

ESGOBAETH LLANELWY

TYFU FFYDD • DOD Â GOBAITH • DANGOS CARIAD

GROW FAITH • BRING HOPE • DEMONSTRATE LOVE

DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

ANNUAL REPORT 2023





Introduction from Bishop Gregory

*Will you not revive us again, O Lord,
that your people may rejoice in you?*

(Psalm 85:6)

🌿 REVIVAL

Psalm 85 was written, we think, in the period just after the great dislocation of exile for the people of Israel had been resolved. During the sixth century BC, the local superpower, the Babylonians, had invaded Judah and shipped off the elite population, lock, stock and barrel, to exile in Babylon. Seventy or so years later, Babylon had itself fallen to Persia, and the Persian Emperor, Cyrus, had packed the Jewish people up and shipped them back. However, the old glories had gone, and this psalm prays for God to intervene again in their life and restore national prosperity.

It seems a fitting verse for us as we move out of the orbit of Covid and into the future. People have felt tired and our congregations have been more than a little uncertain. However, we have a bold

new triple focus to our mission – to grow Faith, to bring Hope and to demonstrate Love, and there are plenty of signs of new growth. God is at work among his people and is reviving us.

Vocations continue to flourish, with five new deacons last year, and seven this year, together with the licensing of several Lay Ministers. We have new lay leadership in our Mission Areas, including five lay Mission Area Leaders. I believe that, in Covid, we learned how to work together better as Mission Areas, and to appreciate the strengths of team ministry. We have thought about Mission and explored new ways of being Church and reaching out into the Community – aspects of which will be recorded in this Annual Report. I am hopeful, because I see many reasons to be confident, that God is giving us growth, is raising up new leaders, is blessing the endeavours we make in the cause of God's Kingdom. We need to be confident in our faith, rejoicing in God and discovering where he is at work in our life as a diocese and in the world.

🌿 THE DIOCESAN TEAM

We have seen some significant changes in the diocesan team. Diane McCarthy left us after 14 years as Diocesan Secretary. Diane worked passionately among us to reform and reshape the life of the diocese to make it resilient, strong and growing, and we share in the benefits of her labours. Hayley Matthews joined us as Archdeacon of Wrexham and is already making an impact with ambition to build a diocese which is strong and dedicated in the service we offer to God. Olwen Lintern-Smyth has taken over as Diocesan Secretary, bringing a wealth of experience in Church and in the charity world, to assist us in our forward planning and growth. Rosalind Williams finished her time as Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, after a hugely talented tenure of that office, and Justine Baldwin has brought experience and flair to the post as a worthy successor in partnership with the Diocese of Bangor. A big thank you to each of these for the gifts they have been offering to the diocese, and to all the diocesan team in the bishop's staff and Esgobty, and in the Diocesan Office for all that they do. A big thank you, indeed, to each member of our diocesan family – to you – for contributing your gifts and faith to building up our common life.

🌿 ASAPH 1450

One feature of life in 2023 has been our celebration of the 1450 years since the reputed consecration of Asaph as our second bishop. Not only was there a splendid service in the Cathedral, at which the Dean of Liverpool preached, but we've been marking 2023 as a Year of Jubilee. Jubilee in the Bible is every fiftieth year, when people were asked to lift their sights from the burden of toil and everyday life to glimpse again the glory of God. We've all been invited to do the same this year, to focus on those things which excite us in the service of God, whether it be engagement with a charity, deepening our prayer life, exploring the beauty of our world or of the sacred in our churches and elsewhere, or just being with folk and sharing the journey of faith. I hope that you are taking this invitation seriously and can join in.



🌿 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING IN MISSION

We are enormously grateful to the Representative Body of the Church in Wales (the trustee body of our financial and physical

resources at national level) for the partnership which they have offered us throughout the period of Covid and beyond. Significant extra funding has allowed us to balance the books, and the funds assigned to us have been largely devolved to the Mission Areas to offer assistance there. Resilience funding this year has allowed us to push resources to where they are most needed, and to take on new projects such as Mission Hub Churches, which focus our work for growth and for the future.

We are engaging and succeeding in mission – there is growth, not just in our churches at ground level, but through Resource Church, Centres of Mission and Mission Hub Churches, ideas which are now being copied and developed in other dioceses of the Church in Wales.

