

TEULU ASAPH

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GWANWYN 2026 | SPRING 2026



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In this Issue

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Spring edition of our St Asaph diocesan magazine. After the wet and gloom of winter, it is good to see the days drawing out and the arrival of Spring colour.

In this edition, we consider the debates about same-sex relationships, ahead of a vote in the Church in Wales' Governing Body in April. There's a celebration of the LGBTQIA+ chaplaincy, launched 10 years ago, and a reflection on what it means to stay together, when agreement is not yet possible. Plus, we hear about investment into the North Wales Pilgrim's Way, there's a thank you to churches for paying the Mission

Area Share, and a reminder that the diocese provides grants for church projects.

Don't forget to send me your news, stories and photographs for the next edition, out in June. You can find the deadline date for submissions below, and details of how to reach me are just here.



Karen

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Page 4



Page 9



Page 12

CONTENTS

- 3 Gair gan yr Esgob / Bishop's Word
- 4 10 years of the LGBTQIA+ Chaplaincy
- 5 The Courage to Stay
- 6 North Wales' Pilgrimage – a World Wellness Experience
- 7 Newyddion / News
- 8 Thank you to all our Mission Areas for paying your Share on time!
- 9 Diocesan Grant Funding to Support You
- 10 Where is God in our Upside-Down World!
- 11 Supporting Families in Holway and Surrounding Communities
- 11 Rural Matters
- 12 Ysgolion / Schools
- 14 Eich Newyddion Chi / Your News
- 15 Ringing the Bells in Mold
- 16 Celebrating Five Years of Hope Street

Cover image: The North Wales Pilgrim's Way named one of the top wellness experiences in the world for 2026. See page 6.

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Trysor mewn llestri pridd

(2 Corinthiaid 4.7)

Rydym yn hoffi meddwl am y ffydd Gristnogol fel rhywbeth pur – rhywbeth a ddysgwyd gan Iesu, a ddehonglwyd gan awduron Beiblaidd ac a drosglwyddwyd ar hyd y canrifoedd. Fodd bynnag, nid felly yn union y bu hi. Yn Llyfr yr Actau, mae llawer o ffraeo – am berchnogaeth eiddo, am gadw'r gyfraith Iddewig, dadlau rhwng y disgyblion gwreiddiol a'r newydd-ddyfodiaid, Pedr yn erbyn Paul. Wrth i'r canrifoedd fynd heibio, doedd y sefyllfa ddim gwell: dadleuon ynglŷn â sut y gallai Iesu fod yn Dduw ac yn ddyn, ac yna anghydweld rhwng y Dwyrain a'r Gorllewin, rhwng y Catholigion a'r Protestaniaid, rhwng yr Eglwys a'r Capel.

Oes rhaid i chi gadw'r Saboth? Ddylech chi ymprydio yn ystod y Grawys? Gewch chi ysgaru? Ydi hi'n iawn ordeinio menywod? Roedd pethau'n mynd yn boeth iawn yn ystod y dadleuon hyn – weithiau'n llythrennol, a phobl yn llosgi ei gilydd. Rwy'n gwybod bod pobl heddiw'n poeni am fater rhywioldeb, a byddwn yn trafod hyn eto yn fuan. Hoffwn i chi gadw'r pethau hyn mewn cof:

- Mae Duw yn derbyn pawb ohonom, trwy waith achubol Iesu Grist. Ac os yw Duw yn derbyn pobl, mae'n rhaid i ninnau wneud hynny hefyd.
- Rydym yn sôn am bobl go iawn, ein cymdogion gartref ac yn ein heglwysi, a'u hanwyliaid; pobl sy'n haeddu cariad, amynedd a pharch.
- Efallai ein bod ni'n argyhoeddedig yn ein meddyliau, ein calonnau a'n heneidiau ein bod wedi dod i ddeall ewyllys Duw, ond mae bron yn sicr bod y bobl sy'n anghytuno â ni yr un mor awyddus â ni i ddangos ufudd-dod i Dduw.
- Mae geiriau'n clwyfo, iaith yn llosgi (gweler Iago Pennod 3), felly defnyddiwch eich geiriau'n ofalus.
- Cofiwch fod angen i bawb ohonom yfed yr un dŵrbywiol, felly gadewch inni helpu ein gilydd i dynnu'r dŵr hwnnw o'r ffynnon.

Treasure in earthenware vessels

(2 Corinthians 4.7)

We like to think of the Christian faith as something pure – taught by Jesus, interpreted by the Biblical authors, passed down through the centuries. However, it has never been quite like that. In the Book of Acts, there are rows galore – about owning property, about keeping the Jewish law, arguments between the original disciples and the newcomers, Peter versus Paul. As the centuries went by, it didn't get any better: arguments about how Jesus could be both God and human, then arguments between East and West, between Catholic and Protestant, between Church and Chapel.

