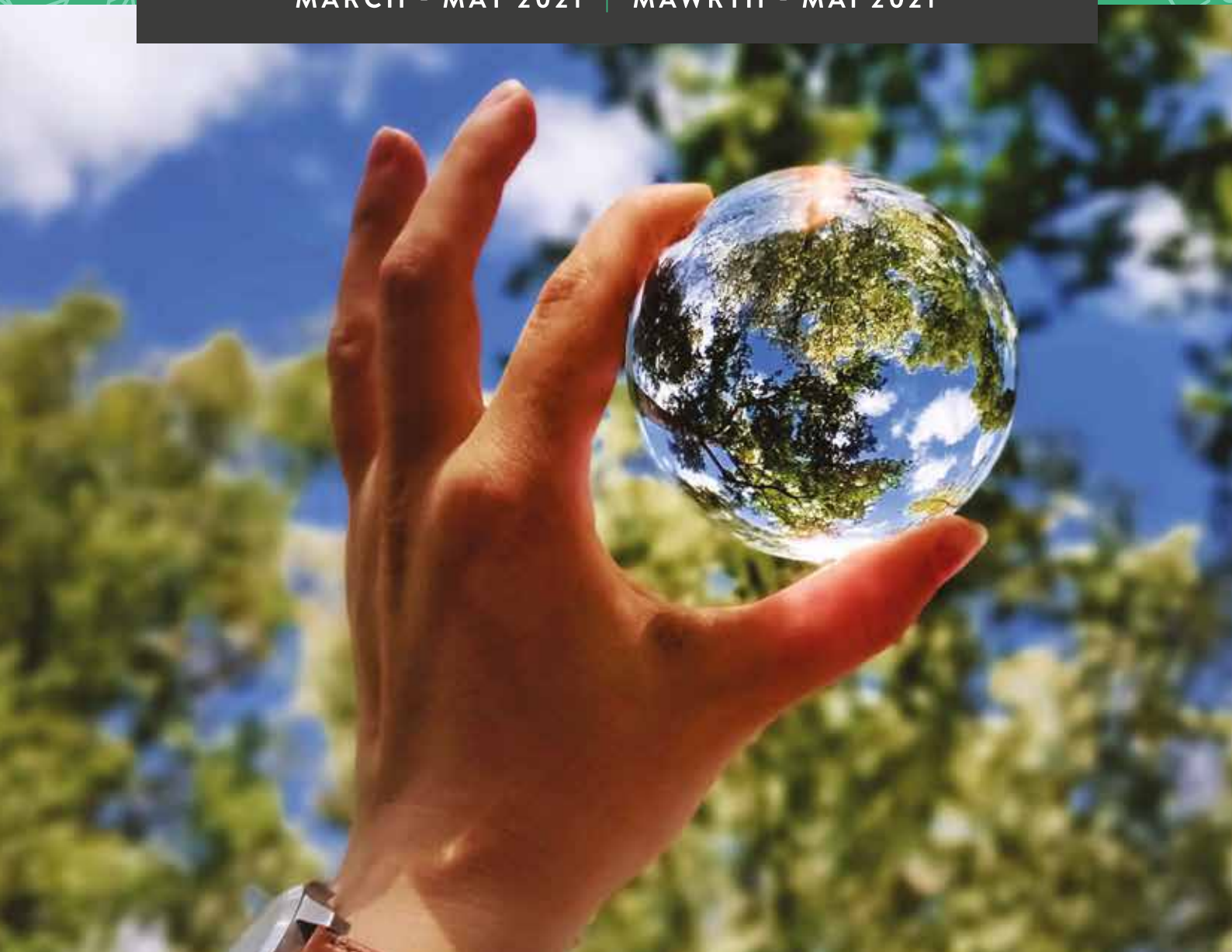




TEULU ASAPH

CONNECTING OUR DIOCESAN FAMILY

MARCH - MAY 2021 | MAWRTH - MAI 2021



Covid-19: a Lens on Life
Signs of Hope
First Silver Eco-Church

Covid-19: Lens ar Fywyd
Arwyddion Gobaith
Eco-Eglwys Arian Gyntaf

FREE | AM DDIM

From the Editor

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Teulu Asaph* which is considering how a year of restrictions is altering so many aspects of our lives.

While writing this I looked back to see when the first set of Coronavirus guidance from the Church in Wales was issued. It was 19 February, and it was clear we had no idea what 2020 had in store for us! In this edition we celebrate the good which is taking place and the changes which are forging new patterns of worship, life, service and thinking. While the pandemic has been devastating in many ways, new opportunities have presented themselves which may never have happened otherwise.

For those wishing to escape all mention of the C-word, we celebrate the diocese's first Silver Eco-Church award, introduce the new Rural Affairs Officer and preview a book on Deliverance Ministry written by one of our clerics.

Do keep sending your contributions for *Teulu Asaph* and let me know your news. I look forward to hearing from you.



