



Margam

Ministry Area Magazine



February 2025



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Happy New Year!

We're already well into the New Year and were probably hoping that January and February would offer some relative calm after the hustle and bustle of Christmas. The weather certainly hasn't been calm – I hope everyone has stayed safe – and, as this issue shows, there's lots happening across the Ministry Area!

Alongside our regular updates, there are some great photos from the Christmas period. Pop over to the website at www.margam.org.uk for more. There's also some archive material about Molly John, contributions from Adrian Warner and John Berry and dates for our diary with Margam Calling's Journey to Easter and the World Day of Prayer.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed. I know our readers like the eclectic mix of news, views and articles.

I hope you enjoy this month's magazine. If there's anything you'd like to see or ideas you have for content, please let me know.

Remember, anyone can contribute to the magazine. The deadline for contributions for the March issue is 20 February – articles, adverts and photos.

Happy reading!

Helen Murdoch

*Please send magazine or website contributions to me at:
helen@helenmurdochmarketing.com or call me on 01656 773645 or 07721 864493.
or by post to 7 Birch Walk, Porthcawl CF36 5AN*

COVER IMAGE: Stephen Kinnock MP visiting the Pyle Family Breakfast

EDITORIAL DEADLINE: The editorial deadline for every issue is close of business on the 20th of the month prior to the date of publication.

Keep up with Ministry Area news and updates:

On the website: www.margam.org.uk

And on our Facebook pages too:

- Churches of Newton, Nottage & Porthcawl in the Margam Ministry Area
- Churches of Pyle & Kenfig - Margam Abbey Church
- St Theodore's—St Colman in the Margam Ministry Area

Margam Calling

www.margamcalling.org.uk and www.facebook.com/MargamCalling

Dear Friends,

Fr. Jonathan

Firstly, Happy New Year to you all. I do hope 2025 will be a year of great blessing.

I am writing this during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which this year focuses on the question posed by Jesus to Martha: 'Do you believe this?' (John 11:26) from the Gospel of Story of the raising of Lazarus.

This year is the 1700th anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council, meeting in Nicaea in 325, which gathered Christian communities from around the world to strengthen their relationships as the Church of Jesus Christ. The council also established the Nicene Creed as a central statement of faith, which still remains integral today for us as Christians. The council of Nicaea was a momentous point in our Christian heritage, despite the many ways in which the church has diverged over the centuries. While some churches have retained a vision closer to that envisaged at Nicaea in 325, there are other parts of the Christian family who have adopted non-credal models, instead focusing on other forms of expression of shared Christian faith.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a time to celebrate our faith, to deepen our understanding and relationships with our fellow Christians, which strengthens our unity in diversity. It is an opportunity to celebrate, to draw strength and encouragement from the gift of our shared faith, especially in these troubled and turbulent times. The Church which met in Nicaea was one that had been shaken and wounded by violence and persecution, which many parts of the church across our world continues to experience today.

As we celebrate this significant anniversary, we are challenged to reflect on what may be getting in the way of our shared and collective witness as Christians, as we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world today.

Love and Prayers,

Fr. Jonathan



Christian Unity Service - Noddfa-Ruhamah Chapel, Philadelphia Road

Lent: Why 40 days?

Lent is meant to be a time of repentance. It is the 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter that are set aside to praise and worship the Lord; to read the Bible more, and to pray more often. Christians who observe Lent correctly anticipate deeper intimacy with the Lord.

The 40 days of Lent this year (weekdays excluding Sundays) begin on Wednesday, March 5th and end on Holy Saturday, April 19th.

But why is it 40 days?

