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MINISTRY AREA

District of Gelligaer Magazine:

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

*A welcoming Christian
community serving the people
of the District of Gelligaer.*

The Feast of the
Ascension of our
Lord

What's in this edition!

Greetings from the Rectory.

Reader Writes.

District News/Messages.

Mothers' Union.

Books of the Bible.

For the Children!

and More.....



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Greetings from the Rectory

Dear friends,

This month we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord. It is the occasion when Jesus was raised from the earth before his Disciples eyes to take his place at the right hand of the Father in heaven where he continues to intercede for us. From his throne he rules over all creation, the Lord of our lives. We thank God that we live our lives under his care and protection and in the light of his love. Whatever we face in our daily lives, whatever we see happening in the world we can be sure that Jesus is at our side, praying for us and supporting us. Sometimes it may be difficult to sense his presence, sometimes our faith will be challenged but the promise of the resurrection is that Jesus will never abandon us and his love will never be withdrawn from us.



As Jesus intercedes for us and for all his people from his throne in Heaven we continue to remember in our prayers the people of the world, for all who live in fear or war, violence, poverty of

disease. We remember especially the people of Israel and Gaza and the people of the Ukraine. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time.

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

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**While he was
blessing them,
he withdrew from them
and was carried up
into heaven.**

Luke 24.51

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who ascended into heaven in glory, I adore You and praise You and beg You to ask Your Heavenly Father to look down in mercy upon us who still struggle here on earth.
Amen.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, may Your Kingdom come!

Reader Writes.

Many years ago when I was studying Public Administration at what was the Polytechnic of Wales, one of the subjects studied spoke of the 3 Es – Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. Since returning to school in September, the three Es came to mind when I noticed how children had their own version – Enjoyment, Excitement and Enthusiasm.



It does not seem to matter which subject the children are studying, they seem to have these 3Es at the core of the school day. Sometimes we need 3Es when we think of our faith and worship.

We are fortunate enough to live in a country where we can speak of and live out our faith. Sadly, people in other countries are persecuted for their belief in Jesus and therefore unable to speak of the Gospel or anything to do with their faith. Thinking of how lucky we are compared with the people suffering persecution should allow us use of the 3Es in our spiritual life. Many people today may not have been brought up attending Sunday School or Church so these people need Encouragement and we need to be Encouraging and Encouraged ourselves.

Having faith Enhances our lives – it gives each and every day that something special. Also, we should not forget that for us to grow in faith we need to be Enabled by the Holy Spirit. We need to listen and be guided in all we do - the Holy Spirit will Enable and through him we all can Encourage and be Encouraged and through listening and believing our lives will be Enhanced.

Carolyn

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

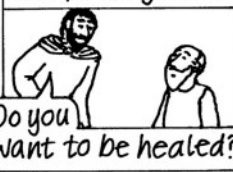
It can be read in the Bible in
John chapter 5 verses 1-18

Jesus was in Jerusalem for a festival, and he visited the pool of Bethesda. People said that an angel sometimes made the water ripple.

Sick people waited for the water to ripple, because they thought that the first person in would be healed.



Jesus went up to a man who had been sick for 38 years.



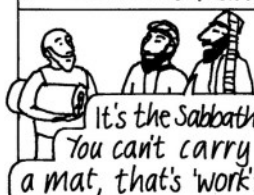
I've got no-one to put me in the pool, so I can never get in first.



He was healed! The man picked up his mat and walked around. But it was the Sabbath.

God had given the Law that the Sabbath day was a rest day (Ex 20: 8-11)... but to make sure it was kept, the Jewish Leaders had made up rules, and then more rules so that anything that even might be work was banned.

The Jewish Leaders saw the healed man.



The man who healed me told me to carry it.



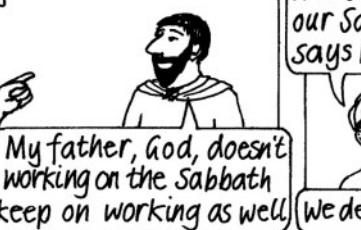
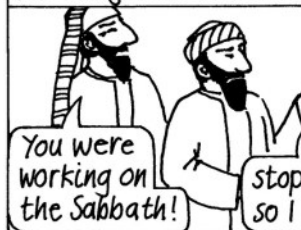
Later, Jesus found the man in the temple.



Now the man knew who Jesus was...



and they went to Jesus



Not only does he disobey our Sabbath rules, but he says he is equal to God!



Ascension Day: 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them – to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: "When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands – and blessed them."

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him – and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

John & Charles Wesley, evangelists & hymn-writers

John and Charles Wesley were the founders of Methodism. Two of 19 children born to Samuel and Susannah Wesley of Epworth Rectory in Lincolnshire in 1703 and 1707, their father was the local rector, while their mother was a spiritual inspiration to her many children.

