

St Catwg (Crickhowell) Ministry Area Magazine

<https://catwg.org.uk/>



Celebrating VE Day in Gilwern

May 2020



We're still open!

We would like to reassure our customers in these difficult times that we are trying trying to still offer you a service. Therefore you can either call in, telephone orders, or, email us and we can discuss either delivery or collection arrangements.



Covid-19 Virus

We want you to know as a responsible business we want to reduce any risk associated with it. Our number one priority is the wellbeing of all. Our employees are taking all sensible precautions in line with government recommendations. We are happy to discuss delivery details based upon your personal circumstances.

Tel: 01873 810331

info@webbscrickhowell.com

Webbs

OF CRICKHOWELL

Personal Service Since 1936

Open Monday - Friday, 10.00am - 4.00pm

www.webbscrickhowell.com

Editor's slot: Rosalind Matty

email: secretary@crickhowellparish.org.uk. Tel: 01873 812953

I'm afraid that the June Magazine is still only available on line, and likely to be still only available on line in July.. We don't go to print in August so we are praying that, come September, we will be back to distributing printed copies, although arrangements may have to be made about where you collect your Magazine from, as Churches may still be closed. However I am earnestly praying that they will be open by then, please God.

You have lots to interest you in your Magazine this month, so I hope that you will enjoy it. Once we go back to our printed copies you will only have a maximum of 36 pages again...

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition – I hadn't realised that there were so many poets in our ranks – thank you, I love poetry!

May God bless you and protect you all and keep you well and safe in these extraordinary times that we are living in..

If you would like to order this magazine regularly, speak to your local church magazine distributor or contact the Editor
(contact details above)



At least 500 Households do what you are doing now, every month. They read this magazine!

If you run a local business tell the communities of Crickhowell, Vale of Grwyne, Llangattock, Llangynidr, Gilwern and Brynmawr about it!

Why not advertise in the area's most cost-effective magazine?

Contact Rosalind or John for more information about placing an advert:

Tel:01873 812953 or mob: 07885 835553

If you would like to order this magazine regularly, speak to your local church magazine distributor or contact the Editor (contact details above)

COPY DATE FOR THE 2020 JULY MAGAZINE BY THURSDAY 11TH JUNE 2020

to the Editor, please, by midnight.

Preferably by email to: secretary@crickhowellparish.org.uk

Important: Contributors please read the guidance at the back of the Magazine

Rector's Reflection: Rev: Rana Khan: Rector, Ministry Area Leader and Area Dean ...



I am using this opportunity for the Rector's Reflection to ponder upon the theme of personal vision and its importance in the Christian life. St. Irenaeus of Lyon who fought tirelessly against heresies(heretics) once said:

"The glory of God is man alive, but the life of man is the vision of God."

All journeys begin somewhere, and it applies to your faith journey too. A lot of people have the feeling that something is in-between the life they want and the life they have. It could be because of the occupied but purposeless lives we live. Until 1993, I didn't have a clear purpose in my life. After working for ten years in the Diocese of Lahore as a priest, I came to London to work for the Archbishop of Canterbury. This move was quite significant for the family and most definitely for me. Since May 2017, I have been here in Crickhowell and have now completed three years as Rector and the Ministry Area Team Leader of St Catwg. On 11th May this year, the day I was licensed three years ago, I received a letter from the Archbishop about my appointment as Area Dean of Greater Brecon. It might be just a coincidence for many people, but I do not believe in coincidences for me. I believe that things happen for a purpose. The date - 11th May, has been a source of great blessing in my life, as three years ago on this special date I was licensed. Coincidentally three years after my induction, on the exact day, I received a letter from the Archbishop informing me about my new appointment as Area Dean of Greater Brecon. Now, some may say this is mere chance, however I truly believe this to be a divine intervention; for everything happens for a purpose. Due to the current situation, I have had some time to focus on the additional responsibility that the Diocese has given to me, my existing ministry and the family.

As humans, we are created in the image of God. He has made each one of us to be something special, and maybe unique. During our Christian journey, God is not merely offering us a shuttle service from this life to the life eternal, but He is showing us how we can join with God in the redemptive plan for human beings and the universe.



It is one thing to have a vision, but without clear communication, it will never become a reality. Until others have understood the vision well enough to articulate it themselves, they cannot be expected to pursue it with passion.

When God gives us a vision about our family, church or community, He would like to fulfil the dream through us. For instance, King David was ready to start the construction of the temple: to build a House for the Lord, was his vision. But God told him that it would be his son rather than him. He might have been disappointed but he passed on his vision and provided all the support Solomon would need. King David was instrumental in making that dream a reality. It is a beautiful story worth reading in 1 Chronicles chapter 29. King David invited all the officials and leaders of

Rector's Reflection: Rev:Jeremy Bevan continued ...

the Israelite people and told them that he wanted to build a place for the Ark of the Covenant, but God wants to use my son for this plan. He articulated the vision God had given him to the senior Israelites.



It is essential to have a vision, but without clear communication, it will never become a reality. Others have to understand and be able to articulate it for themselves. Once people can capture the vision, then they will be able to pursue it passionately. After reading the above mentioned paragraph, you will have noticed that David made it clear that the vision was from God. He invited people to share his vision and informs them that Solomon, the future King, will take the vision forward. Then he gives sufficient details to his son.

When we discover our vision, it helps us to discover who we are and what talents and gifts we have been gifted with. It brings motivation, creates unity, keeps stability, leads to the right strategy and gives a purpose to our life.

One of the great joys of being a Christian is that you have the confidence of knowing that you are entwined into this great plan. While the specifics of our lives and calling may vary, we share a common purpose which is to believe passionately in the principles of God's Kingdom so that they are embedded into every area of our lives. Our vision ties us to this universal scriptural goal.

Jesus inspired and trained His disciples and repeatedly shared His vision. Our lord showed the confidence He had in them, that they will take His message to the ends of the earth. The function of inspirational leadership is to inspire hope. Jesus declared with great passion how His disciples could make a difference after He had departed into Heaven.



'Without a vision from God, we perish', as Proverbs 29:18 points out. We get tired in our walk of life and sometimes we lose impetus and our sense of purpose. If you are struggling to discover what God's vision is for yourself, be encouraged to take time to seek the Lord. Ask Him to speak to you and to reveal His plan and purpose for your life. When God gives you your life's vision and purpose, your spirit will be filled with zeal and an urgency to act in accordance and with reverence of what God has shown to you, and this will become habitual.

Crickhowell Parish Hall

Centrally located adjacent to St Edmund's church
Fully inclusive hall hire for up to 60 people.
Rates and hire form available on application.

Enquiries and bookings to Tel: 01873 812177

Email: bookings@parishhall.org.uk

www.crickparishhall.org.uk



Grenfells & Sons

Crickhowell family Grocer
 Open 7 days a week
 Largest range of groceries
 Free local deliveries
 phone us on 01873 810252 or
 come in and see for your
 self you will be amazed.
 see you soon

M T CASHELL & SONS LTD

Family Butcher & Delicatessen
 Purveyors of Quality Meats - Est 1975
Tel: 01873 810405
 email: mtcashell@btconnect.com

Opening Times:- Monday to Saturday 08:00 -17:30 Sunday:- 09:00 -12:00
Local Butcher Supporting Local & British Farmers



**Local butchers supporting
 local farmers.**

**Local fresh produce
 delivered to your door.**

**Simply send us an E-mail to
cashellsdelivery@btconnect.com
 to find out more !!**

Recipe of the Month: From Melloney Gold's Kitchen



Lock-down Suggestion for a Different Breakfast

A common problem for many of us, I suspect, is - Bananas. What do you do with bananas when they start to go freckled and the family refuse to eat them? I was brought up to eat them freckled or not. They are just as good and a bit sweeter in fact. But my children and grandchildren all turn up their noses at eating them. I have found one solution and maybe you have a few more. It is my new lockdown solution – Bananas on Toast.

Allow one slice of bread per person (minimum).

You will need butter or spread for the bread.

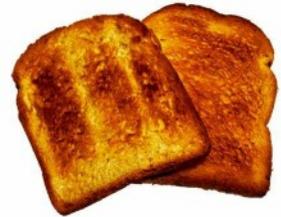
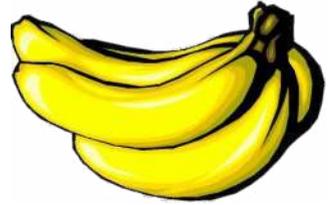
Allow one banana per slice of bread.

Put two heaped dessert spoons of sugar – the best is demerara, but any will do – in a small dish.

Add two teaspoons of cinnamon powder and mix with the sugar.

A small amount of butter for topping.

Method: Heat grill to full temperature. Take your grill pan and turn the grid inside the pan upside down. This will allow space for the topping to be able to go under the grill itself. Lay your bread on the grid in the grill pan and toast just one side. Remove and butter the untoasted side. Slice your banana(s) into a bowl with a fork and mash them. Lay the mashed banana(s) evenly over the buttered toast and sprinkle liberally with the cinnamon / sugar mixture. Dot with thin slivers of butter and replace under the grill. Toast until the sugar topping looks melted. Serve and enjoy. □



Enjoy the healthy benefits of Reflexology at Brynteg Natural Therapies

Award winning Zone Face Lift * Facial/foot Reflexology

* Reflexology Lymphatic Drainage.

Non Toxic & Vegan friendly Pedicures *Mobile Service Available*

Bespoke treatments available.

All subject to Consultation inclusive.

To make an appointment or if you would like to see if
Reflexology may help you,

kindly telephone Brynteg **01874 730582**



News from around the Ministry Area, Area Deanery Diocese, Church in Wales & UK: May & June 2020

News from the Kelling family (CMS) in Jordan

Apologies for our long silence, I think it has been almost a year since we were last in touch, and obviously circumstances have changed significantly in the last few weeks in ways we possibly couldn't have imagined! We hope that everyone at St. Edmund's is doing well and you are finding ways to stay connected despite the restrictions on socialising. We just wanted to touch base and find out how things are with you all, and let you know of our current situation.