Do you have to keep the Sabbath? Should you fast in Lent? Can you get divorced? Can women be ordained? At the time of each argument, temperatures went through the roof – sometimes literally, and we burned each other. I know people are worried these days about sexuality, and another round of debate is coming up. Just bear these things in mind:

- God accepts us all, redeemed by Jesus Christ. Those whom God has accepted, we are bound to receive.
- We are talking about real people, neighbours at home and in our pews, and the ones they love; individuals who deserve love, patience and respect.
- While we can be convinced in our minds, hearts and souls that we've come to understand God's will, the obedience we wish to demonstrate is almost certainly equally true of those who disagree.
- Words wound, language inflames (see James Chapter 3), so use words cautiously.
- Remember that we all need to drink of the same living water, so let us help each other draw from the well.



10 years of the LGBTQIA+ Chaplaincy



Ten years ago, St Asaph Diocese became the first diocese in the UK to launch an LGBTQIA+ chaplaincy. Bishop Gregory commissioned the Revd Canon Sarah Hildreth Osborn as the chaplain in a service in St Grwst's Church in Llanrwst in September 2016. The following January, monthly Eucharist services were launched and they continue today. Teulu Asaph went along as Sarah celebrates 10 years of the chaplaincy.



The monthly Eucharist service is called Whosoever and takes place on the third Saturday of every month at All Saints Church in Deganwy. People come from across the diocese to a service they know will be inclusive, safe and sacred; a space in which they can be fully the person God created them to be. After the service, people stay for lunch together, giving the opportunity to share stories and discuss those things which are important to them and their journeys of faith.

Sarah said: "Our service is now called Whosoever, which is taken from John 3:16. Originally, we were part of the Open Table Network, and we still model our ethos and services on that format.

"The regular congregation is fairly small and there are a few who, like me, have been part of the community since we started, but the majority come for a time and move on. We're an inter-denomination group and some people come with no link to another church."

February was LGBT History Month, and it provides an opportunity to remember that the church hasn't always felt like a safe place for many LGBTQIA+ people. There are still people, Sarah says, who remain hidden in our pews due to their sexuality. For them, it will never feel safe to come out.

The 10th anniversary of the chaplaincy is a reminder of the long journey the Church in Wales is taking to consider blessing same-sex unions and equal marriage. Bishop Gregory set up the chaplaincy after the Bench of Bishops issued a joint pastoral letter committing to working for a Church in which gay and lesbian people are "fully affirmed as equal disciples".

In the 10 years since, the Church in Wales has voted to permit the blessing of same-sex unions for a trial period which expires in September. Ahead of that, the Church in Wales' Governing Body will vote on whether this rite should be made permanent, and next year Governing Body will consider the question of Equal Marriage.

For Sarah and the chaplaincy, these votes are long overdue. "God, who created each and every one of us in God's image, is a God of love," she says, "and God's love is for everyone. Jesus accepts and stands alongside us all."

As Chaplain to the LGBTQIA community, Sarah attended every Listening event held across the diocese for people to give their opinion on permitting the blessing of same-sex unions permanently and moving to Equal Marriage. For those supporting the idea – the majority who spoke were supportive – it was an opportunity to express their long-held desire for full inclusivity, express the hurt and pain of rejection, and share stories of love. (See page 10 for a different view)

For those attending Whosoever, full inclusivity has been part of their existence and mission for 10 years now and that's something worth celebrating.



The Courage to Stay

In April, the Governing Body of the Church in Wales will vote on whether the rite for blessing same-sex relationships will become permanent. It follows a Province-wide listening exercise



conducted by the bishops and a pastoral letter regarding the future of ceremonies for same-sex couples in the Church in Wales. The Canon Pastor at St Asaph Cathedral, Canon Josh Askwith, reflects on the courage to stay.

Many of us carry certain moments in our shared memory. Moments that have quietly shaped who we are, even if we rarely speak of them now. In Wales, one such moment is Aberfan.

In 1966, after subsidence caused a generation of children to be lost, words failed. Explanations were thin and inadequate. What remained was presence. Chapels were opened. Ministers and neighbours sat together in silence. The Church did not resolve the grief. It held it, patiently and imperfectly, because there was nothing else to do.

In moments like these, the Church requires courage. Not the courage to pronounce, but the courage to stay. Not sentimentally, and not passively, but in a way shaped by the cross itself.

Much of our current anxiety in the Church arises from the fear that if we do not resolve disagreement decisively, we will lose coherence altogether; as though the only alternatives are consensus or collapse. Yet the Christian tradition suggests another possibility: that the Church's unity is sustained not by uniformity of conclusion, but by fidelity to a shared life in Christ, even when agreement is not yet possible.

In New York City, at Ground Zero, there stands a cross. Two beams, broken and burned, leaning into one another, held upright not by strength but by the debris itself. It was not a planned monument. No committee authorised it. It did not resolve anything.

It stayed. People gathered near it, prayed, wept, and stood in silence. Pain was borne, not solved.