🌿 GIVING THANKS

Let me end by returning to the note of gratitude. God is at work, but we see that work through the efforts of every member of the Teulu Asaph. I see your new initiatives in mission and I marvel that we have such talent and enthusiasm for new ventures. I see boldness and courage and creativity – and a thank you to our Communications Officer, Karen Maurice, for distilling this in this report. Read and enjoy this annual report – give thanks for all that is being achieved, and for all that God wishes to do with us and through us. *Will you not revive us again, O Lord, that your people may rejoice in you?*

Gregory Llanellwy

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/bishopgregory/>





Faith, Hope and Love

The Venerable Andy Grimwood, Archdeacon of St Asaph and The Venerable Dr Hayley Matthews, Archdeacon of Wrexham

Archdeacon Hayley joined St Asaph from the Diocese of Leeds in February 2023. Here, she and Archdeacon Andy reflect on the three core values which underpin the diocesan strategy:

- Growing Faith
- Bringing Hope
- Demonstrating Love.

🕊️ FAITH, HOPE, LOVE: THE COURSE

A video discussion course was developed by the diocese and rolled out during 2022. Nearly 250 people have taken part in the course so far. The follow-up Bible studies have been used by three Mission Areas, and one Mission Hub has used it as a catalyst for further Bible study.

Responses include:

- People engaged positively and it provoked good discussion.
- It was well received and certainly generated deep discussion on the Bible passages as well as their application for modern Christian living.

- People seemed to enjoy the experience, especially the relationships that were formed between churches, and the conversations the videos engendered.
- Bible study: This has been well received: The group is now continuing to meet to study the Bible together.

🕊️ RESOURCE CHURCH: HOPE STREET, WREXHAM

Hope Street, our first Resource Church, now includes several Ukrainian refugees as part of its congregation, volunteers with Wrexham Street Pastors, and joins the annual, national *Love Christmas* initiative, distributing bags of kindness to individuals and families identified by partner organisations and churches. In 2022, 670 bags of kindness were distributed together with a box of chocolate to 1,820 prisoners at HMP Berwyn.

Student Ministry and Hope Street's relationships with Glyndŵr University and Coleg Cambria have seen a growing number of students who call Hope Street home, particularly among the nursing course based at Wrexham Maelor campus.

A key objective of the Resource Church project is to develop a leadership pipeline. Twenty-six people have attended the School of Theology, engaging with theological teaching at Level 4 from the staff at St Mellitus College. Hope Street currently has four candidates in discernment for ministerial training, and a new curate joined the church in Summer 2023.

🕊️ MISSION HUBS

A fourth Mission Hub was announced in 2022, to add to the three launched previously. Holywell Mission Hub, based around St Peter's and St James' in Holywell and Holy Trinity in Greenfield, has seen the emergence of a new congregation at the Bread of Life service every Monday. In October 2022, Bishop Gregory attended the Bread of Life service, talking to those who come regularly.

🕊️ NORTH WALES CENTRE OF MISSION

It has been a real joy to see the North Wales Centre of Mission established at Canolfan Dewi Sant in Pensarn. Working with the Church Army, a fresh expression of church has started, along with the development of other initiatives.

🕊️ SHORE TO SHORE: COASTAL WALK

A practical expression of Faith, Hope and Love carried out by the diocese was the coastal walk every Monday during the 2022 school summer holidays. Over 70 people joined the Archdeacon of St Asaph collecting litter, talking to people about faith as well as building relationships with each other. Shore to Shore started at the Mission Hub at St David's Church in Penrhyn Bay and finished six weeks later in Prestatyn, supporting the clear up after the town's Classic Car Rally.

🌱 ECO-FEST

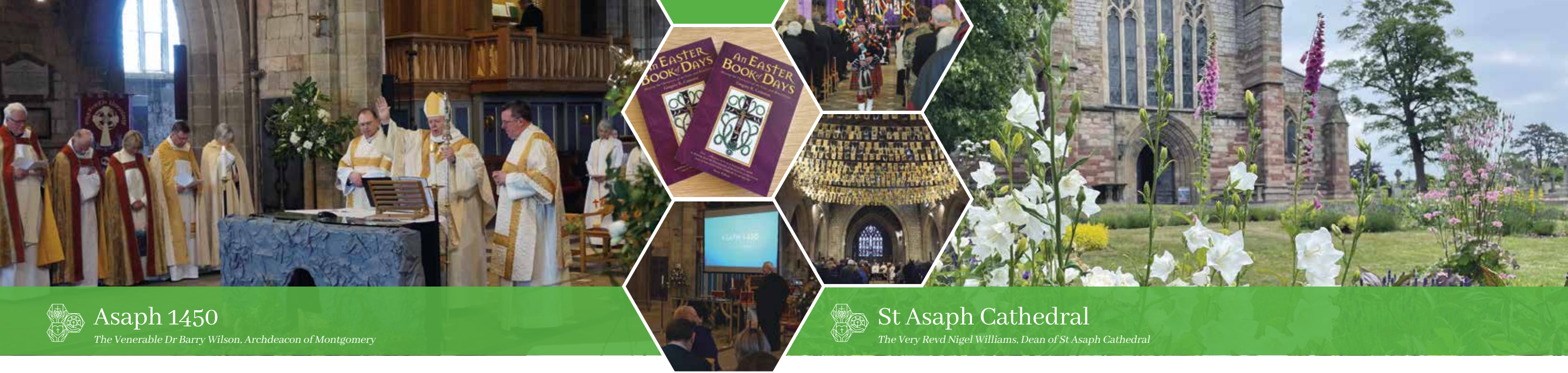
Following the success of the 2022 Eco-Fest in October 2022 (postponed due to the death of Her Majesty, the late Queen), a second Eco-Fest was held in June 2023 in St Mary's Churchyard in Chirk. Churches were encouraged to come along to find out more about becoming an Eco-Church and how to measure their Energy Footprint, using the Church in Wales' online Footprint Tool.

