



NEWYDDION BRO YSTUMANNER NEWS

August 2025

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Church attendance - times have changed

As some people know, I was brought up in Cowley in Oxford and, like the vast majority of local children, I was sent to Sunday School on Sunday afternoons, and the church was 'packed.' When I was 11 years old, I went to the Junior Youth club and started serving at the Eucharist on a Sunday. There were Eucharists at 8am and 10am and Evensong at 6.30pm. My 'claim to fame' is that during the sermon the server went to sit in the choir stalls next to the late Ronnie Barker the well know actor and comedian who lived in the parish and was in the choir.

The Junior Youth Club attendance was well over 100 every Wednesday evening in the parish hall and, later on, I joined the Senior Youth Club which met 2 nights a week - with about 150 attending.

There were 3 churches in the parish and almost all weddings and funerals were in church. You normally only got married in the Register Office if you had been divorced as you could not be re-married in church then.

The vast majority of children were baptised, nearly all weddings were conducted in church and funerals were almost always conducted in church by a priest. Now a great number are conducted at the Crematorium by a 'funeral celebrant' who has no connection with a Church or a chapel and I gather it is highly unusual for there to be any 'Christian content'.

When Celia and I began our ordained ministry in 1988 it wasn't unusual for us to take 3 or 4 funerals a week. One day I conducted 3 consecutive funerals at Coventry Crematorium!

This 'potted history' raises 3 big questions for me.

1. Why has the Church become irrelevant to most people?
2. Where has the Church - of all denominations - gone wrong?
3. Why didn't the churches and chapels do something about it?

On reflection, I think we have all 'swept these questions under the carpet' because church and chapel attendance has generally dramatically reduced over the past 60 or 70 years and nothing has been done.

I have said many times before that the motor industry went through a similar experience in the latter part of the 20th century. In the main, churches and chapels have carried on as if nothing has happened and, with a few exceptions, congregations have gone down and down. How long can that continue?

Perhaps the words of a lady at our Deanery Synod some years ago are shared by many of our congregations. We were discussing the big drop in church attendance over the preceding years and what we might do about it and she said 'as long as it sees me out, I'm not worried!'

People live very different lives now than in years gone by. For example, in our family, our son normally works weekends, our granddaughter is 'horse mad' and spends all day Saturday and Sunday at the stables, our grandson spends the time with his 'mates' either at home or at their homes and our daughter-in-law has a full-time managerial job which means she spends the weekend catching up on the housework and 'transporting' the children where they need to go.

I don't know what the answer is to the problem of ever reducing church attendance, but I am very sure that doing nothing isn't an option.

Answers on a postcard please....

School Pastors - an update -

As of today's date (August 8th), the cut off date for informing the Ascension Trust, the Pastors' umbrella organisation, of our intention of forming a School Pastor group, 11 people have offered their services to this ministry. There are still two people who have as yet to confirm their intentions. Ascension Trust are happy to go ahead to arrange the next steps, but we still need to pray for at least one other person who will join this merry band. It is hoped that we will become operational next May/June 2026. This initiative for Tywyn was instigated by the Police, via the Baptist Church as there were some minor concerns with drug related and vaping issues. However, this is no more a problem than in any other towns and cities.

School Pastors offer “practical Christianity”, listening, caring and helping and meeting the people where they are. After all, although Jesus did go to the Temple and synagogues, where did most of his ministry take place? Amongst the people, out and about. That is where we need to be.

Fiona Covington Mann

Congregational Meetings

The structure of meetings in Bro Ystumanner is based on a 4-monthly cycle, which includes Ministry Area Council meetings in March, July and November. Each MAC meeting is preceded by a Congregational Meeting in each church, in the months of February, April or May, and September or October.

Normally, Congregational Meeting dates would be arranged by Ruth, to ensure that she can attend and chair each one. For the present, churches are asked to decide the dates for themselves (and to arrange someone to chair).

