



HEART OF MONMOUTHSHIRE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 14– EASTERTIDE ‘26



Letter from the Vicarage

Dear friends,

And just like that, we find ourselves in the full throes of spring, and it really is beautiful, isn't it? Monmouthshire is a very special place to live and serve, especially when we can see the full depth and breadth of God's creation in all its detail – blossom, lambs, shades of green, everything around us springing into life.

Our Easter celebrations were wonderful this year – our churches looked stunning, and there were many opportunities to worship and be hospitable together. Thank you to everyone who prepared, cleaned, welcomed, led, sang, or undertook any other ministry to enliven our churches and communities during the season. We now travel towards Pentecost and then the season of ordinary time that stretches into the summer. Ordinary time is associated with the colour green, liturgically, and I rather like that- it's a season of opportunity for gentle growth, and I hope you will see moments and occasions over the coming weeks and months to encounter God in meaningful and deeper ways.

Our Ministry Area Annual Vestry Meeting (our annual general meeting) will take the form of a service this year, and will be preceded by breakfast. Everyone is very welcome, wherever you live, and whether you attend frequently or occasionally. Come along on Sunday 31st May to the primary school in Usk. Breakfast from 10am.

We have challenges in our churches, you don't need me to list them, but I think it is worth noting that last year we experienced growth in our congregations – approximately 5%. This bucks the national narrative of decline, and whilst small, everything has to begin somewhere, and perhaps this little increase is the beginnings of a hopeful season for us all?

Please will you join me in praying the prayer that has become so familiar to many of us, and is it would appear, being answered by God –

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, joy to our worship, and power to our witness. Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us continue together with all that God is doing in our communities and churches. We have much to be thankful for.

With my love and prayers for you all,

Sally xxxx

The Reverend Canon Sally Ingle-Gillis, Rector and Area Dean, HoMMA

News and Views from around the Ministry Area



St Aeddán's Bettws Newydd

Good Friday saw Bettws Newydd church following a service written by Stephen J Maunder of the Iona Community called 'Seven Moments' which was a Tenebrae type service. It was led by Clare Bradly, ably assisted by Hazel Cave from Raglan Baptists who provided the technological knowhow for the music, and her foster son Jayden who was on candle and

drum duties. My thanks to them both for making this service possible.

We have come up with further setbacks in getting the ceiling repairs in the north transept completed, and as we have almost run out of money we are planning a Spring Sale on May 24th to start raising the cash for this, and Phase 2 which includes a lot of repointing.

We are also beginning to plan how to cut a prayer labyrinth in the grass in one area of the churchyard and hope to have details of this and suggestions for its use shortly.

Clare Bradly



All Saints Kemeys Commander

It seems to have been a very quiet start to the year in Kemeys. There was no service here at Easter, although we were happy to celebrate with others, in various parts of the Ministry Area.

We still await the final results of the tests that have been carried out to establish the cause of the cracks and movement that have been recorded. Once this has been established, we hope to be able to welcome people to some events both in the church building and in the churchyard. In the meantime, monthly services continue as usual.

St David's Trostrey



Trostrey also seemed to be quiet at the beginning of the year. As yet this year, there are no weddings planned but we have already had several burials, often for people outside of the parish.

The highlight so far was the Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday morning, held at Trostrey instead of up on the Bloreng.



It was a beautiful service held outside the church, with Pascal candles being lit from a fire, and distributed to each of the twenty churches in the Ministry Area. The service was followed by coffee and hot cross buns served inside the church. We would love this to become a regular event on Easter Sunday morning.

Hilary Rebeiro



St Peter's Bryngwyn

With a newly decorated church our next task was to take out the pews from the North Aisle of the church. We managed to do this in the week before Easter, having pressed my dearly beloved son and the hard-working John Harris into becoming removal men of the highest order! I add that all the correct faculties and permissions were in place and we have sold all the old pews without any problem!



