



ARDAL WEINIDOGAETH
TÂF RHYMNI
TAFF RHYMNEY
MINISTRY AREA

District of Gelligaer Magazine:

Churches of
St. Catwg's, Gelligaer
St. Margaret's, Gilfach

Epiphany

What's in this edition!

Greeting from the Rectory.

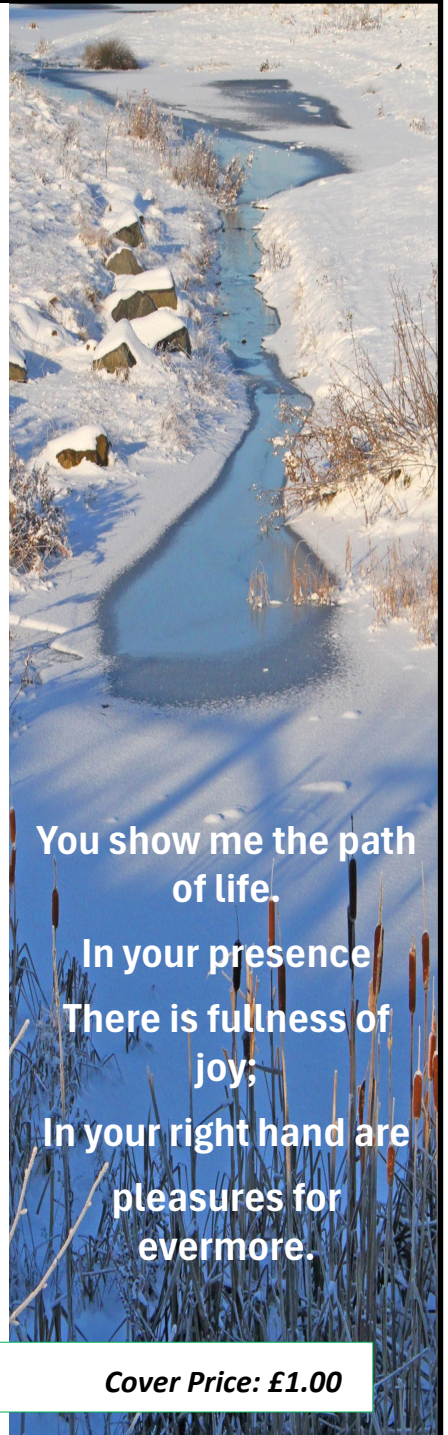
Reader Writes.

District News.

Mothers' Union.

For the Children!

and More.....



**You show me the path
of life.**

In your presence

**There is fullness of
joy;**

**In your right hand are
pleasures for
evermore.**

January 2024

Cover Price: £1.00

Who's Who (*District of Gelligaer*)

<u>Priest</u>	<u>Reader</u>
Fr. Gary Powell	Mrs. Carolyn Corbin
Tel: 01443 832119	Tel: 07983 677360
Email: GaryPowell@cinw.org.uk	Email: carolyncorbin63@aol.com

For general enquiries please do not hesitate contact Rev. Gary Powell or one of our wardens.

Ministry Area Leader's Wardens:

Vicar's Warden: Sue Hankins. Tel: 01443 820754
 People's Warden: Louise Lynch. Tel: 01685 552502

District Sub-Wardens:

Vicar's Warden: Christine Thorpe. Tel: 01443 837482
 People's Warden: Huw Thomas. Tel: 01443 836613

Church Wardens

St. Catwg's Church, Gelligaer:

Vicar's Warden: Cheryl Pugh Tel: 01443 837961
 People's Warden: Linda Hall Tel:

St. Margaret's Church, Gilfach:

Vicar's Warden: Enid Mayne, Tel: 01443 268988
 People's Warden: Jeanette Jones, Tel: 01443 838908

Gift Aid Secretary Huw Thomas. Tel: 01443 836613

Safeguarding Officer Fr Gary Powell Tel: 01443 832119

District Treasurer: Jenn East Tel: 01443 839385

Magazine : Chris Corbin, Tel: 01443 833452
 Email: chriscorbin1961@gmail.com

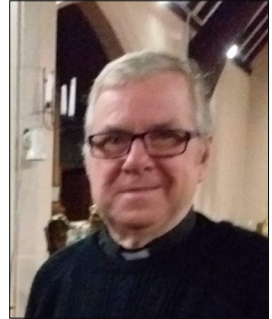
Website: www.parishofgelligaer.org.uk

Facebook Page: https://facebook.com/GelligaerParish/

Greetings from the Rectory

Dear friends,

I hope that you are all well and that you all enjoyed a peaceful and healthy Christmas. After our journey through Advent we now celebrate the Christmas-Epiphany season of light. During this season we celebrate the miracle of the incarnation, of God coming into his own world, living and walking among his people, talking with us and revealing his great love for us.



Throughout the Christmas - Epiphany Season our Sunday readings gradually reveal to us that the child whose birth we celebrated at Christmas is the long-for Messiah. Jesus, born in a stable in Bethlehem and visited by strangers from the east, is the Christ, the Son of God. The season culminates forty days after his birth when his parents take him to the Temple where a priest, Simeon, takes the child in his arms and proclaims him the Light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. Simeon and Anna recognise that in Jesus God is with us. Simeon though has a warning. He tells Mary and Joseph that their child will be responsible for the falling and rising of many and that he will be rejected and he warns Mary that a sword will pierce her soul. Simeon looks forward to the passion of Jesus, to his death and resurrection which we will celebrate during Holy Week and Easter. The Christmas-Epiphany season is a time of great hope, Just as the Christmas lights adorning many houses shine through the darkness of winter, the birth of Christ is a light shining through the darkness of our lives showing us the way we are to go, bringing hope of better times to come, hope for a better world.

Over the last few years especially it has been a great comfort to know that the living Lord Jesus is with us, walking alongside us, encouraging and strengthening us as we journey through our own lives towards our eternal home in the Father's house in heaven. We are

strengthened as we walk together in prayer and fellowship supporting one another in love and faith with Christ at our head.

**Every blessing from your friend and Priest,
Fr Gary.**

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

The Epiphany Of Our Lord



The Epiphany of Our Lord is the Christian feast observed on January 6th. The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek *epiphainen*, a verb that means “to shine upon,” “to manifest,” or “to make known.” Thus, the feast of the Epiphany celebrates the many ways that Christ has made Himself known to the world, mainly the three events that manifested the mission and divinity of Christ: the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12), the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11), and the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11).

Reader Writes.

As I write this article, we are preparing to say farewell to 2023 and hello to 2024.

