

Pont Ystumanner

NEWYDDION BRO YSTUMANNER NEWS

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A SURPRISE MEETING Sue Whitehouse

Storm "Goretti" threatened to disrupt plans for Roger and myself to attend the "Collation, Admission and Installation" of our daughter, Revd Canon Liz Hassall, as Archdeacon of York on 10 January. There was much media hype about this storm, and the ever cautious (!) Transport for Wales saw fit to cancel all Coast line services on Thursday the 8th, when we planned to travel. Lloyds Coaches came to our rescue and we caught the 0805 from Machynlleth and its connections (the storm warning didn't actually kick in until 3pm!!)

We are lucky to have both our daughters, a cousin and several friends living in or near York, so accommodation is rarely a problem, even though

Liz and family couldn't oblige this time due to a recent house move (aka cardboard box hell!) We were able to pay them a visit though.

On the Saturday afternoon twelve family members gathered at my cousin's house by the river for a champagne lunch, before congregating in York Minster for an extended and delightfully melodious Choral Evensong. But imagine our surprise and delight to be hailed in the entrance by the familiar voice of our own Archdeacon of Meirionnydd, the Ven. Robert Townsend! He and his wife Kath had made a detour on their way home from holiday further north, to attend the service - they were even ushered into seats next to us!

Liz, the new Archdeacon, didn't actually have a speaking part in the service, but was duly sworn in before Archbishop Stephen Cottrell beforehand, and conducted with all ceremony to her new stall. Two lessons were read, one by Revd Nicky (Nicola) Gladstone who had been Liz's curate in her previous parishes, the second by our other daughter Kathy Bowes, a further education teacher in York. When Kathy got up to read, her father was somewhat emotionally overcome, as both his daughters were in his field of view in the magnificent "quires and places where they sing".

And sing we did. The Minster choir gave us a lovely Magnificat setting by Michael Praetorius, "interpolated" with two ancient German Christmas carols; the Office hymn, which we all joined in, was "O Jesus, I have promised".

I invite all of you who are reading this, to look anew at the words of this hymn next time you're near a hymnbook...or Google... and consider how splendidly appropriate it is for the inauguration of a new chapter in someone's ministry. It's all about service. As archbishop Stephen pointed out in his rousing sermon, an Archdeacon is the servant of a broad section of the church community, providing support in a much wider context than the "gutters and leaking roofs" about which it is usual to consult them. And to this end, he added, the Archdeacon must look after himself or herself.

We in Bro Ystumanner know this only too well, of course; we are deeply grateful to Archdeacon Robert for being such an admirable go-to person, and wish Archdeacon Liz many years of fruitful ministry now that she too is "The Venerable".(She's only 45. Roger says "What does that make us - prehistoric?").

A Greetings from Rev. Ruth

Snowdrops are already raising their heads with some daffodils showing yellow through their buds. I've even seen several confused daisies and dandelions nodding in the breeze. All signs that we've turned the corner from dark to light, and spring, the season of new life, is on its way.

Yesterday (Jan 19th) was the anniversary of Paul's death (for any who are new readers, my husband had a brain tumour). It was good to gather with Brendan, Krysty, and my parents-in-law and sister to remember Paul in various ways over the last few days. When we visited his grave, we were very fortunate to enjoy blue sky and sunshine that differed markedly from the wind and rain at his funeral last Feb 14th!

It's been a long journey since Paul's diagnosis in Aug 2023 and my diagnosis with breast cancer in Dec 2024. The process of recovery, rebuilding and recalibrating our lives will take time, and has to be approached step by step.

The next step for me is a phased return to work starting at the beginning of February. Exactly what this will look like will be decided in discussion with the Archdeacon. Initially I look forward to gradually catching up with everyone to see how you are all doing and to hear from you what has been happening in all our churches and communities. Then we'll go on step by step from there.

As I meet up with you all again, there are a few things it may be helpful for you to know. First, like many others, I lost most of my hair during chemotherapy. It is now very short, a totally different colour to what it used to be and, in this weather, rather cold without a hat or a scarf. Therefore, you may, like me, take a while to adjust to my new look. Since I have not grown my hair from this short since I was a baby, it is hair looking for a hairstyle, so is liable to go through some 'awkward' phases in the next few weeks and months!

I had an oestrogen-positive tumour, so am now on an oestrogen inhibitor for the next 10 years – the 'super-menopause' phase of my treatment, as my consultant called it. This means that I (along with many breast cancer survivors), am prone to whatever menopause symptoms are individual to me for the whole of that time. One of mine seems to be transposing words where the word I say is different to what I intended to say, such as saying 'How was your Easter?' as opposed to 'How was your Christmas?'