After a good clean we were able to make use of the new area for our Altar of Repose during our Maundy Thursday service of stripping the altar. As many of you already know, we have a fantastic Reredos at Bryngwyn which is a triptych bearing the figures of Peter as a disciple, Mary, John, Jesus and Peter as Bishop. The three separate panels can be closed with a resounding bang at the final phase of the service which, with the lights going off, makes a tremendous atmosphere for the Host to be taken to the Altar of Repose ready, for those who wish, to remain for a vigil.

This area is now far more flexible for other events and we can easily host our usual coffee morning in June and have the space for meetings as well as being available during our regular services. In my humble opinion, it looks great and I would encourage anyone else to do similar.



We also had a great Easter morning eucharist with Rev Dr Will officiating and helping to hand out the traditional Easter Eggs at the end of the service! A warm welcome awaits anyone who would like to join us.

Kay Spencer



Christchurch, Coed-y-paen



Christchurch welcomes Spring with the wonderful colour of many flowers in our Churchyard and lovely birdsong.

As always, we thank Roger for his hard work in keeping our Churchyard looking so good. It's a tough job and hopefully our appeal for more volunteers to help him will reap benefits in the future.

We have also welcomed Charlotte to our village; she has taken over the lease of "The Carpenters Arms" and we are delighted to have her and see the pub doing so well again. We hope to continue the long-standing partnership between the Pub and the Church which has proved so beneficial to both in the past. We are making progress setting up the "Friends of Christchurch" and looking forward to a special event, probably next year.

As always thanks to everyone for their help and support,

Cilla Davies



St Peter's Goetre

St Peter's Goetre held a well-attended Lenten Lunch on March 11th in church. This was a friendly community occasion with proceeds given to the Bishop's Lent Appeal.



Easter Day was celebrated with two joyful adult Baptisms as part of the Easter Eucharist. The church family was delighted to welcome Jermaine and Leo. As always, the church was beautifully decorated, befitting the occasion. This year the arrangements at the pew ends were created and donated by the Goetre Community Centre Floristry Group – a lovely link between church and community.

The annual Spring Supper and Quiz Evening took place at the end of March in Goetre Village Hall. There were participants from Goetre, Llanover, Mamhilad and Monkswood raising funds for each of these churches. Thank you to Jane Whitfield for organising an enjoyable quiz and to all who provided the ploughman's supper and delicious desserts!

The Goetre Wellbeing Café continues to provide fun and friendship on the first, third (and fifth) Mondays of the month between 10.30 and noon. The ever-popular fish and chip lunch was held on February 2nd. Many thanks to Nav from the local Fish and Chip shop for all his help, not only cooking the meal but also delivering and helping to serve. St David's day was celebrated with Bara Brith and Welsh Cakes of various flavours, while the village hall was resplendent with daffodils.

On Easter Monday the Café enjoyed a variety of activities to celebrate Easter including hot cross buns, Easter eggs and Easter Bonnet competition and a puppet show presented by friends from Capel Ed. The motto for the café is "No need to be lonely in Goetre". The organisers are grateful to all who support it.



A future date for your diaries: Strawberry Tea at Goetre Football Club on the afternoon of Saturday June 6th. This is in aid of all the churches in the Goetre district

Lesley Evans



St Michael's Glascoed

This is the time of year to visit Glascoed when the orchids are in bloom and a fantastic sight to see. At the January MAC meeting permission was given to ask an architect for a quote to do a feasibility study on the future of the church and at the recent April meeting permission was also

given to seek a grant to cover the cost of the feasibility study. This will now be progressed.



During March an approach was made on behalf of the community to use the church for a quiz. This was naturally agreed and a top quiz team comprising Rev Sally, Rev Will, Neville Crump and Kay Spencer were persuaded to take part. An enthusiastic group of mainly local people attended on the evening and were not impressed when we, the visiting team, won! Thanks must go to Rev Will for his "Big Brain"!