We were anticipating writing to you now to let you know that we would be back in the UK this summer and were hoping to make a visit to Crickhowell. We also wanted to share the happy news that we are expecting a second child in June, which was partly the reason for the return to the UK. However, with all the current travel restrictions, the airport here will remain closed until after the last date I can fly, which means that the baby is now due to be born here in Jordan.



Jordan has been under curfew for the past three weeks - the government reacted very swiftly when there were only a few cases, and so the situation here seems to be relatively under control. There are currently restrictions on movement (only on foot within your neighbourhood, ages 16-60 and between the hours of 10am-6pm) and periods of intermittent full curfew (like this weekend), but the policy seems to be effective in controlling further spread. We are hoping though that they may be lifted enough that we are able to go and collect some of the items we will need, as we left most of our baby stuff in the UK in anticipation of being there!

Here, we are slowly adjusting to this 'new normal' with an active two year old at home all day, Joel trying to get some work done, and my belly ever growing! We are very aware though that we are in a privileged position, many people around us are less able to stockpile and as daily wage-earners are affected much more by the lock-down. One of the things Joel has been working on is sharing stories of how the local church is working to support those who are particularly vulnerable as a result of the challenges in responding to COVID-19. You can find the first one from St. Paul's, Ashrafiyeh (where we attend) here: <https://bit.ly/2ybD8bt>

The situation also unfortunately means that any travel to the UK this summer is now in question - Joel's brother is currently planning to get married on the 8th of August, and if that goes ahead we would like to try and be there. However, at this stage, as I am sure you are experiencing too, everything is a bit unknown. We do hope to be able to visit in person at some point though, and will keep in touch as things progress. Our next link letter should be coming out in the coming weeks. If in the meantime, you would like any additional information, videos, or participation in online meetings, please do just let us know!

We follow the eastern calendar in Jordan, so our (online) Holy Week is only just about to begin, but we pray that you and all the congregation are able to experience the joy of the resurrection amidst the challenges these days bring us. Many blessings,

Fiona, Joel, Aidan and the Bump ↵

News from around the Ministry Area, Area Deanery Diocese, Church in Wales & UK: continued.....



Encouraging kids with John Wesley's rule:

A primary school in Wigan has been encouraging their pupils in their home environments with a video reminding them of John Wesley's rule for Christian living..

With children out of school, head teachers are reaching out to the students they are missing in a variety of ways. The assistant head teacher at Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School in Leigh, Wigan, wanted to reach out and encourage the children from her school, and so created a short video, shared on social media, where each member of staff was invited to hold up a word from John Wesley's rule for life.



Here, the assistant head teacher tells Youth and Children's Work how making the video helped remind children how much they are missed and that we should be there for each other in lock-down.

John Wesley's rule is about doing good in all the places you can to all the people you can and for as long as you can. In a time when we might feel disconnected, we thought it was vital to try and stay connected with people and John Wesley's rule just seems so pertinent because it means trying to do all the good you can regardless of the situation that you are in at the moment.

Asking our staff to share the pictures and come together was not only a way to send a message of love from us because we miss the children so much, but actually to share a really important message that in this unprecedented and scary time, you can still make a difference and you can still do some good. No matter how small, you can still make a difference.

We've heard so many lovely stories and the children are constantly uploading and sharing with staff, starting with pictures of the rainbows in windows which I've done with my own two little girls. We've heard of children looking after people who are in need, who have family or neighbours that they've helped, and it's all down to that message of staying strong and staying safe, but doing good in the moment. □

Rob Yorke Countryside Reconciliation

**Walks and talks,
Chair for meetings,
Rural negotiator**

**robyorke.co.uk
01873 890305**



The Ministry Area Diary: June and July 2020



Mothers Union News:



Donations are beginning to come in to offset the expected deficit which Mary Sumner House has estimated at £1 million this year. Dioceses have been asked to consider using some of their reserves and Swansea and Brecon have been able to do this. Large donations have also come from the Provinces of Canada and Australia and individual members are contributing according to their means. So we continue to pray that Mothers' Union will be able to survive this crisis along with many other charities.

In the diocese we usually provide 3 or 4 holidays each year for disadvantaged families but of course this will not be possible this year. The money we would have spent on this project has been redirected to additional help for the four women's refuges in the Diocese. We have been able to increase the amount we donate to the three food shops each year at Easter, the summer and Christmas, and we have been able to set up an emergency fund for the two houses in the north of the Diocese, one at Brecon the other at Llandrindod Wells. This will be used to help women and families when they move from the safe house to their own accommodation. In addition we are keeping in close contact with the managers of the houses and continuing to help provide other items which they may need. It is very disturbing to read in the media about the increase in domestic violence during this difficult period of lockdown. The Trustees have been able to organise this via meetings on Microsoft Teams. Life would have been much more difficult without the technology we have these days.



The Mothers' Union website is providing much needed resources including mid-day prayers which members can join in.

Please note that none of the events below, apart from St Edmund's Youth Club update, are currently taking place due to the corona virus.

Caffi Croeso: We meet in Maes -y- Ffynon, Crickhowell (Please note change of venue) from 1:30pm to 4:30pm on the third Thursday of the month. **All are welcome.**

Gilwern Bible Study: Mondays at 6:30pm. We are studying the Gospel of St John. All are welcome. Contact Rev: Jeremy Bevan Tel: 01873 830280 for further information re venue.

Oak View Home Group: We meet on Wednesdays 7:30pm at Caer, Oak View, Brecon Rd, the home of Brenda and David Gooding. Please see weekly Newsletter or contact Brenda for more details. Newcomers welcome. Contact Brenda on: 01873 812113, or Rev Barry Roche on 01495 311048 for more details.



The Ministry Area Diary: May and June 2020 continued....

The Alternative St Edmund's Bible Study Group: Please contact John Matty on 01873 812953, or Rennie Gold on 01874 730968 for further information.



Bryn Nant Home Group: Crickhowell: Meets every Wednesday 7:30pm to 9:30pm. at 6 Bryn Nant, Crickhowell.(or check with Kathryn 07971 255262)

Men's Prayer Breakfast: 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month: All men are welcome from any parish or denomination at 8am in Crickhowell Parish Hall: Contact Richard 01873 810919

Gilwern Toddler Group: Thursdays at 9:15am to 11:15am (term time only)
Venue: Gilwern Parish Hall, Abergavenny Rd. Please contact Nicci Bevan if you would like further information Tel: 01873 830280

Messy MondayTots and Carers Group: Mondays from 9:30am to 11:30am in Crickhowell Parish Hall during Term Time. Please contact Mairwen Large on 07968 864114 for more information.

St Edmund's Youth Clubs update:

TotesAmazeBells Club: Due to the COVID19 situation, we are unfortunately not able to meet weekly in the hall or to ring the church bells. We are however, keeping in contact with the young people through a WhatsApp group chat at least once a week (usually Monday evenings) and a group ZOOM chat once a week (Thursday evenings). I am also posting information, mini videos, mini quizzes, doodle art sheets, reflective spaces, links to helpful sites and other thoughtful and fun items on the WhatsApp site.



If you know of any young people who would like to join in with either or both the WhatsApp and ZOOM chats or would like helpful things sent directly to them, please do get in touch with me.

I also have a few things which may be of help for parents trying to cope with having young people at home all the time and info re COVID19 issues and young people.

Suzanne and Ed are also still in contact with their group of older young people using WhatsApp, Zoom and HouseParty.

For info about any of the groups or resources available, please contact me on:

01873 812093 or 07976 737665 or kerryadrian555@hotmail.com

Thanks.

Keep safe and well

Kerry Andrews □



A forgotten part of God's Creation - and a Challenge.. Mike Stroud

In which Mike introduces us to the amazing wonders – and beauty of fungi, and challenges us to find one for ourselves – read on! Ed..

In this time of lockdown people seem to be becoming increasingly aware and to appreciate more the natural world about them, as a part of God's whole Creation - birdsong, wild flowers, trees and so on. Living in this beautiful part of Wales we are, of course, incredibly privileged and only need to step out of our front doors to become immersed in it and profoundly thankful for our own extremely good fortune.

Many of you who know us - Shelly and Mike - will also know that we are a bit 'nutty' about that somewhat overlooked aspect of Nature, but quite possibly the largest of all the so-called 'Natural Kingdoms': Fungi.

So often when people, for the first time, go on a led Fungal Walk they are amazed by the sheer diversity and number of different fungi they see, once they begin to start **looking!** The bit of the fungus that we generally see is the fruiting body, rather like the apple on an apple tree, as the main part of the fungus is hidden away, for example in the soil *.

But you don't need to go on a special event to find these little beauties: they will be all about you in your garden and everywhere else, performing their unseen, but vital work of waste recycling and providing nutrients for all our green plants - trees, flowers, crops, etc. And, of course, we use them the whole time in our daily life to produce a huge range of things, such as antibiotics, statins, bread, cheese, chocolate, beer & wines, citric acid, just to name a very few.

Let me give an example and set you a challenge. All you need is a good (well, functioning!) pair of eyes, although a magnifying glass can be helpful to those of us who are a bit past our first flush of youth - and children are amazing at spotting fungi and enjoy the fun, like on an Easter Egg Hunt!



A very widespread group, which don't look like ordinary mushrooms, are the Bird's Nest Fungi. As the name suggests, these look like tiny birds' nests, usually in the range 0.5 - 1.5 cm high and across, depending on the particular species. When young the 'nest' is covered by a membrane which, on maturity, falls away to reveal the 'eggs'. These contain the fungal spores, which are released when a raindrop falls on them.

One of these is the Common Bird's Fungus, which occurs on old bits of rotting wood and sticks all over the place - especially, in gardens on path wood-chippings, old posts, and even old bamboo canes. We almost always have these somewhere in our rather untidy vegetable garden. 🍄



A forgotten part of God's Creation - and a Challenge..
Mike Stroud continued...

You might also very well find the Fluted Bird's Nest which can often occur in droves of many tens, or even hundreds, or thousands in a good season, like those (below, left) which we found in a garden at Raglan.



The challenge is to see if you can find and photograph one of these Bird's Nest Fungi in your garden, or somewhere near where you live - there are a number of different species.

If you're successful and want to send the picture to us, our email address is mikestroud1@btinternet.com, - no prizes, though, except the joy of discovery.... sorry!