RMW

Another Minute

An extract from the minute of the Archdeacon's opening remarks at the Ministry Area Vestry meeting on 10th June:

Robert observed that the last two years had not been the easiest, and the last had been tinged with sadness. He thanked everybody for keeping the Area functioning, involving many people in extra work, without which his and the Area Dean's lives would have been much more difficult. He encouraged us to see that as positive and to continue what we were doing."

RMW

National Week of Prayer

September 6th 2025 -September 14th 2025

Theme: - Gather, Refresh, Return

Did you know that there is a National Week of Prayer (NWoP)? Many churches nationwide are involved in this and are holding prayer events throughout the week, mainly online, from Newport in Wales to Aberdeen in Scotland the Isle of Wight and all places in between. For information, resources, school activities, how to join in and much, much more, go to nationalweekofprayer.uk

“Prayer just starts with a conversation.....”

Let us all join together to make the changes this world and its people so desperately need.

FCM

Physiotherapy and Outreach Program (POP)

Lesotho is a small highland landlocked country within South Africa with a population of 2.3 million. 50% live in poverty - the average wage is less than £1 per day; 23% of the population have HIV.

POP is transforming the lives of children with disabilities in Lesotho with practical solutions so they can have a better quality of life”

POP was founded by Jan Jeffrey, a physiotherapist from Aberdyfi! (see www.poplesotho.org). The not-for-profit organisation has been helping at least 1,000 children a year in 3 districts of Lesotho with:

Home visits, school classes for sports, physio, and training of parents and carers,

Equipment to help sitting , mobility, etc. Two workshops make equipment from cardboard, paper and glue.

Robust wheelchairs purchased from South Africa and repaired locally.
(Other aids come from the UK).

An off-road Toyota which will enable a mobile tented camp to reach remote areas, in order to support new children in need.

Out in Lesotho, both Jan and the project are now self-supporting.
Over 2026/7, the need to make the project self-sustaining requires a minimum of £25,000 per year for much-needed current operations, even without additional capital funding for workshop development, training course setup and a possible hospital department.



Students on course to learn how to make APT (Appropriate Paper-based Technology) chairs etc to size and function..

Some
examples at front.



Toilet with “hold-upright”
back and moveable bar to
hkeepchild in place

SO CAN YOU HELP JAN?

Donations can be made via [JustGiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com) – search ‘POP Lesotho’.
(the site takes 2.9% commission). Alternatively, contact Dr Margaret Morgan c/o the Presbyterian Church, Aberdyfi.

Margaret Morgan

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aberdyfi, St Peter's Church



Friday August 15th saw St Peter's celebrate 9 years of Messy Church . We had a wonderful turnout again of regulars and visitors who enjoyed the theme of Jesus Hands were Kind Hands . We look forward to welcoming everyone again in the October half term. If you haven't joined us yet ,do come along it is an uplifting morning of fun and fellowship.

St Peter's continues to be able to provide a service every week , and at this time of year we do have our regular holiday visitors. August also sees us join with the English Chapel to provide a service on the Wharf at 6pm . The weather has been particularly kind and the services well attended.

Hard to believe that we are going in to Autumn already ! Thanks to our faithful congregation and best wishes to all churches and their congregations in the Bro Ystumanner area .

Alison Sayes

Fairbourne, St Cynon's Church



Summer would not be summer without a cream tea!. A wonderful cream tea was enjoyed by many in the village hall. It was a chance not only to support the church, but also to get to know about the various groups that use the village hall.

More importantly, it was a chance for a chat and to enjoy a scone (cream and jam or is it jam and cream) with friends. Thank you to



all who helped in the kitchen, baked, and helped the afternoon run smoothly.

At 8 am, we held an intimate said morning prayer for VJ Day.

We will have a local Male Voice choir entertaining us on 17th September at 7 o'clock, followed by light refreshments. Please do come along. Keep an eye on the Ministry Area Facebook Page for more details

As always, please feel free to contact me for any pastoral support.

George Williams

Llanfihangel y Pennant, St Michael's Church



At the Celtic Sung Evensong on Friday 15th August, the congregation heard from Rev Steve Rollins, leading the service, that his father had served in the army in World War II in the Far East.