I sometimes realise as soon as I've said it, but sometimes don't know until someone says, 'Did you mean ...?' So if I speak nonsense, please do ask!

My immune system is much better than it was, but as I went down with three viruses including Covid between the end of radiotherapy in mid-Sept and Christmas, full recovery is still a work in progress. Therefore, I would still be grateful to keep distance from anyone who knows they are down with some bug or virus. Thank you.

Foot problems stemming from plantar fasciitis that I developed in 2020 and its subsequent treatment are still not properly resolved so I may not be able to spring into action with Prayer Walks and anything else involving more walking as soon as I would like.

Finally, my memory has suffered during this journey and is not yet firing on all cylinders. Therefore, even if I know you really well, your name and where I know you from may well have slipped through a gap! It would be a great kindness if you would remind me of your name and where I know you from. In addition, do not be afraid to remind me of something more than once, as it may have gone in and then wandered off to some less accessible part of my brain!

I am not quite sure what shape things will end up this year, as previously Paul took the lead on home and parenting duties whilst I worked. Combining the roles is still rather new to me, and more challenging in a year when both Brendan and Krysty have A level and GCSE exams and are then moving on to new things. It will no doubt be an interesting journey.

Thank you to you all for your support and sensitivity throughout this phase of our journey. I look forward to catching up with you, listening to your litany of health issues rather than mine, and journeying with you in the coming year.

I also look forward to sharing with you in due course the new addition to



the garden at Y Ficerdy – a labyrinth beautifully constructed by my brother-in-law. A little Pilgrims' Poustinia (aka summerhouse) is to be built next to it soon to provide shelter and space to pause and ponder.

Rev. Ruth

*As we journey together,
may the Living Lord go with us;
may he go behind us, to encourage us,
beside us, to befriend us,
above us, to watch over us,
beneath us, to lift us from our sorrows,
within us, to give us the gifts of faith, hope, and love,
and always before us, to show us the way.*

Amen.

Lent Study Groups 2026

Lent begins early this year (Ash Wednesday is 18th February) and I have been asked to co-ordinate the Lent study groups again, which begin in the first proper week of Lent.

I therefore propose that we use the following:

The Messiah: The Texts Behind Handel's Masterpiece
(LifeGuide Bible Studies) by Douglas Connelly.

I have found enough copies for leaders of local chapels and churches, plus a few extras for those who want to have their own, at £8.50 each (they cost £13.75 from UK Amazon). It is in a workbook format and, as before, I hope to have copies available of the relevant sections plus the scriptural texts at each session.

Consultation with the leaders of the churches and chapels in Bro Ystumanner is ongoing as we go to press, but we aim to continue to use the pattern established recently: Wednesday late afternoons in Aberdyfi and Thursday mornings in the Glass Room at St Cadfan's. The first (introductory) session will be Wed 25 Feb in Aberdyfi (Time and venue TBC) and/or Thurs 26 Feb 10:30 am in the Glass Room, St Cadfan's. We plan to read pp 5-8 together and do

Study 1 His Name Is Wonderful: Messiah's Character (9-12) and

Study 2 The Virgin Will Be with Child: Messiah's Birth (13-17).

Subsequent sessions will be 4/5 Mar, 11/12 Mar & 18/19 Mar, finishing before Holy Week, with each session studying two sections of the book.

Rev Steve

New Year's Eve in London



Street Pastors - London New Year's Eve 2025/26

72 Street Pastors from all over the UK were invited to listen, to care and to help all those who had come into the capital to celebrate the end of 2025 and to witness the arrival of 2026. What a time we had! 12 teams of 6 Street Pastors, plus observers went out on patrol from 8pm. We had specific areas to patrol and ours was around Soho - (interesting), Covent Garden - (really vibrant), Strand and Trafalgar Square - (buzzin' with thousands of people).

We danced with the Hari Krishna crowd, had long, interesting conversations with a group of Muslims, who wanted to know more about what we did. In fact, everyone was very polite, welcoming and supportive.

When Big Ben chimed, the noise was overwhelming and the firework display, which we saw from Trafalgar Square, was brilliant. Unlike most years, the crowds dispersed quickly and by 1am, there were only a few revellers about. BUT, the number of homeless people/rough sleepers were enormous. After supplying many MacDonalds and offering coffee, it appears that the majority are not actually hungry or thirsty. The public are very generous supplying food and hot drinks and many of the larger outlets have “suspended” drinks systems. What these people crave is interactions with others, conversations, general chats and time.

