Calon Sir Fyring

HEART OF MONMOUTHSHIRE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 12-Harvest '25



Letter from the Rector

Dear friends,



It's a funny old time to write to you, I'm really not sure what theme I should take – looking back to the lovely things we could reflect upon connected with harvest, or do I look a little forward into the remembrance season with all the poignancy and

completely different moments of reflection that might offer? Or do I go full pelt towards Advent and Christmas, knowing that these seasons are on the horizon and already occupying a little of our thoughts and energy?

And then I realised that actually we need to rest in this moment, right now, and not worry too much about what has gone before and what is looming. Because today's energy is for today! How many times have you heard me mention that?

Now you know how hard I personally find the idea of dwelling in the moment – I'm a busy person, just like you, and my mind is always racing to the next project, the next idea, the next problem even! Stopping and seeing where I am doesn't always come easy. And yet, it's when I do that that I truly see where we are in our communities, what is healthy and worth celebrating and what is of concern and needs our attention.

One of the things that healthy church communities celebrate is our ability to care for each other well, and to offer a hearty and authentic welcome to those on the edge, or who are new, or who are not like us. Being without judgement and loving everyone is a common Christian mantra (much easier to say than to live) and one which I know we strive for.

So I wonder, who have you given time to today? Who have you noticed who might need a little more love or encouragement? Who haven't you seen for a while? Where are they? How might you reach out? It is by pondering these questions that we can be more confident that we are not leaving anyone behind, that we are not excluding anyone, and that we are ensuring we are sharing the unconditional love of God with everyone, absolutely everyone, we meet.

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2) is a wonderful reminder to us that when we do include, welcome, and befriend, we are the richer for it, especially if those we make the effort with are not like us. So let us help each other to throw open wide the doors of welcome, to everyone, knowing that to do so is biblically recommended, and definitely modelled and encouraged of us by Christ who welcomed us in.

With my love and gratitude for all that you do,

Sally XX The Reverend Canon Sally Ingle-Gillis,

Rector and Area Dean. Heart of Monmouthshire Ministry Ares

News and Views from around the Ministry Area



St Aeddan's Bettws Newydd

Bettws Newydd celebrated Harvest on 19th October, the nearest Sunday to 21st October which is Apple Day. Around 25 people joined us for the service, where we were delighted to have David to play the organ for our harvest hymns. Others joined us afterwards for tea, coffee, cakes and a produce sale as

a fundraiser for the church. All in all, we raised over £500 for church funds.

Products for the food bank were also collected, blessed and sent on their way, about 10 carrier bags full. A very creditable effort for a small church. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way. The church looked lovely and smelled gorgeous!

Clare Bradly



St Peter's Bryngwyn

Sitting at my laptop this morning looking out at another beautiful day, I reflect on the wonderful harvest thanksgiving service we had last Sunday. As usual the church looked beautiful with all the autumn flowers, and also smelled of apples – hasn't everyone got a

glut of fruit this year!

Reverend Will led a lovely service talking about seasons and we even had a rendition of "Turn Turn", by The Byrds as we took the collection. The collection was in aid of Shelter Box for the Gaza and we are delighted to be able to send £250 to the cause. The harvest lunch, for which we sold over 70 tickets was a huge success with everyone thanking us and looking forward to next year already. Thanks to everyone for coming and making it wonderful and a tremendous example of our community. Including the raffle money we raised nearly £1200 for church funds.

Talking of which you may wonder why we still haven't done anything in the church! The second quote for the decorating is, we are assured, on the way! A faculty has been submitted for the removal of the pews in the North aisle and the decorating – we await the decision of the Diocesan Advisory Committee!

Now that the harvest season is well underway our eyes turn to the next big event in the church calendar – yes, it's the C word -Christmas! I have asked that we have a service on Christmas morning but don't know what time that will be, or who will be taking it this year. As for a Carol Service, it is the turn of the Catholic Church (I hope) to organise and so I do not as yet know when this will be. Our next newsletter will be due at the end of November so I should be able to let you know then.

One thing happening before then is the Enthronement of Archbishop Cherry in Newport cathedral on November 8th. There are limited, invitation only, seats for the cathedral but there is an intention to Live Stream the event in Raglan Church that afternoon. I understand that refreshments will be served.