Even if you don't find a Bird's Nest (and someone surely will), who knows what other fungi you will find, once you start looking for them good hunting!

* *Fungal fact: The largest single, living organism on Earth is not a whale or a tree, but a fungus (one of the species of Honey Fungus). It covers about 3½ square miles, is more than 2,500 years old and maybe weighs as much as 35,000 tons.□*



Where was the social distancing?

**CARPET and UPHOLSTERY
CLEANING**

*Are your carpets or sofas
looking a bit tired?
Let us give them a new lease
of life and save you having to
replace them.*

**Husband and wife team.
Fully trained and qualified.
Established 2006.**

Call Michael and Mary-Jane
for a free quotation on:
07941 283495

or email:
michaelhoulton2@gmail.com



The Red Carpet Cleaning Co



DJ PROTHEROE & SONS LTD

The family run funeral directors

Telephone

07545 006922 • 01495 311171



*4 Station Road, Brynmawr, NP23 4NA
24 Hour Service*

Update on Prayer Spaces in Schools : Rev. Jeremy Bevan and Nicci Bevan

<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/>



Over the past couple of years we have been showing those at school how to pray, and we have been creating Prayer Spaces in the schools using a series of activities designed to help them learn to pray. They are designed so that the children who do not wish to pray can still use these activities to process their thoughts and fears, their hopes and feelings, in wholesome and helpful ways.

Now that our children are not out and about, and now that we cannot do what we normally do for them at school, we have tried to come up with something for them at home. Now that we can only touch people by Internet we have prepared a couple of activities on video so that we can pass on the benefit to the children at home, and indeed to any who might be better off for it; it can actually work for anyone.

These three activities have been chosen for their particular relevance to our peculiar circumstances.

The first activity, that of '*People Stones*' is for those who we care about but cannot be with.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4KSpkuhlc&t=6s>



We are left feeling helpless about things we cannot change or help, and remote from people we care about but cannot touch. The idea is to allow the stones to be something we touch while we think about them, and for the weight and hardness of the stones to make us feel our longing and desire, and helplessness; and then release them, to ask God to care for those whom we cannot help.

The second activity, '*Inside Bubbles*', is because when cooped up, and when confined, and when denied many things which are normal for us, feelings come bubbling up inside of us.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WReirNZf3g0&t=79s>

Some of those feelings are hard to describe or express. Some are not nice. It is a way to blow them out, to get rid of them without quarrelling or hurting anyone else. A Christian might then remember the gift of the Holy Spirit, and how Jesus breathed on the disciples, and how the hymn says *Breath On Me Breath Of God*, and ask for the Lord's strength, and breath in the Gift of God, the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the third activity is to recall some things that have gone wrong, and to ask for them to be made better. This might mean recognising that we have done something wrong, or someone else has done something wrong, or that it just happened; the main point being that we are asking for it to be redeemed.

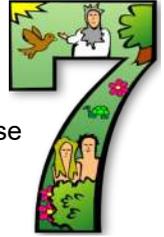


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJTdIBfdTfg&feature=youtu.be>



And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:2–3 ESV)

Here at the end of the Creation story, God Rests, and thus consecrates the seventh day; the Sabbath. The name given in this account is rendered as God, representing the Hebrew word Elohim, which in Scripture is used as a name for God, but in the general sense of the God who is God, but not necessarily known by everyone, or acknowledged by everyone. Alone it is often used in the kind of literature known as ‘wisdom literature’ and refers to God in a more abstract, or less personal way. In this instance from the Creation story it asserts that He is the Creator of everything, irrespective of whether regarded as such; that He is the universal Creator of all things. This has nothing to do with whether anyone believes in Him or not, or fears Him, or worships Him; He is still their Creator. This is not a specific part of covenant or salvation; it is simply a fact that applies to everyone. Wisdom in general applies to everyone, and wisdom literature tends to describe universal principles. Stated here then it makes the assertion that this principle of Rest applies to everyone, and even to the Universe itself. Somehow, that the principle of Rest is built into the fabric of Creation.



“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8–11 ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’” (Exodus 31:12–17 ESV)

““Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any

work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12–15 ESV)

Here a point of importance is reiterated to the Israelites; that they must keep the Sabbath. Something about it is vitally important. It is related directly to Creation, thus to a universal principle, and to honouring God who is now described as LORD as well; for not only is He the Universal Creator, but now He is also their own Saviour, with whom they are making a covenant. Formal observance is a sign of that covenant, and added to that, it is also a mark of memory and compassion; they were to remember their own captivity and forced labour, and to have compassion on the helpless in their land. To rest as God rested was to honour Him, as well as to show compassion and acknowledge their origins.



For the Festival of Passover; ***On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. But you shall present a food offering to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.***” (Leviticus 23:7–8)

For the Festival of Weeks, or, Pentecost; ***And you shall make a proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.*** (Leviticus 23:21)

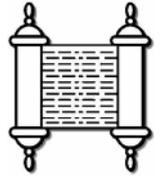
For the Festival Of Trumpets ***“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”*** (Leviticus 23:24–25)

For the Day Of Atonement; ***And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.*** (Leviticus 23:28)

For the Festival Of Booths; ***“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.*** (Leviticus 23:39–40)

Rest: Rev: Jeremy Bevan Continued ...

So not only were the weekly Sabbaths, days of rest, a means of honouring the LORD their God, but also in the Torah, in the law of Moses were instructions for festivals; prolonged times of celebration for the whole community, which included at least a formal two days of rest at each one, as well as any normal Sabbaths. The festivals of Trumpets, Atonement and Booths might run together, resulting in a two week national holiday, in which most normal business would stop, and the people would therefore rest. It would have acted as a kind of New Year's holiday, and break; a reunion of friends and family, and public observances to honour their God, their deliverer and guide, and ultimate King.



Leviticus 25:3–4 *For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. (ESV)*

Here that principle of Rest is extended to the land itself. It seems that not only do people need to rest, but also the land. Since ancient times, farmers have noted how land becomes exhausted and needs to lie fallow; how crops need rotation, but here the whole land at once will be un-worked, and stores used up, and natural self-perpetuating crops will grow, and how wild animals and birds and plants will proliferate. This principle of the Sabbath rest for the land underlies the way the Bible speaks about the ethics of the environment; about the way in which we use, interact, and treat the land, the whole world around us.

The people will not be working hard for a whole year. They will not be wholly idle, since some things always need to be done, and various injunctions in Proverbs would encourage a certain industriousness; but the relentless pursuit of ambition, of wealth creation, of the accumulation of goods, was contradicted, and in this time other tasks could be pursued. Some companies offer sabbaticals to their employees; an extended time of leave to pursue study, a hobby, to travel or learn something new. It is a privilege, and sought after, but it represents two things; a desire for the well being of their employees, and an investment in them. It makes them better as people, and thus better as employees. It is not just a pleasant act giving with a warm glow, like a bottle of wine or a box of chocolates, but it can be helpful and restorative; it can actually be good for them. It is a somewhat rare but real acknowledgment that this principle of Rest, even keeping the biblical label for it, the Sabbatical, is known in the secular world.



Leviticus 25:8–12 *“You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of* ↵

you shall return to his clan. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You may eat the produce of the field. (ESV)

Here that principle of Rest is extended even further, not just an extended, even longer Rest for the land; but also a complete rest from debt, from capital loss, from homelessness, from accumulated bonds of obligations, from contracts, and any other things hampering people. It would only be once in a lifetime, but that once would be a great sigh of relief to those who had struggled, made grievous mistakes, had bad luck, and lost everything. Our circumstances are not the same as ancient Israel, and this whole thing is based on different systems of landownership, citizenship, and mutual obligations. It does give pause for thought though. This is legal and economic Rest to match environmental, social, and physical Rest. It demonstrates the all encompassing nature of Rest in the universe, and that all nature and every aspect of life is included in it.



It also suggests that not to do this is wrong, harmful, and dishonouring to God, lacking compassion, and a denial of who we are.

Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels. He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years. (2 Chronicles 36; 17-21)

Here the whole disaster of the conquest of Judah and Jerusalem, and the sack of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, is linked to Rest. The desolation lasted until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. It was as if the Exile was a corrective to a lack of Rest; as if having neglected to give the land Rest, the land then took its Rest, forcibly. One part of this might be summed up, that if the Israelites would not voluntarily observe the Law, and give Rest to the land and the people, the Rest would be imposed, involuntarily if necessary. Rather like someone who works too hard, who will not Rest, and then whose health fails, and ends up sick in bed, being forced to Rest. The seventy years would amount to 490 years of the kingdom not giving the land its Sabbaths, not including jubilees, which would make it up to 500 years. This takes the calendar back to 1086 BC,



Rest: Rev: Jeremy Bevan Continued ...

which is roughly the time of Samuel, the last Judge, who anointed firstly Saul and then David as kings over Israel. It would suggest something lacking in the kingdom for that whole time, from its inception under Saul till its demise in 586, ***under Zedekiah, who was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and who reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. Who did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Who did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. (2 Chronicles 36:11–12).***

What this has to do with us is that we are being forced to Rest. It begs the question, what was lacking before that is now being forced upon us?

For us in these times, we can respond to this idea of Rest.

We can look upon this enforced Rest as a kind of repentance from not Resting in the past.

We can take stock of our priorities and plan to do this better in the future; to take our Rest, in order to honour God, remembering who we are, and who He is, and to show compassion on the helpless.

We can also enter Rest.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4; 11-13)

This Rest is not just a cessation from activity, but a spiritual place before the LORD. The writer to the Hebrews is speaking ultimately of Heaven, of our eternal home, which he describes as Rest. In the same way though, just as various other events, activities and experiences can be a foretaste of Heaven, just so Rest. In other words, we can enter Rest in the presence of the Living God; we can feel and receive the restorative benefits of Rest as a spiritual experience in the present. Disobedience will lead against it, or mitigate against it, and thus the way into it would be the way of obedience; and since the writer then mentions Scripture, it will be in according with, and as a part of the reception of Scripture. To illustrate this further, Isaiah says; ***For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."*** (Isaiah 30;15) The way to Rest is by repentance; and there will we find quietness and strength. There, repented in the LORD, in his presence, we find security and peace; Rest from all that troubles us. A foretaste of heaven; and health for our souls. □



honeycomb

PRINT SERVICES LTD



Relax...