The Church is repeatedly invited into places like that. Not to tidy them. Not to explain them away. Simply to remain present where suffering, grief, and unknowing cannot yet be redeemed by words. The cross at Ground Zero did not make sense of the devastation. It bore witness to something quieter and more demanding: that God does not step back when things fall apart.

The Church in Wales, in its long listening journey around human sexuality, has chosen a similar path. It has resisted collapsing listening into settlement. That has made the road slower, heavier, and at times painful. Yet it has also allowed something else to grow: the possibility that unity might be sustained through presence rather than agreement, through shared worship rather than shared conclusions. This is a challenge every church faces sooner or later, whether the questions are named or not.

This is not indecision. It is a way of staying with one another at the foot of the cross, trusting that God is still at work even when the outcome is not yet clear.

In a culture that confuses speed with faithfulness, and clarity with control, the Church is called to something more costly: to stay when leaving would be easier, to hold one another when resolution is not yet possible, and to trust that God is at work not only in outcomes, but in endurance itself.

The cross remains the sign of that trust. A place where God stays.

And perhaps that is enough for any season: to stay, to hold, and to trust that God is still present, even here.





North Wales' Pilgrimage – a World Wellness Experience



The North Wales Pilgrim's Way (NWPW), which spans 136 miles through North Wales, has been named in *National Geographic* magazine as one of the top wellness experiences in the world for 2026. It comes as the diocese has appointed a Pilgrimage Development Lead to improve and promote the pilgrimage experience.



Jane Finn took up the post in December and is funded for two years with a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Here she introduces herself.

I have a background in pilgrimage, having walked many of the UK's long-distance trails and created some pilgrimage routes in the past. I first walked the North Wales Pilgrim's Way, (sometimes known as the Welsh Camino, or Camino Cymru), in the spring of 2024. I'm also what's known as a Mountain Leader, which qualifies me to lead walks, take people wild camping and teach navigation.



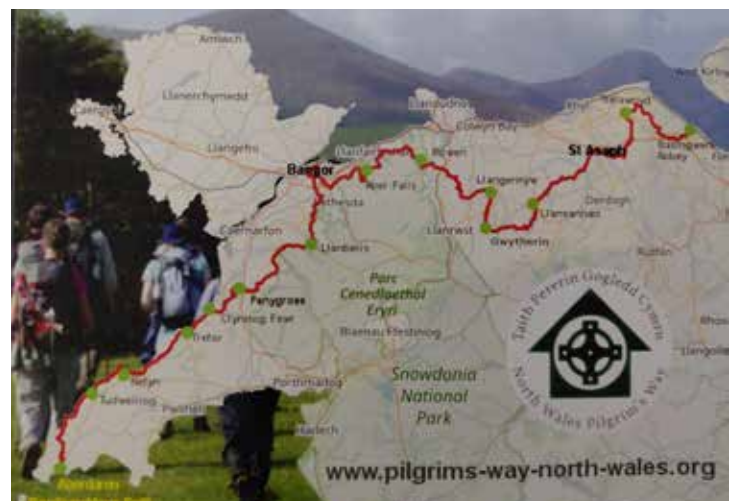
The NWPW starts at Basingwerk Abbey near Holywell and continues through the Diocese of St Asaph, passing the Cathedral, Llansannan and Eglwysbach before continuing to Bardsey Island in the Diocese of Bangor.

A significant part of my role will be to carry out research for a feasibility study to assess the potential for growth and significance of the route. I'll be gathering research data to help identify how the pilgrimage route can be supported and developed to enable a wider range and number of people to engage with the route, its churches, and the

rich spiritual landscape, language, culture and heritage in which the route is embedded.

I'll be working alongside the trustees and founding members of the NWPW, including Chris Potter, former Dean of St Asaph Cathedral, who together with his late wife, Jenny, and dedicated volunteers established the route originally. They have been maintaining it ever since for the benefit of the many pilgrims who come through our area and visit churches on the route.

I'll be meeting with churches, stakeholders, councils and community groups to assess needs and ascertain what different groups may want to offer to pilgrims. The route was designed to link up historic churches, along with holy wells, ancient crosses, standing stones, shrines and sites of interest. We have nine open churches on the route itself, and a further four churches within 0.5 miles of the route, so there are plenty of opportunities to provide some of the missing components to the pilgrimage experience as it currently stands.



How can you help?

I'll be carrying out some qualitative research, so if you've walked some or all of the route, have an interest in the route, or think you may be able to help in any way, including volunteering, please do get in touch. In due course, I'll be implementing, or seeking funding for, some of the research findings as they emerge.