The past few weeks in the lead up to Christmas have been busy for the majority of people through attending services in church, attending and/or preparing for school concerts, shopping and wrapping to name just a few things. For many people, Christmas is not only about the buying and receiving of gifts but of spending time with family and for Chris and myself, it was the first time for fourteen years that we had been together with our family for Christmas day due to their shifts and rotas.



Even though I am not a great fan of social media, it has been heart-warming to see the information and pictures of the various centres opening on Christmas Day to provide not only a Christmas dinner and entertainment but company for those who are on their own.

In church, it has been wonderful to see the schools holding their Christmas plays and carol services in both St. Catwg and St. Margaret so a big thank you to the teachers and children for their hard work. Thank you also to Fr Gary for all the services we had in church – the Candle to Remember, Nine Lessons and Carols and the Christmas Eve and the Christmas Day services – all of which are greatly appreciated by all who attended – thank you once again.

Wishing everyone a Happy and peaceful New Year.

Carolyn

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Exodus chapter 2 verses 1 to 12

In Egypt the Hebrew people flourished so well that the new Pharaoh grew scared and ordered all their new-born boys to be killed.

Moses' mother hid him when he was born, but he grew too big.



She made a basket from reeds for him and put it in the grass by the river Nile.



She told Moses' sister Miriam to keep watch.



Pharaoh's daughter found Moses



Shall I get someone to look after the baby?



So Miriam got her mother.



The princess adopted Moses as her son.



When Moses was grown up he went to see where his people worked as slaves.



Perhaps I will be the one to save my people.



Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave.



Moses checked no-one was looking and...



He hid the body in the sand.



The Naming of Jesus

Matthew and Luke tell how the angel instructed that Mary's baby was to be named Jesus - a common name meaning 'saviour'. The Church recalls the naming of Jesus on 1st January - eight days after 25th December (by the Jewish way of reckoning days). In Jewish tradition, the male babies were circumcised and named on their eighth day of life.

For early Christians, the name of Jesus held a special significance. In Jewish tradition, names expressed aspects of personality. Jesus' name permeated His ministry, and it does so today: we are baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), we are justified through the name of Jesus (1 Cor 6:11); and God the Father has given Jesus a name above all others (Phil 2:9). All Christian prayer is through 'Jesus Christ our Lord', and it is 'at the name of Jesus' that one day every knee shall bow.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Epiphany

On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origen, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Where did the Wise Men come from?

Magi from the East - it isn't a lot to go on. The Magi had originally been a religious caste among the Persians. Their devotion to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams led to an extension in the meaning of the word, and by the first century the Magi in Matthew's gospel could have been astrologers from outside of Persia. Some

scholars believe they might have come from what was then Arabia Felix, or as we would say today, southern Arabia.

It is true that in the first century astrology was practised there, and it was the region where the Queen of Sheba had lived. She of course had visited Solomon and would have heard the prophecies about how one day a Messiah would be born to the Israelites and become their king.

Matthew's gospel (chapter 2) is clear that the Magi asked Herod: 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.' So it is possible that in southern Arabia the Queen of Sheba's story of how a Messiah would one day be sent to the Israelites had survived. Certainly, there are a number of other early legends that connect southern Arabia with Solomon's Israel.

To many people this makes sense: that the ancient stories of a Messiah, linked to later astrological study, prompted these alert and god-fearing men to the realisation that something very stupendous was happening in Israel. They realised that after all these centuries, the King of the Jews, the Messiah, was about to be born.

One more interesting thing that gives weight to the theory that the Magi came from southern Arabia is this: if you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine 'from the East'.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

What about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus.

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as

they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into the future.

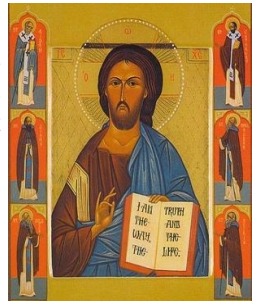
Compare that with the High Priest and religious leaders whom the Wise Men saw in Jerusalem when they first arrived. These head priests knew all about the prophecies of their own coming Messiah, but NOT ONE Jewish religious leader travelled to look for Him in Bethlehem. And it is only six miles down the road!

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

St Nathalan, an early farmer in Scotland

Many saints have fed the poor, but not many were interested in actual food production. Nathalan (died c.678) was, so perhaps he might be the patron saint of anyone who produces food – and gives most of it away to those in need.

Scotland in the 7th century must have been a hungry place, especially as far north as the Aberdeen district. In any case, according to his Legend in the Aberdeen breviary, Nathalan was a nobleman who decided to cultivate his land as a way of serving God. He wanted to feed the people in times of famine. It is not known what food he managed to grow so far north, but Nathalan was well-loved for providing what he could.



Messages from our Churches and Community

100 Club Winners!

November 2023

Date	No:	Winner	Church
5th	11	June Phillips	St. Margaret's
12th	48	Gareth Jones	St. Margaret's
19th	103	Helen Jones	St. Margaret's
26th	61	Elaine Edmunds	St, Catwg's

Sing for Ty Hafan



Our annual Nine Lessons and Carols service took place on, Sunday 17th December St. Catwg's Church, Gelligaer.

At the end of the service there was a retiring collection which raised the magnificent sum of £500.00, which will be donated to Ty Hafan,

Thank you all for attending the service and for your wonderful donations

Following is a letter sent to Ty Hafan:

Dear Ty Hafan

Thank you for your kind invitation to our Parish to join you in "Singing for Ty Hafan". We annually hold our "Candle to Remember services" for our loved ones we no longer see also have a service of 'Nine Lessons and Carols' where we are joined by Bargoed Male Voice Choir.

Our collections this year were for Ty Hafan and I have the pleasure in sending you a cheque for £500.00.

Thankyou for all the work you do in supporting children and their family

Jenn

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Social Committee

On behalf of the social committee, I would like to thank everyone for their support in attending and fundraising at all our events throughout the year. We have had a fantastic year, not only on the fundraising side but coming together in the community in friendship and laughter. We look forward to the coming year, dates have yet to be decided for events, so watch this space for dates for the diary. I would also like to thank the social team for all their hard work to make these events happen. Nothing is to much trouble for them.

I wish you all a happy, blessed and healthy New Year xxx

June

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

100 Club

Once again a very successful year. Monthly prizes given out to a total of £1,325. Fifty two lucky winners with six winning on two occasions. Anyone wishing to join us, please contact Joan in Gelligaer and Jeanette in Gilfach.

Thanks to all of our members.

Jenn



100 Club Winners!

December 2023

Date	No:	Winner	Church
3rd	5	Gareth Rees	St. Margaret's
10th	10	Ros Britten	St. Catwg's
17th	1	Fr Gary	
24th	96	Huw Thomas	St. Margaret's

God in the Arts

Editor: The Rev Michael Burgess begins a year-long series looking at great works of Christian music.