Let us take care of your

Printing

create
design
print

01873 858047

info@honeycombprint.com

Unit 4 Mill Street Industrial Estate | Abergavenny



***High quality, organic plastic free foods, oil & vinegars
cleaning products and zero waste lifestyle products***

**Shop 1 Corn Exchange, 54 High Street, Crickhowell, NP8 1BH
Tel: 01873 269 493 Website: www.naturalweigh.co.uk**

Monthly Gardening Tips:

From Ella Thomas



Ella's garden is now three years old after her move, and she shares her review, three years down the road, with us.. Ed

By the time you read these notes it is possible that the restrictions on lock-down may have been eased a little. I am certainly hoping that garden centre's may be able to open and that the National Trust may be able to re-open its gardens. We are continually reminded how important gardening is to our mental and physical health.



In April we had wonderful sunny, warm days and mostly frost free nights which meant that blossom on fruit and cherry trees has been exceptional, giving hopes of a bumper harvest in the autumn. The rain came just at the right moment too as everywhere was very dry after four weeks without rain.



Now we are into June and the longest day of the year when everything puts on great spurts of growth. Roses will be in bloom so keep an eye open for aphids - they just love the young tender leaves. It is easy to get rid of them with your finger and thumb, perhaps in a glove, rather than use chemical methods. Lily beetle is also around and will soon do a lot of damage to lilies – you can't miss them as they are bright red.

Take care how you approach them as they have a habit of dropping off and falling onto the soil on their black undersides so that you can't see them.

Both roses and lilies are very suitable for pots if, like me, you don't have a great deal of space. Agapanthus also do well in pots and provide stunning and exotic flowers for a long time every year. They like to be pot bound to flower well. Most lilies are suitable for pots but you need to choose carefully what variety of rose is suitable for a pot. There is a lot of advice on line. Any plant that is staying in a pot for years needs a good compost such as John Innes No 2 or 3. Most roses and trees need JI No 3. Multi -purpose compost just doesn't have sufficient nutrients and bulk. In addition long-stay plants in pots require additional feed – something like liquid seaweed is good if you can get it at the moment.

My garden is now 3 years old and beginning to look more established. The climbing roses and clematis look as if they are going to do well this year as are most of my plants. There are a few areas that are not quite right yet but it is interesting to see the difference in the plants that I brought with me – again this comes down to 'right plant right place'. Not everything will grow where you think you would like it to grow! This is one of the interesting, sometimes frustrating, but always joyous aspects of gardening.



Happy gardening!

“Rural Rocks - rural reality without rose tinting” with Rob Yorke a rural surveyor



Rob reflects on our views about where we source our food during the pandemic.. Ed

The virus pandemic has made many think about food. How to find it, buy it, store it, horde it, eat it, re-heat it and not waste it. Tied in with the 75th Anniversary of VE Day when food really was scarce and rabbits were Sunday roasts, there's a hope that farmers will be appreciated for the quality of domestic seasonal groceries rather than consumers merely stating our expectations for year-round produce from around the world. Of course, to frame the discussion it's important to highlight the difference between food security (access to nutritional food at all times) and self-sufficiency (UK is circa 60% home-producing food). We need both - access to global markets for healthy food and expansion of especially more fruit and veg here - especially when society is also 'demanding' that farmers deliver more wildlife, woodlands, carbon stores and National Park landscapes. □



Remember your Future...

As Wales's oldest firm, Gabb and Co has been helping local people protect their families' legal affairs since 1760 so we know how important reliable and personal advice is to you.

For a no-obligation discussion about Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Trusts or Property contact David Lloyd, Ruth Main or Anneli Jones on 01873 810629 or email crickhowell@gabb.co.uk


www.gabb.co.uk

Old Bank House, Beaufort Street, Crickhowell NP8 1AD

Thought for the month: Anne Hayward

'I passed the hour of retirement in my garden and was melted into tears by the divine goodness.'

Charles Wesley, writing in his diary in 1749.

It's now over five years since I started writing this Thought for the Month for the St Catwg Ministry Area magazine. Over that time I have built up a bank of possibly useful subjects for future editions, making notes in a word document on my computer. These have included material for 'Thoughts' appropriate to the great festivals of the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Harvest as well as less obvious times such as All Saints Day, Bible Sunday or the World Day of Prayer.



There have also been 'Thoughts' based around once in a lifetime commemorations such as the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War and the 500 years since Martin Luther's 'ninety-five theses' opened the floodgates to the great changes in the religious landscape of Europe that we call the Reformation.



Some 'Thoughts' have been different again in that they've taken as a theme a feature of our local landscape (the Eglwys Faen cave above Llangattock, our area's ancient yew trees, the Paramor apple orchard at Cwmdru and so on) or they've taken the form of reflections on the wonderful features of our local churches such as the rood screen at Patricio or the banner featuring St Edmund at Crickhowell.

But in all the wide range of ideas and material that I've put in my word document and that I hoped would be useful one day, I'm sure it won't surprise you to learn that I had nothing in mind for a time of global pandemic. As with all of us in our many different activities and lifestyles, I have been completely unprepared for this once in a century crisis and the ensuing tragic loss of life in so many families and nations around the world.

However, I had a few possible subjects tucked away on a 'this might come in handy one day' basis. One of these was 'Gardens', prompted by reading a quotation from Charles Wesley, written in his diary in 1749, **'I passed the hour of retirement in my garden and was melted into tears by the divine goodness'**. (I came across this when I visited the New Rooms in Bristol-one of the earliest Methodist churches and including a small museum- when I was walking to Brittany on my pilgrimage in 2016.)



So, mindful that this month of June would normally have seen the wonderful Crickhowell Open Gardens taking place, what can we say about gardens in this time of Covid-19?



Thought for the month: Anne Hayward

I expect just about everyone who reads this magazine has access to a garden and probably one with lovely views of our beautiful local area too. Sitting in my own garden with the fields beyond going down to the Clydach river and with Pen Cerrig-calch in front of me and the Sugar Loaf behind, I have certainly felt very blessed and even privileged during 'lockdown'. However, I hope I have also become more aware of the needs of those people who live in tower blocks and apartments, sometimes even without a balcony let alone a garden. How difficult it must have been for them in these times when we've all been required to 'stay at home'.



I am in awe of the resilience and stamina of these people, whether they are in the big cities of Britain or those of China or Europe, and I'm sure we all now want to see greater and perhaps more imaginative provision of open spaces and gardens for all. **Whether it's being able to grow vegetables, kick a football around or just sit in the sun we all need the restorative benefits of a garden, as Charles Wesley observed.**

But gardens take us to a place beyond our immediate human needs for exercise and recreation; as Charles Wesley notes, they are places where we can meet God, allowing him to touch our hearts melted as they are by 'the divine goodness'. **In the quiet of a garden and in the observation of the created world as it plays out its cycle through the seasons, we can allow God, who is the source of all goodness, to touch us anew and even to soften and reform our hearts.**

In our walk with God, we may have become dull and complacent or even hard or cynical but in these challenging times and in the 'retirement' of our own gardens, may we allow the 'divine goodness' to melt us into tears again. □



Jan's Violin and Singing Lessons

Friendly, experienced and qualified teacher.

Beginners to advanced - All ages welcome

Exam grades or simply for pleasure

1-2-1 live online Skype violin lessons also available

Phone or text 07812 649013

Email: JanT-A@hotmail.co.uk

Crickhowell, Cwmdu & Tretower Parish News

Rector & Ministry Area Leader: Rev. Rana Khan. rector@crickhowellparish.org.uk

Tel: 01873 810944 www.crickhowellparish.org.uk St-Edmunds-Church-Crickhowell

St. Edmund's Church, Crickhowell.

St Edmund's Youth Clubs update:

TotesAmazeBells Club: Due to the COVID19 situation, we are unfortunately not able to meet weekly in the hall or ring the church bells. We are however, keeping in contact with the young people through a WhatsApp group chat at least once a week (usually Monday evenings) and a group ZOOM chat once a week (Thursday evenings). I am also posting information, mini videos, mini quizzes, doodle art sheets, reflective spaces, links to helpful sites and other thoughtful and fun items on the WhatsApp site.



If you know of any young people who would like to join in with either or both the WhatsApp and ZOOM chats or would like helpful things sent directly to them, please do get in touch with me.

I also have a few things which may be of help for parents trying to cope with having young people at home all the time and info re COVID19 issues and young people.

Suzanne and Ed are also still in contact with their group of older young people using WhatsApp, Zoom and HouseParty.

For info about any of the groups or resources available, please contact me on: 01873 812093 or 07976 737665 or kerryadrian555@hotmail.com

Thank you .

Keep safe and well

Kerry Andrews

Fundraising for Velindre:

Since just before lockdown, John decided to keep himself busy by walking from John O' Groats to Land's End on his treadmill, in the garden and our once a day walk. He's done well over 600 miles with approximately 200 to go. He's decided to use this to raise money for **Velindre**.

Rich our son, has set up a 'Just Giving Page.' If anyone would like to kindly donate the link is attached.

Thanks Linda Parsons

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/richard-parsons19?utm_source=Sharethis&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=richard-parsons19&utm_campaign=pfp-email&utm_term=109e73acad1e46d88d377829b6934ef1



Crickhowell, Cwmdu & Tretower Parish News

Ministry Area Magazine Subscription: £7:

If you haven't paid your yearly subscription for the magazine yet, please wait until normal services resume in church and put it in a named envelope marked 'Magazine' and place it on the offertory plate.

NB: All of our usual church meetings and activities will recommence when it is safe to do so.

Messy Mondays: meets in the Parish Hall, Crickhowell on Mondays

in term time: Our weekly pre-schoolers' group runs from **9:30am - 11:30am**, with a craft activity or two, free play, snacks at 10:30am, story and singing time. Anyone caring for a child is most welcome - parents, grandparents and child minders and it is suitable for children of any age. Breast-feeding mums welcome. £2 per adult and first child, and £1 for each additional child.