As usual, I thank you all for your support.

Kay Spencer

Christchurch, Coed-y-paen

It's been a sad time in the Village as we said goodbye to three of our friends and neighbours, John Hargreaves, Majorie Matthews and Rod Perryman.

It was lovely that the community could pay tribute to both John and Majorie in our lovely village Church at their funerals, it was a source of comfort and place for all to be together to celebrate their lives and remember them.

John was a true and faithful member of our Church doing so much for the Church from taking care of the Churchyard to helping keep the books in order. His valuable contribution to the Village will always be remembered.

Although Majorie was not a Church member she was always interested and helpful and living next door to the Church she kindly kept a watchful eye on things. Stuart, Majorie's son and Karen have taken over her house and we are so grateful for the help and care that they now give to Christchurch.

Rod lived across the reservoir with Lynn but always supported any Church and Village event with great generosity and kindness, we will miss him.

We are all looking forward to our Carol Service on Christmas Eve which is always the highlight of our year.

Cílla Davies



St Peter's Goetre - together with St Bartholomew's Llanover, St Illyd's Mamhilad and St Matthew's Monkswood.

The Harvest Festival season is almost over, and our churches have again given thanks for "all good gifts around us", paying tribute with beautiful decorations and joyous

singing. It was good to welcome some fresh faces to our services. This year we had more variety in our music: as well as the traditional hymns, choices ranged from the modern chorus "You shall go out with joy" to the old Sankey favourites of "Count your blessings" and "Bringing in the sheaves." Something for everyone.

In August, the Goetre community marked the 80th anniversary of VJ Day with a moving ceremony led by Canon Dr Stephen James. A wreath was laid by Mike Jones of the British Legion; a silence was observed and a bugle played.





A week later the mood was less sombre as Goetre Village Family Fun Day was held, with stalls and activities run by several village groups. Members of St Peter's Church participated in a "Human Fruit Machine", a new idea to many of us! Three people mimicked the actions of a fruit machine, drawing items of fruit from bags, with much drama. Matching fruits won a prize. It proved a light-hearted but effective form of church outreach. Thank you to Revd Hannah for the idea.



The Wellbeing Café continues to flourish. It is held in Goetre Village Hall on the1st, 3rd and 5th Mondays of the month between 10.30 and 12noon for anyone seeking companionship and support. This year's outing visited the Brecon Mountain Railway and was greatly enjoyed.

St Peter's, Goetre held an Open Afternoon at church on September 20th. The church was resplendent for the Harvest Festival the next day and visitors appreciated the opportunity to study the church registers over

refreshments. Much local family history came to light.

On September 21st Llanover House held its Rare Plant Fair and Open Gardens, with St Bartholomew's Church providing refreshments, always most welcome. September 21st was also the patronal festival of St Matthew's, Monkswood so the service reflected this in word and prayer. It is interesting that the dedication is relatively recent, when Bishop Gilbert Joyce named the church on September 21st 1938 at the Harvest Festival that year.



Looking ahead, St Peter's, Goetre will hold the annual Christmas Bazaar on the evening of Friday November 28th in the Village Hall. Proceeds contribute to local charities and the Grand Raffle supports the church. Tickets are available from Jan Millett and members of the congregation.

Lesley Evans



St Michael's Glascoed

Despite various rumours that St Mchael's Church, Glascoed is closed, a very successful harvest service was held there on Friday night 3rd.of October! A small army cleaned the church and decorated beforehand to make a warm welcome to all who came.

If you cast your minds back to that night, we were suffering the effects of Storm Amy, the wind was blowing and it was raining hard! However, 19 trusty souls made their way to the church and enjoyed a very lively harvest service under the auspices of Rev Sally.

We sang; we did puzzles and gave Sally the challenge of coming up with a talk using six words made from the word HARVEST. Finally, we enjoyed a lovely cheese ploughman's supper being joined at that by more hardy souls who made their way from the neighbourhood. Much lively chat was enjoyed (was that the cider?!) and plans made for a Carol Service in the weeks leading up to Christmas..... watch this space!!



If you wonder what will happen to the church, well some of the work recommended by the Quinquennial Inspection has been done – trees cut back and the wall repaired. A structural engineer has also surveyed the church – his full report is awaited. Hopefully we will be able to complete repairs and find some funding to keep this beautiful little church open, as its purpose is retained, while also creating a useful space for the community.