‘Glorious the song when God’s the theme’

Those words of the 18th century poet Christopher Smart remind us how faith and music have always gone hand in hand, faith inspiring the music and music expressing the faith. In this series we shall consider 12 pieces of music inspired by the Christian faith, beginning from its roots in the Old Testament.

Among the earliest references to music in the Old Testament is the song of Moses and the Israelites, thanking God for Israel’s deliverance in Exodus. There is also the music of the shofar, the ram’s horn, proclaiming God’s jubilee in Leviticus.

Hebrew music came into its own when performed in the temple. A small choir, using mostly strings and a harp, would sing from the psalms, that incredible collection of 150 hymns of praise God. All human life is found in the psalter, and inevitably they passed into Christian worship, through the monastic daily office of prayer and praise.

Possibly Psalm 23, ‘The Lord is my shepherd,’ is the most loved of the Psalms. St Francis of Assisi sang it on his way to visit the sultan. Most of us know the tune ‘Crimond’, while Howard Goodall’s setting became the theme music for ‘The Vicar of Dibley.’

Leonard Bernstein’s setting of Psalm 23, the ‘Chichester Psalms,’ set six psalms in their original Hebrew for solo voice, choir and orchestra. The middle movement begins with a boy soprano, or countertenor, singing a beautiful melody to the opening words of Psalm 23. Bernstein’s melody has a bluesy, Jewish feel, and is accompanied by a harp, as we remember David playing the lyre.

Suddenly the men’s voices interrupt the soloist’s song of trust with the words of Psalm 2, ‘Why do the nations so furiously rage together?’ But their outburst cannot halt the serene outpouring of the soloist which sounds out clear and strong amid the threat of war and division.

The movement leaves us with the melody of ‘Adonai ro-i’ in our heads and hearts, assuring us that, because the Lord *is* our shepherd, we need not fear, even in the darkest valley. Even when the world hurls the

threats of Psalm 2 at us, God's goodness and mercy *will* follow us all the days of our life.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

A Scientist's Letter to Christians: Have power, love and self-control

It has now been four years since the pandemic began to seep into Western consciousness. Dr Francis Collins, a leader in medical research in the US, spoke early in the pandemic about his faith and his hope in God to help us through that time. He expressed the grief that so many were experiencing, and described an intensity of scientific work he had never experienced before. He also shared his conviction that he was in exactly the right place back in 2020 - serving God with science. Throughout the pandemic, he held on tight to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, 'for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'

Power

In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages his friend to 'fan into flame the gift of God' that is in him. I am thankful that scientists like Francis used their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discovered are not just useful, but at times also display the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

Love

A scientist shows their love for God, for people and for the rest of creation through their work in the lab. One scientist described his experiences to me: "I study God's fingerprints in His creation to learn more of Him and the world He placed us in and to learn how we should take care of it and each other...I pray for inspiration and insight into how His creation works...and that He provides the opportunities to

give the glory to Him.”

Self-Control

It is largely our own and others’ selfish actions that can turn one animal’s friendly virus into our own species’ personal nightmare. Thankfully Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection are the solution to evil. Our ultimate and certain hope is that one day all Creation will be renewed. We can also have hope that God is with us in our suffering. When we respond in positive ways to painful events, that is evidence that Jesus is alive and working in our lives.

Science will not solve all our problems, but with God’s help and wisdom we can use the tools of science to serve Him and love others.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Columbia Pictures celebrates its centenary



Unless you grew up on Mars, Columbia Pictures has played some part in your life. Who doesn’t recognise that opening ‘logo’ to a film you want to watch – the female personification of the United States?

This huge American film studio and production company celebrates its 100th birthday on 10th January 2024.

Columbia was founded in 1918 by two brothers, Jack and Harry Cohn, and their business partner Joe Brandt. At first a minor player in Hollywood, by the late 1920s Columbia had begun to grow. It helped to have the director Frank Capra on board, and to be producing the Three Stooges, which made Columbia one of the primary homes for ‘screwball comedy’. Columbia also distributed Disney’s Silly Symphony film series, as well as the Mickey Mouse cartoon series.

Big names soon came along, including Cary Grant in the 1930s, and Rita Hayworth in the 1940s and 50s. Others followed, including William Holden and Glenn Ford.

No wonder that Columbia was one of the so-called ‘Little Three’ among the eight major film studios of Hollywood’s Golden Age. Today, it is the world’s third largest major film studio, and a subsidiary of the multinational conglomerate Sony.



Mothers' Union



Our December events continued with a meeting on the first Tuesday when we enjoyed mince pies and drinks. It was good just to be able to chat amongst ourselves. Our coffee morning was again well attended with lovely cakes made by Megan. Our outing for the Christmas lunch and cabaret on the 11th at Bryn Meadows for a Neil Diamond tribute was excellent. The bus was on time and apart from Enid being unable to come we all enjoyed ourselves. The food was good and the act was fabulous. If you closed your eyes you would have believed that Neil Diamond himself was there.

Lots of dancing, laughing and drinking. Lovely atmosphere with everyone having a good time. Obviously no quiz afternoon this month as it would have been on Boxing Day. Next month we are not going to have our usual meeting on the first Tuesday as it will be the 2nd January so we will have the coffee morning as usual on the second Tuesday and have our Annual General Meeting on the third Tuesday and then quiz afternoon on the fourth. This will give June time to collect all our subs which will be £25 and send all the forms off at the right time.

I called to see Olive who has not been very well and she sends her love to everyone. Hilda and Nesta went to see Gaynor and unfortunately it is difficult to contact Marion so I sent a card to her daughter's house hoping she will pass it on with details of how we can visit her. The dancing class had a Christmas lunch and Motown cabaret at the Maes Manor, which some of our Mothers' Union members attended and it was another successful afternoon with lots of dancing.

By the time you receive this magazine we will be in 2024 so I am wishing you all a peaceful and healthy New Year and look forward to continuing with our meetings and fellowship. If you know of anyone who would like to join us please persuade them to come and if you have any ideas for events or speakers please let me know.

Love and God Bless

Kath x

St Paul, the first Christian intellectual

This month, on 25th January, the Church celebrates probably the most famous conversion of all. At least, what happened to a young man called Saul on the road to Damascus has become a byword for all instant conversions - what is known as a 'damascene' moment. Saul was a devout Jew, a Pharisee, a student of Gamaliel and a fierce critic of the followers of Jesus, then a very new sect on the religious scene.

On his way to Damascus to start a purge of Christians in that city, he was blinded by a bright light and heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He asked the identity of the voice, and was told: 'Jesus, whom you are persecuting'. Stunned by the experience, he followed further instructions which led him to a Christian man in Damascus, who prayed with him. As he did, Saul's sight was restored.