Messy Church: 2nd Sunday each month at 4pm. Pre-school children and their carers are most welcome to all these events. Contact Mairwen: Email: stedscfw@gmail.com

Men's Prayer Breakfast : 1st and 3rd Saturday:

Usually held in the Parish Hall, Church Lane, Crickhowell at 8:00am on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month. All men welcome from any parish or denomination: Contact Richard 01873 810919.



Oak View Home group (formally Beaufort Ave Group): Usually we meet on Wednesdays at 7:30pm at Caer, Oak View, Brecon Rd, the home of Brenda and David Gooding. Please see weekly notes or contact Brenda Gooding for more details. 01873 812113

Bryn-Nant Homegroup (6 Bryn-Nant): . Usually we meet every Wednesday at 7:30pm. New members always welcome. We may be meeting in different venues so please do contact Kathryn: 07971 255262.

The Alternative St Edmund's Bible Study Group: Please contact John Matty on 01873 812953 for further information.



St Michael's Church, Cwmdu:

May 2020 will surely be remembered as the month that never was; all the events that annually take place just never did. Looking back in last year's diary we should have held AGM's for Community Councils, Annual Vestry Meetings, Crickhowell Choral Society Festival weekend, Hay Festival, Rogation Sunday at St Michael's, innumerable AGM's for many clubs and society's etc. and so many holiday plans that had to be cancelled. On the bright side we have experienced a great strengthening of community spirit, highlighted by the fantastic support



Crickhowell, Cwmdu & Tretower Parish News

provided by the shopkeepers, café and pub owners and volunteers of Crickhowell and District; we are truly fortunate to live in this wonderful area.

Reminder that the annual magazine subscription of £7 is now due; sincere thanks to those who have paid before being reminded. The money can be given to the Treasurer, either of the Church Wardens or to any member of the PCC. We realise that due to the current situation it is virtually impossible to collect the subscriptions at the moment but the coming months will hopefully see a relaxation of the present lockdown so when this occurs we shall remind you again! There will be a reduction in next year's subscription because of the necessity for online publishing for several months this year.



Congratulations to all those who have been involved in the streaming of church services throughout the Ministry Area during this period of lockdown; they have done a marvellous job and we are truly grateful.

Kitchen dilemma: last week we had tweets in the kitchen; not the sort that Donald Trump delights in sending but proper tweets i.e. chirping noises. They seemed to be coming from just above our top corner kitchen unit. On climbing up to investigate, the little noises were coming from the tube that connected the cooker hood extraction fan to the outside of the building. The kitchen backs onto the road so I walked round only to be met by a friend, walking her dog who was standing gazing in wonder as Mrs Sparrow flew out of the small exit hood of our extractor fan leaving her babies tweeting away in the nest she had built. The noises are increasing in volume daily as the chicks are growing and we are just hoping that when they fledge they will have the sense to fly out and not in as I don't fancy cutting open the flexible hose to release them. The other problem is that I have to remember not to switch the fan on instead of the light ; the two switches are side by side on the underside of the hood and without my glasses on I cannot tell which is which!



St. John's Church, Tretower

I'm Afraid I have nothing to report, but am probably not alone!

Ann Grant fell in the garden and cracked her hip. She is now out of The Royal Gwent and in Bronllys for recuperation. As she was virtually George's carer there was considerable concern for his well-being. However, he is coping and is now on five circuits of the Close with his walker per day, watch out Captain Tom! The help given by neighbours knew no bounds, in spite of social distancing! The people in St. Johns Close are an example to us all.

Kindest regards

Peta. ☐

Jesus and the temple: Rev. Jeremy Bevan

So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:18–22 ESV)

Here Jesus has just driven out the market from one of the Temple courts; the livestock sellers, the money changers, and whatever other hawkers were there. Zeal for the House has consumed him, and has provoked his anger. He is challenged; 'what right do you have to do this? What authority do you wield? Who gave you the right or authority to tell us and do this?'



At the time it was a bit opaque, a bit of a non sequitur, for quizzed about rights and responsibilities, he responds with a bizarre claim, that later came back in his trial; that his right and authority was bound up with the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple. Immediately, it was no answer at all, but with the clear view of hindsight it was and is a profound statement about him, his mission, and his purpose, which all do truly reveal his authority.

The Temple was the physical House of God, but God did not live in a house; so it was called 'The Dwelling Place of the Name', 'The Place of the Presence', or 'The Place where the Presence rests'. It was the physical sign of the Presence of LORD amongst his people Israel, and of the Covenant. It was the focus of worship, and the sole place where the Presence of the one LORD God was acknowledged to be found; one God, one Covenant, one People, one Temple, one Land. It was the standing contradiction to all other pretences of any other things claiming worship; against all other truth claims; against all other laws, ways, and means. Anyone seeing it was confronted with the one holy, solitary, unique, Temple, of the one holy, solitary, unique LORD God.

For the previous decades it had been amended and decorated by Herod, and by the time of Jesus it was fabulous building of vast splendour. It was unique, not just in Jerusalem, but in the whole world, and visitors to Jerusalem were amazed by it. And 40 years later it was obliterated. Not one stone of its buildings remain, and only the platform upon which it was built is still there.



So who built it? Originally, it was Solomon, the son of David, whose name means *Peace*. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and the son of David, and thus he claims, by building again, to be the new Solomon; the King of Peace; the new builder of the Dwelling Place, of the Name, of the Presence; the new Sign of the LORD God amongst his people. Jesus here states that *He* will build the Temple. That implies something lacking in the Temple that is there, which is shown again by the cursing of the fruitless fig tree, which then dies and withers. This suggests that any temple built by people will be lacking; that only he, Jesus the Son of God is capable of building the Temple. It suggests that the Temple there was only ever a foreshadowing of the real Temple to come; the Temple built not by human hands, but by God.



Jesus and the temple: Rev. Jeremy Bevan continued ...

But then John mentions that the Temple Jesus was referring to was his Body.

This was then a foretelling of his Resurrection. It seems then that Jesus was aware of his death and resurrection for a while before it happened, and he made allusions and at times direct descriptions, but no one took what he said at either face value or symbolically, and so when he did rise, everyone was confounded.



Immediately then, his Resurrection proves something; his Authority. He has the right to tell us and correct us, and this is proven by that fact that he rose from the dead.

It also brings attention back to his body. The one with this Authority has a Body; he is Man, and he is Risen. It empathises his physical nature, as well as his authority, therefore it emphasises the Incarnation of the Son of God, who is the New Adam, and the King.

But this also brings another idea into focus; the combination of the Temple and Body. Paul describes the church as the Body of Christ; so then, that Body, the universal, spiritual, eternal, Church, can only live if Christ's own body be raised.

It also brings together the idea of the Presence; of the Dwelling Place of the Name; the Place where the Spirit rests. Paul and Peter both describe how we the Lords people are the Dwellings of his Spirit, and that we as such are like living stones being built into the new Temple, the Temple not built by men, but by God. The people of God are the Presence on Earth among the peoples, and the Sign of his Presence. He has written his name upon us, therefore we are bearers of his Name, and the Dwelling Place of the Name.

This draws near to the place of worship. The temple was also the place of worship, where the formal collective public worship was offered towards the presence of God. If we are the Lord's Temple, then we are also a place of worship. Jesus said that the Father sought worshippers who would worship in Spirit and Truth; and that the place of worship as not important; that it would not be neither Mount Gerazim, nor in Jerusalem. We could supply any name for Mount Gerazim, for the place of worship is the heart and soul and spirit of the worshipper; it is no physical location at all. Jesus is the Truth, and his Spirit dwells within his people; therefore only those who receive the truth in Jesus, and his Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, are capable of worship.



This means that we are the Dwelling Place of the Name, resting Place of his Spirit, the Sign of the Presence, the real Presence, the Place of Worship, whoever we are, and where ever we are, because we are the Lord's people, and this is His Will and Testament to us; the new Covenant in Jesus Christ; the covenant of Salvation in his Blood, which purchased our Redemption and Forgiveness, and is proven to us by those who saw him rise from the dead.

All this he said when confronted by those Jews who said, 'By what authority do you do these things?' □



Daily **HOPE**

A free phonenumber of hymns,
reflections and prayers

0800 804 8044

Are you in need of some daily
hope during this lockdown?

We have a new **FREE** telephone
line for you to ring to hear
comforting hymns, daily prayers
and reflections.

Smile Lines



One-line quiz questions

1. What time of day was Adam created?

Just a little before Eve.

2. Who was the fastest runner in the race?

Adam. He was first in the human race.

3. Why are atoms Catholic?

Because they all have mass.

4. Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?

Because Noah was always standing on the deck

5. Why didn't Noah ever go fishing?

He only had two worms.

6. Did Eve ever have a date with Adam?

No — just an apple.

7. Why did the unemployed man get excited while reading his Bible?

He thought he saw a job.

8. Does God love everyone?

Yes, but He prefers 'fruits of the spirit' to 'religious nuts'.

9. Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean?

He just knew there was something fishy about it.

10. What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

Absolutely ruthless.

11. The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose.

Mosquitoes come close, though.

12. What's so funny about forbidden fruits?

They create many jams.



The following are actual call centre conversations....

Wrong number

Customer: "I've been ringing you on 0700 2300 for two days. Why didn't you answer?"

Travel agent: "Where did you get that number from, sir?"

Customer: "It's there on the door to your Travel Centre."

Operator: "Sir, they are our opening hours."

Smile Lines



Other side?

Caller (enquiring about legal requirements while travelling in France): "If I register my car in France, do I have to change the steering wheel to the other side of the car?"

Sure

Then there was the caller who asked for a knitwear company in Woven.

Operator: "Woven? Are you sure?"

Caller: "Yes, of course. That's what it says on the label; Woven in Scotland."

Right-click

Tech Support: "I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop."

Customer: "OK."

Tech Support: "Did you get a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "OK. Right-click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?"

Customer: "Sure. You told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click'."



How to make your wife more efficient

An efficiency expert was delivering a seminar on time management for a company's junior executives. He concluded the session with a disclaimer: "But whatever you do, do NOT attempt these task-organising tips at home," he said.