🌱 FOR THE FUTURE

Planning to bid for funds from the Church in Wales' Church Growth Fund has taken up much of our time in the middle of 2023. We are busy writing job descriptions and project plans for ideas that we hope may bring new life and energy for mission and evangelism to the diocese in 2024 for the next ten years. The opportunity to bid for significant funding to allow us to share the Good News and grow our mission, evangelism and ministry across our church communities is very exciting indeed.

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-hope-love/>





Asaph 1450

The Venerable Dr Barry Wilson, Archdeacon of Montgomery



St Asaph Cathedral

The Very Revd Nigel Williams, Dean of St Asaph Cathedral

This year is the 1450th anniversary of the date traditionally ascribed to the year in which Kentigern arranged the consecration of Asaph as his successor as Bishop of the diocese now called after his name. In the diocese, we proclaimed 2023 a Jubilee for our diocese.

Here are some of the ways we marked the year of Jubilee:

- During Lent, all those in licensed ministry were offered a copy of Bishop Gregory's book *An Easter Book of Days* to reflect on its call to be transformed in our discipleship and enabled to transform the world.
- At the Feast-day service to St Asaph, three people were admitted into the Order of St Asaph and every member of the congregation was given a specially minted commemorative Asaph 1450 coin. These were distributed at other services too.
- Every Mission Area Leadership team was provided with funding to take a 24-hour residential retreat together. So far, two-thirds of Mission Areas have applied for grants and taken their retreats, with the remainder in the process of finalising arrangements.

- Every Licensed Minister was encouraged to access their training bursary and use it to re-energise and enable their charism and ministry. Activities such as creative writing and photography have been taken up as part of the bursary.
- Bishop Gregory has earmarked the Kingdom Season (1–26 November) as a time to prioritise creativity, when everyone is invited to commit to finding a sacred time, set aside for creativity, to do those things that feed well-being and flourishing.
- Material has been prepared that allows space for clergy to reflect on their ministry, and to seek help with developing it. *Skillful Shepherds* is a spiritual resource to review our own ministry, and to reflect upon its fruitfulness.

Information about all these aspects of Asaph 1450 is available at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/asaph-1450/>

It has been a busy year of diocesan, civic and regular daily and Sunday worship in the Cathedral. Large civic services were held following the death of Her Majesty in Autumn 2022 and for His Majesty's Coronation in May 2023. Once again, the Cathedral hosted two ordination services on behalf of the diocese. Sunday services continue to be live streamed to the Cathedral's Facebook page.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Investment has been made into St Asaph Cathedral to resource the development of two key strands of ministry to young people:

1. Music – under the Director of Music, Paul Booth, a successful recruitment drive within local schools has created a probationary choir which is training new choristers for the Cathedral choir. At the first meeting in 2022, more than 30 new young people joined.
2. Chaplaincy – a school chaplain is being appointed to work in the Welsh-medium high school Ysgol Glan Clwyd and its feeder primary schools.

REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

2023 has seen the development of a programme of events aimed at reaching new audiences. Among the events were an Abba Tribute

Night, a 90s Silent Disco and taking place later in the year are a Wedding Fayre and Winter Food Festival. The Cathedral team continue to work with tourism agencies to promote the Translators' Tearoom along with tours of the Cathedral through coach holiday companies.

It is hoped that new audiences will bring additional revenue streams to help the Cathedral's fundraising efforts for two urgent building projects: repairs to the stained-glass east window and repointing work to the wall around the iconic west door entrance. Half of the money has been pledged by the Church in Wales centrally, but fundraising is necessary to acquire the rest of the funds.

