



TEULU ASAPH

CONNECTING OUR DIOCESAN FAMILY

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2019 | MEDI - TACHWEDD 2019

How Green is your Church?
Leaders for Hope Street

Pa mor Wyrdd ydy eich Eglwys chi?
Arweinwyr ar gyfer Stryd Gobaith

FREE
AM DDIM

From the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Teulu Asaph and you'll notice it's a bumper edition. That's partly because we've included a questionnaire about training for you to complete and return, and because there's plenty going on across the Teulu Asaph.

Recently, I discovered that we're entering the Season of Creation when we celebrate creation and commit to healing the Earth. How timely after the Extinction Rebellion Protests and an editorial decision to look at green issues in this issue! You can find out how to sign up as an Eco-Church and gain an award for the work you already do.

We have moved to a quarterly publication too. *Teulu Asaph* will be in your churches four times a year, rather than six, but you can keep up to date

with news, events and activities on our website (dioceseofstasaph.org.uk), via facebook, twitter and Instagram (@stasaphdiocese).

Our next edition will be out in time for Advent, when we start a year marking the centenary of the Church in Wales. If you have events planned, please let me know.



Karen

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Cover image: St Mary's Churchyard in Chirk, which has won numerous awards: RHS 'Its Your Neighbourhood' awards (Distinction), a Green Flag award given by Keep Wales Tidy and Bee Friendly recognition from a Welsh Government scheme.



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One Shared Hope

As Bishop Gregory is away on sabbatical, the Diocesan Secretary, Diane McCarthy encourages us to renew and strengthen our faith.

Preparations for October's Diocesan Conference are now well underway, and I hope you are looking forward to gathering for a day of prayer, friendship and inspiration. Our theme this year is 'One Shared Hope' and it seems that we have much for which to be grateful and hopeful.

A glance across our diocese gives much cause for hope: God is calling people of all ages to a rich variety of ministries; members of the Teulu Asaph are doing life-changing work in their communities with people who are homeless or lonely, people living with dementia and many others; and our schools and youth workers are nurturing the faith of our children and young people.

We all have individual hopes, but our shared hope is to grow the Kingdom of God. And the good news is that the Kingdom of God, which like all healthy living things is constantly changing and growing, has room for us all.

There are always challenges, of course, but these inspiring words from Isaiah will always renew our faith and strength:

Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends
of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no
one can fathom.
He gives strength to the weary and increases the power
of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men
stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

Rhannu'r un Gobaith

Gan fod Esgob Gregory ar ei gyfnod sabothol, mae Ysgrifennydd yr Esgobaeth, Diane McCarthy yn rhoi anogaeth inni adnewyddu a chryfhau ein ffydd.

Mae'r paratodau ar gyfer Cynhadledd yr Esgobaeth ym mis Hydref bellach ar y gweill ers amser – gobeithio eich bod yn edrych ymlaen yn eiddgar at ddiwrnod o weddi, cyfeillach ac ysbrydoliaeth. Ein thema eleni ydy 'Rhannu'r un Gobaith' ac mae'n ymddangos bod ganddon ni lawer iawn i fod yn ddiolchgar ac yn obeithiol amdano.

Mae cipolwg dros ein hesgobaeth yn ddigon i roi achos i obeithio: mae Duw'n galw pobl o bob oed at gyfoeth amrywiol o weinidogaethau; mae aelodau Teulu Asaph yn cyflawni gwaith allweddol yn eu cymunedau gyda'r digartref, y rhai ynysig, pobl yn byw gyda dementia a llawer un arall; ac mae gweithwyr ein hysgolion a'n hieuenctid yn meithrin ffydd ein plant a'n pobl ifanc.

Mae gan bob un ohonon ni ein gobeithion ein hunain ond ein gobaith cytûn ydy i dyfu Teyrnas Dduw. A'r newyddion da ydy fod gan Deyrnas Dduw, sydd fel popeth byw ac iach yn newid a datblygu'n gyson, le i bob un ohonon ni.

Mae heriau i'w cael o hyd, wrth gwrs, ond dyma eiriau i'ch ysbrydoli o Eiseia a fydd bob amser yn adnewyddu a chryfhau ein ffydd:

Wyt ti ddim yn gwybod? Wyt ti ddim wedi clywed?
Yr ARGLWYDD ydy'r Duw tragwyddol! Fe sydd wedi
creu'r ddaear gyfan.
Dydy ei nerth e ddim yn pallu; Dydy e byth yn blino.
Mae e'n rhy ddoeth i unrhyw un ei ddeall!
Fe sy'n gwneud y gwan yn gryf, ac yn rhoi egni i'r blinedig.
Mae pobl ifanc yn pallu ac yn blino, a'r rhai mwya ffit yn
baglu ac yn syrthio;
ond bydd y rhai sy'n pwyso ar yr ARGLWYDD yn cael nerth
newydd.
Byddan nhw'n hedfan i fyny fel eryrod, yn rhedeg heb flino
a cherdded ymlaen heb stopio.



How Green is your Church?

The Diocese of St Asaph is encouraging churches to improve their green credentials. It comes as the Extinction Rebellion protests have been taking place in towns and cities across the UK and Europe highlighting a 'climate emergency'. The Diocesan Engagement Officer, Sarah Wheat wants to inspire churches to do more to take responsibility for their impact on the world.

In 2018, the Diocese of St Asaph became the first in Wales to register as an Eco-Diocese, an award scheme for churches who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. Churches are being encouraged to consider their environmental impact on the world and sign up as an Eco-Church, by completing the eco-survey at <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>.

What is an Eco-Church?

An Eco-Church means expressing your care for God's world in:

- worship and teaching
- how you look after your buildings and land
- how you engage with your local community and in global campaigns
- the personal lifestyles of your congregations.

We know many churches already promote green issues and really care about the environment but registering as an Eco-Church means gaining recognition for the work already done, with bronze, silver and gold level awards.

Eco-inspiration

There are lots of resources to encourage your eco-journey and plenty of inspirational stories. Over the next year, the diocese will be providing further resources in both English and Welsh to encourage more churches to register as



St Mary's Church, Chirk

Eco-Churches. To do this, we would like to hear about the inspirational work you are already undertaking. Perhaps you already have an environmentally friendly building or keep part of your churchyard for wildlife or use a renewable energy company for your heating and lighting? Whatever you do already will count towards being an Eco-Church.