Karen

Karen Maurice, Editor

karenmaurice@cinw.org.uk

07918 133420

Diocesan Office, High Street,
St Asaph, LL17 0RD



Page 4



Page 6



Page 13

Contents

- 3 Bishop's Word / Gair gan yr Esgob
- 4 Launching Hope Street
- 5 First Silver Eco-Church Award
- 6 News / Newyddion
- 8 Looking through Covid
- 10 Hearing the Church Bells
- 11 Introducing the New Rural Affairs Officer
- 12 Schools / Ysgolion
- 13 New Opportunities for our Young People
- 14 Training Together
- 16 Deliverance – Everyday Ghostly Investigations

Cover image: Lens on Life – Looking through Covid, see page 8.

© Diocese of St Asaph 2021. *Teulu Asaph* is edited by Karen Maurice, designed by Daydream Designs and printed by PWS Print Limited. The deadline for content and images for the next edition is 23 April 2021. Please send copy and high-quality images to karenmaurice@cinw.org.uk for inclusion. While we welcome all contributions, unfortunately we are not able to print everything we are sent. The Diocese of St Asaph is part of the Church in Wales.



Bishop's Word / Gair gan yr Esgob

The Great Persecution

Between 303 and 313AD, an event shook the Christian Church known as "The Great Persecution". Although Christianity had been persecuted under the Roman authorities, this was the first – and as it turned out, the last – universal proscription of Christian faith under the Romans: churches were destroyed, scriptures burned, and Christians put to death. It ended only when the Roman Emperor Constantine declared that he was a Christian himself, and announced toleration of Christianity.

During the Great Persecution, public worship was dangerous, any visible sign of Christian faith might lead to arrest, torture, and execution. Yet Christianity adapted and flourished even. When the world was trying to squeeze Christian faith to death, the Spirit found new ways of expressing life, hope and love. With Constantine came power, riches and the chance to build huge churches and attract converts. Ironically, this proved to be a bigger challenge and even more dangerous for the Church ... but that's another story.

When Christian faith is squeezed, the Spirit finds new ways to inspire faith and mission. We've seen it in this last year. Physical worship might be suspended, but online worship has flourished. Old patterns of pastoral care have become muted by restrictions; new ways of supporting and caring for the vulnerable have emerged.

There is good news to tell – some of which is reproduced in this *Teulu Asaph*. "Have I not commanded you?" says the Lord, "Be strong and of good courage, for the Lord your God is with you whithersoever you go." (*Joshua 1.9*)

Yr Erledigaeth Fawr

Rhwng 303 a 313OC, cafodd yr Eglwys Gristnogol ei hysgwyd gan ddigwyddiad sy'n cael ei alw yr 'Erledigaeth Fawr'. Er bod yr awdurdodau Rhufeinig wedi erlid Cristnogaeth, dyma'r tro cyntaf – ac, erbyn gweld, yr olaf – o waharddiad cyffredinol ar y ffydd Gristnogol o dan y Rhufeiniaid: cafodd eglwysi eu dinistrio, yr ysgrythurau eu llosgi a Chrsnogion eu dienyddio. Dim ond ar ôl i'r ymerawdwr Rhufeinig Cystennin gyhoeddi ei fod ef ei hunan yn Gristion y daeth yr erlid i ben ac y cyhoeddwyd goddefgarwch o Gristnogaeth.

Yn ystod yr Erledigaeth Fawr, roedd yn beryglus addoli'n gyhoeddus, gallai unrhyw arwydd o'r ffydd Gristnogol arwain at arestio, poenydio a dienyddio. Eto, addasodd Cristnogaeth a hyd yn oed ffynnu. Pan oedd y byd yn ceisio gwagu'r ffydd Gristnogol i farwolaeth, roedd yr Ysbryd yn canfod ffyrdd newydd o fynegi bywyd, gobaith a chariad. Gyda Chystennin daeth grym, cyfoeth a chyfle i adeiladu eglwysi enfawr a denu pobl at y Ffydd. Yn eironig, roedd hyn hyd yn oed yn fwy o her a hyd yn oed yn fwy peryglus i'r Eglwys,... ond stori arall yw honno.

Pan mae'r ffydd Gristnogol yn cael ei gwasgu, mae'r Ysbryd yn canfod ffyrdd newydd o ysbrydoli ffydd a chenhadaeth. Rydyn ni wedi gweld hynny y llynedd. Efallai nad oedd modd addoli mewn eglwysi, ond mae addoli arlein wedi ffynnu. Mae hen batrymau o ofal bugeiliol wedi cael eu distewi gan y cyfyngiadau; mae ffyrdd newydd o gefnogi a gofalu am y rhai bregus wedi ymddangos.

Mae yna newyddion da i'w adrodd – peth ohono sydd i'w weld yn y *Teulu Asaph* hwn. "Onid wyf wedi gorchymyn iti?" meddai'r Arglwydd, "bydd wrol a dewr? Paid ag arsywdo na dychryn, oherwydd yr wyf fi, yr Arglwydd dy Dduw, gyda thi ble bynnag yr ei." (*Joshua 1.9*)



Launching Hope Street

Regular Sunday services have started from Hope Street in Wrexham, the diocese's new Resource Church based in the converted former Burton store. As the leaders of Hope Street, **Andy and Rachel Kitchen**, explain, it wasn't the sort of launch they had envisaged.