When he was asked why not, he explained: "Well, I did a study of my wife's routine of fixing breakfast. I noticed she made a lot of trips between the refrigerator and the stove, the table and the cabinets, each time carrying only one item. So, I told her: 'Darling you are making too many trips back and forth carrying one item at a time. If you would only try carrying several things at once you would be much more efficient.'" He paused.

"Did that save time?" one of the executives asked.

"Actually, yes," the expert answered, "It used to take her 15 minutes to fix my breakfast. Now I get my own in seven minutes."



What it says on the sign

At a towing company: "We don't charge an arm and a leg.
We want your tows instead."

On a maternity room door: "Push. Push. Push."



Smile Lines



At an optometrist's office: "If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place."

In a podiatrist's office: "Time wounds all heels."

On a house's fence: "Salespeople welcome!
Dog food is expensive."



At a car dealership: "The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."

Outside a muffler shop: "No appointment necessary. We hear you coming."

In a veterinarian's waiting room: "Be back in five minutes. Sit! Stay!"

At the electric company: "We would be de-lighted if you pay your bill. However, if you don't, you will be."

In a restaurant window: "Don't stand there and be hungry.
Come on in and get fed up."

In the front yard of a funeral home: "Drive carefully. We're happy to wait."

Makeup

Every morning, a little girl would go in the bathroom to watch her mother as she was putting on her makeup to go to work. But during coronavirus, the mother stopped bothering with makeup, much to her daughter's confusion. "Mummy," she cried early on in the lockdown: "Come back! You forgot to kiss the toilet paper goodbye!"



Flat

Looking at the report on the financial condition of most nations today, we are inclined to think the old idea that the world was flat had some merit, after all.

Not a bride

"Something's wrong with me," sighed a young lady after a wedding. "I've been a bridesmaid twice, I even caught the bouquet, too; but I'm still single."

"Next time," advised her grandmother, "don't reach for the flowers; reach for the best man."

Polite church

"The congregation was wonderful," said the visiting minister after the Zoom service. "They were so polite that they even covered their mouths when they yawned." □

TURN TO US FOR HELP AND SUPPORT

In your time of need we'll take care of all the funeral arrangements.

Call us 24 hours a day.

- Funeral Pre-Payment Plans
- Memorials

T J THOMAS & SONS FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Henllys Funeral Home
Beaufort Hill, Ebbw Vale NP23 5QN



01495 303273

Part of Dignity plc. A British Company.



Commercial

Invest in solar and sustainable energy to increase your profitability and eco credentials. Funding and interest free credit can be available in Wales. We also design smart systems for locations with **grid limitations**.



Domestic

If you're looking to reduce energy costs, Green Park Power are your friendly and professional installers. Every installation is designed especially for your home and is seen through to completion. **10 year warranty as standard.**



Service & Repair

As a trusted Service Contractor Green Park Power have the experience to quickly identify and resolve the causes of system failure. We are also able to optimise many systems to gain a higher return on investment.

Ask us about: Solar Panels - Energy Storage - Off Grid Systems

**Green Park
Power**

Call: 01873 269031 or 07792 970406

Email: info@greenparkpower.co.uk

Visit: www.greenparkpower.co.uk

Green Park Renewables Ltd. Comp.No. 09497000 VAT No. 119968074



An Uncertain Poem in Hard and Uncertain Times

*I am no poet. But things go through my head, wandering,
Sometimes silkily, sometimes sandpapered by agitation.
I am barely a pray-er, but there's still conversation
With someone I know.
Is the someone myself or some god? A familiar?*

*I think science and patience will get most of us through this
At last. Not unscathed. And I'm not much for miracles.
But I still make daily appeal for faith, hope
And deep charity.
And I call someone "Dear God", as I did when a child.*

*I'm not much for rhyme; I like rhythm, drums speaking,
And hymn tunes and mountains. I lift up mine eyes
Unto the hills - whence cometh what aid?
Are you there waiting?
Kicking the toe of your sandal - no glory, no shimmer?*

*The connection between things now unravels before us,
Things done and undone - the planet, greed, sickness.
Will you let us think clearly, recover from blindness,
Give kindness a chance?
Be the God of small things and hear Solomon's Song!*

*Oh, enlighten us Loveliest. And I do mean that in all senses.
Bring lightness, bring vision in all dark, soul-heavy places,
To frightened, war broken, the cramped and the hungry,
And no home to find!
I believe in you then when you show them your presence.
I do.*

Anon

News from Judy Roche in lockdown at home in Nantyglo Ffald –y-Brenin

I thought I'd drop a note about an interesting meeting.

Just before lockdown we had a weekend in Fishguard. At breakfast we detected an accent which turned out to be a mother and son from New Zealand. Caroline said *'My son has brought me over because I wanted to go to Ffald y Brenin - have you heard of it?'* So of course we said we had friends who visited often and we had had a Church Visit from the leaders. Sadly, the Centre was closed but we were able to have a chat about our Christian faith, and we promised to pray for a safe journey home for them. It was an amazing experience as there were very few of us in the hotel.



I hope you are all well. We are coping OK at home, but will be glad to make the journey to Crickhowell in the future.

Love and prayers from Judy and Barry.

Barry will be 80 on June 28th. We were hoping to get together with family but that may have to be on Zoom! Judy.

Happy 80th Birthday Rev. Barry Roche

This prayer/meditation was used at the Clergy Spouses conference at St Edmund's. It is from the Northumbria Christian community

I will wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word do I hope.

Lord, You have always given bread for the coming day;
and though I am poor, today I believe.

Lord, You have always given strength for the coming day;
and though I am weak, today I believe.

Lord, You have always given peace for the coming day;
and though of anxious heart, today I believe.

Lord, You have always kept me safe in trials;
and now, tried as I am, today I believe.

Lord, You have always marked the road for the coming day;
and though it may be hidden, today I believe.

Lord, You have always lightened this darkness of mine;
and though the night is here, today I believe.

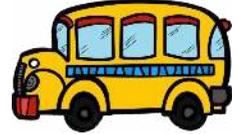
Lord, You have always spoken when time was ripe;
and though you be silent now, today I believe. □

Weekly Services/Groups/Meetings:

Sunday services – Please note that from Sunday 10th May all services will take place in St Elli Church, apart from the first Sunday in each month which will be in the Parish Centre, all commencing at 11am.

Portuguese Pleasures Part 2 : Claire Tipton.

Our Iberian odyssey continued with a three-day sidestep into Portugal, where an entirely different culture, language and landscape awaited us as well as an hour's time difference. To further complicate matters, our coach had developed a fault in Salamanca which necessitated one of the drivers remaining with it to supervise repairs. We soldiered on with our remaining non-Spanish speaking Welsh driver Paul, our new non-English speaking Spanish driver Paco and a Spanish coach that was a few features short of luxury travel status.



My folding drinks table behaved itself very well but our travelling companion in the seat in front of us was not so fortunate and out of pure Christian charity and by applying my massive engineering and problem-solving skills, I devised a Heath-Robinson contraption that secured her tray to the seat back with the aid of my handkerchief, which I hasten to mention had the added attraction of being clean. This all worked a treat until I wanted to blow my nose!

All was forgiven and forgotten as we caught sight of the spectacular city of Porto from above with its elegant bridges, old and new, port warehouses with familiar names, and delightful river Douro. We were bowled over by the students in long black capes marching around the town in groups, circling and protecting the new students dressed in red. Having lived and worked for a while in Porto, J.K. Rowling made good use of these capes for the Hogwarts school uniform in her Harry Potter novels.



With some time before our guided tour on the coach, we exhausted ourselves picking our way down through a maze of higgledy-piggledy buildings finally reaching the river to wave at enthusiastic boatloads of lively students, indulging in some seriously good ice-cream and marvel at the ingenuity of a guy pressing fresh oranges in a juicer powered by vigorously pedaling his bicycle. And I thought my hanky tray fastener was innovative!

We just had time to stagger back up the hill for a guided coach tour with a lovely young student whose English was superb but who unfortunately bored us silly with his obvious love of contemporary history which he was studying at university. Interesting buildings, monuments and landscape features were flashing by unexplained, but he was still droning on about the goodies and baddies of recent Portuguese history with not a glimmer of a chance of interrupting him.



Llanelly Parish News continued....

I'm ashamed to say that back at the tour starting point, we peeled off before his tour of the cathedral and so definitely missed out on a huge wedge of Porto's Christian history, but after all, someone had to sacrifice themselves spending a leisurely half hour on a terrace overlooking the magnificent bustling town and river whilst comparing the relative merits of red and white port wine!



There was just enough time to dash back across one of the iconic bridges, admiring the views and dodging the trams which whip past with inches to spare.

That day and evening, we got to know two of our fellow passengers better, a couple from Northampton. It turned out that the wife's grandfather was Bernard Vann, a WW1 Padre of some note. A talented footballer, hockey player and Cambridge graduate, he entered the priesthood and became a school chaplain before applying to become a military Padre at the outbreak of WW1. Described as a "muscular Christian", he simultaneously managed to carry out his chaplain's duties on the front and distinguish himself in active service for conspicuous



gallantry, receiving a Croix de Guerre with palm, a Military Cross with Bar and finally, a Victoria Cross for acts of valour leading his battalion into battle. He was killed in action shortly before the end of the war. His pregnant Canadian wife, a nurse he'd met during the war, received his posthumous VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace. Vann was the only WW1 Padre involved in active combat to win a VC.

During our trip, on September 29th, the 100th anniversary of Vann being awarded the Victoria Cross, two of his grandsons attended an official celebration of his life in Northampton, marked by a parade and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque. An interesting development is the introduction of the Vann Fellowship at Durham University, dedicated to the examination of the relationship between Christians and the military in the past, present, and future.

The following morning, we set off to the relatively modern-day pilgrimage shrine of Fatima, where during 1916 and 1917, three very young shepherd children saw apparitions of the Virgin Mary who divulged three secrets to them. Over the ensuing years, a complex of religious buildings has sprung up there, including a gigantic square for pilgrims to gather in, twice the size of St Peter's in Rome.

With over 4 million pilgrims every year, it's an important European pilgrimage site but I couldn't help feeling it was over-commercialised and had rather a sterile atmosphere.