Children from Pentre Church in Wales School visiting Chirk Churchyard

Find out more

For further information and to sign up as an Eco-Church, visit <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>. Please send your own inspirational eco-church stories to Sarah Wheat: Sarahwheat@cinw.org.uk For information about Chirk (see page 5) email: Fereliths@gmail.com



Chirk Churchyard Group

St Mary's Church in Chirk has been running a conservation project in its churchyard for over a decade. Ferelith Smith from Chirk Churchyard Volunteer Group, explains.

In 2009, we set up a group to tackle the churchyard and develop a conservation management plan for our two-and-a-half-acre plot. We meet every Friday afternoon from 2-5pm to keep the churchyard tidy, stopping for a cuppa to discuss how we are going to do the various jobs! Organisations such as Environment Wales, Sacred Space and Caring for Gods Acre have helped us along the way.

Recognition

Over the last ten years, the churchyard has become a place for all sorts of people to enjoy. Not only does the wider community use the space, but tourists and visitors wander around, sitting to enjoy the beautiful area we have here in Chirk. This has been recognised with numerous awards: RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' awards (Distinction), a Green Flag award given by Keep Wales Tidy and we have just received Bee Friendly recognition from a Welsh Government scheme.

A mosaic of grassland

Our objectives are to maintain and enhance the natural history and historic interest of the church whilst presenting an attractive and cared for appearance. We do this by mowing different areas at different heights, therefore making a mosaic of grassland for the benefit of wildlife and taking care to cut the grass short at the front of church and around gravestones that are regularly visited. We have three areas where the grass is particularly long and these areas give invertebrates places to live, hide and travel.

A splash of colour

We have planted different kinds of shrubs and plants to encourage the butterflies, bees and insects. Local groups, such as Guides, Brownies, the schools, the Toddler group and a walking group, have helped us plant bulbs and native plants. Three years ago, we designed a large rectangular border and sowed an annual 'cornfield' flower mix, which has been a great success: A huge splash of colour for months.

Bug hotels

We do lots to encourage wildlife habits too. We've installed two large bug hotels, log piles, a hedgehog house, two bat and 12 bird boxes, six bee shelters, two bird baths and five shallow water trays around the churchyard. A monthly bird survey is carried out in the churchyard and the results uploaded to the National Bird Track.

Getting involved

We have a good noticeboard outside the church, along with information and children's fun sheets, to entice people to wander around the churchyard. A local historian takes people on organised tours and children from different schools have explored the churchyard, learning about its wildlife and history.

Every year we hold a 'Butterfly Memorial Service' in the church hall. This is a short informal service which is attended by many who would not feel comfortable in the church. They can all put a butterfly with a message onto a small tree and this is very popular.

To support all this work, we must raise funds. We run events throughout the year which bring the local community into this lovely peaceful and beautiful space. On sale, are the fruits of our labours, as we make rowan and rose hip jams and rhubarb crumbles from the churchyard produce.





Homeless Sunday



Churches across Wales will mark Homeless Sunday on 13 October.

Special prayers and liturgy are being released for use on the day, by the charity, Housing Justice Cymru (HJC), the recipient of the 2019 Diocese of St Asaph Offering.

St Giles Church in Wrexham will be holding a service at 3pm to pray, reflect and plan practical action to tackle homelessness. The service will include a new poem, written and performed by local poet Evrah Rose. The diocesan engagement officer, Sarah Wheat,

said: "I hope as many churches as possible across the diocese will mark Homeless Sunday in any way they can. It is an excellent way to show our continued support for the work of HJC and to encourage as many people as possible to pray and reflect on the issues of homelessness. If you plan to mark the day, please let me know."

HJC will be opening the 2019 Cold Weather Shelter in Wrexham in the winter. If you would like to volunteer, please email Sarah Wheat: Sarahwheat@cinw.org.uk

Ruthin Bells



The first ring of the newly restored bells of St Peter's Church in Ruthin takes place on 8 September.

The service of thanksgiving will celebrate both the return of the peal of eight and restoration work carried out on the church roof. The bells, which date from the nineteenth century, have been repaired, restored and

Finland Partnership



A formal link has been agreed between the Diocese of St Asaph and the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Helsinki in Finland.

The partnership was signed by the Bishops of both dioceses during a visit of a Finnish delegation to north Wales in June. It will see spiritual, imaginative, sustainable, enriching and joyful links developed between the two Christian communities. In October, a group of young people from Helsinki will be visiting north Wales. Next year, the Diocese of St Asaph will run a Confirmation Camp for older teenagers in Finland.

re-tuned at Taylor's Foundry in Loughborough. The ringing room has been refurbished and a new bell frame installed to make the bells easier and safer to ring. The church will be conducting tours of the bell tower on Saturday 7 September as part of the Ruthin Open Doors weekend.

Commissioned for Tanzania

The Bishop of St Asaph has commissioned two members of the Penedeyrn Mission Area to work in the Diocese of South West Tanganyika.

Hilary and Adrian Murray left for Tanzania in August and will spend two years working in Milo. Adrian

is teaching safe, good practice in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Milo Hospital and surrounding Health Centres and Dispensaries. Hilary is involved in Health Education for HIV/AIDS but may also teach English in local schools. Follow their work at brechdan.wordpress.com



Growing Rural Churches

The Diocese of St Asaph is about to embark on a significant process to better support the mission and ministry of rural churches. The Archdeacon of Montgomery, Dr Barry Morgan, explains what's happening, why and how you can get involved.

According to the last census, approximately 41% of the population of the diocese live in a rural context. The rest live on the north coast or in Wrexham.

As the map illustrates, there are different types of rurality: from rural towns to rural villages, and sparse areas of dispersed settlement. The categories of rurality included on the map are those used by the Welsh Government.