Worshipping online may not be the ideal circumstances to launch Hope Street but starting regular services is a big milestone for the project. Being able to worship God from this building in Wrexham and invite others in – albeit virtually – for the first time on Sunday 31 January was an important day for us. For now, in line with restrictions, broadcasting live via Youtube with a Zoom catch up to follow will be our Sunday worship pattern.

In the lead-up to 'launch Sunday,' we organised a week of prayer. We see prayer as being central to all we are going to do. Going right back to the early church in Acts, the activity of prayer has always been the engine room of the church. Like so many, we are longing to see a fresh move of God in north Wales and throughout history it seems that any move of God has had at its heart a praying people. It is part of the reason we have a dedicated prayer space in the building.

The prayer room is located on the ground floor of Hope Street, which also comprises a meeting space for groups and ministries, a café area, and a kitchen. We hope that the large areas of glass and the open feel of the space communicate to people, "Come in, you're welcome here. Come and find a community to belong to. Come and encounter God. Come and see."

The first floor of the building is set out with multi-purpose smaller rooms for training and break-out spaces. We have a vision to be a centre for training, to which people are called, trained and sent out to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel



of Jesus Christ. These rooms have been designed so they can be flexible and be used by many different groups, including our kids and young people. The top floor of the building is now finished and will be used on Sunday as the worship space and during the

week for other larger events.

The launch week at the end of January culminated in 'The Big Hope Street Quiz,' a Friday evening virtual pub quiz entered by 17 teams from around Wrexham. This has been one of several online events and courses organised over this latest lockdown. These include an Alpha course, *The Marriage Course*, as well as several groups for young people.

We have also been looking for practical ways to serve Wrexham. Over the last few months, staff and volunteers from Hope Street partnered with churches in the Wrexham Mission Area, Glyndŵr University and local charities and we delivered Christmas gifts to over 200 households around Wrexham under the "Love Christmas" banner.

Handover of the refurbished former Burton store at 1 Hope Street is now underway, and we are confident that the building is on track to open its doors once restrictions start to be eased.

Find out more about Hope Street at www.hopestreet.church



First Silver Eco-Church Award



A church in Bryn a Môr Mission Area has been awarded the first silver Eco-Church award in the diocese. This is a significant step forward in the move to become an Eco-Diocese. The Revd Gregor Lachlann-Waddell, the recently appointed curate of Ss Cyndeyrn and Asaph in Llanasa, explains how they achieved it.

"...So I will build my altar in the fields.
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And sweet fragrance that the wild flowers yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to thee..."
(To Nature, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, c 1820)

When I arrived to start my curacy in Bryn a Môr, I was excited that I would be serving in an area of outstanding natural beauty. One of the previous incumbents of Llanasa was the Revd Stuart Elliot who had done a lot of conservation work during his time there and our church family has continued this work. I have always been interested in conservation and I am fortunate to have David Lewis as my training incumbent who is encouraging me in this.

Some of our church family have strong links with the Llanasa Conservation Society (I am an honorary member). Together we take care of the plants and wildlife around our village and in our churchyards. During Summer 2020, we spent time in the churchyard weeding and planting bee-friendly flowers. Under the stewardship of the Conservation Society, we are working with the Probation Service in the care and the upkeep of the cemetery. This involves a programme of encouraging natural wildlife, semi-wild fauna, and flora.

As a rural church, we had a conservation report drawn up by the Wildlife Trust which gave us recommendations on how to manage the land around the church. From this report and through the hard work of our wardens, the church family, and the Conservation Society, we have created an environment which is beautiful and tranquil for humans and wildlife alike.

I am hoping to establish a Forest Church soon from which I can take people into nature and teach us all (including myself) how to be better stewards of the Kingdom. I am currently working towards getting the other two churches in my area signed up as Eco-Churches and the intention is to get the whole Mission Area on board!

As part of our teaching for the Mission Area, we are running a Lent course from the organisation Operation Noah called *Tenants of the King*. This course is designed to help us have open and honest conversations about what purpose God has planned for us, his Church and his creation. During Harvest, on Creation Sunday and in Ordinary Time we plan to focus our prayers and teaching on the environment and care for creation.

Chapter 16 of St Mark's Gospel reminds us of Jesus' commission to his disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." The beauty of this is that Stuart Elliot and members of the Church planted this seed for caring for God's creation in the past and it is flourishing to this day.

There are resources to help you sign up your church as an Eco-Church at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faiith-in-action/eco-church/>

New Online Giving for your Church



Regular online donations have increased giving across the Diocese of St Asaph by the equivalent of

a quarter of a million pounds per year. It follows a push last year to encourage all churches to sign up to the Church in Wales' Gift Direct scheme. Now enhancements to the system means people can give digitally to any church, mission area or project and can manage their donations themselves. To donate online go to: <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/onlinegiving>

Online Comedy Raises Money for DASU



More than £350 was raised for this year's Diocesan Offering during an online Christmas Comedy and Carols event. Top comedians such as Daliso Chaponda (above) who won the

Golden Buzzer on *Britain's Got Talent* and Barbara Nice who previously appeared in Peter Kay's *Phoenix Nights* entertained people in their homes across the diocese. Churches and Mission Areas are encouraged to find creative ways to fundraise for this year's Offering which will go to the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit. DASU supports people across north Wales who have experienced domestic abuse: <https://dasunorthwales.co.uk/>