The quiz was followed by a cheese supper and with our BYO bottles was extremely tasty. For this the church was presented with a donation and much excitement was heard when planning the next community events.

Watch this space!!

Kay Spencer



St Bartholomew's Llanover

On March 29th the church provided much appreciated refreshments on a wet day at Llanover House Open Gardens. Despite the inclement weather the event provided a boost to church funds.

St Bartholomew's Church Hall



After years of uncertainties and setbacks to its refurbishment, the Church Hall held a very successful Open Day on April 18th.

Archbishop Cherry was invited to bless the hall and cut a cake to mark the completion of the project. This has been made possible by a grant from

the Heritage Lottery Fund, obtained through the unwavering determination of Betty Perry. Sadly, Betty fell ill before the work began and the committee of Val Snell, Sarah Symondson and Ann Sparrow pushed ahead with the development, with Bob Evans acting as Project Manager. Sarah gave an interesting talk on the background to



the Hall and Bob was presented with a framed picture of Munch's "The Scream", an apt reflection of sentiment on occasions! Canon Sally expressed her thanks and congratulations to all concerned, not forgetting those who laid on the scrumptious cakes and decorated the hall so beautifully for the Open Day.



The renovations have focused on the provision of disabled access, and there is now a substantial ramp to enable wheelchairs to reach the main entrance. As well as the main hall, there is also a meeting room at ground level with its own entrance. Both rooms

have spacious disabled cloakrooms. The main hall has a well-equipped kitchen and downstairs there are facilities for refreshments. Contact details for bookings and enquiries are:

sarahsymondson@btinternet.com or 01600 860520



St Illtud's Mamhilad & St Matthew's Monkswood

The local Lottery clubs provide valuable fundraising for our churches. It is not too late to subscribe to the M and M 50:50 Club for 2026-27 which supports Mamhilad and Monkswood churches. For further details email thevansfamily@yahoo.co.uk

St Matthew's was pleased to welcome over 20 people from across the Ministry Area to the service of Compline during Holy Week, a new venture for us. The church is open again at weekends over the summer

Lesley Evans

St Madoc's Llanbadoc

Friends from all parts of the Ministry Area joined us for a Patronal Festival Evensong at the beginning of the year.

This beautiful service was led by Andrew Morton with his "Canticum" choir on St. Madoc's Day Saturday 31st January.

We were pleased that a number of people from across the MA were able to join us for a Church Walk on Saturday 25th April. We walked from St. Mary's Priory Church along the river bank to St. Madoc's for refreshments.

As has been our tradition for a few years, we placed small posies of flowers in the porch over Easter for people to take, either for themselves, or to remember a loved one.

Rosemary Evans





St Tegfedd, Llandegfedd

Not one but two donkeys fronted the annual Palm Sunday procession in Llandegfedd this year.

A large congregation enjoyed the Spring sunshine and flowers, and managed just three repeats of All Glory Laud and Honour as we processed through the village to church handing out palms, and finishing with a slightly sobering retelling of the Passion in the churchyard. Many thanks to all those who made it happen.

Robert Aitken



St. John's Church, Llandenny



We have been in a quiet period in the churches' year and had a candle lit Taizé service early evening at the beginning of February.

We soon moved on into Lent when the Lent lunches began on first five Tuesdays in Raglan church. The five churches surrounding Raglan each took a turn to provide the soup, cake and drinks so we were busy cooking one week with about 30

people to feed, and also supporting other weeks by inviting friends to come for a good meal and chat - a very successful event in Lent supporting the Bishop's Lent Appeal.

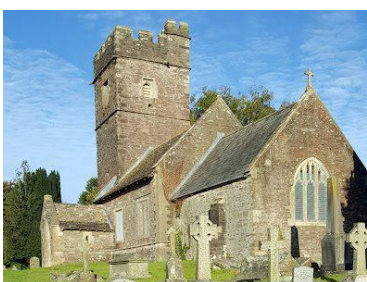
As a group in Llandenny we had a meeting where we did some planning for the year. On Saturday 16 May 2 – 5pm we invite you to LLANDENNY SPRING WALKABOUT - Open Gardens, Treasure Hunt, Stalls, Refreshments, Decorated church as well as a gentle walk about our beautiful village.