40 is a significant number in Jewish-Christian scripture:

- In Genesis, the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain.
- The Hebrews spent 40 years in the wilderness before reaching the land promised to them by God.
- Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the ten commandments on Mount Sinai.
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Fr Wayne

Happy new year to you all. It has been a while since our last Ministry Area Magazine and so much has happened since our last edition. Christmas seems to have come and gone, we have taken down our trees and things have just slotted back in their normal places. However, December and January have been busy months. May I take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the other clergy in our Ministry Area to thank everybody for all their hard work during the build up to Christmas and throughout the Christmas season. As a Ministry Area, we are blessed with volunteers who go out of their way to take on roles and responsibilities without many of us even knowing. From those assisting in service preparation, to reading for services, to our musicians, to those who clean our premises, to producing articles for our magazine, to arranging flowers, to catering for services and events, to sorting out rotas and meeting contractors – the list can go on and on and I don't want to miss anyone out. Thank you all for your generosity of time and efforts to keep our Ministry Area being the success that it is. You all know who you are!

A new year gives us a chance for a fresh start. Many will have written new year's resolutions which may already be broken. I know gyms rub their hands together at the start of a new year as so many people join them and the month of January is their busiest time of the year. However, by February, many fall by the wayside and pay their memberships but don't bother attending. Some could even be stuck in 12 month contracts which are a drain to finances when the facilities are not used. But attending Church is not like that at all. We don't have to pay to attend our services. I wonder how many of us have made a new year's resolution to attend Church services more regularly or perhaps take on another service in perhaps another Church in our Ministry Area? Wouldn't it be lovely if our Churches were gaining numbers like gyms rather than dropping in congregations?

Unfortunately, we have lost a few faithful people from our Churches this year and we continue to pray for those we have lost and those who are left behind. For relatives, sometimes going back to Church

after a bereavement can be a difficult thing. But we must remember that they are still part of our Church family, so it is our responsibility to encourage them back and support their needs. Please be mindful of this when you see them next and tell them that we miss them and want them to come back into the fold.

I was chatting to a few people this week from various Churches across our Ministry Area and they were saying how they have noticed a drop in attendance figures. Just imagine if we all brought one person, perhaps a friend of neighbour or someone looking for a Church to our services, then our numbers would double. There are so many people in the areas where we live that need that little encouragement to step foot across the threshold of our Churches – people we should be looking out for and nurturing. And when they come, we need to be a lot more welcoming. The amount of times I have heard people turn to me and say that someone had been rude to them on their first visit that they would never enter ‘that place’ again is quite worrying. Terms like ‘You can’t sit there as that is my seat’ or ‘Your children were noisy today’ certainly don’t make people feel welcome. And some people need guidance through a service if the language and structure is alien to them. Let them sit by us and we can show them through it.

As Christians, it is our responsibility to let others know that God loves them and wants a relationship with them. We are all responsible for building the Kingdom of God here on earth – not just the Priest. So I challenge you this new year to think about how you can tell the joyful story and build on your capacity for doing good as we continue to work together in love in our Ministry Area. We are the Body of Christ here on earth. Let’s do away with nasty words, thoughts, actions and emails. Let’s be more Christlike in our approach to one another. And let us remember that when we support, encourage and love one another, when we are serving one another, it is actually Christ we are serving. Let me leave you with this Bible quote –

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you

gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Wise words from Jesus our King and Shepherd of the sheep.

God bless you all.

Fr Wayne

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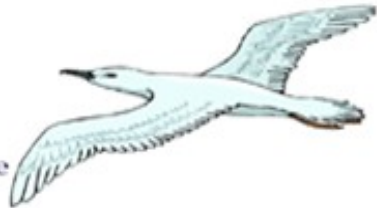
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Liberty lib'ar-ti, n.

freedom from constraint, captivity, slavery, or tyranny: freedom to do as one pleases:
the unrestrained enjoyment of natural rights: power of free choice : privileges:
permission free range: leisure: disposal: the bounds within which certain privileges are enjoyed.

"Chambers"

World Day of Prayer 2025



“I made you wonderful”

World Day of Prayer

Carol Pearce

Kia Orana!

Our sisters in The Cook Islands welcome us and lead us for the Day of Prayer 2025. This group of 15 islands in the South Pacific Ocean has a rich and colourful Māori heritage and a deep connection to nature. Join us as we pray together and reflect on the theme ‘I made you wonderful’.