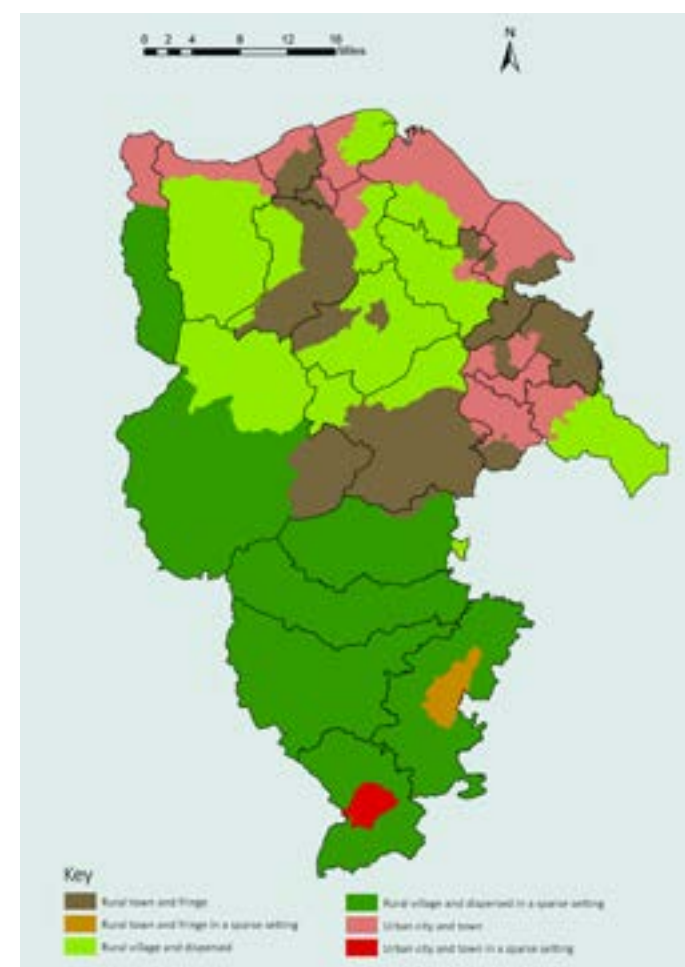
Rural churches also vary: from those serving populations of thousands, to those in tiny hamlets with under 250 people. A few have relatively large congregations, but most have Sunday congregations of between 10 to 20 people.

Most of our rural churches are in good heart, with committed members creating a sense of fellowship, friendship, hope and purpose. But there are concerns.

Congregations worry about their rising age profiles; the difficulty in attracting new members, especially younger families; the cost of keeping ancient buildings in good

repair and paying the Mission Area share which funds the provision of clergy.

To support the mission and ministry of our rural churches the diocese is about to engage in a significant process of listening. We want to understand what the issues are; find ways of addressing them; and establish an agreed vision of what the rural church might be and do in the future.



The process is starting in September 2019 and the outcomes will be published in a rural strategy in 2020. Each step of the way we will let you know what is happening and what we are learning.

Prayer will be at the heart of this initiative. In September, October and November, I will pray with small groups of people in every rural church and community in the diocese. A booklet containing their prayers will be given to all rural worshippers, so that we can join as a family of faith in praying for our shared future. We will also be providing a prayer card which uses an adapted version of a prayer for Oscar Romero, who was martyred in 1980. The prayer,

in many ways summarises the dream that lies at the heart of this endeavour.

Find out more and download a prayer card on the dedicated section of our website at dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/rural/



Hope Street Leaders Appointed

The Bishop of St Asaph has appointed the first two leaders of Hope Street, a new kind of Christian community being established in Wrexham. At the end of June, the Church in Wales announced it was awarding the Diocese of St Asaph the first grant from its £10m Evangelism Fund. The £1.9m award to Hope Street will see the establishment of a community, centred on outreach to younger people. Teulu Asaph spoke to the new leaders as their appointment was announced.

Andy Kitchen and Rachel Kitchen (above) are currently on the staff of Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), in London and will be moving to Wrexham with their two children (below), Joel (11) and Tia (9) during the summer of 2020. Over the next year, they will be praying, dreaming and preparing for Hope Street with regular visits. Andy worked as a Town Planning Consultant for nine years, so will bring that expertise to the design and refurbishment of Hope Street. Rachel, worked for a short period for Tearfund, and brings a heart for justice and compassion. As well as recruiting other team members, including Welsh speakers, and developing relationships across the town, Andy and Rachel will be finishing their work and training at HTB.

Rachel and Andy will share the role of Leader of Hope Street. Both have twenty years of experience investing their passion, time and energy in new and growing churches in London, the Midlands and Watford. Rachel said: "For a long while we've sensed a call to church planting and, as we've prayerfully considered Bishop Gregory's invitation to lead Hope Street, we've sensed this is also God's invitation to us. Through scripture, prayer, prophecy, the wisdom of friends and

looking at our own experience to this point we have a growing sense of excitement, faith and peace.

"We are excited to join with what God is already doing in St Asaph, to reach out to young people, students and families, and to partner with others to serve the surrounding area and see transformation. We are drawn to the pioneering nature of this project; it is a bold move to start a new and differently styled worshipping community right in the centre of Wrexham. We have been really excited and impressed by the work the Diocesan team has already put into this project and count it a privilege to join them to see what God wants to do."

Refurbishment work on Hope Street is getting underway. Window displays will show the sort of work already being undertaken by churches in Wrexham and illustrate future ambitions for Hope Street. You can find out more about Hope Street at hopestreetwrexham.org.uk



Introducing Simon Ponsonby

The Diocesan Conference takes place in Wrexham on 12 October under the banner of One Shared Hope. Its keynote speaker will be Simon Ponsonby, the Pastor of Theology at St Aldates Church in Oxford, a role that combines teaching, travelling and writing. Teulu Asaph spoke to Simon as he prepared for the conference.

Simon interrupts a retreat in Cornwall to discuss his address for the conference. He's from the West Country originally, growing up in Nailsea in Somerset and spending holidays in north Wales, as his Brecon-born father practiced his Welsh. He's a fourth-generation preacher but the first within the Anglican Church. He grew up in a strict non-conformist household, a mix of Exclusive Brethren (mum's side) and Baptist (dad's side). In his teenage years, he went into an Anglican Church and in his words, "never left".