The experience convinced Paul that Jesus - crucified in Jerusalem four or five years earlier - was in fact the Messiah and had risen from the dead. After a period of instruction, Saul was baptised and took the name Paul. At first, some Christians were wary about the reality of his conversion, but over a period of time he was accepted and indeed eventually recognised as an 'apostle', a 'special messenger' of Jesus Christ.

His intellectual stature and leadership gifts quickly marked him out, and within a few years he became a leading figure in the emerging Christian Church, preaching and founding churches all over the Middle East, largely of Gentile converts. He was eventually martyred in Rome, probably in 65AD.

Paul was the first intellectual of the Christian Church, the man who was able to set the events of the life and teaching of Jesus, and especially His death and resurrection, into a coherent theology, with its roots very clearly in the Jewish faith of his own upbringing.

Many people think of Paul as a rather negative, narrow misogynist, but even a quick reading of his letters actually reveals a person of great warmth, who evoked enormous affection and devotion from others. 'You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me!' he writes to the Christians at Galatia. As for the charge that Paul disliked women, even a quick read of his letters will reveal how large a role

women played in his churches. In terms of the first century, St Paul was a dangerous liberal! So, all in all, the amazing Paul of Tarsus deserves a bit of celebrating on 25th January.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Mary Slessor of Calabar

Courage, vision and leadership are found in the most unlikely of places.

Mary Slessor was born in December 1848 into a wretchedly poor family. Her father was an alcoholic who lost his job as a shoemaker. Mary was the second of seven children, and in 1859 they moved from Aberdeen into the fetid slums of Dundee. Her father and mother worked in the mills, and Mary joined them there when she turned 11.



When Mary's father and both brothers died of pneumonia, Mary's mother struggled on to keep Mary and her two sisters alive. By the time Mary was 14 she was doing a 12-hour day as a jute maker.

But life was not all drudgery. Mary's mother was a devout Christian who read the family Bible to her daughters, and also the *Missionary Record*, a monthly publication from the United Presbyterian Church. The stories of the missionaries captivated Mary. When she heard that David Livingstone, the great missionary explorer, had died, she decided that she would follow in his footsteps. She wanted to devote her life to taking the gospel to Africa. She was 25.

In August 1876 the Presbyterians sent her out to Calabar, Nigeria, an area where no European had ever yet set foot. With her red hair and blue eyes, Mary grabbed attention wherever she went, but despite recurring illness and constant danger, Mary settled happily among the tribes. She learned their traditions, quickly becoming fluent in their language, Efik. Soon she won the confidence of their tribal leaders. She taught their children and was soon determined to put an end to some of their barbaric practises, such as the killing of twins (whom they thought were evil).

Over the years Mary put an end to many witchcraft practises, and she adopted every twin child she found abandoned. And she talked endlessly about Jesus Christ, the passion of her life.

Mary was tough – she made long trips through the jungles and took canoes up remote rivers. When her shoes gave out, she went barefoot. Her great passion was to go to ‘the regions beyond’ with the Gospel. She thrived in places and among people who would have terrified most women in her day.

It has been written of her: “Practically singlehanded she tamed and transformed three pagan communities in succession. It is a question if the career of any other woman missionary has been marked by so many strange adventures, daring feats, signal providences, and wonderful achievements.” (Dr Robert H. Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*.)

When in 1901 Southern Nigeria became a British Protectorate, Mary was appointed the first ever female Magistrate in the British Empire. She became a skilful diplomatic emissary.

She was known for saying: "It is not Mary Slessor, but God and our united prayers that have brought the blessings to Calabar. Christ shall have all the honour and glory for the multitudes saved."

When she finally died of fever in January 1915 the native Christian girls and women wept bitterly: “Our mother is dead. Everybody's mother has left us.”

Mary Slessor once wrote to a friend who had long prayed for her: "I have always said that I have no idea how or why God has carried me over so many funny and hard places, and made these hordes of people submit to me, or why the Government should have given me the privilege of a Magistrate among them, except in answer to prayer made at home for me. It is all beyond my comprehension."

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

John the Almsgiver



Have you noticed that people tend to be either givers or takers? John the Almsgiver was a giver – on a grand scale.

Born into a wealthy family in Cyprus about 560 AD John was married with children when disaster struck: both his wife and children all died. In his grief, John

decided to go into the Church. He was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria.

Here John began to astonish the people with his generosity. He distributed thousands of pieces of gold from his own wealth to help the hospitals and monasteries. He founded new hospitals, and introduced maternity wards, poorhouses, and hostels for strangers to the city. He was even known to give away his own bedding to the poor.

John also ordered the use of just weights and measures, he forbid his officials to take any presents, and he sat in the open air beside his church on Wednesdays and Fridays, to make sure that his people had free access to him.

When the Persians sacked Jerusalem he helped the survivors with money, food, transport and clothes. He even paid to get captives back, and so give them their freedom.

Sometimes John gave for a specific Christians purpose; other times he gave for the benefit of all those in whatever need there was, whatever their creed.

John also cared for the souls of his people in Alexandria, and encouraged them in prayer and leading a holy life. He was adamant that only true believers could take Holy Communion.

John died in 620, in Amathus on Cyprus, where he had been born. He had been very much loved, and his memory was highly honoured – he was canonised even though he had not been martyred, and he was made patron of the Knights of Malta.

John the Almsgiver is one of the very few Byzantine era saints to have been truly honoured in the West. Perhaps because it is indeed “more blessed to give than to receive.”

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Christmas gifts

Grandfather was talking to his granddaughter, “When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange.”

The little girl clapped her hands in joy. “Brilliant! I’d love a new computer and a mobile!”

Services and Holy Days

Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist will be held twice weekly in both our Churches:

*St. Margaret's each Sunday at 9.30am and each Wednesday at 10.00am.
St. Catwg's each Sunday at 11.00am and each Thursday at 10.00am.*

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Services and Holy Days</i>
<i>1st Jan</i>	The Naming of Jesus
<i>6th Jan</i>	THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD
<i>7th Jan</i>	THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST - THE FIRST SUNDAY of EPIPHANY
<i>14th Jan</i>	THE SECOND SUNDAY of EPIPHANY
<i>21st Jan</i>	THE THIRD SUNDAY of EPIPHANY
<i>28th Jan</i>	THE FOURTH SUNDAY of EPIPHANY

Notices!

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union will meet again in the new year.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members.

Bargoed Community Choir.

We meet each Thursday, during term time, at St. Margaret's Church, Gilfach – 10.00 to 11.30 am. All are welcome!!

Community Dance Group

Meet each Monday at 10.30am at St. Margaret's Church. All are welcome!!