HERITAGE GARDEN

A dedicated team of volunteer gardeners meets each week to maintain the Cathedral's heritage garden. The garden provides a place of peace and reflection. Information is now provided in the Cathedral for visitors to discover more about the plants growing. <https://stasaphcathedral.wales/en>



Developing Steering Group

Chancellor Pam Powell, Director of Ministry

Archdeacon Hayley, the new Archdeacon of Wrexham (pictured above), has become the lead for the Developing Steering Group and is looking forward to developing lay ministry, vocations and CMD (continuing ministerial development) across the diocese in the coming year.

CLERGY SCHOOL

More than 90% of the clergy of the diocese attended clergy school in November 2022 at The Hayes Centre in Swanwick. The theme was *Making the Journey Happen* and featured leading theologian Dr Peter Walker and Graham Archer from CPAS. Revd Liz Devall from Manchester Diocese acted as chaplain and best-selling author Catherine Fox provided some 'unique' insights. Audio recordings of all the speakers are available from the Vocation and Ministry pages on the diocesan website.

MINISTRY FIGURES

2023 ORDINATIONS AND LICENSING	NUMBER
Ordained as Deacons	7
Ordained Priests	4
Pastoral Chaplains licensed	2

TRAINING STATISTICS UP TO SUMMER 2023	NUMBER
Stipendiary	6
NSM/NSML	1
Distinctive Deacon	2
Reader	0
Youth & Children	0
Evangelist	0
Pastoral Chaplain	3

COMMENCING TRAINING AUTUMN 2023	NUMBER
Stipendiary	6
NSM/NSML	0
Distinctive Deacon	1
Reader	0
Youth & Children	0
Evangelist	1
Pastoral Chaplain	2

IN DISCERNMENT FOR MINISTRY	NUMBER
Stipendiary	7
NSM/NSML	1
Distinctive Deacon	1
Reader	2
Youth & Children	0
Evangelist	0
Pastoral Chaplain	0

MISSION AREA LEADER (MAL) TRAINING

Mission Area Leaders have met together over the year to share food and good practice, reflecting theologically on what we are called to do in the wide variety of contexts in which we are situated. Over the coming year, we will meet in each MAL's context to learn more about what ministry looks like in rural, urban, isolated, city, deprived and comfortable areas as well as to pray for the mission and ministry of all our churches and church leaders.

COMMISSIONED MINISTRIES

Pastoral Assistants and Worship Leaders support worship across the diocese in every Mission Area. Local training takes place in MAs (or MA groups), using the St Padarn's material, supported by the Commissioned Ministries Officer, the Revd Will Marshall.

To provide a training option for people unable to access local training, a Zoom Pastoral Assistant course has been held, with several people making use of this.

A Worship Leader certificate has been created by Joshua Schoch in the diocesan office and is available for any MA that wishes to use it. Alternatively, MAs are welcome to create their own certificates if they wish.

We are looking to develop training for a new Ministry of Commissioned Catechists.

DISCERNMENT

The annual Diocesan Discernment Day was successful. Time was given for conversations to find out about different ways and ministries to serve God and the church. There were presentations from people at different stages in the discernment and training process as well as from staff at St Padarn's Institute.