The final Celtic Evening Prayer service in St Michael's this year is at 3pm on Friday 26th September. With music and liturgy from the

Northumbria Community, we will be celebrating the festival of St Michael and All Angels. St Michael's church is a very special place – please join us for this service.

On a more practical note, we are moving towards being able to do the necessary repairs to the roof of the church. The final bat survey will be completed on 4th September and we should have the NRW license to commence the works in early October, subject to contractor availability.

Paul Inman

Pennal, St Peter ad Vincula Church

All that was promised has happened – the wall is now back to its original beautiful self, once again making the stunning East Window the central focus of our lovely church. The building is spotless thanks to the work of the army of Mums and children brandishing cloths and polishers. Although we have had some good services on Sundays at the back of the church it is good to be 'back to normal'. Our sincere thanks go to Paul Skeet for his guidance and to Esme Walker and her excellent team.



Services in September will go back to usual - each Sunday at 10.00 with Holy Eucharist on the second Sunday of the month. The coffee morning will be on the second Saturday, September 13th.

We will be celebrating the restoration of the wall – and hopefully the restoration of the Village Clock after its repair - with a Concert in the church on Wednesday, September 24th at 7.00 pm Taking part will be

the Dyfi Singers, who have practised in the church for some years, Pennal musician Alex Evans will play the cello, Alwyn Evans, Catrin O'Neill and Stephanie Windsor-Lewis will sing, and Stephanie's son Jack will play the organ. There will be a buffet supper available in Glan y Afon at 8.30pm. Details can be seen in the advertisement elsewhere in the Newsletter.

We plan to have a welcome service this month for the new bench now in place at the church door, kindly donated by Margaret and Peter Jones's family in memory of many years of her playing the organ so splendidly. We will at the same time mark a new stone on our memorial wall in memory of Jean Fage who also accompanied us on the organ for many years and who died recently after her 100th birthday.



Hugh Ramsbotham

Tywyn, St Cadfan's Church

Very little has happened recently at St. Cadfan's, though the remaining old high-level lights have been inspected and assessed by the Diocesan Architect. As we have the necessary funding, we shall go ahead with the replacements as soon as possible. The Vestry floor is now ready for its new floorcovering and the people who are fitting it have been to inspect the new concrete flooring, only to decide that the material they intended to put down was not in fact suitable. We now await delivery of an alternative material!



I suggested last month that Tywyn seemed quieter than in previous years, and this has certainly been true of our recent congregations. Strangely, it

Ardal Weinidogaeth
BRO YSTUMANNER
Ministry Area

Patronal Service of Celtic Evening Prayer

*with music and prayers
from the Northumbria Community*



3 pm Friday 26th September

*St Michael's Church
Llanfihangel y Pennant
LL36 9TS*



**St Peter ad Vincula
Pennal**

**COFFEE, CAKE,
& CHAT**

**10.00 – 12.00
Saturday Sept 13th**

**Do join us – always a
happy morning !**



CRAFTS FOR GIVING

**Monday 8th September
2.00-4.00 pm**

Glass Room, St Cadfan's Church, Tywyn



All knitters and stitchers welcome. We are still able to receive finished items to be given away, and oddments of yarn and other needlework materials (any we can't use will be given to someone who can)

has been the smaller midweek congregation which has held up best. The closure of Maengwyn Street and the restricted access to Corbett Square have almost certainly had an impact, not least on our coffee mornings, as the number of passing pedestrians is greatly reduced.

Nevertheless, Sunday worship continues to inspire and satisfy, and the Word of God is still preached and sung. As before, we are grateful for the help of our readers, NSMs, retired clergy and of the Rev. Esther Yates. We miss our Vicar, but are glad that her treatment has progressed as well as it has. We look forward to her return to our fellowship.

Max Birchenough

Anniversary Ring

Following a suggestion from one of our regular Talyllyn Railway volunteer visitors, herself an enthusiastic bellringer, the bell of St Cadfan's church was rung for an hour, starting at 6.30 p.m., on Friday, 15th August. Four volunteers took it in turns to ring for up to 10 minutes at a time. Bells were rung, starting at the same time, in many other churches, to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day, the true end of World War II.