So next time you see someone on the streets, don't "pass by" on the other side of the road." Yes, offer to buy food and drink, but ask how they are getting on, how they are coping and if you have a couple of minutes have a chat with them.

(We did over 25,000 steps that night too!)

School Pastors Update

At last the constitution has arrived (YAY!) and I'll be going through this with the relevant people this Friday, January 23rd.

Once this is in order, then we can start planning the training programme, so that patrols can hopefully start in September.

Fiona Covington-Mann

Where Next?

In the December magazine Roger rightly said that everyone has contributed to 'keeping the show on the road' and that is very commendable but what show are we keeping on the road?

In the last 25 years or so, church attendance and the number of baptisms, weddings and funerals conducted by a 'Christian minister' have all drastically reduced with very few exceptions.

I know of someone who is a 'funeral celebrant' who takes 6 or 7 funerals a week at the crematorium near where he lives. He has absolutely no connection with any religion. Not long ago those funerals would have been conducted by a Christian minister. My cousin's funeral in Swindon was taken by a funeral celebrant and, of course, there was no liturgy at all.

Many non-churchgoers seem to think that it is hypocritical to have a baptism, wedding or funeral conducted by a Christian minister because they never go to church and chapel. But they don't know that, in an induction service, these words are said to the new incumbent by the Bishop - 'Receive the cure of souls of this Ministry Area'. The Bishop does not say 'Receive the cure of souls of those who attend church regularly'.

Some time ago I picked up a brochure in a pub in Welshpool which advertised the services of a 'Naming Celebrant'. It said that churches and chapels made it very difficult to have a child 'named' and it had to be in a church or a chapel whereas the 'Naming celebrant' could conduct a ceremony anywhere and there were no 'rules and regulations'. Before I retired in 2001, I used to conduct about 35 baptisms, 25 weddings and about 150 funerals a year in a parish with a population of just over 11,000. Not only was that a worthwhile pastoral ministry, the weddings and funerals brought in a good income from the fees charged. There is no fee for a baptism in church.

We know that, with a few exceptions, attendance at churches and

chapels has been going down for a long time, and there must surely come a time when some will have to close. In fact, that has already started to happen.

My Dad used to say that 'you can't make decisions without the facts.' Therefore, I suggest that we need to find out how many baptisms, weddings and funerals have been conducted in our churches since the year 2000 and how many funerals have been conducted at the crematorium by one of our ministers. If I remember rightly, that should not be too difficult because each Ministry Area has to submit such information to the Church in Wales every year, and it might just be a question of finding those details.

I am prepared to co-ordinate a '1 off exercise' to do that and report to the M.A.C. if the members think it is worth doing.

Nigel Adams

Ministry Area

Farewell to the Bishop of Bardsey

Rt Revd David Morris, Bishop of Bardsey, will conclude his ministry in the diocese at a farewell service on Saturday 14th February in Bangor Cathedral at 12 noon. He will preside and preach at the Eucharist, and will lay down his pectoral cross and ring.

He presided at the Eucharist in St Cadfan's Church on December 21st, after sharing breakfast with Ruth and her family.

RMWhitehouse

Newsletter Subscriptions

This is the final call for subscriptions for printed copies of the 2026 Newsletter: please use the form on the last page of this issue.

If you wish to start receiving a copy electronically, please email your request to roger-m-whitehouse@supanet.com.

R M Whitehouse

Croeso Dydd Mercher

Welcome Wednesdays

2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

Eglwys Cadfan Sant
St Cadfan's Church
Tywyn



Join us at our mid-week meeting point.

Chat, free refreshments, friendship and support.

Board games, quizzes, crafting.

Or just come and enjoy the church.

Drop in and stay as long as you wish.

Contact: Paul Inman 07980 374770

**Croeso cynnes i bawb!
A warm welcome for everyone!**

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*Saturday
14th February
10 am - 12 noon
COFFEE
MORNING
Pennal Church
Donations to Church
Funds*

MONDAY 19TH FEBRUARY

CRAFTS FOR GIVING

2.00 - 4.00 PM

IN THE GLASS ROOM
ST CADFAN'S CHURCH

New knitters and natterers always
welcome

Sue W - 07789 448035

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aberdyfi, St Peter's Church

January and February are always a quiet couple of months for Aberdyfi (unless you are involved in Panto !!) and we pray for all local businesses at this time .

Here at St Peter's we are maintaining our services rota .. AAW , HE , MW and HE .. we enjoy praying together and our fellowship over coffee afterwards.