World Day of Prayer is an international, ecumenical organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast, the service begins with the writing country and theme being chosen a number of years earlier. Once written it goes to the International Committee in New York for translation and dissemination to the National Committee in each participating country. The service is then discussed and edited before being presented nationally, regionally and then locally for branches to make their plans. Finally, at a church near you, on Friday 7 March 2025, people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of The Cook Islands.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world—through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later. A worldwide wave of prayer....

In Porthcawl, our service will be held in Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church at 2pm on Friday 7 March 2025. All are welcome.



Welsh Girl Wins £100

The following newspaper cuttings and information were posted on Facebook recently by Tony John, grandson of Molly John. Molly will be remembered by many Porthcawl parishioners as a familiar face in church and was particularly well known for the beautiful embroidery she did for church vestments. I remember as a young girl visiting her in Victoria Avenue to see the vestments she was embroidering for Fr Philip Ursell. Her work was exquisite, and it was the first time I had ever seen someone using such fine gold embroidery thread and gold kid leather.

But it seems, embroidery was not the only talent Molly possessed. Here is Tony's Facebook article:

Things you find out about your grandparents.

Well my grandmother, Molly John, was a dark horse. In 1927, aged 13, she won an essay competition and the prize money was £100!

My daughter went on a mission to find out more about her and discovered that she was always in the papers for her love of sewing and embroidery, as well as flowers when she was a judge on a few shows. It's crazy that she kept this all quiet.

Here are some newspaper clippings that she kept.



Welsh Girl Wins £100

Adoption by film company probable

There was an interesting little ceremony at the *Evening Express*, Cardiff, offices today when Mr Walter E. Dovey, South Wales Manager for the European Motion Picture Company, presented Miss Molly John, of Vinton Terrace, Porthcawl, with a cheque for £100.

Miss John, who is thirteen years of age, was the winner in the South Wales and Monmouthshire area of the essay competition promoted by Mr Carl Laemmle, the famous American film producer, on the film 'Les Miserables'.

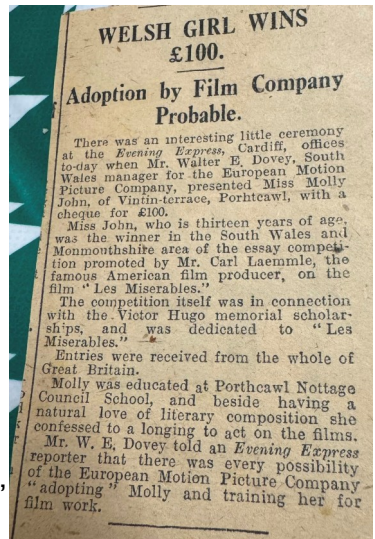
The competition itself was in connection with the Victor Hugo memorial scholarships, and was dedicated to 'Les Miserables'.

Entries were received from the whole of Great Britain.

Molly was educated at Porthcawl Nottage Council School, and beside having a natural love of literary composition she confessed to a longing to act on the films.

Mr W. E. Dovey told an *Evening Express* reporter that there was every possibility of the European Motion Picture Company "adopting" Molly and training her for film work.

Editor's note: The above is a transcript of the article in Western Mail 2 December 1927. The photo below is of the two letters received by Molly from the European Motion Picture Company. The photo on Page 10 is of George Beynon (proprietor of Cosy Cinema, Porthcawl), Cyril John, Molly John, Walter E. Dovey (South Wales Manager of European Motion Picture Co) and J W Rodgers (Trustee of Victor Hugo Memorial Scholarship). Mr Beynon reported that Molly watched "Les Miserables" four times at the Cosy Cinema on Porthcawl Harbourside honing her knowledge for the winning essay.





News from All Saints

Pam Rossini

The New Year – what will it bring?

We used to look forward to a New Year with marriages and babies being born and a general improvement in the welfare of people. This coming year, however, seems more dangerous than ever. We have Donald Trump in the White House, warning countries of trade tariffs and the repercussions these will make. The NHS is in desperate need of replacing with a better model, while social services are just about breaking. Elon Musk and AI may be the answer to our prayers! We will see.