Zoom Evensong

A pre-Covid initiative to re-establish regular Evensong services in the Denbigh Mission Area has evolved into weekly Said services via Zoom, attracting followers from across the UK. A love of the 'Old Evensong Service' led to John Harris and Kath Mitchell-Dawson setting up a Travelling Evensong Choir. Once a month, the Choir visited a different church in the Mission Area, but the pandemic put a stop to all church services and singing had to cease. Now a Said Evening Service



through Zoom every week is keeping members of the choir in touch and attracting new worshippers. The first service was held on Friday 15 May 2020, and has continued every Friday since, including Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Everybody is welcome to join the services. Please contact John: jghcymru@outlook.com

Cartoon Church



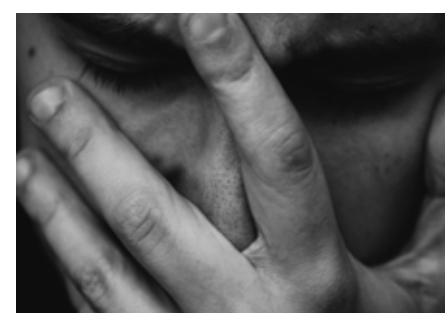
A church in Llandudno, in the Aberconwy Mission Area, has come up with an innovative solution to having to close its doors - use cartoon characters to present a service instead.

St Paul's in Craig y Don has a weekly video service for families which is normally presented by children. But with lockdown measures increasing at the start of January, children were no longer able to come into the church to record their contribution. So the team at St Paul's got them to create cartoon versions of themselves to go on screen alongside real pictures of the church instead. The children also recorded their voices at home to synch with the cartoon characters.

Rev'd Sam Erlandson, Mission Area Leader and Rector of St Paul's said: "It's essential that we as a church continue reaching out to families during the pandemic. It's been good fun finding a creative way to do this. It has been a real privilege to unlock the skills and talents of individuals to work together to communicate important Gospel messages in new ways."

You can see an example at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qaadpxs-4IU>

Mental Health Training



Specialist mental health training is being rolled out to clergy, youth workers and teachers across the diocese. It is a response to widespread acknowledgement that the pandemic is having a devastating effect on people's mental health. Over the last three months the diocese has trained almost 200 people and the intention is to have at least one fully trained

Mental Health First Aider in every Mission Area and church school. The training is being delivered by Helen Lewis from Well-Ahead-Wales and has been organised by the diocesan Under 25s Officer, Tim Feak. He said: "The feedback from this training has been fantastic. This is such vital work and is much needed in our communities. It is great to see that the diocese is at the vanguard of this work which is meeting real needs in our Mission Areas, schools and wider communities. I genuinely believe that it will have a real impact and potentially save lives." For more information, email Tim Feak: timfeak@cinw.org.uk

Medieval Garden for St Asaph Cathedral



Plans have been agreed to create a heritage garden in the grounds of St Asaph Cathedral. The project organised by the Cathedral's Activities Officer, Lorna Kernahan will see volunteers create a medieval

garden growing traditional herbs and plants, inspired by the monastic gardens of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The space will include seating to encourage outdoor prayer and meditation. Work on the garden, which has been approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee, will begin as soon as lockdown permits. If you are interested in volunteering for this project, please email Lorna Kernahan: lornakernahan@stasaphcathedral.wales

Holy Week and Easter Online

Bishop Gregory is planning a series of online services for Psalm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. The online worship will be available via the

diocesan and St Asaph Cathedral websites. Plans are in place to live-stream the annual Chrism Eucharist service which takes place on

Retirement of the Archbishop



The Archbishop of Wales, John Davies, is to retire in May after four years as leader of the Church in Wales.

Archbishop John, who will shortly celebrate his 68th birthday, has also served as Bishop of Swansea and Brecon for the past 13 years. The 13th Archbishop of Wales, he was also the first Bishop of Swansea and Brecon to be elected as Archbishop. During his tenure as Archbishop, John Davies led the Church in Wales as it reached its centenary last year and also as it faced one of its toughest challenges in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic. Following Archbishop John's retirement, the Bishop of Bangor will lead the Church until the election of a new Archbishop later in the year.

Maundy Thursday. Full details will be advertised via StAR and on the diocesan website, later in Lent.



Looking through Covid



One priest in the diocese has had Covid not once but twice.

Revd Dr Jane Wallman-Girdlestone (left) recently moved to the diocese from The Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness in Scotland. She is a disabled priest, theologian and artist with Permission to Officiate. She shares her perceptions of the impact of Covid.

What it means to be a faithful pilgrim in a living community of faith has to transform and change.

I write as a disability theologian. I specialise in the Ethics, Psychology of Religion and understanding of our world and faith through disability. Covid has been a humbling experience for me. I had the illness first early on, back in March. I was road testing a local residential home as a place to move to permanently as I wanted to settle back in Wales. I have a life-long disability and a degenerative condition.