Kay Spencer



All Saints church, Kemeys Commander and St. David's Church, Trostrey.

St David's Trostrey has once again had the pleasure of holding another wedding – the third this year. We are hoping that these newly married couples, although



they do not necessarily live locally, may come and join us for any special services we hold in the future. The first invitation will be to a Christmas Carol Service.

We also recently held a combined Harvest Celebration for Trostrey and Kemeys that was preceded by a breakfast, not easy to accomplish with the limited space and facilities! Was this possibly the first Harvest Breakfast?

Nothing so exciting has happened at Kemeys – and sadly we have now received the structural engineer's report and it doesn't make happy reading. But, on the plus side, it is felt that the church can still be used while options are investigated. This means the planned Candlelit Carol Service planned for the second Sunday in December can still go ahead.

The Chainbridge Inn are holding a Christmas Craft Fair on Saturday 29th November,2025, at which they are raising funds for All Saints, Kemeys Commander. We would like to thank them in advance and wish them every success with the event.

Hilary Rebeiro



St Madoc's Llanbadoc

2025 has gone quietly and quickly at St. Madoc's Church. The church has been given a new lease of life with the completion of the repair work contract, followed by a deep clean to the interior. We would like to thank Taliesin Conservationfor completing the contract on time and within budget - no mean feat for work on a Grade II* listed building with a history of damp and dry rot. The contract was efficiently overseen by Volute Architects and we would also like to

thank them for their advice, consideration and patience.

The repair work included a myriad of small conservation repairs to the roof, external and internal masonry work, cleaning and painting of gutters and downpipes, repointing of the north aisle internal wall and replacing all the external window grills.

The Church in Wales relies on volunteers to instigate and organise building conservation

projects - the planning process was time consuming, and at times, stressful. At Local Church Committee level it is easy to get bogged down in meetings, faculties, applying for grants, commissioning and managing professionals and selecting contractors. The actual repair work took just over two months, compared to almost two years in the planning stage. The effort has been worth it. This listed building is now in a good condition, and hopefully will cope with whatever the winter weather throws at it. Special thanks must go to Ben Gurner and his team at Cleanmate, who were commissioned to clean the interior of the church. After two days of cleaning and polishing the church is now sparkling.



As always the work never stops. We now have a further list of jobs to address. The churchyard plan has been updated and a recent treesurvey has required us to commission further more detailed inspections to some of the mature trees - this includes the trees at the Red Shed. We would also like to thank Morris's of Usk for their continued support with maintaining the churchyard and hedgerow boundary.

Through the hard work and dedication of our volunteer team at the Red Shed, St. Madoc's Church was able to provide a considerable contribution to fund the repair works. Funding contributions were also received from the Benefact Trust, Monmouth Diocese and Monmouthshire County Council.

We are pleased that St. Madoc's Church has been chosen as the venue for a monthly Welsh/Bilingual Service, this is held on the third Sundayof the month at 4 p.m.

Hilary Morgan & Rosemary Evans



St Tegfedd, Llandegfedd

Llandegfedd celebrated Harvest Home on Sunday 12 October. Along with our village carol service and Remembrance, this is always one of our bestattended services – and this year was no exception. A large and appreciative congregation revelled in Thomas Cranmer's luxurious prose in the 1662 setting of Morning Prayer, and enjoyed



an excellent choir, directed by Drew Morton, which sang Stanford's rousing setting of *Te Deum* in B flat (accompanied with great style and energy by Julie Costley-White), the Walford Davies setting of

Psalm 121 ("I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills"), and the moving anthem *Beati Quorum Via* by Stanford – "Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord".

The service concluded with sherry and delicious apple cake made by Joanna Aitken. This was the latest in a series of 1662 BCP services we have held at St Tegfedd, although the first time we've done matins for a while. Word is getting around among the lovers of this ancient and beautiful setting of the liturgy, and we hope to hold even more similar services in future: there's a clear demand for it!

As a result of the generosity of the community, we were able to deliver a full car-load of dry and tinned food and toiletries to the Croesy Food Hub – thus making sure that our contribution was firmly directed to our neighbours who most need them.