I'll also be collecting stories of spiritual experiences, looking at the route's digital presence, organising promotion, resourcing, branding and signage, and will be the central point of contact for all things NWPW. If you would like to contribute to this project, you can contact me at

JaneFinn@cinw.org.uk/07483 613479

New Cathedral Canons

An internationally renowned composer and a member of the Royal Household were among those installed as Canons at St Asaph Cathedral in January. Paul Mealar became the Canon for the Arts and Culture and a member of the Cathedral Chapter. Paul is a former chorister at St Asaph Cathedral and is now the Artistic Director

of the North Wales International Music Festival which is based at the Cathedral. The Revd Canon Paul Wright was installed as an Honorary Canon. He is Sub-Dean of the Chapel Royal and has strong family connections with the Mold area. In addition, three new members of the Chapter were installed, along with two new Cursal Canons and a new



Honorary Canon. You can see a full list of all the Cathedral Canons at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/whos-who/cathedral-canons>

Celebrating Eco Church

Delegates from across North Wales gathered in St Asaph Cathedral in February for a celebration of Eco Church. The day-long conference was open to all churches interested in Eco Church, to encourage them to continue on their eco journey. The speakers included Sister Gemma Simmonds, from the Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge and a Canon at St Asaph Cathedral. She spoke on an eco-theology for a wounded world. Gold and silver-awarded churches across the diocese also shared how they had achieved their awards.



Recruitment Event

An online recruitment evening is to take place in April to promote the vacancies arising from the opening of new Mission Hub Churches.

Three new hubs are opening this year as the diocese invests in growth with money secured from the Church in Wales Growth Fund.

St Grwst's in Llanrwst, St Mary's and St Marcella's in Denbigh, and Holy Trinity in Gwersyllt are all recruiting clergy and lay workers to support ministry and mission in their local communities. In addition, St Paul's in Craig y Don (Llandudno) is opening as an intergenerational church with a

focus on children and young people. The online recruitment event is open to anyone wanting to find out more about the opportunities, and takes place on Wednesday 22 April. For more information, visit <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/jobs/>





Thank you to all our Mission Areas for paying your Share on time!

All 20 of our Mission Areas were successfully able to pay their Share on time in 2025. This is a fabulous achievement, given the difficult times we live in, and it



has been noted and appreciated by the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), which looks after the finances of the Diocese. The chair of the DBF, Sam Allin, reminds us what Share is, and why it is so important to sustain our work across the diocese.

Mission Area Share is the portion of the diocesan budget provided by the churches in our Mission Areas to fund and support the work of their Mission Area churches and the diocese. In calculating the amount for each MA, we take into account:

- the number of clergy in a Mission Area
- the general population of a Mission Area
- a Mission Area's unrestricted funds
- the number of churches in a Mission Area.

Share pays for the mission and ministry across the diocese, including clergy stipends and housing, as well as frontline ministry costs, such as youth workers, training and engagement with communities. The payment of the Mission Area Share is therefore crucial to ensure that the message and love of God reaches all in our communities.

As someone who serves as both a Mission Area Treasurer and a Church Treasurer, I understand the real effort

that goes into fundraising, budgeting and stewarding resources wisely. I am especially grateful for the commitment shown by churches with reserves who have stepped forward to support those who are facing more challenging circumstances. Your willingness to lift one another up is a true expression of Christian community and generosity.

It is also deeply encouraging to see signs of growth emerging across our diocese, both through the Growth Fund projects and through the faithful, everyday work of so many. We move forward together, building on these signs of growth and we continue to pray that the new initiatives taking root will flourish and help draw more people into the love of Christ.

I do want to take this opportunity to reassure you that we are exploring options for more sustainable funding models for the future. We understand that for some Mission Areas raising the Share is a source of anxiety, and dipping into reserves is not a long-term solution.

We are always keen to receive your feedback, and would welcome your views on ways of calculating Mission Area Share, while recognising that costs must be covered and that it is not easy to please everyone!

Thank you all once again for everything you do. Your dedication strengthens our shared mission, brings real hope to our communities, and speaks powerfully of your commitment, generosity and trust in the life and mission of our diocese.





Diocesan Grant Funding to Support You!

More than £85,000 of funding is made available by the diocese each year to support buildings, youth work and community engagement. Churches can apply to the Grants Committee, which meets every three months, as the [Secretary to the Grants Committee, Pamela Vernon](#), outlines.

The funding is divided into four parcels of money:

- building grants, which need to meet certain eco criteria
- youth grants to support work with young people
- engagement grants for churches to support their communities
- training bursaries open to clergy, lay ministers and groups.

The grants committee meets in January, April, July and October. The deadline for applications is usually one month ahead of the meeting to allow the paperwork to be checked.

If your church is thinking about a building project or wants to set up youth work or community engagement work, do consider the diocesan grants – they might get you started, as you can see from the following examples:

Christmas Hampers



Aled Mission Area applied for £500 from the engagement fund to create Christmas Hampers for those in need across the Mission Area. Thirty hampers were distributed by HomeStart.

The food items were donated by Aled Mission Area and the diocesan grant bought the boxes, the wrapping paper and gift vouchers included in the hamper.

Pipe Lagging

St Michael's Church in Abergele applied for a building grant to insulate boiler-room pipework and replace halogen lights with LEDs, following earlier work on draught exclusion. These simple upgrades help prevent heat loss, improve energy efficiency, and tick the necessary eco criteria for the grant. They also reduce running costs. Such improvements can make a difference and help create a more comfortable space for everyone who uses the church.