As a vulnerable member of society while the virus is virulent, I have been in lock down. I have learnt the power of rooting where God has planted me. Giving things a chance that I wouldn't have dreamed of trying a year ago. I wonder what you've tried? Zoom for the first time? Taking up an old hobby or planning a new set of life priorities?

No quick fixes

As a disabled person, I have realised I am better equipped for lockdown than many non-disabled people. Most non-disabled people assume their right to control their actions, not so disabled people. I have learnt from birth about waiting; for a carer to help me, for help to

complete a task, for a bus to arrive that doesn't have its one wheelchair space already filled. Waiting for someone to stop talking over my head to my support worker about what I need, rather than chatting to me.

Patience is overrated, but not being 'seen' and 'heard' does make my expectations realistic. There are no quick fixes. Living with realistic expectations of ourselves and others has to take time to bed in and then grow its own way of flourishing. It's a skill to understand and show kindness towards our high expectations of ourselves and others. Hoping things will be better quicker than they will be is a tempting distraction. I encourage us to give ourselves time to take in the world and people around us, and not get too caught up on over-thinking or instant gratification.

We are a hopeful people as Christians, but Jesus, the prophets, and writers of the Epistles, tended to tell it how it is too. Disability means that I can't pretend either. Firstly, I'm deliciously visible. I use a powered chair. I work a dual trained Guide Dog/Dogs for the Disabled. I make a joke of saying, "I'll carry a copy of *The Financial Times* so people will spot me."

Seeing our vulnerable selves

Covid has made us all visible. It exposes our individual needs. Many of us have focused on the practical things we can do. Getting worship on-line, keeping in touch with people, clapping for the NHS, but we've missed a trick in my view. Gradually as the months have passed we have begun to see each other differently. We have caught sight of our own and others' vulnerable selves. We can't unsee. We need to learn from each other. We are invited by Jesus to nurture and love ourselves as we are. None of that inner dialogue of how we "ought" to

be. Our lives are enhanced when we love ourselves, then we're ready to love others deeply. Disabled people eventually learn not to fight their God-given nature but to use it in love. If we can all do this in lockdown, we can do it anywhere. That's a being not a doing activity, spending time away from distractions and taking in nature, a windowsill, plant or pebble. Turning things off. Being quiet.

Claustrophobia of sameness

We are experiencing the claustrophobia of sameness. The lack of something to look forward to. In common with the mystics and many in religious communities, disabled Christians have learnt to take sameness as a blank 'canvas' to 'paint' on, and nothing to look forward to as a call to stay with now. Many of us have lived for years in fear that the next lung infection will be our death. We are used to uncertainty. We have a choice to live as though we are waiting for life to start again or to get on with it as though today is our last day on the planet. Predictability doesn't need rewards to make it better, it wants to be seen for what it is, a starting point, a pulse to your life as it is at the moment. Treats are fine but they don't feed the deeper parts of us that are crying out to be hugged, understood and empathised with. You feed yourself to make that happen.

Prayer is underrated at times like this. Many of us feel a bit angry with God for 'letting this happen'. Let's turn that right round. Christianity isn't great at lamentation as we see ourselves as a religion of hope and new life. We don't articulate despair, hurt and anger well in a church context. I write down my annoyance with God and myself, to put it outside myself. I talk to people about it. Vulnerability makes us all more human and real to each other. What a different Church we would be if we met each other through our weaknesses and not our strength. Not simply, "How can I help you?" which feels a tad patronising to disabled people to "How can we help each other?"

Shared normal

Disabled people can help you relax into being present - in the now. You can help me by having an understanding which starts with what you see before you is my personal normal. Covid is our shared normal. We can be this together and grow new shoots and discard what we no longer need for this next stage of the journey as we go on listening and sharing our inner truths and feelings together.

You can contact Jane at janewallmangirdlestone@gmail.com or via [facebook.com/jane.wallmangirdlestone](https://www.facebook.com/jane.wallmangirdlestone)



Hearing the Church Bells



When film or TV programme makers want to signify that it is Sunday morning what do they do? They have church bells ringing in the background. As Peter Furniss (above) from the North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers explains, the ringing of church bells has gone on for centuries only silenced once, during the Second World War – until the pandemic struck.

When the first lockdown was introduced in March last year all bell ringing stopped overnight and has only been able to resume in a very limited way since. At the time of writing (January 2021) all ringing has again been suspended apart from the ringing of individual bells or the use of chiming apparatus.

There are 32 towers in the Diocese of St Asaph with rings of bells hung for full circle ringing in the traditional manner. Prior to the pandemic most had their own bands of ringers typically ringing for Sunday services and practising one night per week. When restrictions began to be eased over the Summer, the Church in Wales and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (The representative body for church bell ringers worldwide) agreed a set of protocols which allowed limited ringing to resume. Observing these measures, some bands did start to ring again for Sunday services but some ringing rooms were simply too small for ringing to resume safely. Most towers, however, have made a concerted effort to ensure that the sound of bells continues, to let people know that the church is still there for them, to remind them of God's presence and to bring comfort to the sick, housebound or those who are shielding.

One of the greatest impacts on bell ringing has been our inability to recruit and train new ringers. Training bell ringers involves close physical supervision which is impossible currently. In addition, it is quite likely that some ringers will not want to return to bell ringing, when it is possible, either because of age or health or because they have found alternative interests. However, a survey of ringers at Halkyn found that virtually all were looking forward to ringing again once it was safe to do so.