Robert Aitken



St. John's, Llandenny

We had a joyous Harvest service with the addition of these great harvest creatures created by these boys.

Afterwards everyone enjoyed a chat

and brunch of bacon butties, croissants, Danish pastries and slices of melon.



Thank you to all who helped make the church so beautiful and provided the delicious food.

Sue Russell



St Cybi's Llangybi

We handed over the church keys to Hiraeth Architecture Ltd at the beginning of September so that Conservators Jane Rutherford and Naomi Cox could start to stabilise the wall painting of Saints Michael and Mary on the north wall. First of all, there was scaffolding indoors and then outdoor scaffolding went up to allow our contractors Jennings Weston Bricknell to carefully remove cement

mortar from the stabilised north wall and begin repointing with lime.

Meanwhile, we have been holding services in the village hall, with many benefits. Reverend Hannah and Reverend Bill



presided at our Eucharists during
September, when we were able to all
gather around the Lord's table in one big
semi-circle. And then Reverend Sally
joined us for a joyful harvest breakfast
and led our songs of praise on 5th



October, with a record congregation. Many thanks to the decorating and catering team, and particularly to Irene Cameron and Morris's of Usk who provided a beautiful and traditional (but actually very edible) large wheatsheaf loaf. Generous donations of more than £300 will help defray the costs of ongoing conservation work.

Peter Foden



St John's Llanhennock

At last, some good news! Repairs to our roof have now been

completed, and there is no further need for buckets, towels or umbrellas inside the church. And just in time! The deluge on Friday 3rd October gave

the repairs a thorough testing, and they held firm.

Our harvest celebration on 5th October was well-attended; the flowers were exceptionally beautiful, and donations for the Eastern Valley food bank were sufficient to strain the suspension on Gerry's car.



We held a Bingo evening on 17th October This was a fundraiser but also a community event, with refreshments and lively commentary, and, of course, a raffle. A number of our regular worshippers have been laid low by ill health, including by seasonal colds and falls, and we wish them all a speedy recovery. Meanwhile plans for our Christmas Nativity Play are proceeding and evolving. Watch this space.... Chris Edwards



St. Peter, Paul& John, Llantrisant & Llanllowell

After a relatively quiet summer for the church but rather more stressful few months for members of the congregation and the wider community, we managed to celebrate both the Harvest and the end of summer time, with a goodly and godly congregation.



As the photos show the church was well decorated, the attendance significantly higher than our average

Sunday Service and we much enjoyed being, as Canon Sally

increasingly describes us, an Events Church. No Sermon but a quiz, no Eucharist but an informal Communion as we all shared pieces

of the same bread (baked in the village)

Celebrating Harvest has put us back into the autumn mood for more community activity as we undertake our traditional Act of

Remembrance in November and prepare for Christmas with our even more

traditional Carol Service.

Talking of celebration; we have all been delighted with the award to our Organist, Thelma Cantello, of the Archbishop's Award for contributions to Church Music.

As always thanks go to members of the congregation for help in the church, local volunteers

who help in the churchyard, and local donors who keep us financially viable. Sandy Blair









St Cadoc's Raglan

Harvest season 2025 in Raglan has been a busy time, especially for Rev. Will who has led our services and been introduced to a long-standing harvest tradition in Raglan Church when along with all the traditional harvest decorations the eagle on the lectern always carries a bunch of grapes in his mouth. Our Harvest service was an

uplifting act of worship followed by a delicious lunch in church.

Since then, the primary school pupils, teachers, parents, grandparents and carers filled the church celebrating the harvest with poems and songs. One proud grandparent shared her absolute joy seeing her granddaughter who nervously started school this September confidently singing about a Big, Red Combine Harvester.

The Harvest season has finished with a service hosted by the NFU Ladies and Young Farmers, followed by a cheese and wine supper, and an auction of harvest hampers by aspiring auctioneers.

Jenny Swattridge



St Andrew's Tredunnock

The 4 pm Fresh @ 4 Harvest service was well supported by the community Tredunnock. This informal service was a fun filled and joyous occasion with bible readings, prayers, poetry, hymns old and new and a cup of tea and slice of Harvest loaf and honey afterwards! We welcomed 27 folks that almost filled our little church.