RETIRED CLERGY

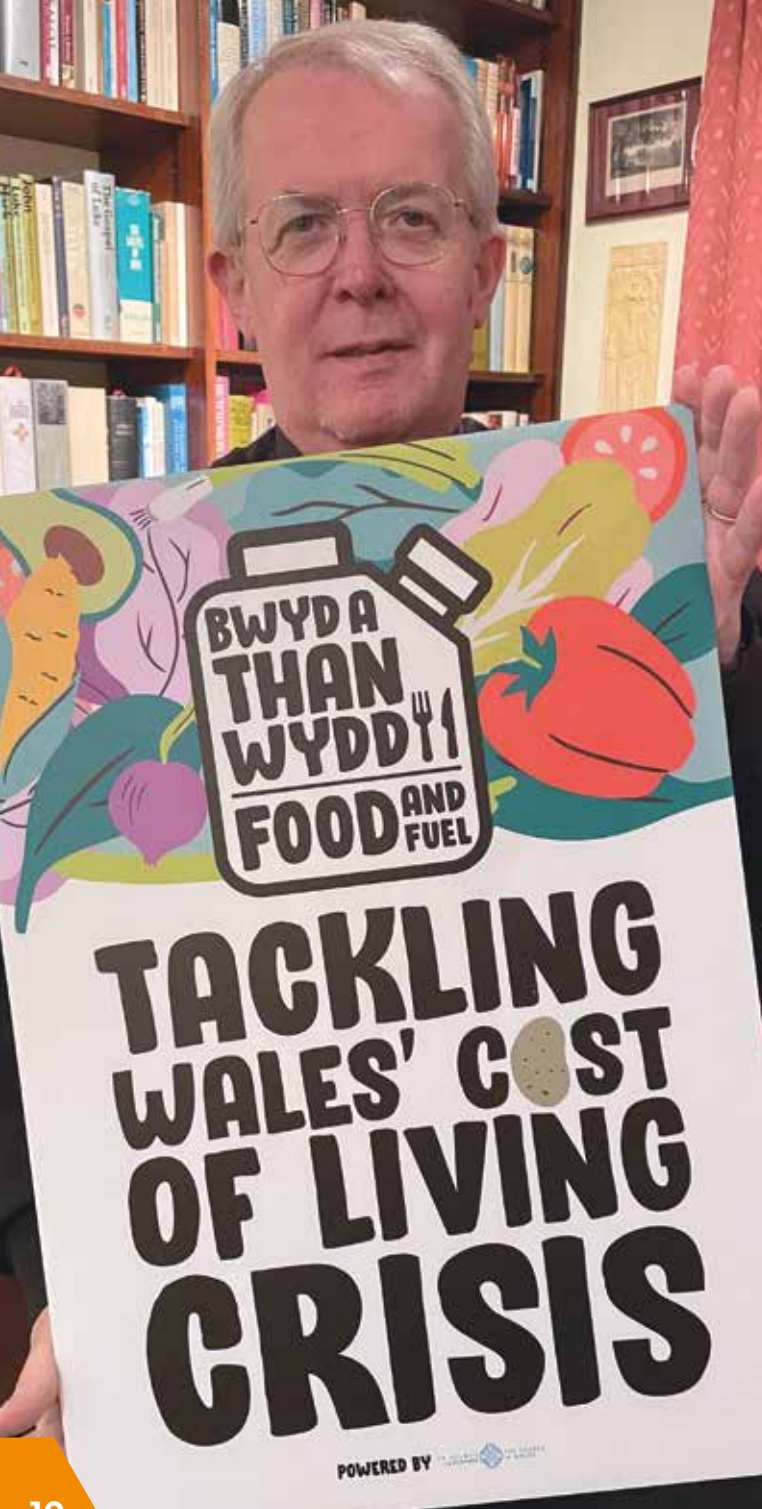
The Retired Clergy and spouses/widows have met three times this year for Fellowship and Evensong. The generosity of the DBF in subsidising these events is appreciated.

DIOCESAN SPIRITUALITY GROUP

The Diocesan Spirituality Group supports all ministries within the diocese. The highlight of the year was a masterclass on prayer in St Asaph Cathedral with Archbishop Rowan Williams and a retreat led by Bishop John Pritchard. Smaller events have been held across the diocese. Work has also moved forward to train Spiritual Directors for those who require them to lead and support individuals on their spiritual journey.

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/vocations-and-ministry/>





Engaging Steering Group

Sarah Wheat, Lead Officer, Engaging Steering Group

🍷 COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

At the beginning of 2023, reacting to the unprecedented, nationwide financial situation, the Diocesan Board of Finance approved a one-off grant toward the cost-of-living crisis. This money came from a fund of £50,000 provided by the Church in Wales centrally to support Warm Hub and related projects. Mission Areas and their churches were invited to apply for assistance with costs relating to providing a 'warm' place where the community could attend, socialise and have light refreshments. A total of £41,696 was distributed in response to 29 applications from 13 Mission Areas. Many projects have continued as people have enjoyed the chance to gather together.

🍷 THIS WORKS!

We have continued to add more content, films and inspiration to the This Works! section of the website, showcasing the projects and people who are delivering social engagement activities across the diocese. Please contact us to add details of your project, which can be shared with others to offer practical support and encouragement so projects can flourish and enhance our churches and communities.

🍷 BREAKING COUNTY LINES

We continue to deliver training sessions on Breaking County Lines in partnership with the Clewer Initiative. We are now partnering with Adult Learning Wales to deliver Train-the-Trainer sessions to their tutors so the training can be rolled out to their Youth Workers across Wales. The training allows us to raise awareness of this form of exploitation and work together to build community resilience that protects young people and others in our community from the negative impact of County Lines.

🍷 UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

The Diocesan Ukrainian Forum ran until April 2023, sharing resources and finding solutions for the issues host families and refugees were facing. We have maintained our partnership with Link International as they provided tools, templates, guidance and updated information from Welsh Government. The forum had 20 regular attenders, meeting monthly to support church groups and host families as they cared for and worked with Ukrainian refugees. The forum continues to share updates and news as needed. Many of the refugees have now moved to more permanent accommodation.