In the February half term we will hold our Messy Church session ... Why worry when you can pray ? ... we are aware that many children do not grow up knowing Our Lords Prayer or how to pray , so we pray we can have family fun learning / becoming aware of the positive power of prayer for all . Do join us and add your experience to this important conversation.

Please see poster for further details or contact me on 07718046343 .

We look forward to welcoming you .

A Sayers



Abergynolwyn – St David's Church

Our annual Plygain on 7th January was well attended despite it being a very cold night. It was lovely to welcome both the Reverend Canon Miriam Beecroft and Reverend George Williams to preside over the evening.



Reviewing events from last year we are delighted with the results of our fund raising and very grateful to those who kindly made a donation to the Church. Thank you very much to everyone, it keeps the doors open and the lights on!

Looking forward to February, we have two Services: Holy Eucharist

on Sunday 1st February 2026 and Morning Worship on Sunday 15th February 2026.

Take care, stay warm and Happy Valentines Day.

Janet Wright

Arthog – St Catherines Church



We were very pleased to welcome Rev Dr Carol Roberts, Ministry Area Leader from Eglwys y Santes Fair, Dolgellau, to our service of Holy Communion in January. She spoke from the first chapter of John's Gospel, about The Greatest Gift; calling on all of us during 2026 both to encourage someone who has helped us in our own discipleship, as John the Baptist did, and also to bring someone else to Jesus, as Andrew did for his brother Simon Peter.

Continuing thanks and appreciation go to Rev George for his work as Deacon here and to Carole Kind for her music ministry.

Our February gathering will be at 3pm on Sunday 15th, just before Ash Wednesday brings the beginning of Lent. In the meantime Rev Ruth, Brendan and Krysty will be in our thoughts and prayers.

Catherine Horton

Fairbourne, St Cynon's Church

We were pleased to welcome Rev Peter Ward, who preached and presided at our January Eucharist service.



Our gratitude to Arthog Community Council, who gave a donation towards the repair and restoration of the vandalised window. The donation, as you can imagine was very much appreciated.

In one of my recent Newsletters, I mentioned the Pudding club, you will be pleased to know that on Wednesday 11th February (and the 2nd Wednesday of each month) at 7pm in the village hall, you can eat and enjoy various puddings for £5. This month it's a batter/pancake theme.

We also wish Peter and Sue, all the best as they leave us to be closer to Sue's daughter in Hertfordshire.

As always, if you or you know of anyone who would like our prayers, pastoral support or home communion, please do get in touch.

The Joint Congregational Vestry Meeting (Fairbourne, Arthog and Llwyngwril) will be held in St Cynon's at 7pm on Monday 23rd February

Rev George

PUDDING CLUB



Friog & Fairbourne Village Hall

Wednesday 11th February 2026, then on the second Wednesday of each month at 7pm £5

Join us for a selection of Winter Puddings to eat and enjoy.

This month a batter / pancake theme.

Custard and Cream to serve.

Refreshments available

Please Join us for the evening

Tickets available

For more information, please contact June on 01341 250524

Llwyngwril, St. Celynnin,

December was quite a busy month with a Crib Service and our annual Candlelit Service at the Old Church, Llangelynnin. As usual the church was full with about 100 people enjoying singing carols and listening to the readings under twinkling candle lights. Many thanks to the few that decorated the church and put up the 200 candles.

January was a quiet month with the usual three services which are held on the first, third and fourth Sundays.

We are fortunate that our Worship Leader, Sandy Lovett, has been willing to lead many of the services during 2025 and appreciate all that she has done.

Pat Griffiths has also worked hard throughout 2025 preparing for the services. Like most churches we are short of helpers and we would appreciate any volunteers.

Ann Hackney



Pennal

We continue to hold Coffee Mornings on the second Saturday of every month. In February date is the 14th.

Alan Fisher



Tywyn.

“Though we are many, we are one body, for we all share in One Bread.”

I have to confess that I often look around at this point in the Communion Service, and feel that “many” is an exaggeration. But when one stops to consider all that happens at St. Cadfan’s, perhaps our numbers are more than we might at first imagine. As well as the regulars at Sunday services, there are more regulars at the midweek Communion on Wednesdays. Later that same day, there will be regulars at the Welcome Wednesday session; not, perhaps, a worship occasion in the normal sense of the word, but fellowship and encouragement nevertheless. Then there are the many who visit, some to leave comments in the Visitors Book (see my December report!), others to light candles as the only way they know to pray, and others to write in the Intercessions Book. All these add up to a greater ministry than a simple headcount on a Sunday morning would suggest. “(Thou) dost assure us thereby of Thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.”