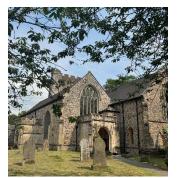
The visitor book that can be found on the tower table has shown to us that keeping churches open has been a welcome ongoing event. During the summer months St. Andrew's has welcomed visitors from as far away as Australia. Most of the comments describe the church as a tranquil and beautifully kept building and graveyard. This is a reflection of the "tlc" of our village volunteers who prepare the church for services and keep it looking dust and cobweb free during the weeks. Our groundsman and his wife have worked diligently over the summer months cutting grass and caring for the graves. We are so fortunate to have a great team of folks.

We are now looking forward to a village wedding, the next Fresh@ 4 service on November 2nd and the Remembrance Sunday Service at 10:45 on 9th November. At most of our services we are accompanied on the organ by Thelma Cantello. StAndrews share Thelma, a very special and talented organist, with St Peter, Paul & John Llantrisant

Thelma was presented with The Archbishop of Wales Award for Church Music at Choral Evensong on Sunday October 19th.

Congratulations Thelma!

A member of the congregation.



The Priory Church of St Mary, Usk

We have enjoyed a wonderful busy summer working together with the community to enjoy a series of events that included a Strawberry Tea where we were joined by a youth choir from the Usk twin town of Graben-Neudorf in Germany. Having never attended a tea previously they all loved the homemade scones and the strawberries with cream.



Following the tea the choir performed at the church traditional music in German, English and Welsh!



The History group have also been busy and celebrated the life of St David Lewis who is buried in the churchyard and researched the mysteries of the churchyard. During the history open day visitors enjoyed visiting the church and churchyard and learnt fascinating facts about some the people who had been part of the community in



the past. All the research from the history group can be found on the website https://uskma.uk.

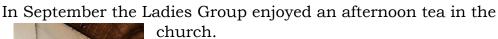
In September we celebrated Harvest together with Archbishop Cherry who presented the



ECO 'Gold' standard to members of the ECO church. This was a wonderful opportunity to remember that we all have a responsibility to look after God's wonderful creation. Members of other ECO organisations from across Usk together with



the mayor joined the service at which donations of food were collected for the Raven House trust The service was followed by a Harvest Lunch enjoyed by over 50 people.





The use of the food pantry in church has demonstrated that there is a need to reach out to support some members of the wider community in many different ways and the new school term has seen the baby and toddlers' group and 'open the book' team restarting after the summer break.





The October All Age Service NOW@ St Mary's saw no less than 21 children and their parents gathering to enjoy Rev'd Helen telling them the story of Zacchaeus, supported by puzzles and colouring and learning a new song before feasting on jacket potatoes and cake!

We look forward to a busy couple of months leading up to Christmas, this will include a number of concerts, a 'pop up' shop with children's crafts at the Usk community event on 30th November and a morning of mince pies, coffee and socialising in December.

Debbie Harper for Team St Mary's



St Thomas à Becket, Wolvesnewton

In the space of a week, we had two very different, but very special services.

The first was a sad farewell, but fitting funeral for Sylvia Lewis, which was followed by interment at St Jerome's. Sylvia had been a regular worshipper

at St John's, Llangwm and a long-standing churchwarden. She also ran the Sunday School for many years. We were delighted when, after the closure of St John's, she became a regular worshipper at St Thomas a



Becket. Her son, David, played the music for the service and also accompanied her grandson, Aozora, on his violin for a moving reflective piece.

We will miss her wonderful reading, singing and friendship. The second was a joyful celebration of Harvest, led by Rev'd Helen. The church looked beautiful, thanks to Pauline, and we were pleased to welcome several visitors. The service was followed by a buffet lunch with a delicious spread of savoury and sweet food. Thank you to everyone who helped to clean the church and provide refreshments.