February's Magazine 2024

Please can you forward any news, articles etc, to me by Monday 29th January, for inclusion in the February's edition.

Many Thanks Chris (email: chriscorbin1961@gmail.com)

Sudoku Challenge

			7		8	1	5	
1		7	2					6
				5		9		7
				8		5	6	3
	1	3	6		7	2	4	
8	4	6		2				
7		4		1				
9					6	8		2
	2	1	8		5			

© 2008 KrazyDad.com

Solution can be found on page 39

As we consider 2024 stretching ahead:

Peace is to the soul what health is to the body: a sign of balance and order. – **Guy Appere**

You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you. – **James Allen**

Obedience is the key that unlocks the door to every profound spiritual experience. – **Dorothy Kerin**

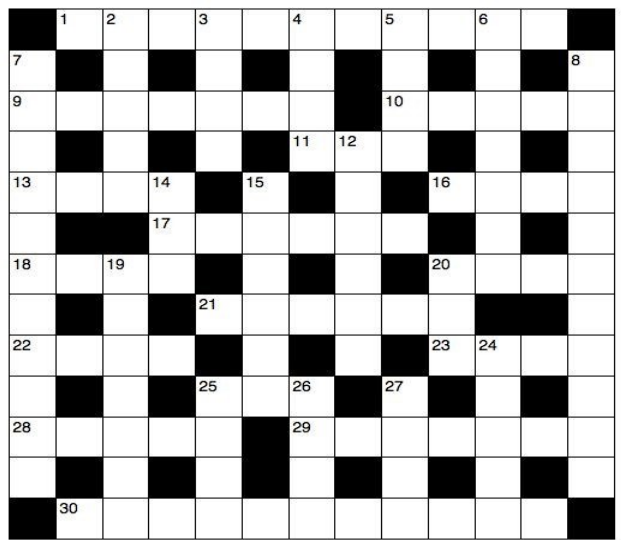
Miscellaneous observations on modern life :

Carpe diem. Seize the day. Make your lives extraordinary. – **Dead Poets Society**

The last thing one knows is what to put first. – **Blaise Pascal**

The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved, loved for ourselves, or rather, in spite of ourselves. – **Victor Hugo**

January's Crossword



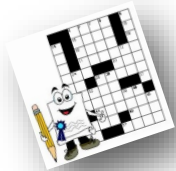
Challenge

ACROSS

- 1 Paul said the wrath of God 'is being revealed from heaven' against this (Romans 1:18) (11)
- 9 Go smite (anag.) (7)
- 10 'But — I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee' (Matthew 26:32) (5)
- 11 'Take and —; this is my body' (Matthew 26:26) (3)
- 13 Type (2 Thessalonians 2:10) (4)
- 16 'Woe to those who — iniquity' (Micah 2:1) (4)
- 17 'How shall we — if we ignore such a great salvation?' (Hebrews 2:3) (6)
- 18 Opposite of evens (4)
- 20 Previously cited (Latin) (4)
- 21 'There is surely — — of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife' (Genesis 20:11) (2,4)
- 22 The Thessalonians were warned to keep away from every brother who was this (2 Thessalonians 3:6) (4)
- 23 Beat (anag.) (4)
- 25 To trouble or afflict (Job 16:3) (3)
- 28 Part of a roof (1 Kings 7:9) (5)
- 29 Attain (Job 5:12) (7)
- 30 Insect noted for its gymnastic ability (Psalm 78:46) (11)

DOWN

- 2 Smell (John 11:39) (5)
3 Lion's home (Jeremiah 25:38) (4)
4 'Jesus Christ is the — yesterday and today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8) (4)
5 Tidy (4)
6 Made their home (Genesis 47:27) (7)
7 Their task was to carry the curtains of the tabernacle (Numbers 4:25–26) (11)
8 Timothy's was called Lois (2 Timothy 1:5) (11)
12 The Lover likened the fragrance of the Beloved's breath to these (Song of Songs 7:8) (6)
14 Times Educational Supplement (1,1,1)
15 Eight-tentacled sea creatures (6)
19 'And lead us not into temptation, but — us from the evil one' (Matthew 6:13) (7)
20 D.L. Moody's legendary song leader, — D. Sankey (3)
24 Rarely used musical note (5)
25 'Your will be done on earth — it — in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,2)
26 and 27 'The Lord Almighty will — them with a — , as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb' (Isaiah 10:26) (4,4)
27 See 26 Down



Crossword solution - Page 39

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Windows

A wife texted her husband on a cold winter morning: "Windows frozen."

Her husband texted back: "Pour some lukewarm water over it."

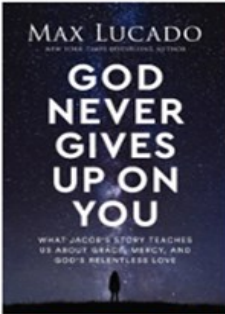
The wife texted back five minutes later: "Computer's completely not working now."

Book Reviews

God Never Gives Up on You

What Jacob's Story Teaches Us About Grace, Mercy, and God's Relentless Love

By Max Lucado, 10Publishing £11.30



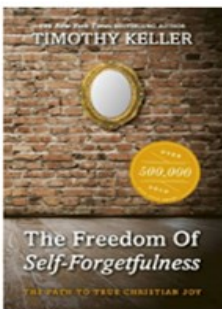
Ever wonder if you've gone wrong too many times for God to use someone like you?

This is a book for members of the Lost Halo Society – for the strugglers among us and the fumbler within us. We are all of us part saint, part scoundrel. We mean well, but we don't always do well. We have breakthroughs and breakdowns, often in the same hour. We need no reminder of our failures, but we could always use a refresher course on God's perfect plan to use imperfect people to do great things. This book offers you just that.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

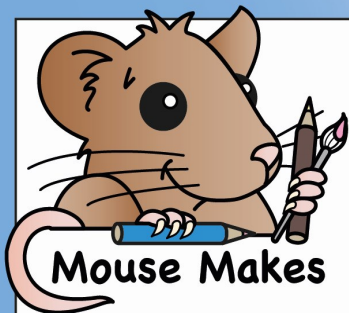
The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness The Path to True Christian Joy

By Timothy Keller, 10Publishing £2.99



'What are the marks of a supernaturally changed heart?' This was one of the questions the Apostle Paul addressed as he wrote to the church in Corinth. In an age when pleasing people, puffing up your ego and building your résumé are seen as the methods to 'make it', the Apostle Paul calls us to find true rest in blessed self-forgetfulness.

In this short and punchy book, best-selling author Timothy Keller shows that gospel-humility means we can stop connecting every experience and every conversation with ourselves. A truly gospel-humble person is not a self-hating person or a self-loving person, but a self-forgetful person.