Also, two other dates to note: Saturday 4 July – Strawberry Tea (details later) and Saturday 21 November (afternoon) Winter Fayre. Thinking of this we have established a small craft group who meet every few weeks to share ideas and materials for items to make for the stalls.

Further details available from Sue Russell: gsrussell@btinternet.com

St John's Llanhennock 'When Spring with its joy and its laughter, comes slowly over the lea'... Spring has come exceptionally slowly over the lea this year, and Easter Day was mostly chilly and windy. It was nevertheless vibrant Spring inside St John's, which was richly

decorated with seasonal flowers, bringing joy, if not actual laughter, to the full congregation.





Instead of our usual collection of goods for the Eastern Valley Food Bank, we collected cash; we had been told that churches usually give food and household goods generously at Easter and Christmas, but that there are long gaps when very little comes in. We thought that a financial donation would go some way to filling the gaps, so that they can use the money when needed. Llanhennock Ladies voted to add to the sum given as part of their charity initiative, and we were able to send a generous cheque.

We have decided to hold a Wedding Dress Display or Bridal Exhibition in the Church and Village Hall on Saturday 13th June. This will be accompanied by afternoon tea, a blue stall, and a plant stall, to name just a few of the delights in store. Planning is in its final stages, and posters and further information will shortly be widely available.

Chris Edwards



St. Peter, Paul & John, Llantrisant & Llanllowell

Our church dedicated to St Peter, Paul and John remains a quiet giant reflecting a long-ago era of wealthy investment in God's buildings. according to its listed building status, it is a medieval relic of national interest, though whether that interest is in its scale or in why and how it came to be built is still not

clear.



A faithful few attend our fortnightly service; we are so grateful that friends from other parishes come too. A generous few non-attenders help to maintain the churchyard and ensure our financial viability.

This summer the very positive relationship with our small local community will witness

two very special "life events". One family will celebrate the sacrament of marriage. another will bring young members of their family to be baptised.

Our church is always open, not just in "open churches month"; visitors from far and near are often surprised to find such a calm and uncluttered interior and taken aback by the scale of the scissor beamed roof. Whoever comes for whatever reason, they are always made to feel welcome, either in person, or by finding the biscuits!

On a less positive note, the sale of Llanllowell church continues to meet obstacles: it may be put back on the market.

Sandy Blair

St Cadoc's Raglan



The period from Candlemas to Easter in St. Cadoc's, Raglan was taken up with prayer and reading during Lent. Our Clergy team produced a list of books that they felt were suitable for the Lenten period and Rev. Helen has started a Bible Study Course in Raglan which continues to take place from 2.00pm on a Tuesday afternoon. We are studying Mark's Gospel at present, and anyone is welcome

and invited to join us.

The Lenten Lunches took place on a Tuesday when the various churches in our area got together to enjoy fellowship and raise funds for the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. This year we raised over £1100.

The local Primary school attended church for a Eucharist service, it is uplifting to see so many young people filling the pews and singing lustily in worship.

The Open the Book team continue to go into school once a month and act out, with the help of the children, stories from the Bible, another heartening interaction between the adults and children.

Jenny Swattridge

St Andrew's Tredunnoch



Many thanks must go to Sally, Stephen and Amy for Conducting our church services over the last few months. It is amazing how they have often already taken a number of services earlier in the day.



Fresh@4, which takes place on the first Sunday of each month, is thriving. The congregation seem to like the informality, being able to discuss things and the refreshments after the service and of course being able to have a good chat. Thanks must go to Thelma, our organist, for selecting and playing the hymns.