Light Parties

The churches in Holywell and Greenfield applied for a youth grant of £500 to run Light Parties as an alternative to Halloween. The grant helped cover the costs



of fun activities, refreshments and goody-bags, making the events free and accessible for local families in an area where many parents can't afford paid events. The parties shared a Christian message about Jesus as light of the world, while giving the children a fun time.

Welsh Messy Church

St Dgain's Church in Llangernyw applied for a £500 youth grant to run 'Llan Llanast', a Welsh-language Messy Church. The project created a fun, creative and welcoming space for local children to explore faith in their first language, helping them feel connected, included and part of their local church community.

Rhyl Café



A grant from the engagement fund contributed to Holy Trinity Church in Rhyl opening a community café in Summer 2025. The café is open every Monday and Tuesday with

different themed events taking place. It brings people together, to relax in a 'friendly' and 'convivial atmosphere', where they can find information and support and learn something new.

Training Bursaries

These are also distributed via the Grants Committee. They cover education, training, development or learning. The bursary has been awarded for clergy to do a BSL (British Sign Language) Course, attend conferences, learn Welsh or develop fresh expressions of faith.

You can find details of all the diocesan grants, how to apply and the forms needed at:
<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/grants/>

A new Funding and Grants Officer, Ben Morgan, has joined the diocesan office team. Look out for details on StAr sent every Thursday via email.



Where is God in our Upside-Down World?



In April, the Governing Body of the Church in Wales will vote on whether the rite for blessing same-sex relationships will become permanent. As the [Revd Janice Brown from Aber-Morfa Mission Area](#) writes, the Bible is clear on what marriage is and is not.

As I start writing this piece I am reminded of the bold witness of the apostles who declared, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." In a world that often demands our allegiance to current beliefs or ideologies, we need courage to stand firm in our commitment to God and his Word, his Ways.

The blessing of same-sex relationships is a bit of an oxymoron, in my mind. My question has always been, "how can we bless that which we do not have the authority or regulation to fully embrace?" Therefore, if we can't marry what are we blessing?

God's Word is clear on what a marriage is and is not. In Genesis 2:24 we read about how a man will leave his parents and be joined to his wife in public. Within this relationship they are to care for one another in love forsaking all others. Marriage is not one of our church traditions. It was not instituted by man. It is a God-given-

gift given to fulfil a God-given-plan. God has shown us how much he loves us right from the very creation of mankind. He loves us so much he gave us a special relationship between the crown of all creation - man and woman. This isn't something that can be changed to fit in with our everchanging world and its evolving ideas. This is a Holy Sacrament.

I constantly hear that the church needs to be all encompassing and loving. It certainly does BUT not at the cost of compromising or even worse desecrating that which GOD has made, so that the church fits in with society and world values.

We are baptised into the Body of Christ. We are called into a Royal Priesthood where we live and love as Christ has loved us. I truly believe that if the Church in Wales regulates same-sex marriage, we will be doing our brothers and sisters, who seek this, an unspeakable disservice because neither our Governing Body nor our bishops have the power to make these changes - to rewrite Scripture. In truth only God can. Our services and liturgies for such an event would be no more than fantasy in the eyes of God: a second-rate offering - and where is the love and compassion in that?

The secular world has made provision both for civil partnership and marriage for same-sex relationships. The Church in Wales, however, needs to work out what MASTER it will serve - man or God in Christ. There can be no middle ground.

My constant prayer for the Church in Wales is that Christ will open our hearts to His presence and our minds to His truth; that He will renew a right Spirit within us and His church here on earth; that all we do will bring honour to His name - the name of Christ whom we are called to serve above all others.

For a different view on this matter, please see page 4.



Families across Holywell and surrounding areas received much-needed support over Christmas thanks to a partnership between the Love Holway Chaplaincy, the Community Development Team, the Diocese of St Asaph, the Stening Charitable Trust, and the Estuary and Mountain Mission Area, writes the Revd Andrea De Vaal, from the Love Holway Chaplaincy.

Through this shared support, we were able to provide a full Christmas dinner, dessert, festive treats, and a toy for every child to 60 families across the area who were facing hardship over the winter.

Referrals came from local schools, mental health social workers, NHS staff, hospital teams, the local Mother and Baby Unit, and the Family Liaison and Victim Care (FLVC) service. Families were identified who were not otherwise receiving Christmas support, including those who had experienced bereavement, had a family member or child in hospital, were living in the Mother and Baby Unit, or had faced a particularly difficult year due to job loss, low income, or ongoing health or mental-health challenges. This reflects the wide range of pressures affecting families across the community at this time.



One family shared how meaningful the support had been after a particularly difficult year: "We honestly didn't know how we were going to manage Christmas. When the hamper arrived, we were overwhelmed; it reminded us that people really do care."