EPIPHANY is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down, worshipped him and left *three* special gifts.



Where was Jesus born?

 Luke 2:1



What three gifts did the wise men give Jesus?



 and -----
 Luke 2:11



Who was the king?

 Luke 2:1

Where did the wise men come from?
 the -----

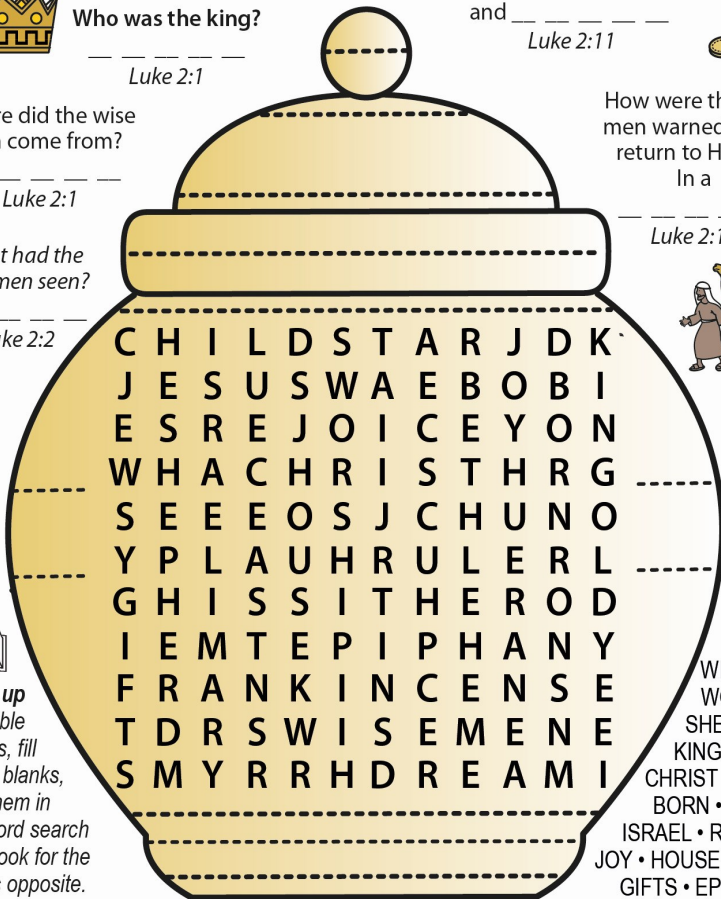
Luke 2:1

How were the wise men warned not to return to Herod?
 In a -----

Luke 2:12

What had the wise men seen?

a -----
 Luke 2:2



Look up the Bible verses, fill in the blanks, find them in the word search then look for the words opposite.

JESUS
 WISEMEN
 WORSHIP
 SHEPHERD
 KING • JEWS
 CHRIST • CHILD
 BORN • RULER
 ISRAEL • REJOICE
 JOY • HOUSE • MARY
 GIFTS • EPIPHANY

How many other words can you make from the letters in EPIPHANY?

From the Register

Christian Funerals

December 2023

1st	<i>Phillip Price RIP</i>
4th	<i>Clifford Parker RIP</i>
8th	<i>Paul Smith RIP</i>
13th	<i>Derrick Stevens RIP</i>
19th	<i>Gwyneira Lewis RIP</i>
20th	<i>Robert Lewis RIP</i>
21st	<i>Allan Rogers RIP</i>

*May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*





Gone yet not forgotten,
Although we are apart,
Your spirit lives within me,
Forever in my heart.
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Author Unknown

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Prayers for the Bereaved

*May the love of God and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ
console you and gently wipe away every tear from your eyes.
May Almighty God bless you, and look after you at this
difficult time. Amen.*

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

*Lord, in our time of grief we turn to you. God of love
hear our cries. Listen to our prayers for whom
you have called out of this world. Lead them to
your kingdom of light and peace. Amen.*

Local Business Adverts



Bargoed Sight Centre




A full range of Eye Care services
including Sight Tests, Spectacles and Contact
Lenses for children and adults.


CONTACT DETAILS

26 Hanbury Road, Bargoed CF81 8QT

Tel: 01443 830750 Fax: 01443 879544

Website: www.bargoedsightcentre.co.uk

 BargoedSightCentre

 @bargoedsc

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday

9.30am-5.30pm

Saturday

9.30am-1.30pm

Closed

Sunday & Bank Holidays

D. Emlyn Lloyd



Ironmonger, Builders' Merchant

Sheffield House 32, Bedwlwyn Rd,

Ystrad Mynach,

Hengoed, CF82 7AD

Tel: 01443 813261

TURN TO US FOR HELP AND SUPPORT

**In your time of need we'll take care
of all the funeral arrangements.**

Call us 24 hours a day

- Funeral Pre-Payment Plans
 - Memorials
 - Service Chapel
- Monumental Masonry

D J THOMAS & SONS

Funeral Directors

The Private Chapel
Lower Wood Street,
Bargoed.

CF81 8NW

Tel: 01443 831044



Part of Dignity plc. A British Company





Stanley J. Nicholas Ltd

“The Paddocks”

ALL FAITHS CATERED FOR
Prepaid Funeral Plans
Golden Charter
The Perfect Choice
Modern Fleet of Cars
Private Chapel of Rest
Compassion & Discretion at all Times

Your independent & family firm providing a complete dignified caring service in the Blackwood and Bargoed areas

Email:- info@sjnicholas.co.uk

Web:- www.sjnicholas.co.uk

“The Paddocks”

New Road, Pengam, Blackwood. NP12 3QZ

also at

92 Commercial Street, Aberbargoed, Bargoed,
Caerphilly. CF81 9EU

and

202 High Street, Blackwood. NP12 1AJ

Tel: (01443) 830328

JOHN DAVIES AND SONS

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Beechwood, Park Terrace,
Treharris, Treharris
CF46 6BT

2 The Shopping Centre,
St Cattwgs Avenue, Gelligaer
CF82 8FD

Nelson Business Centre
Commercial Street, Nelson
CF46 6NF

An independent family run funeral directors established in the early 1900's, serving Treharris, Nelson, Gelligaer, Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach and all surrounding areas

Private Chapel of Rest | 280 Seater Chapel | Funeral Plans | Memorial Masonry



01443 410224 / 822826



info@johndaviesandsons.co.uk



Maenordy Llancaiach Fawr Manor



Tours

Restaurant

Gift Shop

01443 412248 www.llancaiachfawr.co.uk

LLEWELLYN'S CAR SALES (BARGOED) LTD

The Showroom, Gwerthonor Place,
Gilfach, Bargoed,
Caerphilly,
Mid Glamorgan,
CF81 8JP
Tel: 01443 838383
www.llewellynsgarage.co.uk

Opening Times

Monday	09:00 - 18:00
Tuesday	09:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	09:00 - 18:00
Thursday	09:00 - 18:00
Friday	09:00 - 18:00
Saturday	09:00 - 18:00
Sunday	09:00 - 18:00



Morgan Thomas

Quality Butcher

*Prime meat from our own farms,
fresh fruit and vegetables,
fresh bread and milk daily.*

**2, The Square
Penpedairheol.
01443 830492**



Local Deliveries



If you or someone you know of
would like to advertise their
business in our magazine please
to not hesitate to contact the
magazine editor on
07983 754610

or

chriscorbin1961@gmail.com



Neuadd St. Catwg Community Hall

Church Road, Gelligaer. CF82 8FW

.....
Excellent facilities in Gelligaer, located opposite
St. Catwg's Church.