Ringers, however, are a resourceful bunch. Quickly after lockdown began two ringers in the USA developed and shared an online ringing platform called *Ringin' Room*. It is now possible with the aid of your computer or other device to ring together with ringers from around the World. Several bands in the diocese are using *Ringin' Room* to not only hone their ringing skills but more importantly to keep their social contact going until such time as we can return to our towers.

The North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers is using *Ringin' Room* and Zoom to help support ringers across the area and has convened a "Ringin' Recovery Group". The purpose of this group is to assess the impact of the pandemic on bell ringing and what can be done to help individual towers once the pandemic is over.

Bell ringers are looking forward to the time when we can proclaim God's Word through the ringing of bells, all together, in church towers. In the meantime, we hope you will forgive us if what you hear is a single bell or unfamiliar combinations of bells. They all carry the same message of God's love.



Introducing the New Rural Affairs Officer

The Bishop of St Asaph has appointed the **Revd Hermione Morris, (right)** as the **Diocesan Rural Affairs Officer**.

Hermione, a priest in the Tanat-Vyrnwy Mission Area, replaces the Revd Heather Fenton in the role. Here Hermione introduces herself and her priorities.

'It is with a sense of great joy, delight, privilege, and responsibility that I have accepted Bishop Gregory's appointment as Diocesan Rural Affairs Officer (RAO), as I seek to follow in Revd Heather Fenton's very long-standing footsteps.'

Having been brought up in rural Kent, I spent the first 24 years of my working life in urban/suburban settings, as a nurse and then as a priest. For the past 10 years I have been living and ministering in rural Montgomeryshire, based in Llanfyllin, which comes within the Tanat-Vyrnwy Mission Area. During this time, I met and married my now husband, who is a beef and sheep farmer, and have become what I describe as a 'sessional farmer' as well as a farmer's wife, and priest-in-charge, looking after four churches covering five communities. Through my marriage and increasing knowledge about farming and farming life, alongside my rootedness within rural-agricultural communities, God has ignited a passion to reach out to and minister with those who live and work in predominantly agricultural and land-based sectors.

In 2019 I spent my sabbatical visiting agricultural chaplaincies and Diocesan Rural Officers across Wales and England, and I believe my appointment to this role is a succession to this exploration and time of discovery. I am very aware that rurality is more than agriculture and land-based activities and looks different depending on the local context. One of the things I am very much looking forward to is discovering how rurality looks in and for other Mission Areas in the diocese, working and celebrating with people there, as we continue to minister God's love and good news to all.

My appointment is for three years initially, and during the first 12 months I hope to:

- further develop the rural pages on the diocesan website to signpost visitors to support for farmers and other agricultural industries



- continue praying for and begin to familiarise myself more deeply with other rural MAs in the diocese (Covid restrictions allowing)
- identify who the 'rurally interested and skilled' peoples are across the diocese and look at ways of bringing them together
- establish which rural festivals (other than Harvest) might be contextually relevant to celebrate, developing liturgies and resources to encourage and facilitate their celebration
- participate in the meetings and work of the Church in Wales' Provincial Rural Life Advisors/Officers group.

In addition to ministry within the Church in Wales, I am also part of the chaplaincy team for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (RWAS) based in Llanellwedd; a volunteer for Farming Community Network Cymru (FCN), going into Welshpool Livestock Market in this capacity; and am a member of the Agricultural Chaplains Association.



To find out more, visit www.nwacbr.wales or email Peter at peter@peterfurniss.com

Hermione can be contacted on 01691 648306 or via email hjmorris66@gmail.com



The much-anticipated opening of Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School took place in January. Just a small number of children are being taught in the building while Wales remains in lockdown, with

the majority learning from home online. The new building is the first Passivhaus (low energy) primary school in Powys and was completed by Knockin-based Pave Aways.

Two Winning Designs for the Bishop's Christmas Card



Two designs, illustrated by pupils from St Joseph's School in Wrexham, featured on the front and back of the Bishop of St Asaph's Christmas Card.

The winning designs were selected from more than 1,400 entries on the theme of Angels, based on their appearance in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth. First prize was awarded to Chloe Juarana for her design of a glamorous angel overlooking a colourful Bethlehem (left). For the first time, a second design, a festive border, by Aleksander Korizynski featured on the back of the card.

New Childcare Provision for Flintshire

Two Church Schools in Flintshire have been awarded grants to provide local childcare provision. Ysgol Y Llan, in Whitford and Ysgol yr Esgob, in Caerwys have been awarded the Welsh Government funding after a successful application by Flintshire County Council.

Both schools will be able to set up self-contained on-site childcare facilities and offer three- and four-year-olds Government funded early education and childcare for up to 48 weeks a year.