These days Simon lives and works in Oxford in a busy city centre multi-generational church, but he arrived there from Bradford, where he served his curacy in an urban priority estate. It was during his time here that he met and became good friends with Robin Gamble, a name that will be very familiar to Teulu Asaph Readers who have been on the Leading Your Church into Growth (LyCiG) training. Robin has also been a keynote speaker at a previous Diocesan Conference.

"Much of my work today is about encouraging people to return to their first love," Simon said, "To minister out of love and understand again the resources God gives us. Often ministry can knock the love out of you, and you become less fruitful.

But when people – all people, clergy and laity – can reconnect with their first love, they know again that they are loved and called by God."

Simon intends to use his keynote address to encourage us once again to seek the love of God. "I'm planning to speak on the theme of Hope, to emphasise that we as Christians are, in our DNA, people of Hope. Our faith is predicated on God; the God who raises the dead, who is, who acts and whose love and power mean there is a future. I will be reminding everyone that in the kingdom of heaven we do not live on nostalgia. We don't just have good old memories, but brand-new testimonies and the best is yet to come."

Simon has written ten books on doctrine, spirituality and practical theology. In all his ministry he is passionate about combining Word with Spirit. Next year, Simon is releasing a new book on the life of Jesus but in anticipation of that, he's about to release a short book called *Amazing* published by Muddy Pearl. It is built around this meditation: www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6iTVyp2o_A

We look forward to welcoming Simon as the keynote speaker for this year's Diocesan Conference. Full details of the conference are at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/diocesan-conference/>



Darllenwch hwn yn Gymraeg ar dudalen 12

Diocesan Training for Churches and Mission Areas

The Diocesan Training Forum is asking for your help to identify the training needs in our churches and Mission Areas.

Effective learning gives you confidence that you understand your role and how to do it. It can inspire you and lead you to places you never thought you would go. Therefore, the Training Forum has designed the following questionnaire so training can be tailor-made to meet needs.

The quickest, easiest and cheapest way to complete the questionnaire is online at:

English: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2KDKPK8>

Welsh: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/287TY6Y>

If you don't have access to a computer, please complete this paper version, detach it from *Teulu Asaph* (after you've read the interview with Simon Ponsonby!) and send it to Tracey White, Diocesan Office, High Street, St Asaph, LL17 0RD.

All completed questionnaires will be entered in a draw to win a £30 Amazon gift voucher.

Q1. Your Name:

Q2. Email address or phone number (to be entered into prize draw):

Q3. Name of Church:

Q4. Name of Mission Area:

Q5. Are you responding on behalf of the Mission Area Conference (at the MACs request) or as an individual? You may only complete one questionnaire per email address.

Q6. Your role in your Church/Mission Area (please tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Member of Congregation | ☐ Youth Work Team | ☐ MA Electoral Roll Co-ordinator |
| ☐ Church Warden | ☐ Messy Church Team | ☐ MA Safeguarding Co-ordinator |
| ☐ Church Treasurer | ☐ Fresh Expression Team | ☐ MA Training Co-ordinator |
| ☐ Church Secretary | ☐ Headteacher/teacher Church School | ☐ MA Treasurer / Chair of Finance Sub-committee |
| ☐ Gift Aid Secretary | ☐ Headteacher/teacher County School | ☐ MA Gift Aid Secretary |
| ☐ Safeguarding Officer | ☐ Prayer Group | ☐ MA Information Co-ordinator |
| ☐ Church Committee Member | ☐ School Governor | ☐ MAC Member |
| ☐ Worship Leader | ☐ MA Warden | ☐ Chair of Property/Buildings sub-committee |
| ☐ Lay Reader | ☐ MA Leader | ☐ Other (please specify) |
| ☐ Licensed Lay Minister (other than Reader) | ☐ MA Administrator | |
| ☐ Ordinand | ☐ MA Lay Chair | |
| ☐ Clergy | ☐ MA Secretary | |
| ☐ Pastoral Assistant | | |

Q7. If you are a member of the Mission Area Conference, have you attended Governance Training?

Q8. Have you attended Diocesan training since January 2016? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Q9. Have you seen Toolkit 5 which lists the roles and responsibilities in your church/Mission Area? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive a copy ☐

Q10. What do you need to learn to make it easier for you to do your role? (select all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ☐ Church Growth | ☐ Prayer | ☐ Youth and Children's Work |
| ☐ Social Outreach | ☐ Preaching | ☐ Working with schools |
| ☐ Evangelism/Talking about Faith | ☐ Understanding world religions | ☐ Governance |
| ☐ Getting to know the Bible better | ☐ Leadership | ☐ Resilience |
| ☐ Administration relating to my role | ☐ Technical information relating to my role | ☐ I don't need any training |
| ☐ Buildings | | |

Q11. What would be your preferred way to access training?

- ☐ Training Session
☐ Video Clip
☐ Manual
☐ Online module

Q12. Aside from your answer to Q11, are there any other ways you might access training? Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Training Session
☐ Video Clip
☐ Manual
☐ Online module

Q13. Thinking about training sessions, when is a good time? (Tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Morning | ☐ Evening 7pm - 9pm | ☐ Sunday |
| ☐ Anytime | ☐ 9am - 3pm | ☐ Any other time (please specify) |
| ☐ Afternoon | ☐ 10am - 4pm | |
| ☐ Early evening 6pm - 8pm | ☐ Saturday | |

Q14. Thinking about non-residential training sessions, how far (up to 50 miles) are you prepared to travel in order to attend relevant training?

Q15. Thinking about training sessions, how long should they last? (bear in mind that you may need to attend more than one session if they are shorter)

☐ 2 hours	☐ 6 hours
☐ 3 hours	☐ Other (please specify)
☐ 4 hours	

Q16. Thinking about your Church or Mission Area, what training do you want the Diocese to provide for your Church/Mission Area?

Q17. Should training be free? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Q18. Are there circumstances where you would you be prepared to pay for training? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, under what circumstances

Q19. Are you aware you can apply for a Training Bursary to help pay for training?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Yes - please send me the guidelines ☐ No ☐ No - please send me the guidelines

Q20. How do you find out about training opportunities?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Training Prospectus Hard Copy | ☐ StAr | ☐ Twitter |
| ☐ Training Prospectus Online | ☐ Teulu Asaph | ☐ Word of mouth |

Q21. How could we better advertise training opportunities?