Scílla Greenland

More HoMMA News and Events

Success at Usk Show

After the 2024 Show your Ministry Area Leader and Ministry Area Co-Chair had the bright idea that we could enter the Corporate Competition in the homecrafts section of the Show. Duly, and under orders, we started to put something together! The theme this year was "Musicals" – our obvious thought was "Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat" – and so we started! We wanted to include people from all over the MA in this project – so – who do we have that is a good seamstress? Jan Millett from Goetre – Jan made us the most beautiful little Dreamcoat, out of parachute silk, which she hand painted and decorated. We all knew that Dee Seabourne was up to date with her cooking and hygiene skills, and she included Sue Cowburn – so two ladies from Usk. Flower

arranging – well who better than Kathy Clarke from Bryngwyn and Raglan! So, we worked on the theme and decided on Falafels as our savoury dish and a multicoloured rainbow cake for our sweet dish. Next, we needed a background framework – in comes John Harris to make up a sheet of plywood which I then covered (the extent of my own artistic talents!) Even after three weeks of meeting every Thursday afternoon, we still didn't really know what our design would look like until we actually set it up on the morning of the Show!



However, all went well and we were delighted to have come second out of six exhibits beaten by Bryngwyn WI who are old hands at this competition.

Congratulations to the ladies who took part and thanks to John Harris for his patience, he tells me he has stored the framework in the cellar at St Mary's Usk, and will modify it for easier handling next year!!

Kay Spencer

Big Breakfast

Once again, The Big Breakfast on September 27th was a happy and successful event. It was wonderful to see those that attend enjoying good food and company and all the helpers working so well together. Counting up the orders, we served 100 cooked breakfasts plus all the helpers, and there were some who just had cereal, toast etc. We have one more BB this year on **22nd November**.

Scilla Greenland

Ministry Area Council

Although we have members from almost all of our 20 churches on the Ministry Area Council, and, theoretically they should be passing on news of what happens in the various committees which now make up our MAC. I thought it would be a good idea to set some key points out for everyone to see.

We have now had meetings for all three committees – Mission, Management and Ministry Area Council. Much of the time has been spent in going over the Terms and Conditions for all three committees so that we know who does what and where responsibility lies – which ultimately is with the MAC.

The Mission Committee chose, as its Chairman, Sue Russell from Llandenny, and as its secretary, Sarah Byford from Usk (representing Llanbadoc on MAC). This secretary role does not include minute taking as we have become ultra-high tech and are using Chat GB to take minutes electronically – this is on a trial basis at the moment! The Mission committee will be responsible for drawing up lists of events – the harvest services and the forthcoming Christmas Card. They will take over the handling of the Usk Show, Big Breakfast and any other events we may wish to pursue – in fact anything missional!

The Management Committee will look more closely into financial analysis, property matters and the general running of the Ministry Area while the Ministry Area Council, and its Trustees, have overall responsibility for accounts, faculties and everything else that is involved in running 20 churches. New forms have been created for applying to use church monies where projects are outside of budgets, and for contracts for work done. We are extremely grateful to Rita Edwards taking over the Treasurer role and updating some of the methods, and to Sandy Blair for becoming the Property Lead and trying to make sense of such things as how we look after our churchyards of closed churches in our area.

Importantly we also listen to requests and will be looking to purchase a branded gazebo for use at outside events to save borrowing from others!

Any comments or questions and I will try to answer!!

Kay Spencer Lay Co chair



At the time of writing this course in its 6th week all three venues have been well supported with representation from most of the churches across the MA. This has proved to be an excellent course, allowing us to make sense of the Bible for ourselves and discover where we fit into the story

Many thanks to the clergy for showing the videos and leading the sometimes challenging and thought-provoking discussions and reflections.

Enthronement of Archbishop Cherry

We are all looking forward to celebrating this wonderful occasion on November 8th– if you don't qualify for seat in the Cathedral, never fear –come to St Cadoc's Raglan where the service will be live streamed on a big screen. Drinks will be provided, please bring a plate of food to share. If you have not already done so let us know you are coming, so that we have plenty of comfortable seating arranged.

Sue Russell & Sarah Byford



Finally - a big thank you to all who continue to make such worthwhile contributions to this newsletter -so many lovely accounts and photos of joyful harvest celebrations!

If you would like hard copies for those in your churches who are unable to receive e mail **please let me know the number you require** and I will print them for you.

There continues to be so much that is wonderful and positive going on throughout the MA so please keep on spreading the word – with contributions for the next (post-Christmas) issue if possible as an attachment in 'word' with photos where possible sent separately as jpeg no later than **2nd January 2026**

Wishing you all good health, peace and happiness.

Sarah Byford - Editor