It seemed somehow incongruous to see the three enlarged photographs of the simple shepherd children set amidst the pristine white of the square, resplendent with all its religious buildings. I think that personally, I would be more drawn to some of the smaller and quirkier shrines and sites that Anne Hayward has spoken of on her recent pilgrimage journeys. But, each to his own!



Llanelly Parish News continued....

The capital Lisbon was next on our agenda. My husband and I have come to the conclusion that big cities are not our favourite places to visit. During a quick coach tour, as Lisbon is quite spread out, we experienced a few of Lisbon's highlights, including driving over the astonishing 17.2 km long Vasco da Gama Bridge (Europe's longest) which was enticingly visible from our hotel room, and visited the stylishly impressive and historical Portuguese Navigators' monument looking out to sea. We then decided to just wander around and soak up the atmosphere. This included buying some T-shirts for my new twin great-nephews complete with iconic Lisbon tram motif – what's not to like? And then we finally located a famous café I had heard about and enjoyed a cup of chocolate you could stand your spoon up in, with the added attraction/distraction of a pigeon wandering from table to table. Ok outdoors, but a bit more nerve-racking inside! We rounded off the day in a nearby square, watching a hugely enthusiastic group of adults and children in national dress performing some furiously fast and energetic dances. They sang and played the accordion and walloped large sticks together, often leaping over them. They were like beefed up Morris Dancers gone demented. We have no idea what it was all about, but it was hugely entertaining.



Our final day in Portugal, country of great contrasts, was a trip to Evora, which has a lot to offer with its ruined Roman temple, aqueduct and city wall remnants and Gothic cathedral. Inside the latter we came across a young female student, fund-raising for her studies by offering a pack including a print of a typical Portuguese scene, a bilingual guide to Evora, and a set of postcards. The students we saw were always well turned out, proudly sporting their famous capes. They had good instrumental and singing skills too, put to excellent effect in their fund-raising street entertainment.



In this cathedral, the explorer Vasco da Gama had the flags blessed for his fleet bound for the Orient. As Health and Safety officer for our church, I must admit to being delighted and aghast in equal measure to find that the cathedral roof was easily accessible to one and all. What!! Strangely enough, there weren't droves of people plummeting to their deaths up there – well, I suppose that was because there were only three of us - oh, and a very large butterfly. It did however give me quite a thrill to career around up there with not a risk assessment form in sight, and situated on a hill in the city, the views were second to none.

State and Church have been formally separated for some time now in Portugal, but the predominant Roman Catholic church still exerts quite an influence on everyday life, even though the number of practising Christians has diminished. Fatima has evidently been a significant factor in Portugal maintaining a strong religious profile. In what seemed to be no time at all, we were bidding Paco and Portugal a fond "adeiu's" and packing our bags for Seville. ☐



St Catwg's Church, Llangattock

It hardly seems possible, but we have had nearly two months in Lock-down. With very little notice we all had to stay at home except for essential journeys to buy food or go to work if unable to do so from home. Schools were closed, so parents who could work from home had to do so with the children around - and home tutor them too.

How lucky we are to live in such a beautiful area - that's why most of us are here to be fair - we chose to live here, but many do not have that choice. We have a large garden and are never short of something to do, but many live in high rise flats and social distancing becomes much more difficult and there is a limit to the number of places one can go to exercise. Even as we slowly return to normal, we need to be aware of these people and hold them in our prayers.



We must also be aware of the millions in the developing world who do not have the protection we do and who will struggle to cope with the virus if it reaches them - those who are already starving, those in refugee camps, those who have no access to clean water. We give thanks for Christian Aid and Tearfund, working in these places. Do please support them at this time.

It has been hard having our churches closed, but our MA was the first to have a live-streamed service and since the first trial we have all been able to tune in to a Sunday service, from different churches in our Ministry Area. We have all had to learn to self video - well, just to be videoed was bad enough! But the resulting services have been great, with something different each week and the chance to show we can worship anywhere - even though we'll all be glad to return to our churches.



The amazing thing is that we have reached so many more people with our live streamed services - thousands, in fact! It is hard to believe but one feels we must continue some of this outreach even when we can return to church! Who would have thought we could reach so many?

We are aware of those who do not have the Internet and therefore cannot read the magazine or 'attend' our services, or even the new Zoom chat on Sunday afternoon. Archbishop Justin Welby and others have put together some resources on a free-phone line, 0800 8048044 (see advertisement on Page 30, which may be of use to anyone you know. And please do think to ask if they would like the magazine printed off for them - or part of it at least. This also applies to the weekly notice sheet and other resources available at this time. If you cannot print resources for them, just ask me...Meanwhile, thanks to Katy for the continued notice sheets, Ros and John for managing the magazine, and everyone who is ↵

Llangattock & Llangynidr Parish News: Continued

helping to provide support and such innovative programmes and services for us. It has involved all of us in learning new ways of doing things! It is not easy singing to a camera, or even a phone... and putting it all together must take hours. We are indebted to Anna's son, James, whose been our 'techy' – he does the aerial shots too. Well done James!



Ours is very much a wild garden and though we have had plenty of time these past few weeks, it is far from the manicured garden some prefer! However, it is good to know I am not alone in my efforts to preserve wildlife and I am helping the local Wildlife Trust to record all the less common plants in the garden. I am accumulating quite a list, which, in succession, have been delighting us for years - from snowdrops before Christmas, to real Welsh Daffodils and primroses galore, and now bluebells, which are a real picture this year. Whilst all this is happening at home, I am sadly unaware of the fate of the churchyard. I had hoped to be able to continue to work there, but felt that it maybe stretched the rules. Hopefully things will soon be under control and our circumstances relieved to some extent. There will be plenty of work to do once we are able!

We were unable to hold any special event for VE Day, the latest cancelled event, but, although it has also meant the memorial garden is on hold, we will proceed as soon as possible. The commemorative benches are awaiting clearance to be delivered and we hope to move the celebrations to VJ Day, 15th August.

We have not been without tragic loss and illness in the parish and our hearts go out to all involved. We hold them in our thoughts and prayers and know that the recorded services have been of comfort.



Llangynidr Parish Church:



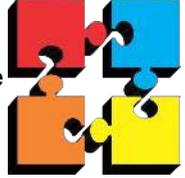
Still in 'lock-down' as you read this? Who can guess? We can only hope the answer is 'NO'! I ended last month hoping everyone was well and I must begin now with the same hope. We must indeed be thankful that, for the most part, the sunny weather has cheered us on through our relative 'imprisonment', and that nature has blossomed and grown regardless of all our troubles. I have taken my daily exercise every morning by walking to our local shop to fetch the newspaper, with less traffic noise, the birdsong has been very audible and it certainly lifts the spirit. It is also an opportunity for shouted conversations across the two metre divide with people one meets – people I don't usually speak to because I am driving!

I guess we each have our own ways of coping with 'isolation'. Whilst feeling a certain amount of resentment over the curtailing of my personal freedom, but accepting it like the obedient soul I was taught to be, time somehow seems to fill



Llangattock & Llangynidr Parish News: Continued

itself with a mixture of cleaning, laundry, cooking, reading, minimal gardening, television and emailing friends with whom I do not usually communicate so frequently. How good is that? Perhaps the addition of an on-going VERY difficult jigsaw puzzle also helps. I would like to visit family and a friend in a care home; I would also like to browse around shops but I don't really need anything new and the family members are all well so far, so in that respect I am contented and thankful. Why waste energy worrying about things WE cannot change? We can but put our trust in God that he will inspire the medical profession to solve the virus conundrum and take care of the carers.



I hope as many as possible of you are watching our weekly services. The technical side of these productions is like magic to me! Thank you so much to all who take part for their tremendous efforts. We may not be together in our church but we can be together in spirit. So, until we meet again – please have faith, not fear. ☐

In the Day of Trouble

There is a God who answers prayer
Who intercedes before the throne
The Son of God who ever cares
Who walks with us, we're not alone.

Though flood and pestilence should come
He sees the path that we now tread
His rod and staff will comfort us
He knows the days that lie ahead.

We trust in Him who knows all things
And lift our prayers to heaven above
Our confidence is all in Him
Encompassed by unending love.

By Megan Carter ☐

The good thing about prayer is that there's only one way to go wrong, and that's not to do it. If prayer at its simplest level is listening to God and talking to Him, you don't need long books to tell you how to do it. –

Anon



"Mike composes all his sermons on his iPhone – he uses something called Predictable Text..."

**St Peter's Church, Llanbedr Ystrad
Yw St Cenau's Church, Llangenny
St Issui's Church, Partrishow**

Llangenny: I am happy to say that there is very little to report... No cases of virus..... No excessive use of the rights of way.... No fly tipping.... lots of smiles.... lots of good wishes.... lots of gardening and maintenance being done. Stay well and all the best.



Llanbedr: As everywhere, things have been quiet around the church in Llanbedr, we are having another lovely spring, with joyful celebrations of returning cuckoos, swallows and house martins.



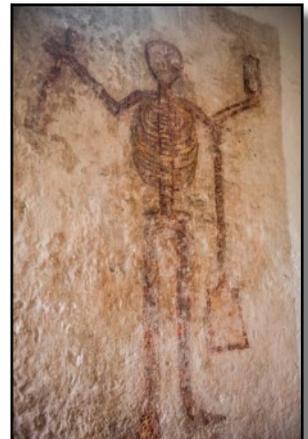
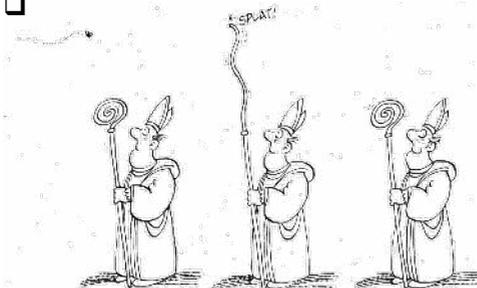
Nesting boxes for swifts were fitted to the bell tower, and although they have been seen and heard racing around the roofs, we can't be sure they've used them. Hopefully they will check them out before departing in the autumn, and return to use them next spring.

Also hanging around the yew trees now are small gangs of starlings, which is good news as their numbers have been falling in recent years.

Sad news to report is the recent death of Roger Brown, husband of Julie Brown, and son-in-law of Mary and John Davies. As well as Julie he leaves two sons and a grandson.

