network and two are volunteers with Cafe Cof. Some church members have taken part in MA-wide courses and discussion groups.

We consistently fund raise. This year events included Garden Opening with coffee and stalls, and Hymns and Pimms which attracted many. The Harvest Supper was also a sell out and enjoyed by all. The Remembrance Service raised money for the British Legion.

The immediate community is very small and the old parish boundary has no urban centre. We reach out to the local community through personal contacts, word of mouth, advertising through the MA newsletter, social media and website, as well as holding outside events.

Our services attract people seeking traditional worship in a welcoming country church. Those attending tend to be of middle age or older. This year a 1662 service has been introduced once each quarter.

Families with children do attend services at special times in the Christian Calendar - e.g. at Easter and Christmas.

**St Foddhyd’s Church, Clocaenog**

There have been many highlights during the year, the best of which is the number of local people attending our outdoor services at Easter but also throughout the year at services such as the Pet Blessing. We have had our first baptism within our outdoor worship area, which we hope will be the first of many to come.

Second, our relationship with Ysgol Carreg Emlyn – the primary school in Clocaenog, is blossoming with Wild Church sessions being organised for the whole school on a termly basis. Whilst the school is not a Church in Wales school, we are keen to build on the foundations that we have built to bring children and their families into our church to experience and learn about Christ through craft and prayer activities and our teaching. Typically, we deliver four sessions in a day appropriate to the different age groups within the school.

The lack of toilet facilities is a regular concern expressed at our services and our sessions with the school.

There is also a concern over the regularity of attendance in that many of our congregation do not attend on a regular basis.

St Foddhyd’s serves a relatively small community and whilst there was an increase in baptisms from 1 to 3 this is not reflective of the growth of the church as we are likely to conduct fewer baptisms in the coming year.

The number of weddings in the year is the same as previous year as 1. We are pleased, however, to report that there are a few new members who have joined the church in the last year.

We have relied on support from the MA in the outreach work within the school for a Welsh speaking priest to take part in the sessions that we have provided. The church is also thankful for the work of the MA in developing the re-ordering plans for the church building.

Whilst the church ensures that it is fully represented at the MAC and at Treasurers’ meetings, it would wish that MAC meetings were less lengthy and the business was undertaken in a more concise and clear way.

Fundraising this year has focused on raising money for MacMillan nurses for which we have had two events – a coffee morning and a curry evening. We believe that it is both part of our duty to raise money for charitable organisations, but also part of our mission to the community to invite them to join us at these events.

The aim of the church is to be outward looking to the geographic community it serves and beyond. We have this year continued with activities such as the Scarecrow competition and craft activities in Advent – both of which draw large numbers of participants from our communities. We have this year also started a community garden project, a choir for youngsters and their parents as well as holding four meals to which we attract a small number of people who are not part of our congregation yet.

The church aims through its delivery of services to cater for families, with a relaxed style of ministry and a focus on hospitality either around the fire pit or the kettle when inside. Whilst the focus has been on making worship accessible for families, the majority who attend are adults, some of whom are retired.

**St Michael and All Angels Church, Efenechtyd**

The key event of last year was that the church stood down as a regular Sunday Service church and became a “Festival” church. We fully understand that we need to hold at least 6 events within any calendar year to maintain that status.

The first 4 months of 2022 was dominated by the structural work to the roof timbers which was instigated by the need to undertake a woodworm treatment project. Our time window for doing the woodworm treatment, due to the presence of bats, closed before the wood worm treatment could be carried out. This work was, therefore, implemented in early 2023

We are most proud of organizing and hosting our special events, as follows:

* Wedding and street clog dancing – Aug 26. Full church
* The Olivia Window unveiling service – Sept 10. Full church
* Queen’s Vigil – Sept 18
* Gwylmabsant – Sept 24. Full church
* Harvest – Oct 22. Full church
* Remembrance Day – Nov 12
* Christmas carols – Dec 15. Full church
* Churchyard Nature Count and bulb planting. The bulbs were donated to us by the Efenechtyd Community Council and most of the local residents joined in the planting.

Our main challenge is to keep the church alive and active within the community. We are doing this by promoting and holding events whereby many members of the community join in.

As a Festival Church it is difficult to attract new members. However, we are endeavouring to keep the church as an active focus point within the community and encourage the residents of the neighbourhood to join in when we hold events.

We also have frequent visitors to the churchyard who come to pay their respects to their family and friends. Therefore, we constantly strive to keep the churchyard clean and tidy and make these visitors very welcome. Our benches in the churchyard are often used by walkers who stop and visit the church and churchyard. Encouraging and welcoming visitors is one of our principal goals.

Sadly, we cannot report any new members as such. However, we do enjoy continued support from the local community through attending our events, maintaining the church and churchyard, keeping the church clean and welcoming visitors.

We are still having one wedding per year and recently the adjacent field owner has allowed us to use his field as a car park on such occasions which makes the church even more attractive to potential wedding planners.

As a Festival church, we have seen our involvement with the Mission Area slightly diminish. We have church committee members who regularly attend MAC and Treasury meetings. We frequently have contact with the Mission Area office requesting that our promotional material be displayed on the Mission Area website and weekly reports. We are very enthusiastic and supportive in contributing material to draw attention to our church and the events that we hold.

We have been instrumental in assisting the parents of Olivia Alkir (who died in a car accident) to create and fundraise sufficient capital to install a modern stained glass window in the church in her memory.

In late April, we hosted, within the churchyard, the return of two local people who helped to raise money for the Olivia window by walking from Aberdaron to Efenechtyd in less than 24 hours. Our collections at our events were given to The Wallich, a shelter for the homeless in Wrexham, and the Ruthin Foodbank.

We have financially supported another church ie Cyffylliog in helping them to pay their parish share. In this way we feel that we are sharing our good fortune with churches that are less fortunate.

We feel that we have a deep involvement with the local community. Our church has become the heart of the local community through our events and the welcome that local people and visitors receive. We have supported the local village shop in Pwllglas by lending, interest-free, funds which enabled them to install solar panels, thus reducing their monthly electricity costs (extremely beneficial in these times). This loan is being paid back monthly.

We have regular contact with the Efenechtyd Community Council on forthcoming and future ideas for events. A photography competition is planned for 2023 with the prize giving in the church by a local celebrity.

In past years, we encouraged schools to visit and we organize object-spotting activities for the children. Unfortunately, due to Covid this activity was temporarily suspended but will be re-introduced next year. There are also meditation opportunities for people wanting to enjoy quiet and spiritual moments.

We were privileged to welcome a Ukrainian mother and daughter to the village and ensured that they could use the church and play the church organ whenever they wanted.

We welcome everyone and encourage all the members of our community and beyond to visit the church, enjoy the peace and tranquility of the surroundings and attend our events. We are proud of the effort that our community has made to ensure that our church remains alive and the focal point of our community. The church committee works tirelessly to ensure that everything possible is done to maintain the standing and importance of our beautiful church within the local community.

**Llanynys Church - pending**