Gwasanaeth Cyfieithwyr

Bydd plant o ysgolion ar draws yr esgobaeth yn cymryd rhan mewn gwasanaeth arbennig i nodi pedwar canmlwyddiant cyfieithiad Edmwnd Prys o'r Salmau i'r Gymraeg. Mae Edmwnd Prys, a gafod ei eni yn Llanrwst, yn un o gyfieithwyr enwog y Beibl sydd ar y gofob tu allan i Eglwys Gadeiriol Llanelwy. Bydd gwasanaeth arbennig gydag Esgob Gregory a Deon Eglwys Gadeiriol Llanelwy, ar gael i ysgolion o 15 Mai. Bydd yn cynnwys gwaith celf gan ddisgyblion wedi'i greu mewn gweithdai rhithiol wedi'u trefnu gan swyddog gweithgareddau'r Eglwys Gadeiriol ac addoliad yn dathlu'r greadigaeth, gydag elfennau wedi'u recordio o flaen llaw o'r traeth, y goedwig a'r fferm.

Translators' Service

Children from schools across the diocese will be taking part in a special service to mark 400 years of the Edmund Prys translation of the Psalms into Welsh. Prys, who was born in Llanrwst is one of the Bible translators celebrated on the memorial outside St Asaph Cathedral (above). A special service, featuring Bishop Gregory and the Dean of St Asaph Cathedral, will be available to schools from 15 May. It will feature artwork from pupils done in virtual workshops organised by St Asaph Cathedral's Activities Officer and worship celebrating creation, with pre-recorded elements from the beach, the forest and the farm.



With Coronavirus restrictions still in place, you might have expected youth work opportunities to have slowed but work with young people is continuing apace with exciting new developments underway as the Under 25s officer, Tim Feak explains.

Young People's International Discipleship and Leaders Programmes – Finland

We may be facing a new era of relations with countries in Europe following Brexit, but that is not stopping our young people from St Asaph taking part in a new programme backed by the Finnish Government. It is part of the link agreement between the dioceses of St Asaph and Helsinki, signed in 2019.

That agreement saw the development of a Discipleship and Leadership Programme which supports young people in their faith journey and offers them an international perspective in sharing this journey with young people from Finland. Last year, Covid-19 halted the programme and a visit to Finland had to be cancelled. However, in 2021 most young people from the 2020 groups are starting to meet again in a different and exciting way!

Unlike previous programmes where Finnish and Welsh young people only met on the week-long camps in Wales and Finland, 2021 will see both groups meeting regularly online. Together they will be exploring their faith and learning more about leadership. There is of course a desire to organise a visit to Finland but due to the uncertainty over Coronavirus, this is not possible yet.

The group will start by undertaking an initiative backed by both the Finnish Government and the Diocese of Helsinki. The groups will be using *Timeout*, a set of dialogue tools which help to create constructive discussions. *Timeout* is



helpful in implementing conversations in sensitive topics such as prejudice and forms of hate speech giving individuals and groups an opportunity to pause and consider issues constructively and in peace. As a group, the young people will learn how to use *Timeout* and once this training is completed the St Asaph group will then put this training into practice with our Mission Areas.

I have been heartened that against the backdrop of Brexit and Covid, the work with our Finnish friends is continuing to flourish. Covid has stopped us from delivering our initial plans but I am so happy that we have been able to develop creative ways to work with young people.

New members for Youth Forum

Five new members have signed up to join the St Asaph Youth Forum. The group for 12 to 18 year olds, meets to advise on key issues affecting young people in the diocese and has exciting plans for 2021.

First on the list will be to respond to a consultation on digital youth work to develop a strategy for the future. In addition, the forum will be advising on green issues with members encouraging their local church to become an Eco-Church.

Over the past year some of the Youth Forum members have turned 18 and have graduated from the group. The 2021 Youth Forum is the fourth cohort since the group was founded in 2016.

Any young person wishing to find out more can email Tim Feak (timfeak@cinw.org.uk) or speak to your local vicar or youth worker.



Training Together

St Asaph Diocese has always invested in training those who volunteer or work in our churches. That commitment to training continues, although it is now more likely to happen online than face to face. Whilst the timetable for reopening our churches is uncertain, you may feel the time could be put to good use in doing some learning. Tracey White, the Training Together Coordinator, outlines some of the courses planned for 2021.

Some of these events will be programmed as they are delivered in partnership with other organisations. Aside from planned events, we also offer more bespoke provision. This offers training solutions designed to meet the needs of your church or Mission Area.

To give you some idea of what can be arranged, have a look at this list and see if you are inspired. We can tailor most courses to suit your needs and context so just get in touch.

Schools, Youth and Children's Ministry

(further information from timfeak@cinw.org.uk)

- Youth and Children's Work Training and Support Group (planned for March)
- Mission Area Youth and Children's Ministry Strategy – how to pray and hear God's Voice (this will look at how to run an audit / community mapping and put together a strategy)
- Digital Youth Work Training – delivered online via Glyndwr University
- Mental Health Awareness Training – run by an external provider
- Mental Health First Aid Training - run by an external provider

2021 Leading your Church into Youth Work Conference

Many churches feel that engagement with teenagers is beyond them: they feel under-resourced and too small to make an impact. However, with the same encouraging, inspiring, practical and doable principles that inspire our main conferences, this conference is designed to encourage you that whatever resources you have, ministry with teenagers is not only possible, but vital.