The Love Holway Chaplaincy works year-round to support families through food provision, community meals, children's activities and pastoral care, supported and co-ordinated through the Estuary and Mountain Mission Area.

The partners involved have expressed deep gratitude to all those who made this possible, including funders, local organisations, volunteers and referral agencies who worked together to ensure families felt supported, seen, and cared for during the Christmas season.

Rural Matters: Northop Young Farmers

The church in Northop has developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the local Young Farmers group, as the Revd Canon Martin Batchelor describes.

"Any chance the Young Farmers can use your church for their meetings please?" was the start of a conversation three years ago, which has led to an excellent relationship between St Eurgain and St Peter's Church, in Northop, and Northop Young Farmers. Since then, they have regularly used the church for their meetings and as Michael Hughes, the church warden said: "It's great having them here. They bring something that was missing from the church". Another church member added: "They remind us how important our farming communities are and how farming often involves the whole family."

Joanne Strange, one of the leaders for the Young Farmers, said: "Northop Young Farmers Club is delighted to be linked with Northop Church. It provides us with a welcome base,

not only to hold regular meetings, but also as a venue to organise events that allows us to contribute back to the community. Our members have really enjoyed the revival of the annual Harvest Service and the countywide Carol Service we hosted in 2025. It raised much needed funds to continue running our charitable organisation, whilst also engaging with the local church and its congregation. Members also helped with the church's Crib Service and we hope this relationship continues for many years to come."

This coming year, the church plans to further their links as Northop Young Farmers celebrate its 70th Anniversary.



Disgybl o Wrecsam yn Ennill Cystadleuaeth Cerdyn Nadolig

Disgybl o Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig ac Anglicanaidd Sant Joseff yn Wrecsam oedd enillydd Cystadleuaeth Cerdyn Nadolig Esgob Llanelwy. Roedd cerdyn Matilda Jones yn cynnwys llun angylion yn cyhoeddi geni Iesu mewn stabl, a Mair a Joseff yn dystion i'r achlysur. Roedd cynllun Matilda'n bodloni'r briff a roddwyd i bob un o'r 49 o ysgolion yr Eglwys yng Nghymru yn yr Esgobaeth: Cân yr Angylion:

Gloria in Excelsis Deo, wedi'i seilio ar stori'r angylion yn ymddangos i'r bugeiliaid a adroddir yn Efengyl Luc. Dywedodd y Gwir Barchedig Gregory Cameron: "Mae'r beirniaid bob amser yn synnu at greadigrwydd a thalent disgyblion ein hysgolion eglwys a'r ffordd y maen nhw'n dehongli'r thema. Mae ein hysgolion eglwys yn gwneud gwaith ardderchog ac mae cydweithio â nhw ar y gystadleuaeth hon wir yn codi calon.

Diolch i'r staff am roi'r amser i helpu'r plant i ddeall y thema a dylunio'u cardiau. Llongyfarchiadau i Matilda a diolch i bawb a gymerodd ran yn y gystadleuaeth."



Canmoliaeth gan Estyn



Mae Ysgol y Llan yn Chwitfordd yn dathlu ar ôl cael adroddiad arolygu cadarnhaol iawn gan Estyn yn tynnu sylw at ethos cryf yr ysgol, ei disgwyliadau uchel a'i hamgylchedd dysgu anogol. Canfu'r arolygwyr fod y disgyblion yn teimlo'n ddiogel,

yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi ac yn barod i ddysgu, a bod ganddynt ymddygiad rhagorol, agweddau cadarnhaol, a brwdfrydedd dros ddysgu. Canmolwyd yr addysgu am fod yn ddiddorol ac yn heriol i raddau priodol, gyda chwestiynu ac adborth effeithiol yn hybu cynnydd y disgyblion. Cafodd amgylcheddau dysgu'r ysgol, yn cynnwys ei mannau awyr agored, eu cydnabod hefyd am hyrwyddo annibyniaeth a chwilfrydedd. Dywedodd y Pennaeth

Tomos Williams: "Rwy'n hynod falch o ganlyniad arolygiad Estyn yn ddiweddar. Mae'r adroddiad wir yn adlewyrchu'r gymuned gynnes, ofalgar ac uchelgeisiol yr ydym yn gweithio mor galed i'w meithrin bob dydd yn yr ysgol. Yr elfen fwyaf nodedig yn ystod yr arolygiad oedd ein disgyblion. Roedd eu hymddygiad, eu cwrteisi a'u hagweddau cadarnhaol at ddysgu yn eithriadol, ac roeddent yn cynrychioli ein hysgol â hyder a balchder."

Croeso i Ysgol Black Lane

Croesawyd disgyblion o ysgol gynradd Black Lane, Pentre Broughton, gan gynulleidfa Eglwys Sant Paul gerllaw cyn y

Nadolig i ddysgu am arwyddocâd Gwasanaeth y Cristingl. Roedd cyfle hefyd i'r plant holi aelodau'r Eglwys am eu heglwys leol wrth iddynt grwydro o'i chwmpas gyda'u hathrawon.