Max Birchenough.

Golden Girls

Golden Girls are taking a break in February. The next ‘Get Together’ will be on Friday March 27th. Watch out for further details in the March Bro Ystumanner News.

Dates for your Diary - FEBRUARY

Wed	11	7 pm	Friog & Fairborne Pudding Club	Village Hall
Th	12	7 pm	Tywyn Congregational Meeting	Glass Room, St Cadfan's Church
Sat	14	12 noon	Farewell Eucharist for Bishop David	Bangor Cathedral
Sat	14	10-12	Coffee Morning	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
Fri	20	10-11.30	Messy Church	St Peter's, Aberdyfi
Fri	20	mid-night	LAST TIME FOR NEWSLETTER INFORMATION	
Mon	23	7pm	3 Churches Cong. Meeting	St Cynon's, Church
EITHER				
Wed	25	tba	1st Lent Study Group	tba Aberdyfi
OR/AND				
Th	26	'0.30 am	1st Lent Study Group	Glass Room, St Cadfan's

NEWSLETTER

Rather disappointingly, I have decided that the March Newsletter will come out for the first Sunday of March - March 1st. (The alternative being 22nd Feb. and you would have hardly had time to turn round before sending in your next information).

This means the cut-off date will be **Friday 20th February**.NO EXCEPTIONS!

As before, early information will be most welcome.

If you have an event on a certain date, it helps if you can repeat the date/time/item/place separately at the bottom so I get it into the Dates..

Services in February

Regular Weekday Services

Wednesdays 10.30am Holy Communion St Cadfan's, Tywyn
(February 11th – Followed by Prayers for Healing and Wholeness)

Sunday 1st February – 4th Sunday of Epiphany

9.30am	All Age Worship	St Celnnin's, Llwyngwril
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 8th February – Creation Sunday & Racial Justice Sunday

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

Sunday 15th February – Transfiguration Sunday

9.30am	Holy Communion	St Celynnin's, Llwyngwril
10am	Morning Worship	St David's, Abergynolwyn
11am	Holy Communion	St Cynon's, Fairbourne
11.15am	Morning Worship	St Peter's, Aberdyfi
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
3pm	Evening Prayer	St Catherine's, Arthog

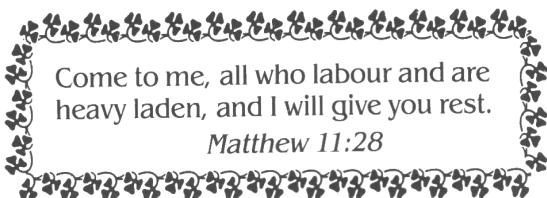
Wednesday 18th February – Ash Wednesday

10.30am	Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
7.30pm	Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes	St Cadfan's, Tywyn PTO

Sunday 22nd February - 1st Sunday of Lent

9.30am	Morning Worship	St Celynnin's, Llwyngwril
10am	Morning Worship	St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Peter's, Aberdyfi
11.15am	All Age Worship	St Cadfan's, Tywyn
11.15am	Holy Communion	St Mary & St Egryn, Llanegrynn

We look forward to welcoming you to our churches!



FUND RAISING

the GABERDINE SWINE



by Roy Mitchell



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<i>Family Ministers</i>	Zoe Hobbs Alison Sayes	01341 250993 07718046343
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Warden Emeritus	Eluned Fowles [w]	01654767570
Worship Leader	David Rynn	01654 767935
Organist	Fiona Covington-Mann	01654711892
<i>Abergynolwyn, St David</i>		
Churchwarden	Janet Wright [w]	01654782632
<i>Arthog, St Catherine</i>		
	Ven Robert Townsend	07789940049
<i>Fairbourne, St Cynon</i>		
Representative	Rev George Williams	01341250204
<i>Llanegryn, St Mary & St Egryn</i>		
Churchwarden	William Williams Wynne	
<i>Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, St Michael</i>		
Administrator	Roger Whitehouse	01654712275
<i>Llangelynnin Old Church, St Celynnin</i>		
Deputy Church-warden	Pat Griffiths	01341250131
<i>Llwyngwril, St Celynnin</i>		
Deputy Church-warden	Pat Griffiths	01341250131
Worship Leader	Sandy Lovett	01341 250788
<i>Pennal, St Peter ad Vincula</i>		
Churchwardens	Alan Fisher	01654791651

[w] also Worship Leader

Tywyn & Bryncrug, St Cadfan

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

[w] also Worship Leader

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out the form overleaf**

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