Both John and Charles went to Christ Church, Oxford (1720 and 1726). John was ordained, and Charles and some friends formed a 'Holy Club' while still at college. It consisted of men who dedicated themselves to Bible study, prayer, fasting and good works. Such regular disciplines soon earned Charles the nickname 'Methodist'. The name stuck.

Both Charles and John felt called to the mission field, and so in 1735 they sailed to Georgia. Their time among Indians in America was not a success – they struggled for any real spiritual authority in their ministries. Feeling failures, they returned to England in some depression. John summed it up: "I went to America to convert the Indians; but, oh, who shall convert me?"

Then the Wesley's made friends with some Moravians. They stressed that salvation cannot be earned, but must be received by grace through faith in Christ. Charles was the first to experience this 'true' conversion, when on Pentecost Sunday, 21st May 1738, he wrote that the Spirit of God 'chased away the darkness of my unbelief.'

Only three days later, on 24th May, 1738, it was John's turn. As he wrote in his journal:

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed."

John and Charles Wesley then devoted the rest of their lives to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. In doing so, they turned England upside-down. When the established Church threw John out, he took to the fields, preaching to coal miners and commoners.

His itinerant evangelism took him 250,000 miles on horseback and to preach over 40,000 sermons. His small ‘societies’ attracted some 120,000 followers by the time of his death.

Charles became the most prolific and skilled hymn-writer in English history, writing hymns that are sung widely today, such as ‘Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.’ In all, he wrote more than 6,000 hymns.

The legacy of the two brothers lives on. As well as Methodism, their teaching has widely impacted the holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement, and the charismatic movement.

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The hymns of the Wesley's

The Church calendar celebrates the lives of John and Charles Wesley. John's great gift to the Christian cause was the little matter of founding the world-wide movement known as Methodism. His brother Charles had an equally profound impact through his hymns. He wrote over 6,000, most of which aren't sung nowadays, but among the ones we do still sing are all-time favourites – ‘Love divine, all loves excelling’, ‘O for a thousand tongues to sing’. ‘Jesu lover of my soul’, ‘Hark the herald angels sing’ – and scores more.

40 years ago, almost everybody knew quite a lot of hymns, but sadly that's no longer true. Traditional hymns aren't usually sung at school assemblies, not even in church schools, and while the audience for ‘Songs of Praise’ on BBC TV is substantial, most of those watching are older people.

Nowadays, with only about five per cent of the population going to church, there is inevitably a lack of familiarity with hymns of any kind. Christmas carols are an exception, as is ‘Jerusalem’ and ‘Amazing Grace’, because they are frequently heard outside church.

Singing hymns is a wonderful experience at its best – just ask a Welsh rugby crowd singing ‘Bread of heaven’! It seems a pity to lose it.

It's not a bad idea to take ten minutes and think about what is your favourite hymn – ancient or modern doesn't matter. Then try singing it in the bath or under the shower – a very purifying experience!

Notices!

100 Club Winners!

April 2025

Date:	No:	Winner	Church
6th			
13th			
20th			
27th			

*** *April's 100 club winners will appear in June's magazine.* ***



Bargoed Community Choir Concert

Bargoed Community Choir, joined by Students of Heolddu School, and Ali Shone (Soloist) are in concert at St. Margaret's Church, Gilfach on Thursday 19th June, start 7.00pm. Tickets cost £5.00 and are available from choir members.

Taff Rhymney Ministry Area.

PENTECOST PRAISE

On Pentecost Sunday (8th June 2025)

Our Ministry Area is holding an afternoon

SERVICE OF PENTECOST PRAISE AND A FAITH TEA

Further details to follow

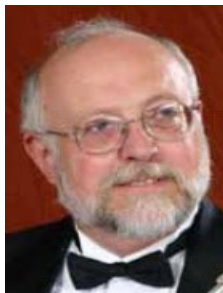


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Scan the QR code on your smart phone, then open in browser to visit our website or visit us on

<https://www.parishofgelligaer.org.uk>

The story behind the hymn: ‘Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks to the Risen Lord’



Not many university students are able to write Christian songs which become worldwide hits, but Don Emry Fishel managed it with his Alleluia No. 1. Nearly 50 years on, it is loved and sung by millions of Christians worldwide.

Fishel wrote it in 1971, while he was a student at the University of Michigan and also music leader of a Roman Catholic charismatic community based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. These were the days of folk songs and guitars, and Alleluia No. 1 fitted the prevailing mood perfectly. Written in E Major, it is ideal for guitar accompaniment.

Mr Fishel became a freelance flutist, flute instructor and composer. He was publications editor for the Word of God and Servant Music for a number of years and then worked in computers for 25 years. In 2008 he moved to Nashville and returned to music, teaching the flute.

Alleluia No 1 was Fishel’s first song, written “rather quickly, in about an hour.” It had four verses to begin with, but a fifth verse (which became the third verse) was added later, as he prepared for baptism. As Fishel explained, he wanted the line ‘We have been crucified with Christ; now we shall live forever’ “to be the centre of the song.”