Q22. Any other comments about training? Please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary.



Yn Cyflwyno Simon Ponsonby

Mae Cynhadledd yr Esgobaeth yn cael ei chynnal yn Wrecsam ar Hydref 12 o dan faner Un Gobaith Cytûn. Y prif

siaradwr fydd Simon Ponsonby, Bugail Diwinyddiaeth yn Eglwys St Aldates yn Rhydychen, rôl sy'n cyfuno addysgu, teithio a sgwennu. Cafodd Teulu Asaph air bach gyda Simon wrth iddo baratoi ar gyfer y gynhadledd.

Mae Simon yn cymryd hoe o'i encil yng Nghernyw er mwyn trafod ei anerchiad i'r gynhadledd. Un yn hannu o Orllewin Lloegr yn wreiddiol, wedi'i fagu yn Nailsea yng Ngwlad yr Haf. Treuliodd ei wyliau yng ngogledd Cymru gan ganiatáu dad, a anwyd yn Aberhonddu, ymarfer ei Gymraeg. Fo ydy'r bedwaredd genhedlaeth o bregethwyr yn ei deulu, er mai yntau ydy'r cyntaf gyda'r Eglwys Anglicanaidd. Cafodd ei fagu ar aelwyd anghydfurfiol cul, yn gymysgedd o'r Brodyr Neilltuedig (ar ochr ei fam) a Bedyddwyr (o ochr ei dad). Yn ei arddegau, fe aeth i Eglwys Anglicanaidd ac, yn ei eiriau ei hun, "byth gadael".

Y dyddiau hyn, mae Simon yn byw a gweithio yn Rhydychen, mewn eglwys aml-genhedlaeth brysur yng nghanol y ddinas, ond symud yno o Bradford a wnaeth, lle bu'n gwaasanaethu fel curad ar stâd o dai trefol sy'n derbyn blaenoriaeth. Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn y bu iddo gyfarfod a datblygu cyfeillgarwch da gyda Robin Gamble, enw cyfarwydd iawn i Ddarllenwyr Teulu Asaph a fu ar hyfforddiant Arwain eich Eglwys at Dwf (LyCiG). Bu Robin hefyd yn brif siaradwr mewn

Cynhadledd blaenorol yr Esgobaeth.

"Mae llawer o'n gwaith heddiw yn ymwneud

ag annog pobl i ddychwelyd at eu cariad cyntaf," meddai Simon, "I weinidogaethu mewn cariad a deall o'r newydd yr holl adnoddau a roddwyd inni gan Dduw. Mor aml gall y weinidogaeth sugno'r cariad allan ohonoch, gan eich gwneud yn llai ffrwythlon. Ond pan fydd pobl – pawb, yn glerigwyr a lleygwyr – yn medru ailgysylltu â'u cariad cyntaf, maen nhw'n sylweddoli eto eu bod yn cael eu caru a'u galw gan Dduw."

Mae Simon yn bwriadu defnyddio ei anerchiad cyweimod i'n hannog eto i geisio cariad Duw. "Dwi'n bwriadu siarad ar y thema Gobaith, i bwysleisio ein bod ninnau fel Cristnogion, ym mêr ein hesgryn, yn bobl Gobaith. Mae ein ffydd wedi'i phriodoli i Dduw: y Duw sy'n codi'r meirw'n fyw, sy'n bod, sy'n gweithredu ac yn Dduw y mae ei gariad a'i nerth yn sicrhau bod dyfodol. Fe fydda i'n atgoffa pawb nad ydyn ni'n byw ar hiraeth yn nheyrnas nefoedd. Nid ar hen atgofion melys yn unig, ond tystiolaethau newydd sbon a bod y gorau eto'i ddod."

Mae Simon yn awdur deg o lyfrau ar athrawiaeth, ysbrydolrwydd a diwinyddiaeth ymarferol. Mae ei weinidogaeth yn adlewyrchu ei angerdd dros gyfuno'r Gair gyda'r Ysbryd. Y flwyddyn nesaf, mae Simon yn cyhoeddi llyfr newydd ar fywyd Iesu, ond yn rhagflaenori hwnnw, mae ar fin rhyddhau llyfr yn o'r enw *Amazing trwy'r cyhoeddwy* Muddy Pearl. Mae'r thema'n ymwneud â'r myfyrdod hwn: www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6iTVyp2o_A

Edrychwn ymlaen at groesawu Simon fel ein prif siaradwr yng Nghynhadledd yr Esgobaeth eleni.



Read this in English on page 9



Gair am Air: Hwyl

A fun word to finish this series which reflects theologically in the space between English and Welsh in our bi-lingual diocese. As Revd Dylan Parry Jones points out, *hwyl* has more than one English translation.

One of the English translations of the word *hwyl* (pron: 'who-ill') is fun, but there are many more.

- Hwyl a sbri – Fun and joy, a bit of fun
- Hwyl Fawr / Hwyl – Good bye, bye
- Pob hwyl – Good luck, all the best
- Llawn hwyl – full of joy and life

Hwyl is an untranslatable sense of the joy of being alive that is connected to Welshness. It is often used to describe singing or speaking with gusto and passion, be that an impromptu choir breaking into angelic harmonies down the pub or Michael Sheen's impassioned speeches on daytime telly or Bafta ceremonies!