One positive thing to come out of Trump's inauguration is that a Peace Agreement has finally been achieved between Israel and Hamas. Hopefully it will hold and food and medical help can be restored to those in Gaza. That war has been bloody and merciless, let us pray that peace will hold.

Ukraine is still being bombarded with rockets and all kinds of munitions while Putin has a firm hold on Russia. The heroes of Ukraine are still holding on, but how much longer will we stand by and watch this disaster?

Too much sadness and negativity and very little to look forward to. However, there was a good day for me last week. My daughter and I were to meet up with my infant great grand-daughter with her Mum at Forage, outside Cowbridge. The intention was that the little one could enjoy some outside play and we would then enjoy lunch in the restaurant. The day didn't bode well as it was quite misty, but then the sun broke out and all appeared OK until closer to Cowbridge heavy freezing fog covered the area.

Not to be put off, the little one and Mum set off striding across the mud to visit the chickens. We were all covered in mud and very cold. This didn't deter the smiles and laughter of little Lola. She enjoyed every moment, not in the least upset or disappointed that her part of the day was a wash-out! She remained cheerful through it all.

It has taught me a lesson – to be more positive and not give in, even

when life doesn't always show you it's better side. These little ones can show us in their innocence the joy, love and peace in our part of Wales, so let us give thanks for all that we have.



Pam Rossini

We were saddened to lose Doreen Lewis recently. Doreen was a stalwart in All Saints, the Mothers' Union and in many organisations around the town. We will always remember her with a smile on our faces as we recall her many fascinating and amusing tales. Rest In Peace, Doreen.

Porthcawl U3A hosted the BBC Radio 4's *Any Questions?* in All Saints church on 20th January. This popular discussion programme visits different parts of the UK with a panel of speakers answering audience questions. It provides an opportunity for people to challenge politicians, policy makers, writers and thinkers live on Radio 4 after the 8pm news. The event in All Saints was presented by BBC political correspondent Alex Forsyth with questions answered by the panel consisting of Eluned Morgan MS, First Minister of Wales, Mims Davies MP, Shadow Secretary for Wales, Sioned Williams MS, Plaid Cymru's spokesperson for social justice and early years, and Rupert Soames, Chair of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). If you would like to listen to this lively broadcast, it is available on BBC Sounds.

Helen Murdoch

“Be Still” Contemplative Prayer



Be Still is a scriptural-led quiet time with God. Hosted by Valerie Fyans, it is on the third Tuesday every month at 8pm on Zoom. Each session is approximately 40 minutes.

For more information, contact Valerie on 07881 818760.



Newton Nottage Mothers' Union

Judith Shawe

Our year ended with Carol singing and mince pies (not at the same time!) in our December meeting. Thanks must go to Father Graham for playing so willingly and excellently for us, leaving me free to sing! Made a nice change..

Sadly, we lost long time member Doreen Lewis. Doreen will be very much missed by us all, she was a real character. I was glad to see a good turnout of Mothers' Union members to say farewell at her funeral. Rest in peace, Doreen.

The Thursday Group surpassed themselves at the Christmas CROESO. Fr Wayne played for Come + Sing Christmas Carols and I'm grateful to him. Maria led the singing, well done to her too. Where was I? Indisposed, of course! Mince pies and mulled wine, a cake stall and a raffle raised £520 for church funds. Really well done girls!

The next CROESO Tea is on February 8th at 2pm in All Saints. Please do come and bring a friend

Mothers' Union meets on the first Tuesday of the month in All Saints Hall. Our speaker for February is Fr Geoff Lunn. Everyone is welcome.

Judith

Thank you

On behalf of Bridgend Foodbank, I'd like to thank you all for your generous donations to Foodbank. Over the Christmas period, I was given over £500 in cash, and lots of tins and packets.

Thank you all.

Remember, the purple bucket (at the back of the Porthcawl churches) is for donations, and I'm always ready to take cash!

Judith Shawe



Thank you



News from St David's

Pat Parry

We were all shocked to hear of the sudden death of Mark Powell, husband of Catherine, our Warden, and son -in-law of Clive and Gil Edwards. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their sons James and Nathan.