Alleluia No. 1 was first published in the UK in Sound of Living Waters, in 1974.

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Don’t look back

The Sunday School teacher was telling the story of how when Lot’s wife looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah, she turned into a pillar of salt. One youngster nodded in a knowing fashion. “My mummy looked back once while she was driving,” he confided, “and she turned into a lamp post.”:

God in the Arts

This year the Revd Michael Burgess surveys works of sacred art that can be found in various museums...you can see the image by googling the title of the painting and the artist. '

He gave us eyes to see them: 'The Death of the Virgin' by Bruegel



Upton House in Warwickshire was the home of a millionaire oil magnate, Walter Samuel, in the 1920s and 30s. The origin of that fortune is displayed in the collection of early Shell posters, but the house is now owned by the National Trust.

The interiors still breathe the art deco atmosphere of that earlier lifestyle. Outside there are beautiful terraced gardens, imposing cedar trees, and spectacular asters. Inside there is a remarkable art collection with works by Bosch, Holbein, El Greco, Canaletto and Stubbs. And two paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-69) – 'The Massacre of the Innocents' and 'The Death of the Virgin.' Bruegel's works are full of movement and colour as he depicts the peasant life and landscapes of his day. The mood for 'The Death of the Virgin' is very different. It is a grisaille, painted in grey tones that suit the theme of life ending.

This month of May is often known as Mary's month, with May Queen celebrations and the feast of the Visitation on the 31st. On that day we give thanks for the beginning of new life in the womb of our Lady as she goes to share that good news with her cousin, Elizabeth. In Bruegel's painting in Upton House, it is the ending of her life that is the theme. Local villagers gather around her bed which is set in a typical Flemish room of the period. The source of this story is the Golden Legend. In the Gospels we hear of Mary at the Incarnation and Cana. We know Mary was with the disciples at the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and, as the Golden Legend relates, here they are with her at her death. John, the beloved disciple, seems to be dozing by the fireside, perhaps dreaming of that special moment at the crucifixion when he was entrusted with the care of the mother of Jesus.

Mary holds a candle and is praying as she looks at the crucifix on the pillow at the end of the bed. For all the figures gathered around, Bruegel has depicted the scene as a special, intimate moment, when she is about to be reunited with her son. We can think of Mary praying the

Magnificat and Mary praying with the disciples at Pentecost. And prayer suffuses this scene as she commends her life to God's grace. The light that shines forth faintly around the bed will blaze out in resurrection glory as she is welcomed into the heavenly courts.

In the Orthodox Church this moment is known as the falling asleep of Mary. If so, it is a falling asleep to wake into the realm of life eternal. She whose words to the angels began the great gospel of salvation in Jesus; she who told the servants at Cana to do what Jesus asks; she who followed Jesus to the foot of the cross – now in this painting, she places her hope and trust in that same son who showed that death was not the end, but birth into new life. Mary's Yes to the angel is a lesson and example for all of us as we try to follow God's will. As we ponder this scene of Bruegel in her month of May, we can echo the angel's words to our Lady: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you' – now and eternally.

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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.

Humility

A few years ago I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So I could crouch down to 'meet' Homo floriensis or stand tall to look into the eyes of Homo heidelbergensis. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just

weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth. Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

**For resources on this question, try the Faraday Institute, BioLogos, and Christians in Science.*

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Happy 1700th Birthday, Nicene Creed!

This month, 1700 years ago, one of the most important meetings in the history of the Christian Church began in the Bithynian city of Nicaea. It began in May 325 and went on until the end of July 325.

The Council of Nicaea was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine, and he had an urgent job for the Christian bishops to do. He wanted them to spell out as exactly as they could the core beliefs of the Christian Church, especially with regard to the person of Christ.

Constantine had good reason to do this: a man called Arius of Alexandria was spreading the idea that Jesus Christ was not divine, but instead was a created being. Such a belief, if accepted, would have changed the very heart of Christianity.

After three months of hard work, the bishops at Nicaea had prayerfully and carefully written down as exactly as they could the core beliefs of Christianity. It became known as the Nicene Creed, and it has been the bedrock of orthodox Christianity ever since.

The Nicene Creed is unique in that it is the only Christian statement of faith that is accepted as authoritative by the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and major Protestant Churches.



Mothers' Union



*** *Apologies.* ***

We have no Mothers' Union news for this month.

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Farewell to George Foreman – boxer and preacher

Warm tributes were paid to the Christian US heavyweight boxing legend George Foreman, who died aged 76 on 21st of March. The two-time heavyweight champion of the world became a Christian in 1977, three years after his famous match with Muhammad Ali, known as the 'Rumble in the Jungle'.

Born into a poor single-parent family of seven children in Texas, Foreman dropped out of junior high school, but was able to turn his life around through Job Corps, which helped him get into boxing.