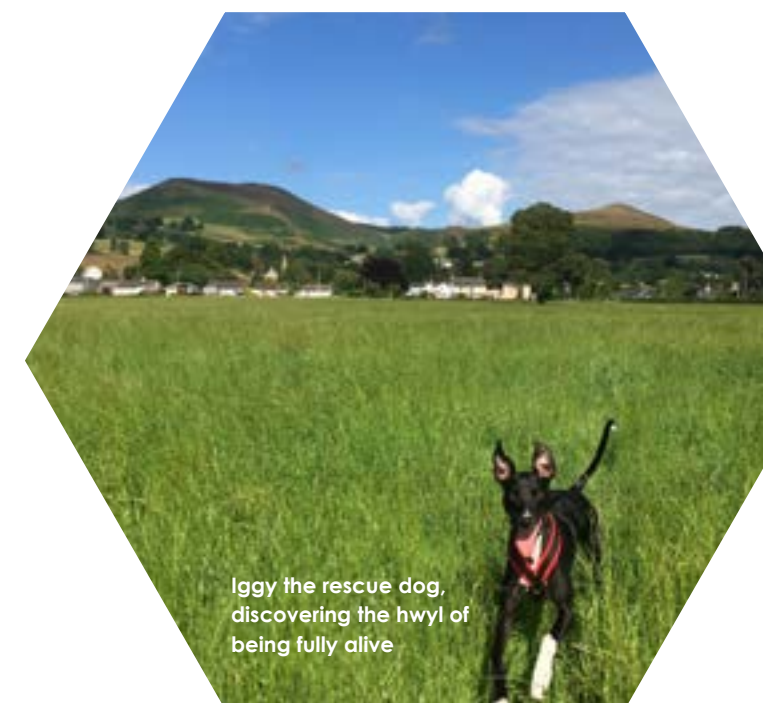
Seen altogether the above collection of *hwyl*, highlights a wider meaning of the concept. *Hwyl* carries with it a very living sense of life. The words life and *bywyd* are equivalent in English and Welsh and so *hwyl* is something different; somehow a sense of alive-ness, that is joyful (although not always happy) and passionate (that is engaged – not necessarily romantic!).

When Jesus was addressing the Pharisees in John's Gospel about using religious ideas to confine people he declared: 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.' (John 10:10b) This abundant life is not about individuals competing to be more abundant than one another. Abundant life relies on the realisation that all are necessary for all to flourish.

In the second century, Bishop Irenaeus of Lyon wrote: 'The Glory of God is humanity fully alive.' I often find myself wondering what humanity fully alive might look like. There is more to it I think than the absence of poverty, oppression, and war (although that is a part). For me, returning to the notion of a choir helps. That moment when a song moves from union to parts and harmonies and the sound becomes something so much more than the voices singing; perhaps this is a glimpse of *hwyl* - a peek at what being fully alive might mean.

So to say goodbye to someone in Welsh is to wish them life in all its fullness. An abundant life is to be caught up in the cycle of receiving that life as a gift from God and offering our lives for the Glory God.

And so, as I finish this short series, I bid you Hwyl Fawr!



Iggy the rescue dog, discovering the *hwyl* of being fully alive



Should the Church in Wales Introduce the Blessing of Same Sex Relationships?

The Diocese of St Asaph Human Sexuality group has responded to an update on same sex relationships provided by the Bench of Bishop's in the June Governing Body meeting. Elizabeth Day, from the St Asaph Human Sexuality group introduces two reflections on the issue.

In their update, the Bench of Bishop recognised that it was "pastorally unsustainable for the Church in Wales to make no formal provision for those in same-sex relationships" and indicated that they would like to "move towards putting in place formal provision for those in committed, faithful, same sex relationships". Therefore, The Standing Liturgical Advisory Commission will be asked "to advise us on possible options for services of affirmation or blessing of such relationships".

The Diocesan Human Sexuality group provides a unique opportunity for the sharing of very different attitudes and beliefs relating to such issues. Those who attend the group are given space to express their views and to hear those of others, accepting that opinions are held with equal integrity. Meetings are held in the spirit of hopeful enquiry and there is no intention that we should come to any common mind or to produce an all encompassing "answer" which will be acceptable to all.

As an example of our approach, we offer two reflections on the question...

Yes

The short answer is 'yes'! In an age of increasing exclusion, the last thing we need is discouraging people from finding that God loves them and that they could belong to a wider, accepting community. They need not be isolated. So acceptance is the first thing. Secondly, we are gaining a much better understanding of who we are as individuals. You can now find out something about your ancestry or diseases to which you may be susceptible! There are explorations about chromosomes which indicate that the simple centuries old divide of 'definitely male' and 'definitely female' may not always be true. Our lovely cat Tomos is an xxy-chromosome 'male', making him very gentle and totally unaggressive. Perhaps God the creator is more innovative than we think!

So if it is 'no' to exclusion and 'yes' to actively accepting people of all backgrounds regardless of race, income, education, there is no space for picking off one group.

The early church found this sort of challenge hard too. In Acts 10 Peter had a very strange dream, the longer term outcome of which, for the early church, was very uncomfortable. Remember,

without this event and the decisions the church made then, we would not be here following Christ too unless we had jumped through the 'right' religious hoops!

Finally, we say we urgently need to get on with what we call 'evangelism'. What does this mean? Hoping someone else will share something of the good news of Jesus, so more will come and sit in our pews...?

NO! It is about sharing who we are, our strengths and weakness with other individuals. It about us pointing to Christ as the one who accepts me, forgives me, sets me free from my own, or the result of other people's failings. About becoming who God made us to be. Just like Tomos the cat, who only understands arguments about doors, or food, we receive without fully understanding. We have to do the same with our own, and with other people's sexuality!



No

Blessing someone or something implies God's favour, asking Him to act there for good. God opens His arms in love and accepts all who come to Him, so the church must do likewise. But we all agree that God does not bless some actions – wrong things we all sometimes do, against God's will. Yet, though we sin, God accepts and blesses us through Jesus, whose loving sacrifice enables our forgiveness. Likewise, we must welcome all in church and bless all people; but are same-sex partnerships something God favours, which we should therefore bless?

Issues like the abolition of slavery or inclusion of Gentiles without becoming Jews have clear 'redemptive trajectories' and specific teaching within Scripture (e.g. Slavery: The Exodus, Jubilee, Exodus 21:16, 1Cor 7:21, 1Tim 1:10, Gentiles: Gen 12:3, Isaiah 11:10, John 4:21-24, Acts 10).

Regarding sexuality, however, Scripture reveals an 'unchanging witness'¹ that God created marriage as a union between a man and a woman (Gen 2:18-25), while all other sexual partnerships are against God's will. Jesus explicitly affirms this (Mat 19:4-5), and this remains utterly consistent throughout Scripture, though cultural aspects of marriage vary.