🍷 FOOD POVERTY IN WALES

Working in partnership with Well Fed/Can Cook, a social business in Deeside, we held a conference at St Asaph Cathedral to look at how we can all work together to change our food system. More than 120 people from across the diocese attended to find out how everyone can have access to good, nutritious food no matter their income. The conference looked at ways in which our churches and people can be part of the solution to end food poverty in Wales.

🍷 BECOME A MENTAL-HEALTH FIRST AIDER

The diocese now has a qualified Mental-Health First Aid instructor, which enables us to offer low-cost training to become a Mental-Health First Aider. Two courses have been delivered in 2023 so far and another is scheduled for the Autumn. We can deliver training online or in person. Understanding the mental-health issues people face and what to do in a mental-health crisis, is hugely important today.

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/>





Schools

St Asaph Education Team

The Diocese of St Asaph looks after 50 Church in Wales Schools. In February 2023, a new Director of Education for north Wales was appointed. Dr Justine Baldwin looks after schools here and in the Diocese of Bangor.

CARU CREADIGAETH

An environmentally themed event was attended by 200 people at the Cathedral in St Asaph in July 2023. The event was inspired by a report written by a Professor of Archaeology who recorded plastic waste on an archaeological site at Castell Henllys. Educational professionals and clergy joined pupils from four local church schools to celebrate the message of stewardship found within Genesis and the Book of Psalms.

TEDDY FRANCIS-JOHN

During the Pandemic, the Revd Paulette Gower started writing and filming Bible stories with a cast of teddy bears, led by Teddy Francis-John. These have proved so popular that, in January 2023, 60 teddy-friends of Teddy Francis-John were sent out to help children engage with the Bible. A special service was held in the Pool Mission Area to support the vision, Grow Faith, Bring Hope and Demonstrate Love, and local church schools were invited. The Bishop's Visitors worked with the Education Team to ensure teddy friends were delivered to all the church schools across

St Asaph Diocese. There were also bears for some of Teddy Francis-John's special 'young at heart' fans too, with bears travelling as far as Jersey and a special Bishop Bear helping in Esgobty.

The children and young people in our 50 church schools are keen to ensure the teddy bears are included in their learning and celebrations of Christian values and traditions.

ASAPH 1450

To celebrate Asaph 1450, the Education Team explored the narratives of the founding of Llanellwy, the place. Working with Ysgol Esgob Morgan and supported by grant funding from Culham St Gabriel's, the project researched the school's 'cynefin'. (Cynefin in Welsh loosely translates as belonging/sense of place/habitat). Pupils and teachers engaged with the story of Kentigern and were keen to develop the project in their own classrooms.

Welsh Christian identity and the deep relationship of the language and Welsh culture were common themes. The project has helped the whole school community understand how Christian identity and values were central to the founding of the holy place of Llanellwy.

CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

School leadership meetings in Wrexham and Welshpool proved popular with headteachers, governors and Mission Area representatives from across the diocese in summer 2023. The agenda included presentations on Religion, Values and Ethics curriculum planning, training on the teaching of non-religious philosophical convictions, an update on Section 50 inspections, and training on the appointment and recruitment of Foundation Governors. The meetings also included presentations from Transforming Lives for Good, a Christian charity working with families, schools and church communities to provide early intervention for pupils with emotional development needs, and Well-Fed, a social business dedicated to feeding children and families well-cooked and nutritious food. The meetings were valued by those who attended as an opportunity to develop their leaderships skills and knowledge, and as a long-awaited get-together with peers for support and professional dialogue. Two further school leadership meetings are planned in St Asaph and Caernarfon in October.

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/schools/>





Children and Young People

Hannah Daniels, Children and Youth Officer

YOUTH WORKERS

Growth and rejuvenation have been at the heart of children and youth work this year. The number of youth/all-age workers has increased: there is now a specialist worker in each of the four Hub churches, along with Hope Street Resource Church, and youth workers employed by two Mission Areas: Pool, and Estuary and Mountain.

SCHOOL AND CHAPLAINCY WORK

Much of the work in the Hub churches has focused on developing links with local communities, especially schools, and this has resulted in chaplaincy work being developed in primary and secondary schools. School assemblies, drop-in and 1-1 sessions, Prayer Spaces reflection days, holiday clubs, and a collaboration with the Xplore! Science Centre in Wrexham, have been features of this work. More than 500 children and young people in the diocese have been reached through this engagement.

LINKS WITH THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Children and Youth Officer, Hannah Daniels, is a Welsh representative on the executive committee of the Children's and Youth Adviser Network. In April 2023, the committee had a meeting

with the Archbishop of York who shared his vision of putting children, young people and families instinctively at the heart of the mission and ministry of the Church. Although a Church of England initiative, it is a beneficial link for the Church in Wales, and good practice has been and continues to be shared between both Anglican bodies.