Gill Williams, a faithful member of our church also died in January after a short illness . Our sympathy is extended to her daughters. Barry Griffin, husband of Annette who attended our Sunday afternoon service also died in January. He had been well looked after and nursed in the Masonic Home in Porthcawl for some time. Our condolences go out to Annette.

On a brighter note, over Christmas during the Nursery holidays, the doors were open at the back of the church, extending the space for the well -attended Cub and Guide Service. The children read lessons and prayers and had learned songs. My granddaughter, Sylvie, has joined the Rainbow troop that meet in St David's and they sang 'Away in a Manger' with actions.

On Christmas Eve, Fr. Wayne had organised a Crib service which was well attended with many children. The children had to search the church for the characters to place in the back-lit crib. It certainly kept them interested.



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News from St John's

Diane Jackson

Although it's now the end of January, I hope it's not too late to wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year.

Advent and Christmas did not start well for us, with the church being broken into in the early hours of Friday 6th December. As most of you will be aware, one of our old and beautiful stained glass windows was damaged as the thieves attempted to gain access. Other than the damage to the window and the loss of a small sum of money, which had been given for candles, no other loss or damage happened.

Nevertheless, it has been a very upsetting experience, especially for Denver and Margaret who discovered the break-in. On a much lighter note, perhaps the thieves had heard there may have been turkeys stored there and they were looking for a cheap Christmas dinner! Seriously, the response to this has been so heart warming. Special thanks go to Nicola Willis who set up the Gofundme website to help with the insurance excess and to all who contributed, many of whom, whilst having an association with the church, many not necessarily attend on a regular basis. The cost of repair (about £6000) will hopefully be covered by Insurance with the excess being covered by the money raised. Many thanks to all who donated. It means so much that our church holds a special place in so many hearts.

During Advent many of the usual services took place, including Darkness into Light, Community Carol services and our own Christmas Eve Carol Service - with plenty of mince pies and mulled wine! All were attended with a varying degree of people depending on the weather and during the early part of December we were certainly hit with some very bad storms.

Our Christmas Coffee Morning (the same morning as the break in was discovered) followed our Morning Service, which was also held in the School Room as we were not allowed to enter the church until the police arrived. The weather that morning was fortunately good so we had a good turn-out. We had a super raffle and everyone was very generous in supporting it. As a result we raised over nearly £300 for church funds. Despite the upset, it was still a lovely jolly morning.



The Sunday after, we enjoyed another excellent Christmas Lunch prepared and served by Janice and her wonderful band of helpers. It was a very pleasant afternoon and the lunch and Coffee Morning were spent in true Christian Fellowship. The Church was beautifully decorated by the talented and dedicated ladies of the Flower Guild, lead by Sandra, who seems to come up on each and every occasion, with something different and original. Thank you ladies for your time and effort, we're so lucky to have them.

John Berry has written a book called 'Cogitations of an old Codger' copies of which were available on the above occasions, and which could be acquired for a donation, all of which John very generously gave to the church. Thank you John for your cogitations and your generosity. It is a very good read, what a remarkable life he has lead. Having travelled the world and made such a contribution to so many communities, we have been very lucky that he settled in Porthcawl where he has a made fantastic contribution to organisations in the town, especially those with a Christian association. As he says, now in his 89th year, he gives thanks for the time given to witness, to serve and to be served. Reading it makes you feel very humble.

It's nice to see the Advent Candles still in place until Candlemas on 2 Feb (40 days since Christmas). Traditionally it marks the presentation of Jesus to the temple by Mary and Joseph and the purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I will end with good news! Those of us who've been brave enough to attend services despite the cold, may, in the not too distant future, have heating. The boiler is now in situ, though still not operational - nearly 12 months since it all started! Our thanks to Fr Wayne (although this is not now supposed to be his responsibility) for giving so much of his time, including his day off, to ensure we have heating and the work gets done. It's been a difficult period for him whilst he settles in and we all get used to one another. With the shortage of clergy, we are very lucky to have him, with both his care, drive and energy. We hold him in our prayers as he continues his ministry with us into the coming year.