The team presenting will have had first-hand experience of developing youth work of different sizes and in different contexts and will include diocesan youth missionaries. The conference takes the form of an open seminar with interactive talks, practical exercises, workshops and time and space for personal reflection. As a 'mixed economy' Mission Shaped Church, we work with Fresh Expressions as well as 'Re-freshed' Expressions of Church!

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 1AU, from 5pm on Friday 17th September to 2pm on Sunday 19th September.

Cost of £205 includes all accommodation and board (training bursaries may be available to cover the cost).

Schools Admissions Training Part 1: Statutory Code, Policy and Process (further information from sheridangoodey@cinw.org.uk)

This will focus on providing an overview of the current Schools Admission Code paying particular attention to the school admission policy and the process for admission arrangements that needs to be followed. For: Head Teachers, Governors and anyone else involved in School Admissions.

Schools Admissions Training Part 2: School Admission Appeal Code, Appeal Preparation and Documentation

This will focus on providing an overview of the current Schools Admission Appeals Code paying particular attention to:

- Overview of the process / who is on the appeals panel
- How to prepare for a hearing / documentation to provide
- What the appeals panel will be looking for
- Case studies for discussion

Capital Repair and Maintenance of Voluntary Aided Schools

Useful for Governors and Head Teachers in Church Schools. Topics covered include:

- The requirements of the CRAMP scheme
- How to effectively create an asset management plan
- When to apply for funding
- What is covered by the scheme?
- What is the process?

Engaging with our Communities

(further information from sarahwheat@cinw.org.uk)

- Cultivating Healthy Volunteer Relationships - Tuesday 13th April 11am – 1pm. How to use all aspects of the volunteer process to inspire and retain your volunteers. Looking at recruitment, induction, training, supervision and support.
- Hope and a Future (creative tools for understanding your community and responding to needs)
- County Lines – spotting the signs and raising awareness

Ministry

(further information from traceywhite@cinw.org.uk)

- Talking about Stewardship and Money – Monday 8th March 11am – 1.30pm. A session with tools, techniques and teaching to help you be confident in talking about money so that you can turn your vision into action.

Safeguarding Training

- Training dates for Part 1 and Part 2 training are available on the St Padarn's Institute website. To book, email: safeguardingtraining@stpadarns.ac.uk

Mission Area Admin, Finance and Governance

(further information from siancharlesworth@cinw.org.uk)

- Introductory & Intermediate training in the Finance Co-ordinator software
- Introducing and exploring the role of MA Treasurer
- Claiming Gift Aid and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)
- The role of the Churchwarden
- Mission Area Governance
- Being a Member of the MAC – vision, strategy and planning



ESGOBAETH LLANELWY
DATGLOI EIN
POTENTIAL
UNLOCKING OUR
POTENTIAL
DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

The list of available training is updated regularly on StAR, the weekly what's on email bulletin. Sign up to StAR at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/st-asaph-round-up-newsletter/>



Deliverance – Everyday Ghostly Investigations



A new book written by the Vicar of St Giles' in Wrexham, **Revd Dr Jason Bray** (left), is revealing the reality of investigations into ghosts, poltergeists, and other supernatural phenomena. The book, called *Deliverance*, is based on Jason's work as a Deliverance Minister. *Teulu Asaph* caught up with Jason just as the book was published in mid-February.

"The book is already attracting interest from the mainstream media," says Jason as we meet virtually ahead of its launch. "There are discussions to serialise it in the *Daily Mail*, *This Morning* on ITV want to talk to me, and a television company has bought the rights to make a series, based on the stories in the book. It will be more in the style of *Call the Midwife* than the *Exorcist*," he explains casually.

Deliverance is certainly causing a stir and it is probably not surprising. Jason's stories of ghostly happenings, possible demon possession, supernatural paranormal activity will always attract fascination and his book uncovers the everyday reality of his investigations. He is the first Anglican Priest to write on this subject for a general audience.

He explains: "The book is my memoirs really over the last 20 years of Deliverance Ministry. The book provides a general theological framework but without being too heavy. In the past, books on ghosts or poltergeists or the supernatural have either been very technical or for the 'batty' end of the market. My book covers this subject seriously and includes moments of observational comedy too."

The book opens with a very readable account of Jason's first encounter with the inexplicable and the event which moved him towards Deliverance Ministry. When is a cold house more than just a cold house? That is the book's opening line, and it becomes immediately clear that this house is very close to home for Jason, his wife, Laura and their new-born son, Tom.

To describe the happenings, Jason finds himself using language more associated with doctors or detectives. "It's my job to investigate," he says, "and I have a duty as a Deliverance Minister not to jump to conclusions. What we find in the end though is that the majority of especially poltergeist cases are caused by an emotional reaction to circumstances. Things like teenage angst, mental illness, the arrival of a new baby or even major structural changes to a building can all underpin and be the cause of strange activity."

But this isn't to minimise the important role Jason and other Deliverance Ministers play. "These happenings are real," he says, "and praying with people, asking God to deal with it, blessing their homes and occasionally referring them to a doctor makes a huge difference to people and their lives."



Jason is Convenor of the St Asaph Deliverance Group. His book, *Deliverance*, is published by Hodder and Stoughton and is available in bookshops and online now, priced £20.