Aelodau Tîm Newydd



Mae dau aelod newydd wedi ymuno â'r tîm ysgolion yn Swyddfa'r Esgobaeth, sy'n golygu bod gennym dîm cyflawn. Ymunodd Rhiannon Smith ym mis Mai 2025 fel Swyddog Ysgolion yn gyfrifol am adeiladau, llywodraethiant a derbyn disgyblion i'r Ysgolion Eglwys. Mae'n

cynorthwyo ysgolion â chyllid CRAMP hefyd. Ymunodd Anna Walsh ym mis Ionawr 2026 fel Swyddog Ysgolion yn cefnogi ysgolion ar faterion yn ymwneud â'r cwricwlwm, yn cynnig cyngor am arolygiadau Adran 50 ac yn gofalu am Raglen Ymwelwyr yr Esgob.

Wrexham Pupil Wins Christmas Card Competition

A pupil at St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School in Wrexham won first prize in the Bishop of St Asaph's Christmas Card Competition. The design by Matilda Jones featured angels heralding the birth of Jesus in a stable, overlooked by Mary and Joseph. Her design hit the brief given to all 49 Church in Wales Schools in the diocese: The Song of the Angels: Gloria in Excelsis Deo based on the story of

the appearance of the angels to the shepherds told in Luke's Gospel. The Rt Revd Gregory Cameron said: "The judges are always struck by the creativeness and talent of the pupils in our church schools and the way in which they interpret the theme. Our church schools do such good work, and co-operating with them for this competition is a real joy. Thank you to the staff who set aside time to support the children to understand

the theme and design their entries. Congratulations to Matilda and thank you to everyone who took part in the competition."



Estyn Inspection Praise



Ysgol y Llan in Whitford is celebrating a very positive Estyn inspection report which highlights the school's strong ethos, high expectations and nurturing learning environment.

Inspectors found that pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn, and consistently demonstrate excellent behaviour, positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. Teaching was praised for being engaging and appropriately challenging, with effective questioning and feedback supporting pupils' progress. The school's learning environments, including its outdoor areas, were also recognised for promoting independence and curiosity.

Headteacher Tomos Williams said: "I am incredibly proud of the recent Estyn inspection outcome. The report truly reflects the warm, caring and ambitious school community that we work so hard to nurture every day. What stood out most during the inspection was our pupils. Their behaviour, manners and positive attitudes to learning were exceptional, and they represented our school with confidence and pride."

Welcome to Black Lane School

The congregation of St Paul's Church in Pentre Broughton welcomed pupils from their local primary school just before Christmas to learn about

the significance of the Christingle Service. The children from Black Lane were able to ask various church members questions about their local church as they explored it with their teachers.



New Team Members



Two new members have joined the schools' team in the diocesan office, bringing the team to a full complement. Rhiannon Smith joined in May 2025 as Schools' Officer responsible for buildings, governance and admissions for

Church Schools. She also assists schools with CRAMP funding. Anna Walsh joined in January 2026 as Schools' Officer supporting schools' curriculum, offering Section 50 inspection advice and looking after the Bishop's Visitor Programme.





Riding Lights in Mold



At the end of November, St Mary's Church Hub in Mold hosted an audience of almost 300 for the Riding Lights production of *Christmas in Trouble*. This was part of a national tour and the only host venue in Wales. Riding Lights Theatre Company is one of the UK's most productive and long-established

independent theatre companies. Founded in York in 1977, partly through the initiative of a city centre church, the company continues to take innovative, accessible theatre into all kinds of communities far and wide. You can find out about their future productions at <https://www.ridinglights.org/>

Sparring in Llanrwst

St Grwst Church in Llanrwst welcomed an unusual activity into the re-ordered church recently.

The large nave offered a perfect space for a sparring session run by North Wales HEMA Academy. The

Revd Huw Bryant, vicar of Llanrwst, said: "Like all martial arts, sparring is a great work-out and teaches respect, discipline and restraint as well as building confidence in a safe and supportive environment."



Celebrating 150 years of Mothers' Union



Mothers' Union is celebrating 150 years since its founder, Mary Sumner, together with her friends, set about creating the framework of a Christian, women-led movement that would improve the lives of families. Karen Stringer from St Asaph Mothers' Union outlines plans to celebrate in the diocese.

25 March, 2pm: A special service of celebration at St Asaph Cathedral with our Patron Bishop Gregory and Provincial President Sue Rivers. St Asaph Mothers' Union will be formally admitted to the Community of the Cross of Nails (a movement working for reconciliation). Past, present and future members are welcome

to attend. For more information or to order afternoon tea, contact secretary.stasaphmu@gmail.com.

7 April: A visit from Kathleen Snow, Worldwide President, who will also be speaking at the Church in Wales' Governing Body, in Llandudno (15/16 April).