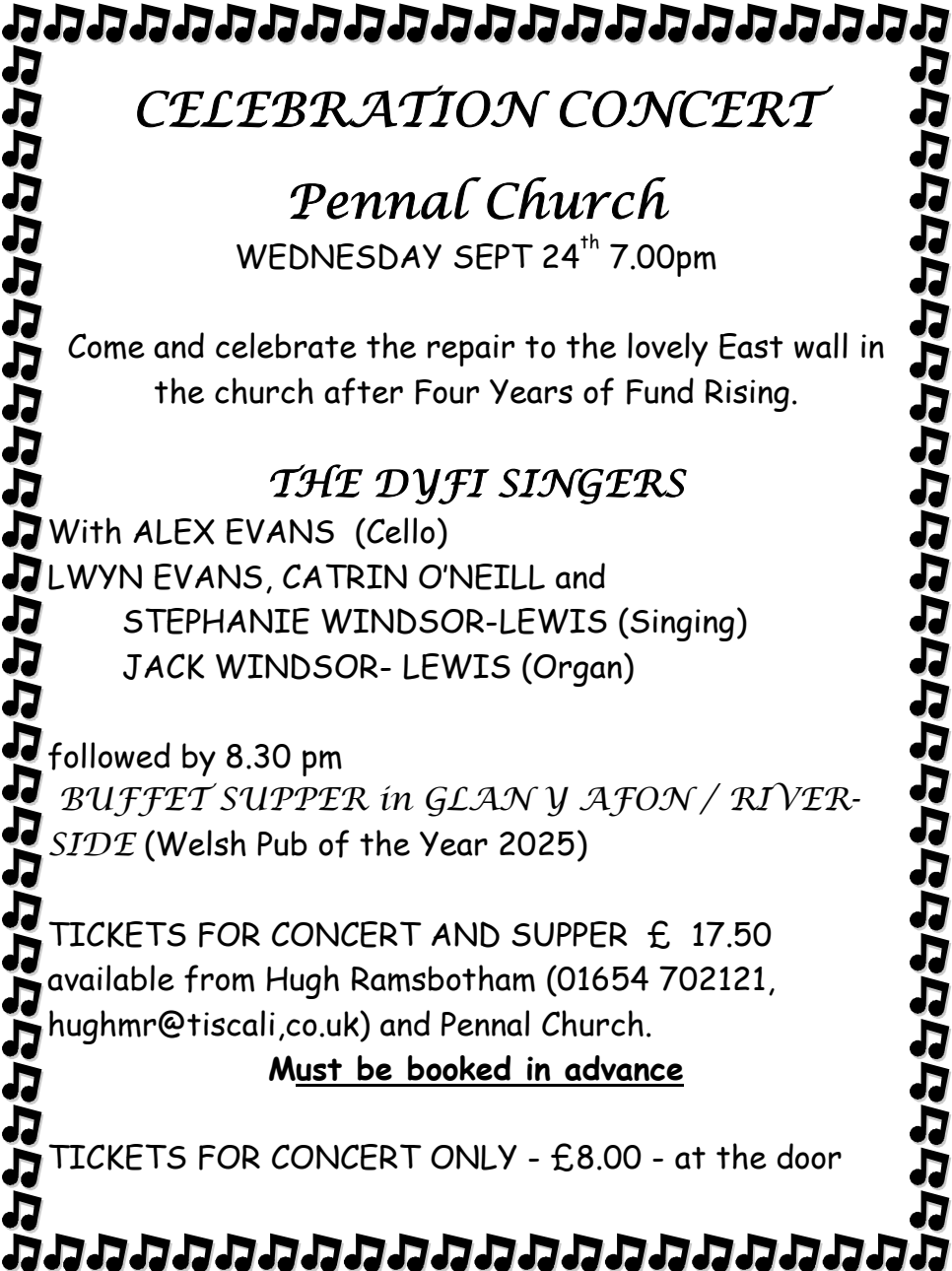
RMW

St Catherine's Church, Arthog

Our August service was a joyful gathering with ten of us when Archdeacon Robert led us in a service of Holy Eucharist followed by paned a chacenau. On September 21st we will meet for our annual service of Canu Emynau, Songs of Praise, led by Reverend George.