Foreman proved to be a natural: at only 19 he won the heavyweight boxing gold medal at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

After this, he turned pro, and then won 37 straight matches on his way to face reigning champion Joe Frazier in Kingston, Jamaica, winning by technical knockout.

It was after a defeat in 1977 that Foreman had a profound experience of Jesus Christ, and was converted. Aged 28, he abandoned boxing and became a minister. He founded The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Foreman boxed again in 1987, to raise money for a youth centre he had founded. He then won another 24 matches in a row. His last match was in 1997, when he ended his career with a record of 76 wins and five losses.

In 1985, he married for the fifth time, to Mary Joan Martelly. He had five sons - all called George - five daughters, and two adopted daughters.

In March his family posted on Instagram: "Our hearts are broken. A devout preacher, a devoted husband, a loving father, and a proud grand and great grandfather, he lived a life marked by unwavering faith, humility, and purpose."

Remembering VE Day – 80 years on

80 years ago, on 8th May 1945, VE Day took place – marking Victory in Europe at the end of World War 2. It was celebrated as a public holiday, and came exactly a week after German radio announced the death in action of Adolf Hitler.

In reality, Hitler had committed suicide on 30th April. His successor, Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, quickly negotiated an end to the war with the Allies – at the same time trying with some success to prevent as many Germans as possible from falling into Soviet hands.

Field Marshal Montgomery accepted the unconditional surrender of German forces in the Netherlands, north-west Germany and Denmark at a ceremony near Hamburg on 4th May. All German forces then surrendered to Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower on 7th May at Reims, France. Soviet leader Josef Stalin had his own ceremony, in Berlin.

The announcement that the war had ended in Europe was broadcast to the British people by the BBC late on 7th May. It was decreed that there would be a national holiday the next day, and the stage was set for huge celebrations. Prime Minister Churchill had been assured that there was enough beer in the capital, and commemorative items, including VE Day mugs, were quickly produced.

St Paul's Cathedral held ten consecutive services giving thanks for peace, each one attended by thousands of people, and churches throughout the country rang their bells. The Royal Family played a central role, appearing eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace while huge numbers of people flocked down The Mall.

In the United States, VE Day coincided with President Harry S Truman's 61st birthday: he dedicated the victory to the memory of his predecessor, Franklin D Roosevelt, who had died of a stroke less than a month earlier. But both Truman and Churchill pointed out that the war against Japan had not yet been won. That final victory was still more than three months away.

Of course, the end of a war could never be neat. In Europe the last known shots on the Eastern Front were actually fired on 11th May, and on 25th May the battle of Odžak ended in a Yugoslav Partisan victory. Tragically, in French Algeria, Muslims celebrating the end of the war (some also peacefully protesting for independence) were “inexcusably” massacred by colonial authorities and militias – leading eventually to the Algerian War nine years later.-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Mary, the Blessed Virgin, visits Elizabeth

Mary – the virgin mother of Jesus. For centuries, the eastern and western churches have considered her pre-eminent among all the saints.

In the gospels, Mary makes her first appearance as a teenager. Nothing is known of her childhood, and what we do know of her is found mostly in Matthew 1 – 2 and in Luke 1 – 2. If you read both accounts, you'll notice that Luke's account seems to give the story from Mary's standpoint, whereas Matthew concentrates more on Joseph's side of things. In both accounts the virginal conception of Christ is clearly stated. Mary's quiet devotion to God and her total acceptance of His will shine forth.

Her visit to Elizabeth, when both were pregnant, is a moving and poignant account of two humble, ordinary women, suddenly caught up in a great event that would shape world history. Their trusting faith in God and acceptance of His will, shine through.

After Jesus is born, Mary fades into the background, and makes few appearances: when the family visits Jerusalem and she loses her son on the way home; when she urges Him to help the wedding party in Cana with its wine problem; and when Jesus gives her into the keeping of the beloved disciple when He is dying on the cross. Mary's last appearance is in Acts chapter one, just before Pentecost.

Mary obviously joined the early Church, but her role was never one of teaching and preaching, and indeed she remained so much in the background that nothing more about her is known for certain. Both Ephesus and Jerusalem have claimed to be the place of her death.

Mary, chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ, one who is both God and Man, holds a unique place in the history of mankind. Down the centuries that have followed, the Church has paid special honour to Mary – and well deserved it is. "All generations shall call me blessed..."



Books of the Bible.

An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Ecclesiastes



‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ This is how the book of Ecclesiastes begins (1:2), as it examines the futility of human experience ‘under the sun’. The author is named as ‘The Teacher’ (1:1, Hebrew qoheleth), traditionally identified with King Solomon. Although focusing on life in the physical

world, the book ends with, ‘Fear God and keep his commandments’ (12:13).

Ecclesiastes reminds us of the limitation of human wisdom, which cannot find meaning and purpose without God:

Our strivings ‘under the sun’ can only lead to disillusionment (1:5–11). Therefore, we need to accept the life God gives us and enjoy it to the full.