TRAINING

Hannah Daniels has qualified as a Youth Mental-Health First Aid trainer and this year has led courses for people in the diocese, staff at St David's School in Llandudno, and for employees of the charity Children in Wales. Over 30 people in the diocese have now received the training and this will be developed further in 2024.

FUTURE PLANS

Looking to the future, the link with the Diocese of Helsinki in Finland has been re-established. Plans include a cathedral choir tour and an exchange with young people in both dioceses. The Nurturing Steering Group will reconvene in October 2023, and the membership will include the voice of young people for the first time since the group was established.

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/young-people-and-children/>



Property

St Asaph Property Team

CHURCHES

Church inspections have continued throughout the year, with 51 inspections completed during 2022/23. Over the past 12 months we have also visited churches to provide support, advice and guidance on the preparation of Faculty applications.

The extension to and refurbishment of All Saints Church in Newtown was completed in June 2023. This provides a new meeting room, kitchen and ancillary facilities to enable the church to expand its programme of community activities, and provides a space for different forms of worship during Sunday services.

The reordering of St Peter's, Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd, affords new facilities and flexible space in the Nave. This will allow greater use, mainly for discipleship of the congregation and wider

community engagement. A Mission Area Song School, which will be based here, will also benefit all churches in Dyffryn Clwyd.

PILGRIM CHURCHES

Pilgrim Churches now have to submit an annual report to remain in the scheme. These were recently reviewed at the Property Board, with all being approved for the next 12 months. The Pilgrim Church scheme now includes nine churches. One of the most recently accepted into the scheme was St John's, Bettisfield. It is a rural Church within a farming community and is keen to hold events which showcase the work done on surrounding farms to affirm the link between environment, animals and food.



PROPERTY FORUMS

Following recent changes within the Property Team, plans are progressing to re-establish Property Forums to provide an opportunity for Mission Area and Church Wardens to meet with the Diocesan Property and Funding Teams. It is hoped that these forums will build on the good work previously accomplished, such as identifying common areas of concern, enabling the sharing of expertise and building relationships across the diocese.

PROPERTY TEAM CHANGES

We said goodbye to Rachel Cutler in November 2022 to take up a post as Closed Churches Officer with the Representative Body of the Church in Wales. We have been delighted to welcome Ceri Jones to the team as our new Churches Conservation and Development Officer. Ceri looks after access to the Online Faculty System (OFS) and is able to support and advise applicants across the diocese with their Faculty applications.

DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAC)

St Asaph Archdeaconry 2022	Awarded	Ongoing
Type A	52	0
Type B	22	1
Full	20	4

Montgomery Archdeaconry 2022	Awarded	Ongoing
Type A	11	0
Type B	6	2
Full	6	6

Wrexham Archdeaconry 2022	Awarded	Ongoing
Type A	19	0
Type B	16	0
Full	12	5

PARSONAGES

Managing the diocese's parsonage portfolio during 2022/23 has proved challenging. Having emerged from the pandemic and the restrictions this imposed, unstable financial conditions globally have given rise to a testing year as a result of high inflation. This has impacted the repair, maintenance and improvement of our parsonages. Budgets are being put under increased pressure as a result, with the timescales for delivering works being difficult to predict and manage.

While the housing market has slowly reverted to a more 'normal' pre-pandemic climate, financial uncertainty has given rise to a situation where the disposal and sale of parsonages, particularly those that are difficult to sell, has proved challenging. Prospective buyers are struggling to secure mortgages or finding difficulty in selling their own property. This slow-down in sales has adversely affected the Diocese's Parsonage Improvement Fund.

The Property Board continues to observe a strategy of disposing of parsonages where the energy performance of property is poor, or where substantial investment is required to upgrade and improve a property to meet current standards. This strategy, coupled with improvements in energy efficiency and installation of renewable energy sources to the parsonages, supports The Church in Wales' commitment to achieving net zero carbon by the end of the decade.

PARSONAGE PROPERTY STATISTICS 2022/23:

Parsonages refurbished or prepared to accommodate clergy	23
Grants received for clergy housing improvements (Marshall's Charity)	£3,380
Parsonage properties sold/disposed	1
Parsonage properties currently marketed for sale/disposal	4
Parsonage property purchases/acquisitions	2
Parsonage properties let	9
Parsonage renewable energy installations	4
Parsonage EV charge point installation	5

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/property/>



Funding

Martyn Schlangen, Funding Officer

The Diocese Grants Committee continues to sit quarterly, reviewing grant applications to assist with essential repairs, maintenance and project work within our churches. A total of £50,110 has been approved in response to 21 applications.