10 June: St Paul's Cathedral in London will be hosting a national celebration with MU patron, Her Royal Highness Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh. Tickets are available via the link on the MU website: mothersunion.org/150

June/July: S4C will be filming an episode of *Dechau Canu Dechrau Canmol* dedicated to this special anniversary.

Other local celebrations are being planned and will be advertised on StAR.

St Asaph Diocese Mothers' Union members provide understated support in their churches and beyond. We are men, women, married, single, with or without children. The founding aims are:

- that family life is the greatest institution in the world for the formation of the character of children
- that faith is the foundation of family life.

These are still at the heart of our ministry as we support families (in whatever arrangement that takes).

Today, you can visit 83 countries worldwide and find four million Mothers' Union members.

To find out more visit <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/mothers-union/>



Celebrating the Church Bells in Mold



December 2025 saw the bellringers in Mold celebrating 20 years since two new bells were added to the church tower in St Mary's the Virgin.

A band of local ringers rang a special Quarter Peal to mark the anniversary of the first Quarter Peal rung on the augmented eight bells. The ringers of bells 1, 2, 3 and 7 also rang in that

first Quarter Peal 20 years ago, as did Herbert Heaton who came up into the ringing room to listen, along with his wife, Megan. Sarah Parker, from Mold bellringers, delves into the history of the church bells and explains some of the common ringing patterns.

The original six bells at St Mary were cast by Abraham Rudhall Junior at Gloucester in 1732. They were brought by river to Shrewsbury and then by road to Mold. They replaced a ring of three bells which had been cast by Geoffrey Scott at Wigan in 1654.

The bells were rehung in the newly rebuilt tower in 1733, and in 1832 the tenor (the heaviest bell) was recast. In 1885 they were placed in a new frame by John Taylor of Loughborough, and in 1900 were tuned by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry "as a small tribute to the memory of the late Revd E M Roderick, Vicar of Mold 1832-97". The bells were placed on ball bearings by Taylors in 1931, which makes them easier to ring.

In 2005, the ring of six was augmented to the ring of eight that we enjoy today. A new treble (the lightest bell) bearing the name "Melangell" was the gift of the Revd Canon John Whelan, and the new tenor bearing

the name "Cloch y Clochganwyr" (Ringers' Bell) was the gift of the ringers themselves. The idea of the augmentation came about after one practice when the ringers were chatting and refreshing themselves in the local hostelry. The enthusiastic ringers believed a self-funded project was possible to add two additional bells. With a huge amount of hard work, and support from the Vicar (at that time, the Revd Ian Day) just six months after the initial idea, the new augmented bells were ready to try. The new bells for the project were cast at The Royal Eijsbouts Bell Foundry in Asten, in the Netherlands.

The new ring was dedicated by the Bishop of St Asaph on 4 December 2005. The first Quarter Peal on the new bells was rung on 18 December 2005 and the first Peal on 28 March 2006.

Church towers with eight bells are perhaps the most popular (being a musical octave) and thus us ringers love to try and ring all possible combinations (which we call changes) on seven bells, with the heaviest (tenor) bell always ringing last (like a bass drum). This involves some 5,040 changes and is known as a Peal. Here at Mold we rarely ring Peals due to the time and exertion involved (over three hours of continuous ringing), but we love to develop our skills by ringing a Quarter Peal which is at least 1,260 changes and takes around 45 minutes.

If you are interested in visiting the bells in Mold or wish to join us in ringing them, please do get in touch at moldringers@gmail.com or if you are elsewhere in North Wales please contact the North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers at www.nwacbr.wales



Celebrating Five Years of Hope Street



All three congregations from Hope Street in Wrexham joined together for a special service to celebrate its fifth birthday in February. The service, which took place in St Giles' Church, included worship, prayer, and powerful testimonies from people whose lives have been transformed through faith. It was a joyful celebration of the many things God has done in the first five years, writes the Revd Andy Kitchen, one of the leaders of Hope Street.

Since launching in 2021 as part of the diocese's bid to the Church in Wales Evangelism Fund, Hope Street has grown to a typical Sunday attendance of over 300 people, including around 60 under-18s. During this time, around 200 bibles have been given away to those exploring faith, 429 people have attended *Alpha* as guests, with more than 80 people becoming Christians and many others coming to faith through *Alpha* in HMP Berwyn.

One of those who spoke during the birthday service was Liam, who became a Christian in 2025. Reflecting on his journey to faith, he said: "I came to Hope Street because I had an overwhelming urge to go to church, and I didn't know where to go. *Alpha* answered a lot of my questions, and I left with a real relationship with God rather than just saying I believed in him. I'm quite an anxious person, and Jesus has brought a lot of peace into my life. He guides me down the right path instead of me making the wrong choices."

Later this year, Hope Street will launch its first church plant with the reopening of St Tudfil's Church in Coedpoeth. This new local expression of Hope Street will be led by the Revd Hugh Richardson.

To find out more about Hope Street and the Coedpoeth project, visit hopestreet.church.