Both Old and New Testaments were written surrounded by cultures which generally approved of homosexual sex (only condemning specific abusive acts), and knew of sexual orientation and loving, monogamous same-sex partnerships. Yet God, who knows us better than we will ever know ourselves, always calls his people to stand apart, teaching that all same-sex intercourse and romantic partnerships are against His will. So we cannot bless what God is against.

What we *should* bless is love, remembering that love's highest expression is not in romance or sex, but in Jesus' sacrifice for us (1John 4:2-12) and our Christ-like conduct towards each other (1Cor 13). We should bless marriage and singleness as equally good gifts, remembering all earthly marriage is temporary, pointing to the ultimate loving relationship we will all enjoy in the eternal marriage of Christ to His bride, the Church (Rev 21:1-14). And our churches must be loving communities where all find acceptance and deep, fulfilling relationships, enabling us to be our authentic selves and find blessing according to God's loving will.²

¹Unchanging Witness, Fortson & Grams, addresses this comprehensively.

²The Plausibility Problem, Shaw.

Your Response

We recognise that these are not the only ways to respond to the Bench of Bishops' proposal and offer them as an opportunity for you to reflect on your own response.

If you would like to explore the issues raised by these comments in more detail, you could use the "Same Sex Issues and the Bible" study guide, originally produced by Olhausen, Kennerley and Compton (Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland 2015) and adapted with permission in 2017 by the Diocese of St Asaph Human Sexuality Group. Each session aims to raise awareness that there are equally credible and theologically sound alternative interpretations of a biblical text. The publication enables study to take place in an atmosphere where diverse views can be expressed whilst maintaining mutual respect.

Copies of this resource and the facilitators guide are available to download from the Diocesan website <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/sex-issues-bible-study-resource/>



Cau Ysgol Beuno Sant



Daeth cyfnod hanesyddol o addysg eglwysig yn y Bala i ben ar Orffennaf 19 pan gaewyd Ysgol Beuno Sant. Cafwyd sioe dathlu hanes yr ysgol, gwasanaeth arbennig yn Eglwys Crist gyda Esgob Gregory, a lluo o weithgareddau a thripiâu bythgofiadwy. Buodd yr artist Cefyn Burgess yn gweithio gyda

phlant o Ysgol Beuno Sant ac Ysgol Bro Tegid i greu tapestri o'r Bala i'w arddangos yn yr ysgol newydd. Bydd y ddwy ysgol yn ymuno â'r ysgol uwchradd Ysgol y Berwyn i greu un ysgol bob oed, Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn.
(This is about the closure of Ysgol Beuno Sant in Bala).

Open the Book Volunteers required



The Bible Society's 'Open the Book' is looking for volunteers to help with their story telling programme in local English and Welsh medium schools. 'Open the book' is a project which offers primary school children an opportunity to hear key Bible stories from a team of Christians from local

Footprints in Bronington

The children of Bronington VA Primary School used the poem Footprints to inspire a piece of art submitted to the Holy Trinity Bronington Art Exhibition. The children made moulds of their feet in a basic flour dough. They mixed plaster of paris and water together and poured it into the moulds. All the feet were mounted onto a board and meaningful words and phrases from the poem were added. A sprinkle of sand and shells completed the work. It is now on display in the entrance porch of the school.



Christian symbols

Pupils from Pentre Church in Wales School near Chirk have created displays of Christian symbols throughout their school. They designed artwork to give the windows a stained-glass effect and worked together to create

a flower made of handprints demonstrating we are part of God's family. They also created a patchwork cross from pieces of material donated by pupils, staff, Governors, Church members and the community.



Season of Creation



The Season of Creation, also known as Creation Time, takes place every year from

1 September, the Global Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, until 4 October, St Francis of Assisi Day.

The season is used by many denominations to pray and celebrate with creation, focus on the story of Earth, and commit to a

ministry of healing Earth. There are lots of resources and information at <https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources/season-of-creation.aspx> or <https://ctbi.org.uk/season-of-creation-creation-time-2019/>

Operation Noah

Operation Noah is a Christian charity working with the Church to inspire action on climate change.

It describes itself as Faith Motivated, Science Informed and Hope Inspired and supports a range of national and international campaigns relevant to climate change. In addition, it runs its own campaigns and has two underway:

- Bright Now: towards fossil free Churches. It believes that Churches need to disinvest from fossil fuel companies if they are to retain their integrity in the face of climate change.
- The Outreach campaign aims to encourage Christians who do not regard climate justice as a priority to become actively and politically



engaged on this issue and to find their voice.

You can find out more at <https://operationnoah.org/>

Going to University?



If you are heading to College or University for the first time this Autumn or have children or

grandchildren doing so, the Student Christian Movement (SCM) provides tips and advice on being a Fresher: www.movement.org.uk/get-involved/freshers

SCM's vision is that every student can find a vibrant, open and

inclusive Christian community, where they can explore faith and be inspired to put faith into action. Its website also includes contact details for local groups across the country.
www.movement.org.uk

Light Parties for Halloween

Scripture Union has launched its Light Party Packs to help churches and youth groups offer a Christian alternative to Halloween.

The pack is full of ideas for games, crafts and ways to talk with children

and young people about the good news of Jesus. You can download a pack at:

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/what-we-donew-initiatives/light-parties-2019>





Sponsored Walk for St Mark's



Revd Rebecca from St Mark's Church on Caia Park, Wrexham and her two sons Joseph (12) and Isaac (10) have just completed a 75 mile walk around north-east Wales. They were raising money for St Mark's which serves three of the four most deprived wards in Wales, to enable projects such as Holiday Hunger and a Foodbank to continue to operate there.

The first day was showery as they walked from Wrexham to Buckley where they slept in St Matthew's Church. Spirits were still high on day

two as they took the coast path to Holywell. They battled with the wind along the beach near Talacre to get to Meliden Church. The final two days, in scorching temperatures, took them across the Clwydian Range down Offa's Dyke over Moel Famau and Moel Arthur, sleeping in Denbigh Church. On finishing in Llandegla, Isaac announced that next time he would be doing a sponsored sleep instead!