Wisdom is given to those who please God (2:26). Such wisdom cannot solve all problems (1:16–18), or secure enduring reward (2:12–17). We cannot control our immediate future, resulting in uncertainty (6:12), and there are difficult questions about life and death itself (9:1–3). In response, we need to understand our human limitations before God.

God has ordered all things in their time; things we cannot change or fully anticipate: ‘There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven’ (3:1–15).

However, the world is not fundamentally chaotic or irrational, as it is ordered by God: ‘He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.’ (3:11). We should remember our Creator when we are young before the infirmities of advanced age stop us from enjoying the good things of life (12: 1-8).

In summary, Ecclesiastes shows us how to live meaningfully and joyfully by placing God at the centre of our life, while trusting and obeying our Creator.

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Praying with the Prayers Of The Bible - Praying in the Silence of the Heart

‘O Lord of hosts ... if you will give me a son ...I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.’ (1 Samuel 1:11)

Three ‘C’s will help us to grasp this most personal and moving prayer.

First, the prayer’s context. Hannah was the childless wife of Elkanah, who had sons and daughters by his other wife, Peninnah. As she longed for a child, she was taunted by ‘her rival’ (see v.6) who reproached her for being barren.

It doesn’t take much imagination to understand how miserable and lonely and useless Hannah felt. Although Elkanah loved Hannah, his well-meant sympathy, “Am I not more to you than ten sons?” (v.8) was hardly calculated to ease her pain! Making the annual pilgrimage to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, Hannah was ‘deeply distressed, prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly’ (v.10).

This is the Bible’s first record of a woman praying. We can be certain that godly women, long before Hannah’s time, had prayed but this is the first mention in Scripture of a woman praying.

Secondly, the prayer’s content. Above everything else, Hannah longed to have a son. “O Lord of hosts, if you will look on my affliction and give me a son, I will give him back to You in service all the days of his life” (v.11). It was a cry from the heart. A lonely wife, longing for a child, taunted by her rival, and not really understood by her husband, poured out her very soul in grief.

And it was all done without spoken words! As her lips moved, Eli the priest, misreading the signs, rebuked her for being drunk (v.14). There are times when the burden of our heart is so great that no words can express it, but how comforting to know that God hears us!

Thirdly, the prayer’s consequences. The Lord graciously answered Hannah’s distress and a year later she was nursing her baby son! (vv. 21,22). Hannah’s dark night had been eclipsed by a glorious morning. Grief and sorrow had given way to joy and delight but as she cradled her infant son, Hannah did not forget what she had promised the Lord.

In token of His faithfulness, she named her son Samuel, meaning, ‘asked of the Lord’ (v.20). Some time later, Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh and presented him to Eli, fulfilling the promise she had made to the Lord. Hannah’s dedication of Samuel is a reminder to all of us not only to give thanks to God for answered prayer but also to carry out whatever vows or promises we’ve made to Him.

Hannah’s words to Eli are so full of praise and gratitude to God that they need no comment. Let them inspire thanksgiving in our hearts. “For this child I prayed ...therefore as long as he lives he is lent to the Lord” (v.28).

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>4th</i>	<i>THE THIRD SUNDAY of EASTER</i>
<i>11th</i>	<i>THE FOURTH SUNDAY of EASTER</i>
<i>18th</i>	<i>THE FIFTH SUNDAY of EASTER</i>
<i>24th</i>	<i>† Charles Wesley and John Wesley</i>
<i>25th</i>	<i>THE SIXTH SUNDAY of EASTER: ROGATION SUNDAY</i>
<i>29th</i>	<i>ASCENSION DAY</i>
<i>31st</i>	<i>* The Visit of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth.</i>

Bargoed Community Choir.

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

Community Dance Group

The dance group will meet each Monday at 10.30am at
St. Margaret's Church. *All are welcome!!*



BRINGING FAITH TO YOUR INBOX

Sign up to Llandaff Matters and receive inspirational stories of faith in action from across the diocese. Use the following link:

<https://llandaff.churchinwales.org.uk/>

Sudoku Challenge

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

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Solution can be found on page 39

Quotes for May 2025

Rogation Sunday (25th May) is about asking for God's protection and blessing

Pure prayers have pure blessings. – **Thomas Goodwin**

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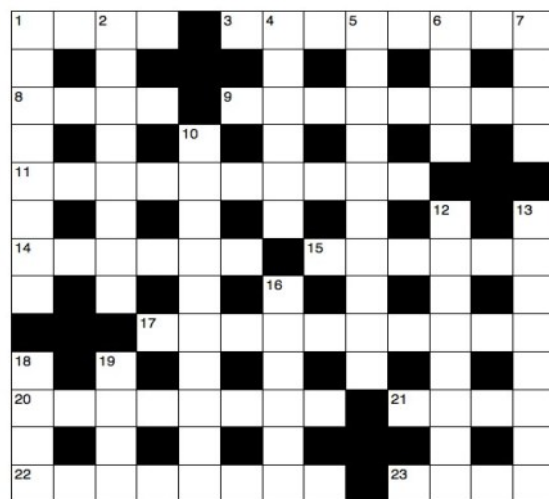
We should believe that nothing is too small to be named before God. What should we think of the patient who told his doctor he was ill, but never went into particulars? – **Anon**

Miscellaneous musings on life.