The Funding Officer continues to be an information resource for advice and enquiries, and provides direct support for projects. This ranges from providing initial advice, assisting with the preparation of project plans and strategies, directing the church representatives towards potential funding sources, identifying viability, advice on fundraising activities and assisting with grant applications. With this support, a total of £650,000 has been raised for 26 projects, providing essential funding to assist with repairs and reordering projects.

Some noteworthy projects:

- **St Paul's, Rhosesmor:** £250,000 raised to fund the installation of a new kitchen, toilet and community space to complement The Outpost Shop (shown above) within the church, which serves the rural community.
- **St Mary's, Llanfair Talhaiarn:** £150,000 raised to fund the installation of a new kitchen, toilet and community space.
- **St Peter's, Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd:** £90,000 raised to fund the installation of a new kitchen and toilet.
- **St Mark's, Caia Park, Wrexham:** £600,000 is actively being sought for their project to reorder the church.

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/grants/>



Finance

Sandra Davies, Finance Officer

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is made up of elected lay and clerical representatives from churches across the diocese, along with ex-officio members. All areas of the diocese are represented on the Board and the elected members bring considerable experience of church life and finances to the meetings and discussions.

REVIEW OF 2022–2023

Despite the continuing challenges through 2022 and into 2023, the Board continues to steward and direct the financial resources of the diocese to support mission, ministry and growth. We are grateful to the Representative Body of the Church in Wales who provided further funding during 2022 to support all six dioceses through the continuing financial challenges. The Board has used this funding to provide all Mission Areas with crucial support for the church at grassroots level, to provide targeted funding in areas of need and to fund new initiatives for growth. The Mission Areas continued to

respond magnificently and ensured that the Share was paid in full, working closely with and often supporting other churches in their Mission Area.

In 2022, the Board had budgeted for a deficit of £95,449 as part their commitment to reinvest prior year surpluses back. The final reported surplus on operations is £128,868. This is chiefly because of reduced salary costs of both stipendiary clergy and lay staff as the diocese saw challenges in filling vacant positions through 2022. The Board has maintained its ongoing commitment to frontline ministry and is working hard to fill vacancies in a timely manner.

The largest element of our diocesan expenditure (61% or £2.5m) is on clergy costs, including stipends, pensions and housing. The Board also allocates funds to support the work of the Diocesan Steering Groups in the vital areas of social engagement, education

and lifelong learning, and support and development for the many different forms of ministry. It also funds the work of the Diocesan Office Team that provides essential support to the life of our churches and Mission Areas.

Although there was a 2% increase in clergy stipends and lay salaries and a 7.3% increase in clergy housing costs in 2022, the Board decided that there would be no increase in the total level of Mission Area Share for the fourth consecutive year. The annual grant from the Representative Body of the Church in Wales reduced in 2022. However, this was offset by a reduction in clergy costs, as the Representative Body of the Church in Wales is now responsible for contributions to the clergy pension scheme, which was previously a diocesan cost.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, a new formula for allocating Mission Area Share was developed for 2023. This was rolled out with a successful series of online roadshows, videos and an FAQ section on the diocesan website.

Mission Area Treasurers and Church Treasurers continue to work prayerfully and constructively together to ensure the sustainability and flourishing of our churches. Most of our Mission Area Finance Meetings took place once again on Zoom during 2022 and this has proved to be an efficient and effective way of working. We were delighted that all 19 Mission Areas qualified for the annual discount

scheme for the third year running, which is a real tribute to all the faithful work that is carried out by so many people across the diocese.

FUTURE PLANS – PRIORITIES FOR 2023 AND BEYOND

- The DBF has agreed to fund the key values of **Growing Faith, Bringing Hope, Demonstrating Love** initiatives over the next five years.
- All of the 2022 surplus on diocesan operations of **£128,868** will be reinvested in delivering these initiatives, along with the 2021 surplus of **£197,247**.
- The DBF continues its commitment to fund four Mission Hub Churches, invest in the Cathedral and invest in Digital Ministry.
- The Board will continue to work closely with the bishop to identify other areas of growth that require investment.
- The Board will be developing its bid for funding from the Representative Body's £100m Church Growth Fund.

2023 Budget:

Income

Mission Area Share



Church in Wales Cardiff, Rental Income from Let Properties, Other income, Diocesan Investments



Expenditure

Clergy Costs including housing



Developing & Social Engagement

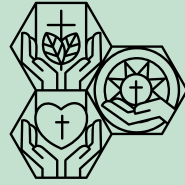


Cathedral, Rural Support, Church Inspections and Faculties



Central Diocesan Costs including the Nurturing Steering Group, Grants, Governance, and Support staff





Keeping in touch

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