There are hopeful signs that the busy gardeners of Llanbedr might be starting to turn their attention now to the church yard, with small, safe, socially distanced activity.

Patricio: Surrounded by cuckoos, a hen harrier on the hill above, jackdaws in the eaves, Sam has fixed the long term minor leak in the bell tower and so bats can roost in the dry over the Figure of Doom. The sun will shine again. ☐



Brynmawr Parish News

Contact Priest : Revd Rana Khan Tel: 01873 810944

E-mail: rector@crickhowellparish.org.uk

The sun is shining bright and I have been musing in the garden which is unusually quiet because of the lockdown. The birds are singing heartily and the flowers are growing apace. Almost idyllic, almost – but, of course not.

My mind turned to my childhood when I used to be an altar boy in Pontypool. The church was built just a little later than St Mary's, and World War 1 wasn't such a distant memory. There was a commemorative plaque on the wall in the sanctuary to a beloved son who had given his life in the war and at the bottom it read:



'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'
John 15 v 13.

Young people will surely remember the sacrifices made by so many during this warlike pandemic. I believe they will look back in fifty years' time, as I can look back now, and be proud – if only by association.



And so, I am reminded of another outstanding act of self-sacrifice on a huge scale. We all remember from our school days the Great Plague of London in 1665. It was carried by fleas and there was no cure or treatment. It spread readily and eventually reached a small village in Derbyshire called Eyam (pronounced Eem). The people of Eyam, under the leadership of the rector, tried a number of things to try to reduce the spread: church services were continued but were to be held only outdoors; people had to bury their own dead. One lady buried six of her children and her husband in little more than a week!

She, herself, never caught the plague. Before long the village took the unbelievable step to self-isolate (although there appears to have been certain dispute, argument and outright disagreement). Nonetheless, the barriers went up and no one was allowed in or out. They all stayed within the village confines. They all went into quarantine. It lasted for over a year before the plague died out and they were free of it. Out of over 300 villagers only about 80 survived, however.

Their sacrifice is rightly remembered every year and homage paid to those to whom so much was owed.

May we do likewise and remember now and always those who paid the ultimate price for others in this pandemic and for their families, too. "Enduring uncontrollable aversive events can leave us feeling trapped, unsettled and helpless... Focus on what you can control, and favour short-term goals over longer-term aims." □

An encouraging communication from Pete Greig
of the Good News Paper

Something is stirring in the UK. There, I've said it!

I've hesitated to write this post. It's probably premature. We're still bang-slap in the middle of a vast crisis and no one really knows how it's all going to end. But here's the thing: over recent weeks, and particularly over this last week, prayers that some of us have been praying for decades, suddenly seem to be finding answers in the most unexpected ways.

UKBlessing

For starters there's the national blessing song pulled together by my friend Tim Hughes. Released a week ago, it's now been watched 2.1 million times which is equivalent to 200 new people every single minute of every hour since last Sunday. Yesterday a BBC journalist asked me about its striking unity. This harmony - literal and metaphorical - between such diverse groups as Hillsong and The Kingdom Choir, the Coptic Orthodox and the Salvation Army seems to be touching a deep nerve in our divided nation. And the stories just keep coming in from those who don't consider themselves religious, saying that the track has moved them unexpectedly to tears.



Is a worship song going viral everything we're praying for? Of course not! But is it something? You'd better believe it! Maybe something is stirring?

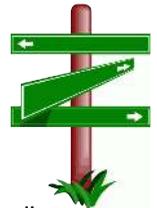
PrayerSurge

Then there's the research commissioned by Tearfund and released on the same day (quite coincidentally) as the UK Blessing song. This survey indicates that some 3 million new people have turned to prayer in the UK since lockdown began. The online British bookstore Eden reports a 55% increase in sales of bibles in April. And demand for prayer resources from 24-7 Prayer has been going through the roof. At Emmaus Rd our twice-daily prayer-meetings are suddenly wonderfully well attended. Now we know why!

Is a sudden surge of prayer everything we need? Of course not! But is it something? Could it be a start? You'd better believe it! Something seems to be stirring in the UK.

SignsoftheTimes

Jesus once rebuked the Pharisees for failing to read the signs of the times (Matthew 16:2-3). These great religious leaders could, he said, forecast the weather but they were oblivious to the presence and power of God right under their noses.



ChurchAttendance

The Tearfund survey also indicates that record numbers have begun attending church online since the lockdown began. Generally we'd expect around 5-7% of the nation to attend a Sunday service at least once a month. But over the past couple of months, this figure has jumped - in fact it has skyrocketed - to 24% of the British population. Almost one in four. And 5% of these people wouldn't normally be at church in, well... a month of Sundays! "I've never known a time in my life," says Nicky Gumbel, "when people are more open to [God's word] than they are now."

An encouraging communication from Pete Greig of the Good News Paper continued

Is virtual church attendance everything we're praying for? Of course not! But is it encouraging? You'd better believe it!

It seems to me that people are far more likely to attend a normal church service if they've attended a digital one first. Here at Emmaus Rd we are by no means unusual in having more-than doubled in size since lockdown and we have more people than ever signed up for our next Alpha course (online). It's not everything. But something does seem to be stirring.



PublicOpinion

Slowly the national media is picking up the story. First, the Guardian newspaper last Sunday. Then Good Morning Britain TV on Wednesday. A piece by my friend Krish Kandiah in the Times on Friday. The BBC News at 10 last night.

What are we to make of this? Is a week of positive media attention everything we're praying for? Of course not! Is it widespread or prominent? No, not yet. But is it a pleasant change from the usual cynical sniping? Could it be an early sign that public opinion is preparing to shift? You'd better believe it!

YoungPeople

I would never have believed a few months ago that I'd be seeing a headline in a major British paper saying this:
**"BRITISH PUBLIC TURN TO PRAYER AS ONE IN FOUR
TUNE INTO RELIGIOUS SERVICES ONLINE."**

And then the stunning subtitle:
"YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD RESURGENCE IN FAITH."



Yep, you read that right: the demographic leading the charge to church is the sophisticated, supposedly post-Christian 18-34 year olds.

Thefactsareourfriends.

We do not pray ex nihilo. No-one can jump to the top of the staircase in one go. We find faith for the big things that God hasn't done yet, by celebrating the small things he's doing or he's already done. On a cold, dark night when we spot sparks in the hearth, we blow on them. We don't pour cold water on them. We pray 'More, Lord.' We say, 'Well, if you can do this, maybe you can do that?'

Are all these developments any more than embers in the hearth? Has this past week been without heartbreak? Are we experiencing some kind of revival? Are any of these encouragements guaranteed to last? To all these questions we must clearly answer with an emphatic 'no!'

But could these sparks somehow become a wildfire? Does tragedy precede resurrection? Could this be the beginning of a spiritual awakening in our nation for which so many have been praying so faithfully and for so long?

My friends, this is a time to pray with greater faith, preach with greater confidence and plan with great ambition. Yes, let's dare to believe it!

Contributed by Eluned Watkins □

Contact Details



Magazine Link Contacts

Rob Yorke, Vale of Gwryne Parish	Tel: 01873 890305	ry@robyorke.plus.com
Ruth Griffiths, Crickhowell	Tel: 01873 810731	ruthg3@talktalk.net
Mary Hulme, Gilwern	Tel: 01873 830877	p.hulme39@btinternet.com
Barbara Hill, Brynmawr	Tel: 01495 311078	barbarahill46@live.co.uk
Jean Barnes, Llangynidr :	Tel: 01874 730064	jean@pandjbarnes.plus.com
Ann Williams Llangattock	Tel: 01873 810200	ann_williams@talk21.com
Janice Block, Cwmdu	Tel: 01874 730286	jebcwmdu@btinternet.com
Peta Brabner, Tretower	Tel: 01874 731122	petabrabner@gmail.com

Editorial Team

Rosalind Matty	Tel: 01873 812953	secretary@crickhowellparish.org.uk
John Matty	Tel: 01873 812953	newsletter@crickhowellparish.org.uk

St. Catwg (Crickhowell) Ministry Area Office Rectory Road, Crickhowell

Normal opening hours - Monday – Friday 10am – 1pm - please call the administrator on 01873 810944 or email katy.tutt@catwg.org.uk. An answer-phone is available out of hours. If you need to contact the ministry area leader Rev. Rana Khan, please call 07729 805100 or email rector@crickhowellparish.org.uk.

Disclaimers

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor, the Clergy or the corporate body of the church.

The advertisements included in this magazine are paid for and as such are not being recommended by being included in this magazine. Please check as you would any other supplier.

Guidance for Contributors

The following guidance is intended to help you provide copy to the magazine in a format which is almost print-ready. This helps preparation and speeds up printing.

We are able to accept handwritten or typed copy if you do not have access to email. If it is handwritten we ask you to forgive us for the occasional mis-reading!

Please send electronic copy by email to: secretary@crickhowellparish.org.uk

Our default font is Arial; default font size is 10 pt, justified for the body of the text; 14 pt bold, centred for the title, and 11pt bold for sub headings. Please do not use capital letters except as the first letter of a word or sentence. Do not underline headings or sub headings, or words that you want to emphasize, although they may be in bold. Please submit in MS Word (ie .doc) format as an attachment to the email. The email should also contain any additional notes that you think important. Do not submit tables unless specifically instructed to do so. If you need to use them, email the Editor first and we will try to work out a solution.

PDFs

Bear in mind that pdf format articles will be shrunk to fit our page size and that we are unable to edit them further.

Photographs

We are pleased to accept digital images to go with articles. Format can be either JPEG (.jpg, .jpeg) or TIFF (TIFF, TIF). Remember that they may be reprinted in black and white, so shouldn't be too dark. Send them as attachments to your email. You, or the organization you represent must hold the copyright to the image, ie you or they own it; unless informed otherwise we will assume that this is so. No photos of people or children can be printed unless you have informed us that you have specific permission to do so which complies with the Church in Wales Safeguarding Policy: Section [9http://cinw.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/1547-Safeguarding-Policy-Web-version.pdf](http://cinw.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/1547-Safeguarding-Policy-Web-version.pdf)

Let Evening Come

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

Jane Kenyon
(1947-1995)