Only one petition in the Lord's Prayer has any condition attached to it; it is the petition for forgiveness. – **Archbishop William Temple**

Inanimate objects are classified scientifically into three major categories: those that don't work, those that break down and those that get lost. – **Russell Baker**

Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well, when they cannot be discerned from the top of a mountain. So are many things learned in adversity which the prosperous man dreams not of. – **CH Spurgeon**



Across

- 1 Infant (Luke 2:12) (4)
- 3 Luis must (anag.) (8)
- 8 What Jesus called the devil (John 8:44) (4)
- 9 ‘My God, my God, why have you — me?’ (Matthew 27:46) (8)
- 11 Anglican form of church government (10)
- 14 ‘Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like — ’ (Isaiah 40:31) (6)
- 15 Ministers of religion (6)
- 17 Make stronger (1 Thessalonians 3:13) (10)
- 20 Devoutness (1 Timothy 2:2) (8)
- 21 The father of Jesse (Ruth 4:22) (4)
- 22 Pool where Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years (John 5:2) (8)
- 23 ‘[Jesus] said to them, “ — here and keep watch”’ (Mark 14:34) (4)

Down

- 1 Follower of Christ (Acts 16:1) (8)
- 2 One of the punishments endured by Paul (2 Corinthians 6:5) (8)
- 4 Soldiers (Exodus 14:9) (6)
- 5 Scholarly study of melody, harmony and rhythm (10)
- 6 ‘I am God, and there is none — me’ (Isaiah 46:9) (4)
- 7 ‘And how can they preach unless they are — ?’ (Romans 10:15) (4)
- 10 Favourable reception (1 Timothy 1:15) (10)
- 12 Hip orbit (anag.) (8)
- 13 End of life (Isaiah 22:14) (5,3)
- 16 ‘About midnight the sailors — they were approaching land’ (Acts 27:27) (6)
- 18 He married Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30–31) (4)
- 19 ‘According to your great compassion — out my transgressions’ (Psalm 51:1) (4)

Crossword solution - Page 39

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Economy

The vicar asked a member of his congregation, a banker, why he seemed a bit down. The banker replied: “I’m a walking economy! My hairline is in recession, my stomach is a victim of inflation, and both of these together are putting me into a deep depression.”

June’s Magazine 2025

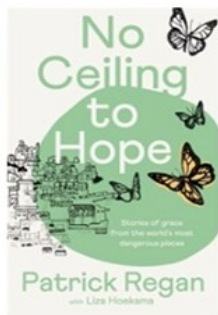
Please can you forward any news, articles etc, to me by Monday 26th May, for inclusion in the Junes edition.

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

Book Reviews

No Ceiling to Hope: Stories of grace from the world's most dangerous places

By Patrick Regan and Liza Hoeksma, SPCK, £10.99



Here are some real-life stories from across the world to show how Christians are helping the most vulnerable in society with God's love.

In Bolivia, Christians are backing education projects to help families to find a way out of poverty. In London, XLP is mentoring young people to turn aside from violence. In Los Angeles, a new future is being offered to gang girls. In high security prisons in the UK and US, the Spirit is turning lives around.

In Belfast's Shankill Road area, a group of elderly ladies is cooking meals for men who sit all day in local pubs . . . The list is extensive, and inspiring. The common element is that, in all circumstances, Christ is offering hope.

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

Grandparenting for Faith: Sharing God with the children you love the most

By Becky Sedgwick, BRF, £9.99

Part of the joy of being a grandparent is to help your grandchildren learn to have confidence in God's love for them.

This book will encourage grandparents to be a unique voice, speaking into their grandchildren's lives, and helping to nurture them into the reality of a relationship with the God who loves them.