It is ideal for:

- Wedding Receptions
- Funeral Receptions
- Christening Receptions
- Meetings and much more etc,
- Fashion Shows
- Birthday Parties
- Training Events

facilities available include:

Fully equipment kitchen, audio visual equipment, stage with disabled access, tables & chairs, conference/meeting room, fully disabled access, disabled toilet and baby changing facilities on site.

for

Booking and Enquiries

Please Contact:

Christine Harvey: 01443 833123



Christine Harvey 01443 833123 /

Church Reading / Cleaning Rotas

If anyone wishes to be on either the readers rota for either church, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant church wardens.

St. Catwg's Readers Rota

St. Catwg's Readers Rota					
January 2024		February 2024		March 2024	
7 th	Cheryl Pugh	4 th	Pat Davies	3 rd	Christine Harvey
14 th	Janeve Manca	11 th	Paul Thomas	10 th	Joan Jenkins
21 st	Christine Harvey	18 th	Cheryl Pugh	17 th	Pat Davies
28 th	Joan Jenkins	25 th	Janeve Manca	24 th	Paul Thomas
				31 st	Cheryl Pugh

St. Margaret's Readers Rota

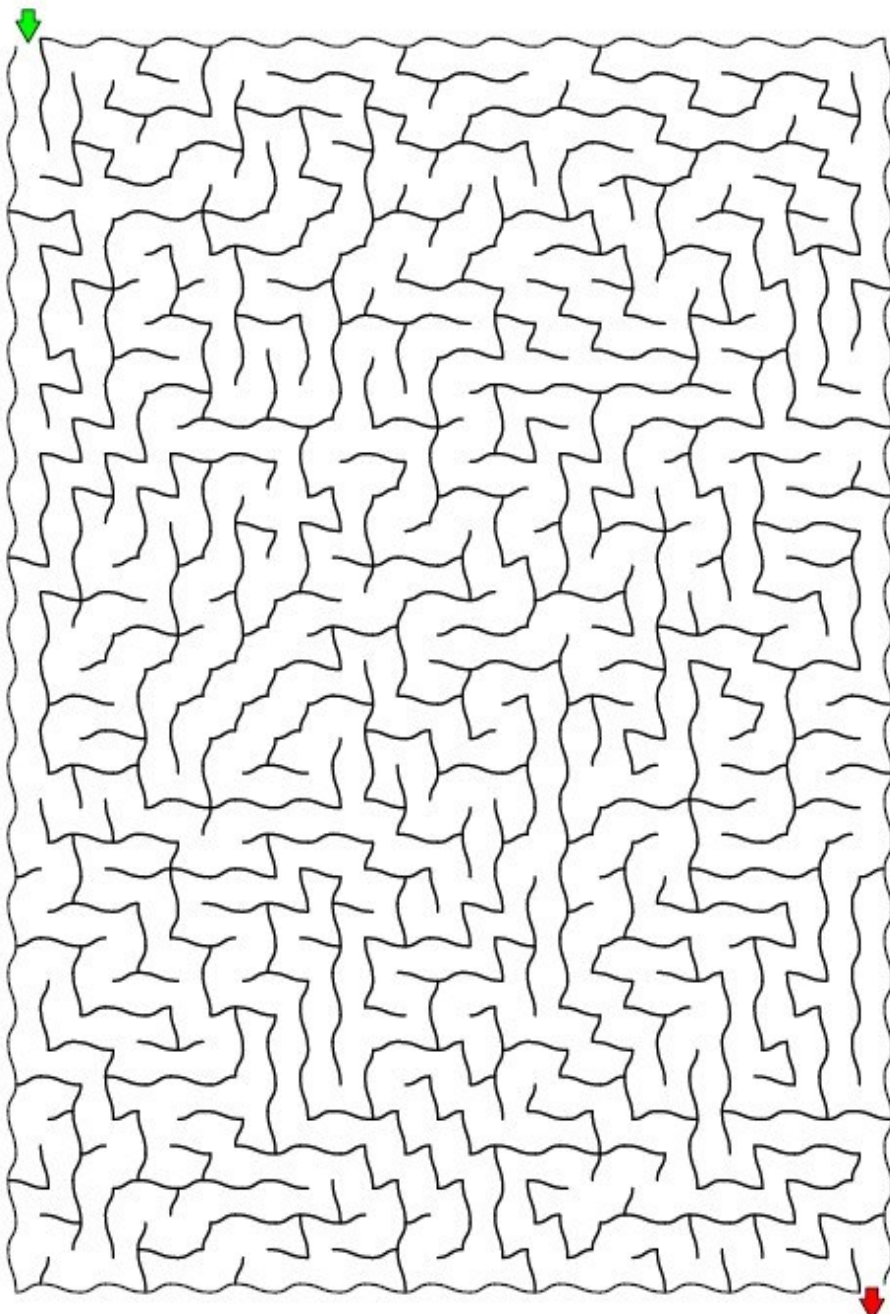
St. Margaret's Readers Rota					
January 2024		February 2024		March 2024	
7 th	June Phillips	4 th	Kath Llewellyn	3 rd	June Phillips
14 th	Alex Ball	11 th	Christine Thorpe	10 th	Jenn East
21 st	Audrey Powell	18 th	Enid Mayne	17 th	Jennette Jones
28 th	Chris Ball	25 th	Huw Thomas	24 th	Linda Bartlett
				31 st	Lynne Thomas

Should you wish to be on the St. Margaret's cleaning rota please contact the relevant Church Wardens.