Our ongoing thanks to all who are supporting our services during Vicar



CELEBRATION CONCERT

Pennal Church

WEDNESDAY SEPT 24th 7.00pm

Come and celebrate the repair to the lovely East wall in
the church after Four Years of Fund Rising.

THE DYFI SINGERS

With ALEX EVANS (Cello)

LWYN EVANS, CATRIN O'NEILL and

STEPHANIE WINDSOR-LEWIS (Singing)

JACK WINDSOR- LEWIS (Organ)

followed by 8.30 pm

*BUFFET SUPPER in GLAN Y AFON / RIVER-
SIDE* (Welsh Pub of the Year 2025)

TICKETS FOR CONCERT AND SUPPER £ 17.50

available from Hugh Ramsbotham (01654 702121,

hughmr@tiscali.co.uk) and Pennal Church.

Must be booked in advance

TICKETS FOR CONCERT ONLY - £8.00 - at the door

Ruth's absence. We continue to hold her and Brendan and Krysty in our prayers and hearts.

Thanks too to Peredur for leading and organising the team to keep the churchyard in good order and to Carole for her music ministry.

Throughout the summer we have been delighted to read very appreciative comments in our Visitors' Book from people who take advantage of St Catherine's peaceful and quiet space to reflect or pray. They often leave requests on the prayer tree, which are prayed over during the week.

Catherine Horton

ADVANCED NOTICE OF OCTOBER DATES

Golden Girls

Golden Girls have been taking a break for the past few months, but will be back in the Autumn. The next meeting will be on Friday October 31st. Watch out for notices giving further details of time and venue.

Anita Inman 01654 711633

Croeso Dydd Mercher – Welcome Wednesdays

After the summer break Croeso Dydd Mercher – Welcome Wednesdays, our weekly drop-in, will be starting again on **Wednesday 8th October** – a date for your diaries!

Do join us then in the comfort of the Glass Room in St Cadfan's on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 4pm for fun and friendship and free refreshments.

Paul Inman

From the Temporary Emergency Editor!

Apologies for all the errors I am sure you will find in this edition! I'll try to sort them next time.

If you look at the little pictures of the churches by each name, you will see that some of them are not very good. I do have original files for some churches, but others I have had to get by scanning a past newsletter with not very good results. If the one for your church is poor, please can you see if someone has a good line drawing to send me. Other pictures: those which were sent embedded in an email, have also reproduced very poorly. Please put them as attachments if possible.

To those who receive your newsletter by email, you should have been able to read it on-screen with the pages in order. Please let me know of any problems.

Many thanks to those who got information to me by the earlier deadline. It made all the difference to getting the newsletter out. I apologise that the October deadline is also earlier than usual; I am still feeling my way as it is 10 years or so since I last did one.

For the October newsletter, please can you send "Dates for your Diary" directly to me, rather than to Roger.

LAST DATE for receipt of information

Friday 19th September

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Services in September

Weekday Services

Wednesdays 10.30am Holy Communion St Cadfan's, Tywyn
(September 17th – Followed by Prayers for Healing and Wholeness)

Friday 26th September 3pm Celtic Sung Evening Prayer
St Michael's, Llanfihangel-y-Pennant

Sunday 7th September – 12th Sunday after Trinity

9.30am	All Age Worship	St Celynnin's, Llwyngwrl
10am	Holy Communion	St David's, Abergynolwyn
10am	Morning Worship	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
11am	Morning Worship	St Cynon's, Fairbourne
11.15am	All Age Worship	St Peter's, Aberdyfi
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Cadfan's, Tywyn

Sunday 14th September – Holy Cross Sunday

10am	Holy Communion	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
11.15am	Morning Worship	St Mary & St Egryn, Llanegryn
11.15am	Morning Worship St	Peter's, Aberdyfi
11.15am	Morning Worship	St Cadfan's, Tywyn