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

May 2025			June 2025			July 2025		
4 th	Christine Harvey		1 st	Janeve Manca		6 th	Janeve Manca	
11 th	Pat Davies		8 th	Christine Harvey		13 th	Christine Harvey	
18 th	Paul Thomas		15 th	Pat Davies		20 th	Pat Davies	
25 th	Cheryl Pugh		22 nd	Paul Thomas		27 th	Paul Thomas	
			29 th	Cheryl Pugh				

St. Margaret's Readers Rota

May 2025			June 2025			July 2025		
4 th	June Phillips		1 st	Kath Llewellyn		6 th	June Phillips	
11 th	Chris Ball		8 th	Huw Thomas		13 th	Lynne Thomas	
18 th	Christine Thorpe		15 th	Jenn East		20 th	Neil Hazell	
25 th	Enid Mayne		22 nd	Jennette Jones		27 th	Alex Ball	
			29 th	Linda Bartlett				

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

St. Margaret's Cleaning Rota

May 2025			June 2025			July 2025		
4	Lynda Trollope	Enid	1	Lynda Trollope	Enid	6	Jennette	Audrey
11	Jennette	Audrey	8	Jennette	Audrey	13	Kath	June
18	Kath	June	15	Kath	June	20	Lynda Bartlett	Sue
25	Lynda Bartlett	Sue	22	Lynda Bartlett	Sue	27	Lynda Trollope	Enid
			29	Lynda Trollope	Enid			

For the Younger Generation.



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ON ONE OCCASION JESUS TOLD THE STORY ABOUT SOME PARTY INVITATIONS



HE EXPLAINED THAT WHEN YOU ARE INVITED TO A MEAL



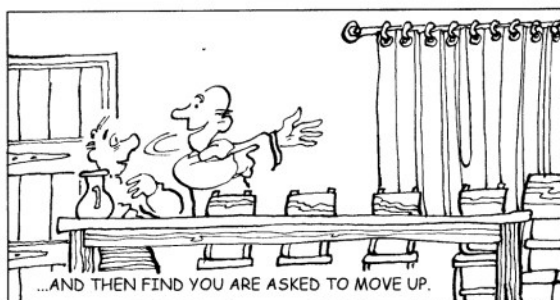
DON'T RUSH TO SIT IN THE BEST SEAT...



...IN CASE YOU ARE ASKED TO MOVE DOWN THE TABLE.



IT'S MUCH BETTER TO TAKE THE LOWER SEAT



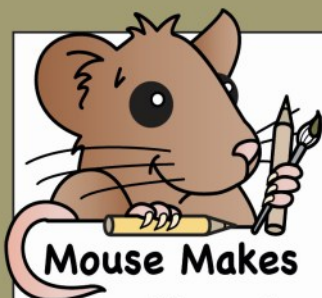
...AND THEN FIND YOU ARE ASKED TO MOVE UP.



JESUS EXPLAINED THAT WE SHOULDN'T KEEP PUSHING OURSELVES TO THE FRONT.



AS CHRISTIANS WE SHOULD ALWAYS TRY TO PUT OTHER PEOPLE FIRST. Read Luke 11.7-11



MIRACLES OF PETER

At which temple gate
did the crippled man lay?

Acts 3:1-10



Who were the man and wife
who lied to God?

and

Acts 5:1-11

People carried the sick into
the streets so that when Peter
came by at least his

might fall on them.

Acts 5:12-16

How long had Aeneas
been paralysed for?

_____ years

Acts 9:32-35

Where had Tabitha's body been laid?
in the _____

Acts 9:36-42



"And the word
of God
continued to
increase,
and the number
of the disciples
multiplied
greatly."
Acts 6:7

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

After Jesus
ascended into
heaven, the
Holy Spirit
came upon
the Apostles
and Peter was
able to perform
many miracles
in Jesus' name.
*See the book
of ACTS*