The themes have been very varied and it is always interesting to hear how Sally and Amy tackle them and involve the congregation. In February we had the theme of "Modernity,"

which was fascinating and in March our theme was St David. Naturally Thelma chose some appropriate hymns.

Just after Christmas we held a very pleasant and well attended social evening in the church organised by Heather and Duncan Anstey. It was nice to catch up with everyone. We also held an excellent, well attended, defibrillator training course in February. Guto and Gemma, members of the village community, hosted the evening and Pete Richards, a coordinator of the Rapid Responders in Monmouthshire, brought us up to date with a refresher on CPR and the use of our defibrillator. Tredunnoch's defibrillator, which is located in the bus shelter, is now ten years old and luckily has not been used.

We are hoping to organise a series of concerts throughout the summer and autumn in St Andrew's church or outside if the weather is good. The plan, at the moment, is to have a folk evening in June followed by a jazz evening in July. There will also be some choral concerts. More information will be circulated once dates are fixed.

David Banning-Lover

The Priory Church of St Mary, Usk



Once again, the church has enjoyed a busy time leading up to Easter with opportunities to come together to both worship and for fellowship.

The Lent Lunch was enjoyed by 50 People coming together to enjoy homemade soup and apple pies enjoying the opportunity to catch up with old and new friends.



After the lunch Sue Cowburn talked about the Food Pantry in the church and progress over the last few months to upgrade the area and the generosity of people donating whilst the increasing numbers regularly needing to use the pantry is concerning, the opportunity to reach out into the community is appreciated.

Towards the end of Lent, a morning of hot cross buns and hot drinks was enjoyed by a surprising number of people on a quiet Saturday morning with donations going towards church social funds.

Members of St Mary's regular congregation were really pleased to welcome so many people at the joint MA service in March, the collection going to the Bishop's Lent Appeal



Preparations for Easter included the Maundy Thursday service, a very special service with the return of a vigil this year as well as the traditional washing of feet. Good Friday included the *Walk of Witness* through Usk town coming together with members of the Catholic and Baptist churches before joining together in fellowship at St Mary's, this year made particularly special as the visiting choir were practicing.



The Final Hour service - Reflections on the Cross, supported by the St Cybi Consort was

both prayerful and wonderful.

Sunday was a joyous time of worship with a full church (running out of hymn and service books) the cross decorated with flowers by the congregation as they returned from receiving communion, our choir leading the singing and adding two glorious anthems. After the service the usual tea, coffee and biscuits were served with the addition of chocolate eggs!



Open the Book and the Baby and Toddler Groups continue to thrive, sharing the Easter message sensitively with the wider community.

Plans for the summer include a History Day looking at how the Victorians influenced the church and town in Usk, an art exhibition including displays from amateur artists from the church and the town, and a Green Fair to celebrate Gods creation whilst exploring opportunities to support climate initiatives at the end of

September. We also plan to continue to support community events with refreshments for open gardens weekend and the church will once again be one of the venues for the Choral Festival in July.

Debbie Harper

Eco Church



The 'recycle/reuse table' is well used. Anyone planning to make jam, please help yourself to jam jars from this table. Wool, fabric pieces and gift bags are also available. We continue to collect used stamps (with a large border please) for the RNIB.



This year is the 10th anniversary of Eco Church and there will be four special services in England and Wales to celebrate this milestone. In May three of us from St Mary's will be attending the service in Wales at the Baptist Church in Morryston, Swansea.

We are working towards holding an Eco Fair at St Mary's in September - keep a look-out for further details.

Carol Southwell

NOW@ St Mary's – the All-Age worship led by Canon Sally at 4.00 p.m. each third Sunday in the month continues to be very well supported and families from across the MA will always be made welcome – why not come and give it a try? You will not be disappointed.



Eastertide saw 14 children searching for 50 mini-Jesus' hidden round the church - the message being that Jesus is everywhere. To witness the children and their grownups engaging in worship through song, prayer, story, craft and of course food is a joy to behold and to be part of.