WANTED

YOUR HELP

We are looking for people with the following skills, or an interest in being involved in a new type of service in the Ministry Area.

If you or someone you know might be interested please pass on these details. Being a regular worshiper, age or being a professional are not essential.

Band Members - Singers & Musicians

We are forming a worship group and if you're a musician, instrumentalist or singer who might be interested please get in touch.

Sound Board Operator

If you're interested in sound and have the ability to operate a sound board setup for a service or are interested in learning, please let us know.

Lighting Setup Operator

If you're interested in or have expertise in setting up and operating stage lighting please let us know.

Live Streaming -Filming

Interested or able to live stream services or make small videos for Instagram or Facebook.



Contact James

mmamissiongroup@gmail.com or 07432 483527





this season

Our Journey to Easter 2025

Join us every fortnight from Sunday 2nd February, as we explore the life and ministry of Jesus through inspiring themes: discipleship, God's Kingdom, grace, love, sacrifice, and the path to the cross.

Prepare your heart for Easter with worship, reflection, and fellowship.

Sunday, 2nd February - The Call to Discipleship

Sunday, 16th February - The Kingdom of God is Near

Sunday, 2nd March - Transformed by Grace -
Special Speaker The Dean of Llandaff

Sunday, 16th March - The Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep

Sunday, 30th March - The Way of the Cross

Sunday, 13th April (Palm Sunday) - The King on a Donkey

St Theodore's Church @ 5:30pm

remember/
**you're
invited!!**

www.margamecalling.org.uk

Christmas Sparkle and The Family Breakfast

Jan Battrick

Christmas Sparkle has just completed its third round. This charitable objective aims to provide new, or as good as new, toys to families who could not otherwise afford them. Initiated by Mrs. Vanessa Evans from St. James, the scheme was adopted by the Mission Group and has since grown from strength to strength. We now accept donations from other churches within the Ministry Area in addition to those from other groups and individuals. As a result, last Christmas over 500 children received some very welcome gifts.

We are truly grateful to everyone who donated or helped with deliveries to make this possible.

We now average about 80 people per week attending Family Breakfast. We are all delighted by the way The Family Breakfast has grown whilst regretting the circumstances which make it a necessity in our area. We still operate on a "Take if you need, donate if you can" basis. Financially in theory, it shouldn't work, but, thanks to the very generous support from businesses and individuals, it does. This Christmas, in addition to the weekly support offered every Saturday, we were also able to supply "Bonus Bags" and Asda vouchers to the families most in need to tide them over this demanding period.

The children who attend Family Breakfast were delighted to welcome Father Christmas and his elf on the 14th December. As Father Christmas is rather short of stature and his elf is particularly tall, they made an interesting and very entertaining duo! As well as the selection boxes donated by the Community Council, a very kind lady also provided gift bags of toys and sweets for every child. Having grown up in a large family when times were hard, she now wanted to make sure that these children had a particularly good Christmas. The kindness of individuals in our community never ceases to amaze me.

The following Saturday we were delighted to welcome Father Jonathan Durley for a Christingle service. With their parents, the children made their own Christingle, as Father Jonathan explained the meaning of each component. Carols were sung and prayers were said and this

year it was so good to see adults without children staying to participate in the service and share in the joy of Christmas.

As we approach our second birthday, we were delighted to welcome Stephen Kinnock MP to join us. He noted that the Family Breakfast was unique in that it combined a sociable community venue with food and pantry provision without any sense of discrimination. He suggested that it was a model that could be adopted elsewhere.

Familiar Phrases from the Good Book

Do puzzles sometimes drive you to your wits' end? Or are they always a labour of love? Do some answers come to you in the twinkling of an eye, while others keep you pondering until the eleventh hour? If someone tries to help does it feel like the blind leading the blind? Or does other people's advice fall on stony ground? Did you know that all of these familiar sayings come from the King James' Bible!

At one's wits' end is from the Old Testament, Psalm 107: 'They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.'

The other examples are from the New Testament.

In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says of the Pharisees: 'Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.'