Sunday 21st September – St Matthew, Apostle

9.30am	Holy Communion	St Celynnin's, Llwyngwrl
10am	Morning Worship	St David's, Abergynolwyn
10am	Morning Worship	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
11am	Holy Communion	St Cynon's, Fairbourne
11.15am	Holy Communion with Baptism	St Peter's, Aberdyfi
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
3pm	Songs of Praise	St Catherine's, Arthog

Sunday 28th September 15th Sunday after Trinity

10am	Morning Worship	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Mary & St Egryn, Llanegryn
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Peter's, Aberdyfi
11.15am	All Age Worship	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
5pm	Evening Prayer	Llangelynnin Old Church

Dates for your Diary

September

8th	2-4pm	Crafts for Giving	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
13th	10am to 12noon	Coffee Morning	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
19th		FINAL DATE FOR NEWSLETTER ENTRIES	
24th	7.00 pm	Concert	At Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
26th	3pm	Patronal Festival Celtic Sung Evening Prayer	St Michael's, Llanfihangel- y-Pennant

Every Wednesday from October 8th

Oct 8th	2-4pm	Welcome Wednes- day	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
Oct 15th		Welcome Wednes- day	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
Oct 22nd		Welcome Wednes- day	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
29th		Welcome Wednes- day	Welcome Wednesday

CONTACTS

Vicar and Ministry Area Team Leader	RevDrRuthHansford	Please contact Archdeacon Robert Townsend roberttownsend@cinw.org.uk 07789 940049
Self-Supporting Associate Vicars	RevChristinatenWolde RevDrSteveRollins Rev George Williams (Distinctive Deacon)	01654 767047 01654 288538 / 07594 976699 steverollins@cinw.org.uk 01341 250204
	[w] also Worship Leader	
Readers	SueWhitehouse Meryl Gover	01654 710135 07789 442035
LicensedLay Ministers		
<i>PastoralMinister</i>	FionaCovingtonMann	01654 711892
<i>FamilyMinisters</i>	ZoeHobbs AlisonSayes	01341 250993 01654 767474
Pastoral Assistant & Worship Leader	PaulInman	07980 374770
Safeguarding Officer	SueWhitehouse	07789 442035
Safeguarding Administrative Assis- tant	AlanFisher	01654 791651
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Newsletter editor	vacant	
Administrator	RogerWhitehouse	01654 712275 roger-m-whitehouse @supanet.com

Aberdyfi, St Peter

Churchwarden	Alison Sayes [w]	01654767474
Warden Emeritus	Eluned Fowles [w]	01654767570
Worship Leader	David Rynn	01654 767935
Organist	Fiona Covington-Mann	01654711892

Abergynolwyn, St David

Churchwarden	Janet Wright [w]	01654782632
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Arthog, St Catherine

<i>Fairbourne, St Cynon</i>	Ven Robert Townsen	07789940049
Representative	Rev George Williams	01341250204

***Llanegryn,
St Mary & St Egryn***

Churchwarden	William Williams Wynne
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***Llanfihangel-y-
Pennant, St Michael***

Administrator	Roger Whitehouse	01654712275
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***Llangelynnin Old-
Church, St Celynnin***

Deputy Churchwarden	Pat Griffiths	01341250131
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Llwyngwrl, St Celynnin

Deputy Churchwarden	Pat Griffiths	01341250131
Worship Leader	Sandy Lovett	01341 250788

***Pennal,
St Peter ad Vincula***

Churchwardens	Hugh Ramsbotham [w]	01654702121
	Alan Fisher	01654791651

[w] also Worship Leader

***Tywyn &
Bryncrug, St Cadfan***

Churchwardens	Charles Benedetto	01654710640/ 07707 483612
	John Vaughan Jones	01654 712116
Warden Emeritus	Meryl Gover	01654710135
Sacristan	Linda Birchenough	01654288473
Organists	Max Birchenough	01654288473
	Carol Thomas	01654712652
Flowers	Margaret Evans Sarah Taylor	

[w] also Worship Leader