St. Margaret's Cleaning Rota

St. Margaret's Cleaning Rota								
January 2024			February 2024			March 2024		
7	Lynda Bartlett	Sue	4	Lynda Bartlett	Sue	3	Lynda Bartlett	Sue
14	Lynda Trollope	Enid	11	Lynda Trollope	Enid	10	Lynda Trollope	Enid
21	Jennette	Audrey	18	Jennette	Audrey	17	Jennette	Audrey
28	Kath	June	25	Kath	June	24	Kath	June
						31	Lynda Bartlett	Sue

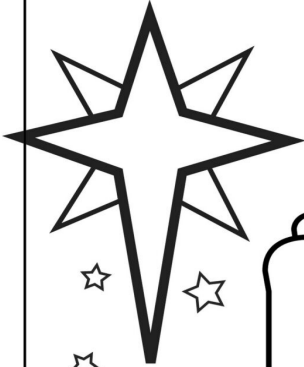
Complete the Maze!



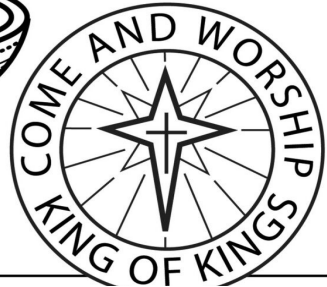
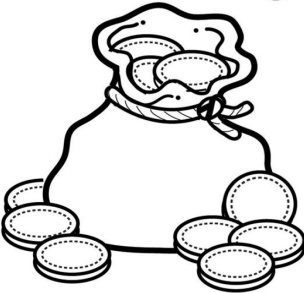
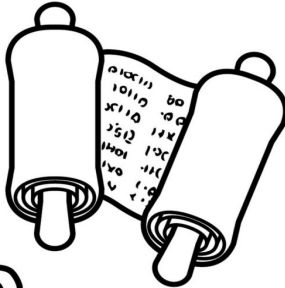
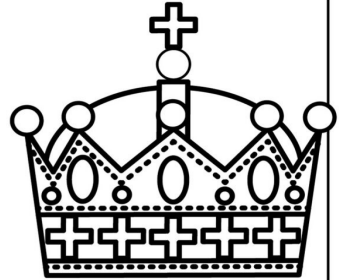
For the Children!

Epiphany

SIGNS, VISITORS, GIFTS AND KINGS



READ
the story in
Matthew:2 1-12



Service Times

Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist will be held twice weekly in both our Churches:

*St. Catwg's each Sunday at 11.00am and each Thursday at 10.00am and
St. Margaret's each Sunday at 9.30am and each Wednesday at 10.00am.*

Both of our Churches have a friendly and welcoming atmosphere where you can worship our Lord, Jesus Christ. Everybody is welcome to attend any of our services listed below. If it is your first visit to the Parish and you are new to our Church please do not hesitate to make yourself known to us.

SUNDAY

9.30 am. Sung Eucharist at St. Margaret's Church

1st Sunday of each Month - Family Services

11.00 am. Sung Eucharist at St. Catwg's Church

WEDNESDAY

10.00 am. Holy Eucharist at St. Margaret's Church,
followed by Tea and Coffee

THURSDAY

10.00 am. Holy Eucharist at St. Catwg's Church

General Disclaimer

The appearance of comments, articles, advertisements, hyperlinks, or statements made within our District magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the District of Gelligaer Wardens and Committee. While we aim to include accurate and up-to-date information at the time of publication, we make no warranties or representations as to the accuracy. We therefore assume no liability or responsibility for any error or omission in the content.

Directory of Contacts

*Should you wish to contact a specific group that meets in our churches,
please use the relevant telephone number from the list below.*

Thank You!

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Family History Research: Carolyn Corbin Tel: 07983677360
Email. carolyncorbin63@aol.com

Mothers' Union:

Branch Leader Kath Llewellyn. Tel: 01443 829658
Branch Secretary
Branch Treasurer June Phillips. Tel: 01443 835977

Community Dance Group: June Phillips. Tel: 01443 835977

Flower Arranging Group: Nesta Williams. Tel: 01443 831009

Arts and Crafts Group: June Phillips. Tel: 01443 835977

Neuadd St. Catwg's Hall: Christine Harvey. Tel: 01443 833123
(Bookings and Enquiries)

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Solutions to this month's puzzles.

3	9	2	7	6	8	1	5	4
1	5	7	2	4	9	3	8	6
4	6	8	3	5	1	9	2	7
2	7	9	1	8	4	5	6	3
5	1	3	6	9	7	2	4	8
8	4	6	5	2	3	7	9	1
7	8	4	9	1	2	6	3	5
9	3	5	4	7	6	8	1	2
6	2	1	8	3	5	4	7	9

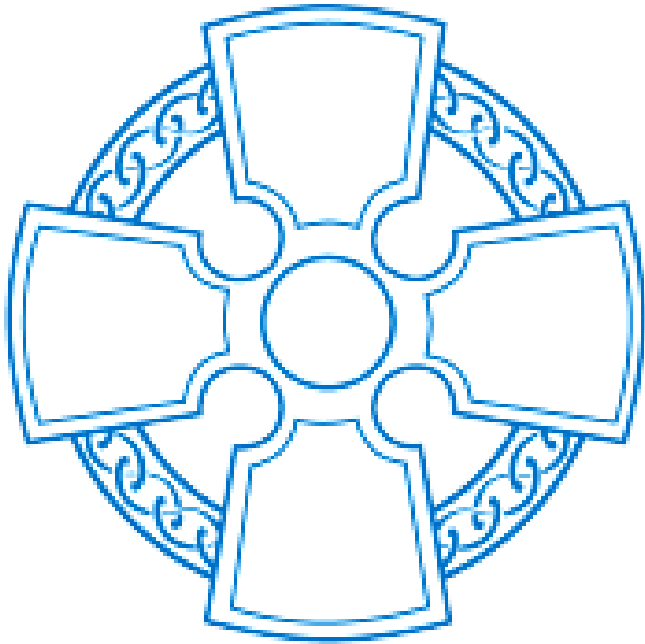
Answer to **Sudoku** on page 21

G	O	D	L	E	S	S	N	E	S	S	
G	D	A	A	E	E	E	G				
E	G	O	T	I	S	M	A	F	T	E	R
R	U	R	E	A	T	T	A				
S	O	R	T	O	P	P	L	A	N		
H		E	S	C	A	P	E	E	D		
O	D	D	S	T	L	I	D	E	M		
N	E	N	O	F	E	A	R		O		
I	D	L	E	P	S	A	B	E	T		
T	I	A	I	L	W	R	H				
E	A	V	E	S	A	C	H	I	E	V	E
S	E	I	S	I	V	E	R				
G	R	A	S	S	H	O	P	P	E	R	

Answers to **Crossword** on page 22



ARDAL WEINIDOGAETH
TÂF RHYMNI
TAFF RHYMNEY
MINISTRY AREA



*This Publication was produced and printed by the Taff Rhymney Ministry Area,
District of Gelligaer. 2024*