Sarah Byford

St. Mary's Baby and Toddler Group

We are a very friendly group, meeting on a Wednesday morning during term time at The Grange in Maryport St, Usk. This term began two weeks ago and we have been delighted to welcome more new families to our sessions.

Last week there were 29 children plus parents and /or grandparents enjoying the space and the weekly activities. Thanks must

go to the dream team of volunteers who work so hard each week to make the morning so enjoyable.



Judith Lee



St Thomas à Becket, Wolvesnewton

We are delighted to be able to use the chancel again now that repairs to the ceiling have been carried out. Grateful thanks to John Harris for organising and supervising the work, including removal of some long standing and long hanging cobwebs! It was good to hear that John was one of this year's recipients of the King's Maundy money, many congratulations to him.

Chepstow walkers paid a visit as part of their Three churches walk. Julie gave them a short history of the church and, with the chancel accessible, they were able to look at our stunning stained-glass windows. Thank you to Pauline and Colin for providing very welcome refreshments for the walkers.

We are looking forward to our 'Bootleggers' concert in May, a joint venture with Llangwm Village Hall and spearheaded by Leila.

Scilla Greenland

More HoMMA Activities, Events and Reflections

Easter Sunrise Service

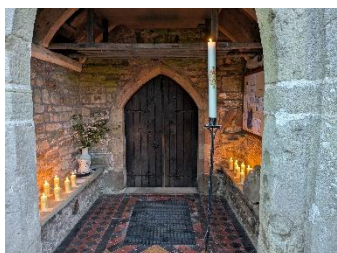
For me Easter Day for at least the last eleven years has been getting up before 5am in order to drive to The Blorenges for the Sunrise Easter Communion Service there. This year we all met at 6am for the Sunrise Easter Communion Service at Trostrey Church nestling on the hillside overlooking the Usk valley beautifully decorated in the churchyard with daffodils. Torches shone as we walked towards the church in the dark.

We were welcomed by the clergy with a fire pit glowing red outside the entrance to the porch of the church where we could warm our hands.

The service began at 6am with celebrating the lighting and blessing of the first Pascal Candle from the fire in the fire pit, this same light was taken into Trostrey porch where twenty candles were then lit from the same light, representing all the churches in the Heart of Monmouthshire Ministry Area.



Therefore everyone in the whole Ministry Area would receive the one blessed light when their candle returned to their church.



We then celebrated Holy Communion outside together before seeing the sky becoming lighter and glowing as the sun rose.

All were invited inside for hot drinks and hot cross buns and fellowship together. A memorable start to Easter Day. *Sue Russell*



Mothers' Union

In 2026 Mothers' Union is celebrating 150 years since its foundation with over 4 million members in 84 countries worldwide.

The Worldwide President of this organisation Kathleen Snow came to Usk Memorial Hall on Tuesday 7 April to meet the members of MU from Raglan Branch and other branches in the Diocese of Monmouth. She shared her journey in MU and experiences from her home branch in Canada and was greatly moved by the display of action and outreach projects on display.



These included the Prison work where members regularly attend the service in Usk Prison on a Sunday and help with the family days as well as selling the beautiful wooden carved items made in the prison. Members on a rota attend the Contact Centre where they support the play facilities for separated parents to meet their children on neutral ground.

Branches also continue to provide items for the hospitals, refugees and overseas projects. This visit was part of the journey Kathleen was making throughout Wales and all members were pleased to have met her.

If you would like to know more about the Mothers' Union and its work here, please contact Jenny - 01291 690708 jennifer.swattridge@googlemail.com



2026 World Day of Prayer

The service to be used throughout the world in 2026 was prepared this year by an Ecumenical group of Christian women in Nigeria.

Members from several churches in the Heart of Monmouthshire Ministry Area and Baptists from Raglan met in Raglan Church on the first Friday in March, as part of the worldwide wave of prayer which encircled the world on that day.