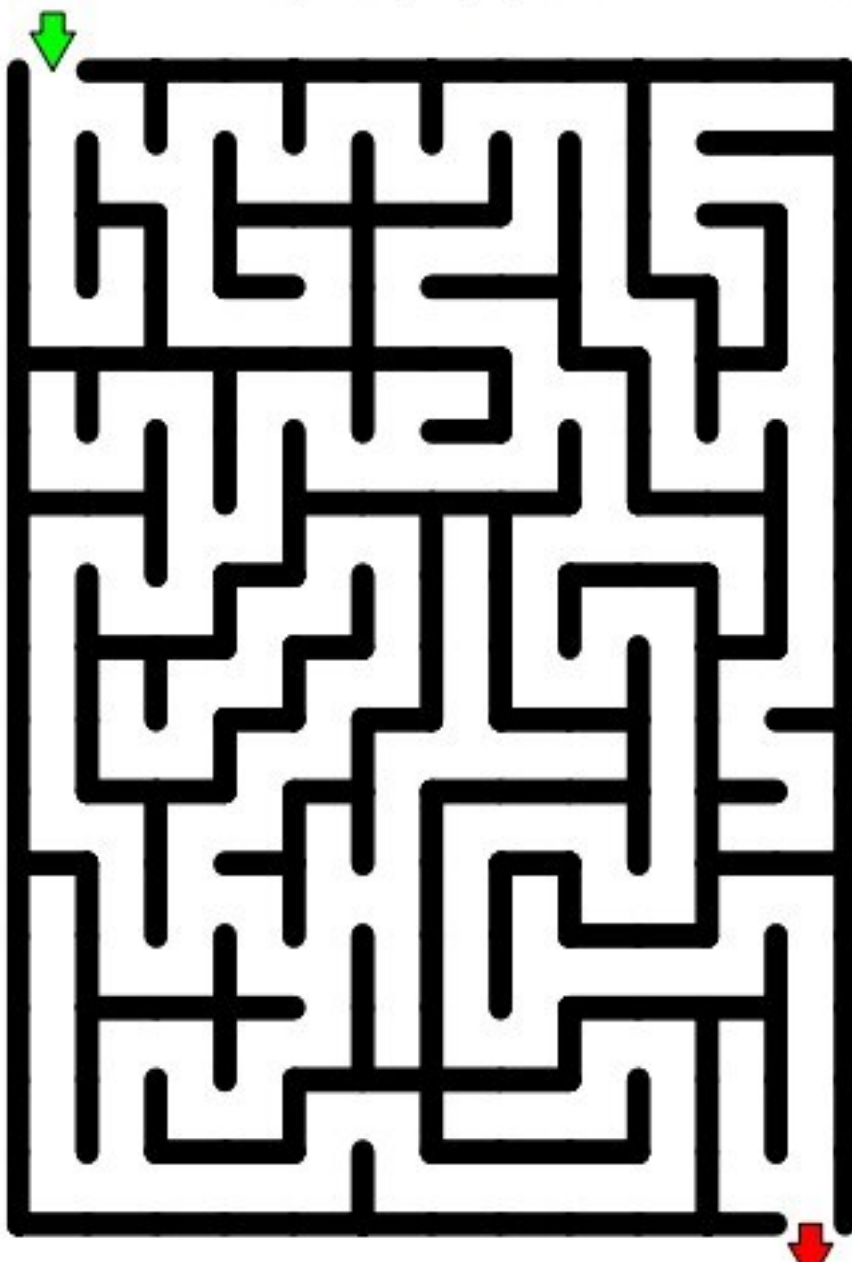


PETER • SIGNS • WONDERS • MIRACLES • HEALED
CRIPPLE • LAME • WALK • LEAPING • PRAISING • LIED • DIED • SICK
AENEAS • PARALISED • TABITHA • ILL • PRAYED • ALIVE

Find the words from the questions too!

May25© deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

Complete the Maze!



Colour in!



From the Register

Christian Funerals

April 2025

2nd	<i>Mrs Christine Marenghi RIP</i>
17th	<i>Mr Malcolm Dallimore RIP</i>
22nd	<i>Mr James Buckley RIP</i>
25th	<i>Mr David Arthur RIP</i>
30th	<i>Mrs Melva Clifton RIP</i>
<i>May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.</i>	





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

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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.***

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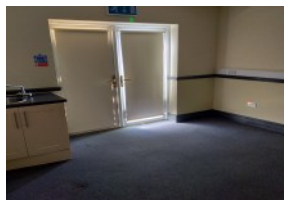
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Please Contact:

Christine Harvey: 01443 833123



Christine Harvey 01443 833123 / Booking Secretary.
Facebook Page: <https://facebook.com/Neuadd St Catwg Community Hall>

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!

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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)

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Solutions to this month's puzzles.

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

Answer to **Sudoku** on page 21

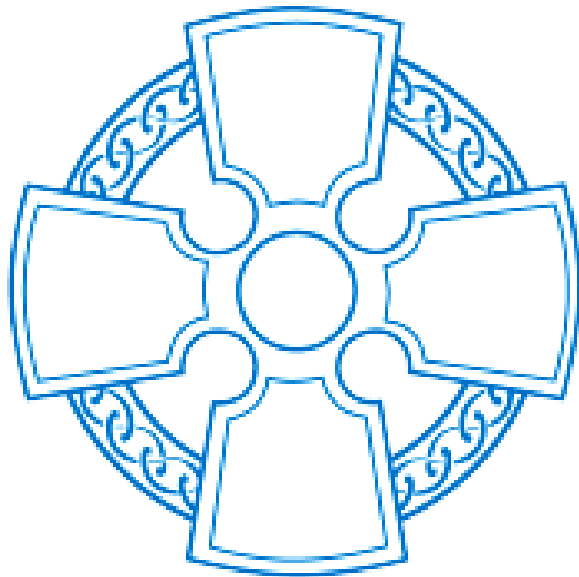
B	A	B	B	S	T	I	M	U	L	A	S
E	E										E
L	I	A	R	F	O	R	S	A	K	E	N
I	T	A	O	I	E	T					
E	P	I	S	C	O	P	A	C	Y		
V	N	C	S	O	P	D					
E	A	G	L	E	S	C	L	E	R	G	Y
R	S	P	S	O	O	I					
A	B	A	N	Y	I	G					
H	O	L	I	N	E	S	O	B	E	D	
A	O	C	E								
B	E	T	H	E	S	D	A	S	T	A	Y

Answers to **Crossword** on page 22

*This Publication was produced and printed by the Taff Rhymney Ministry Area,
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