If you would like to make a donation, send a cheque to St Mark's Church or visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stmarkscaiapark



Last Service for Rhiwlas

After 140 years the tiny mission church at Rhiwlas has held its last service, writes Jeffrey Olstead. A daughter church of St Silin's, it was built at a time when the population of Rhiwlas township was greater than that of Llansilin, but a century of rural depopulation has made its mark. The church was built with money raised by local subscription on land given by Arthur Jebb. A major landowner both locally and

in Shropshire, he was the father of Eglantyne Jebb who founded Save the Children, which this year celebrated its centenary.

Many of the items in the church were given by the Jebb family and Arthur and other members of the family are buried in the churchyard, which will remain open. The current warden, Marjorie Evans, recalled some of the many characters associated with the church at its

final service, which was conducted by the Archdeacon of Montgomery, the Venerable Barry Wilson.

The building will now be offered for sale.



Mega Cupcake Fundraiser



The churches in the Aber-Morfa Mission Area have raised £400 for the Alzheimer's Society by holding a Mega Cupcake Fundraiser, writes Jean Carthy.

All the churches are committed to becoming 'Dementia Friendly' in the coming months, which will enable people with Dementia and their carers to participate fully in services designed for them. The photograph shows the presentation of the cheque to the Alzheimer's Fundraiser, Helen Marchant by clergy and representatives from the Mission Area.



Useful and Informative Bereavement Course



Borderlands Mission Area arranged for a Bereavement Course to be hosted, after people from the area requested more support to deal with bereavement. The course was held

at Emmanuel Church, Penyffordd with people coming from across the Mission Area and into Chester to attend.

The course was created by Care for the Family, a national charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face difficulties. Alison Utting led the course and shared her experiences of losing her husband. She explained how death has become a taboo,

and she is pleased that in her role she is able to talk to so many people about something so often ignored.

Kirsty Blain, a Worship Leader at Hope Parish Church, said: "The most important thing I learnt was that bereavement can affect people in ways you wouldn't expect. It has motivated me into looking at whether our church is able to provide more support for our community and those who have been bereaved."

Pet Service in Flint Mountain

St Thomas' Church in Flint Mountain recently invited pets and their owners to its tenth annual pet service and celebration of God's creation. Over fifty adults and children were joined by the Mayor of Flint, Councillor Norma Davies and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mel Buckley.

To the relief of their owners, all the

dogs, rabbits and guinea pigs were well-behaved, and the barbecue that followed raised just over £300 for church funds.

Earlier this year, the children of St Thomas' Monday Club took part in their annual pancake toss and race. They raised an amazing £170 which was donated to a local charity:



Giddos Gift provides grants and gifts for young people suffering with cancer.

'Faith' in Artwork



Four art students at Coleg Cambria's Sixth Form hub in Connah's Quay have produced a piece of artwork entitled 'Faith' as part of their Welsh Baccalaureate Community Challenge.

The students liaised with the Chaplaincy Team throughout the academic year to complete the work. It will be hung in the Chaplaincy Prayer Room on the Deeside main campus.

Llandrillo Coffee Morning



Every Saturday morning a coffee morning is held for the community at St Trillo Church in Llandrillo, writes Emma Newport.

Throughout the summer we have been very fortunate and grateful to

have Richard Jones from the village with us who is attempting to acquire his Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award. He's volunteering at the church by baking delicious cakes and serving tea and coffee.



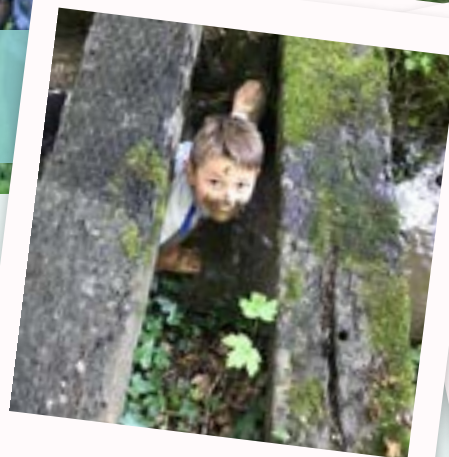
Muddy Church

We may have heard of Café Church or Messy Church, but St Mary's Church in Llanfair Caereinion recently launched Muddy Church, a follow-up to Sweaty Church! Huw Ellis explains how mud and sweat brought everyone together.

A great time of fun in the outdoors was had in a beautiful garden near Llanfair Caereinion, on a sunny and warm evening at the beginning of July. Muddy prayers, a mud slide, an adventure course up the stream, a scavenger hunt, a water slide, den building, a mud kitchen and Hide and Seek - were the activities that brought much excitement to both those participating and watching.

The children and teenagers (plus one or two adults!) were unrecognisable by the end of the evening as they were plastered in mud from head to toe! There was much laughter, fun and MUD as we enjoyed God's wonderful creation together.

These activities were preceded by a short time to pause and appreciate the beautiful world that God has created for each one of us to enjoy, with all present encouraged to seek out and know the God who made our beautiful world and who created us to enjoy His world with Him.



At half time Hot Dogs fuelled the troops to go again and the evening just rolled on as everybody enjoyed being together with no one in a rush to go home!!

Muddy Church was the culmination of regular Sweaty Church sessions which were held every fortnight in Caereinion Leisure Centre throughout the year. Sweaty Church is a great way for children, teens and families to worship and get to know God without having to sit still for long. Active worship is good for both the body and soul!!! JAM (Jesus and Me) has recently been added to the programme providing a space on alternate weeks for the teenagers to chill and learn more about God in a relaxed way.

There is a fabulous team of helpers who make all this possible, working closely to plan and deliver the sessions. St Mary's Church, Llanfair Caereinion and Impact Schools Team jointly support this work with young people. The work also includes regular school assemblies across the Caereinion Mission Area, a Summer Impact Bus Tour in schools and TLG Early Intervention – volunteers providing emotional 1 to 1 mentoring in seven local schools on a weekly basis.

Find out more at:

sweatychurch.wordpress.com

www.impactschoolsteam.co.uk

www.tlg.org.uk