It has started in Samoa and ended, 146 countries later, in American Samoa, all praying with and for the people of Nigeria.



Raglan church was prepared with symbols on the table representing Nigeria and its culture. Green and white fabric represented the Nigerian flag and black as a mourning cloth representing the burden of marginalisation.

A backpack represented the burden of religious persecution that some children face.

Rice symbolised the interconnected burdens of poverty and

despair and stones

represented the heavy burden of oppression and injustice that people carry.

All these symbols represented the pen pictures which were narrated by women from Nigeria but in the darkness each person wrote of the positive way their faith holds them through their struggles. As one wrote 'our strength doesn't come from an expectation of an easy life. Instead, it is rooted in the knowledge that Christ walks with us through every hardship

It was a privilege to be part of the service to learn about the struggles that other Christians have in their lives, and give thanks for those who speak

Sue Russell

Two of our closed churches – well worth a visit



St Michael's. Llanfihangel Gobion

Once a vibrant church within the old Bettws Newydd group of churches, the small church at Llanvihangel Gobion had long been forgotten until we received complaints of the churchyard being overgrown and brambles etc straying into neighbouring gardens!

Having been given an emergency grant for the initial paring back, we are now lucky to have someone willing to keep the churchyard under control three times a year. The paying for this will come from funds in that old group but if anyone has connections with the area, we would be delighted to receive any donations! The church itself is closed until the Representative Body decide what to do with it but, as with all the closed churchyards within our Ministry Area, we are responsible for its upkeep.



St Mary's, Llanfair Kilgeddin

This church also once a church within the Bettws Newydd group, is now under the guardianship of The Friends of the Friendless churches. It is well worth a visit as it has some wonderful features, 15th century rood screen, stained glass and tracery with a rich decorative sgraffito scheme over the walls. Luckily, the churchyard is looked after by the Trumper family with the aid of a Trust Fund left for the parish by the late incumbent, Rev William John Coussmaker Lindsay.

Kay Spencer

The Big Saturday Breakfast

Well done and thank you for ensuring another great breakfast event. There was a wonderful atmosphere and it is so good to see people relaxing and enjoying each other's company, even if we did wonder where we could put them all! Amazingly the numbers were almost exactly the same as last time, borne out by the quantities of food used.





We served 105 cooked breakfasts, plus up to 16 helpers, and some who only had cereal, toast etc. It is absolutely down to everyone playing their part in making it such a popular occasion.

I hope we showed God's love in the way we served others.



Scilla Greenland

John Harris -a worthy recipient of Maundy Money

After a long career as an engineer for the steel works in South Wales, John Harris has devoted his retirement to using his extensive knowledge and experience to care for a large number of medieval and more modern rural churches in Monmouthshire. He works tirelessly and sacrificially with church committees, government bodies, charities, and contractors to ensure that our buildings are safe, well cared for, and beautiful places to worship.

John gives as much attention to the detailed repair of a medieval door hinge, as to the shelves of the food pantry, or the complete reroofing of a church, or a reordering to accommodate toilets and kitchens. He is exceptional in both his devotion, and his willingness to listen and respond to the needs of the various church communities, and I suspect he actually works longer hours now than he ever worked for the Steel Works!

John is that rare individual - humble, incredibly gifted, kind, and godly. He is a blessing to us all and a worthy recipient of the Maundy money.

Canon Sally

... and this is how it all happened

It's Maundy Thursday I'm sitting in my hotel room in St Asaph and shortly I will meet the King however my only thought is how am I going to get to the Cathedral? the Main Street is closed I was rescued by Google maps panic over - now the King.

We arrive at car park A, the nearest car park to the Cathedral, Buckingham Palace arranged this to make it easier for Linda, they were so kind. Out of the car, clearing security and nearing the main door of the Cathedral. As we arrive a Royal Airforce Officer approaches and asks, "May have your name sir" he checks his list and we are moving forward. The Officer calls a Corporal and we are led to our seats. I sit down, Linda sits in her seat behind me, I attach my badge my name printed below the King's crest - I am terrified!

I sit silently watching the many people: Clergy, Buckingham Palace officials, people in ceremonial uniforms and opposite and to the right the First Minister of Wales, this is far more special than I could ever have expected.

All the recipients are now seated, the staff of the Lord High Almoner are approaching me and I'm informed that I will be first to receive the King, adding that it's important I stand at the right moment. I want to swear, however the Archbishop of Wales is opposite, I don't let the MA down.

The Lord High Almoner addresses the congregation explaining the service, then the processions start: The Bishops of the Church in Wales, the Metropolitan Cross, The Archbishop of Wales, the Cathedral Chapter, the Mayor of St Asaph. The Yeoman of the Guard arrive and move into their positions; every move coordinated as one.

The Royal trumpeters begin the fanfare, loud, magnificent and immensely moving. We stand, the fanfare ends and we are singing "Praise to the Holiest in the Height". The King and Queen pass close to me and the King smiles, he takes his seat to the right of me with the Queen.

The service starts, I have lost my nervousness, I become quietly emotional thinking of the nomination and of all the people who have been so pleased for me, the phone calls and messages I received while we traveled to St Asaph, everyone has been so kind. I have never experienced anything so overwhelming.

The nervousness returns, the first lesson is nearing the end-John 13. 1-15. I now have to stand at the right time receive the King, was it your Majesty or your Highness? There is no time to panic as a member of the Almonry staff whispers in my ear "stand". I stand, the King is in front of me presenting the wallets and holding my hand and talking, he smiles, I smile and I say "thank you your Majesty" bowing slightly. It's over, I was correct, it was your Majesty and it was wonderful, so wonderful, that moment will remain with me always.



to

The same member of staff who told me to stand now tells me to sit.

I sit in silence again thinking of all the the kind words and all the people I work with who help so much in what I do and I feel deeply grateful.



Unknown to me Linda was helping the Almoner's staff follow the sections of the service which is all in Welsh, they are so grateful.

We stand, the King and Queen leave the Cathedral, the service has ended. Linda and I look at the coins and we shake hands with other recipients. We slowly leave the Cathedral and join others outside.

We return to car park A, now controlled by armed police officers. I ask if I can leave, we safely exit the car park without being shot and we're travelling home.

What a day! what an incredible and overwhelming day, I am proud, moved and so appreciative.

John Harris

Come and Pray in May

Rev'd Sally will be praying Morning Prayer
in each of our churches on the following days and times.
Come and join in,
let's pray together and see where God is at work.

Sat 2 nd 10am Bryngwyn	Tues 19 th 10am Usk
Tues 5 th 9.30am Monkswood	Weds 20 th 9am Wolvesnewton
Weds 6 th 9am Llanover	Thurs 21 st 9.30am Llantrisant
Thurs 7 th 9am Kemeys Comm.	Fri 22 nd 8.30am Tredunnock
Fri 8 th 8.30am Glascoed	Sat 23 rd 9.30am Llanhennock
Mon 11 th 10am Goytre	Mon 25 th 9.30am Llandegfedd
Tues 12 th 10am Bettws Newydd	Tues 26 th 9.30am Llanybi
Weds 13 th 9am Trostrey	Weds 27 th 9am Coed y Paen
Sat 16 th 8.30am Raglan	Thurs 28 th 9am Mamhilad
Mon 18 th 9am Llanbadoc	Sat 30 th 9.30am Llandenny

Heart of Monmouthshire Ministry Area
prayer pilgrimage in the month of May,
for Rogation and Thy Kingdom Come



A note from the Editor.

What a truly wonderful Eastertide we have had and are still enjoying – a big thank you to all the contributors - for spreading the good news of all that is happening in our Ministry Area. We are truly blessed.

I look forward to your contributions for the next edition– in 'Word' format please - to usksarah456@gmail.com.- no later than 6th July

Sarah Byford