The phrase 'eleventh hour' is from a parable, also in Matthew, where vineyard workers who turn up at the eleventh hour still get paid for a full day's work. The parable of the farmer who sows seeds 'on stony ground' where they do not thrive is from Mark's Gospel.

'In the twinkling of an eye' appears in Corinthians: 'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.'

'Labour of love' appears in both the Old Testament (Hebrews) and the New (Thessalonians).

So, don't give up the ghost (from Genesis) just yet. There's no peace for the wicked (Isaiah) in the world of puzzles. If you believe you can finish them then faith will move mountains (Matthew). Press on, fight the good fight (Timothy) and then you can eat, drink and be merry (Ecclesiastes).

A Tribute to Margaret Griffiths

Fr Jonathan Durley

This is an excerpt from the Address provided at the funeral service of Margaret Griffiths, St Theodore's Church, Kenfig Hill on Monday 16th December 2024.

'It's been said that where love is given, life is given, and Margaret gave her life and love to so many over the course of the decades of her life. To her much-loved family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and the many with whom she connected through the many avenues of service. With each person she loved, she practiced the giving away of herself.

If ever I've known a person who could be described as being full of good works, it was Margaret, no matter whether it was with her much-loved family; her church family here in St Theodore's; the wider Margam Ministry Area; in the wider community of Bridgend and the province of Wales, of which she held such great pride. Margaret responded to the call to serve, so humbly, never tooting her own



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www.margam.org.uk/st-theodores-theos

horn, hesitating or complaining. That is unless you mentioned key terms such as the Daily Mail, Brexit, Library closures or immigration, where she would readily let you know her views firmly based on social justice. As on all these subjects Margaret would take no prisoners. As she was a true champion for inclusivity, challenging fake news, promoting open borders and providing grass roots access to information, literature and knowledge! She just knew and did what was needed to be done or to act, both humbly and tirelessly.

Even in supposed retirement, she readily took up or continued the roles as funding development officer for St Theodore's re-ordering; Parish Warden & PCC Secretary; Sub-Warden; Ministry Area Council Member; Magazine correspondent from St Theodore's. Then there was her love of music with the many Choirs in which she sang; being a Breakfast Project volunteer; Distributor of Christmas Presents for the Sparkle Campaign; School Governor; Awen Trustee; Dementia Friend; and a community befriender.....Even putting out the weekly refuse for her church, her service knew no bounds and it was not beyond what she felt was her sense of duty and her call as a Christian. As in all her actions there was always a sense of social responsibility, because she cared about her community. And this address just scratches the surface as we celebrate her life and faith.

Margaret's Christian faith and belief in the resurrection was fundamental to her life and witness. Margaret lived her life because of her immense love for her family, her love for others and her belief in the resurrection of Christ. Her faith was the core of her inner being which sustained her, motivated her and gave her optimism in life. She returns to God with a multiple increase of the talents given to her in life. For certain, she will hear the words of the Lord saying to her "Well done, good and faithful servant!

Margaret was the stature of being strong, loving and wise. It was only in having more strength, more love, more wisdom and indeed, more faith that Margaret was able to be larger than any other obstacle or challenge in her life.

Requiescat in Pace.'



News from Margam Abbey

Bev Gulley

At Margam Abbey, we are looking forward to a busy and varied 2025, and hope to be part of the celebrations for the Urdd Eisteddfod, taking place in Margam Park from the 26th – 31st of May.

Visits:

Are you looking for somewhere to visit with your group, or friends in 2025? Margam Abbey is the perfect place to visit and a warm welcome is assured, with guided tours and bespoke visits to suit your needs. Coffee and cake always provided. With free parking to the Abbey front, our own entrance into the park, as well as the Stones Museum (some of the finest Celtic Stones in Britain) nestled in the graveyard, and our ever-popular Gift Shop, there is something for everyone. Do contact Bev Gulley 07530 421220 if you wish to enquire about the tours (with knowledgeable guides), from the General Margam Abbey guided tour, to 'Stories in Stone', 'The Monks of Margam', 'The Talbots of Margam', 'Trails and Tales around the graveyard', 'The History and Conservation of Vestments' and more. No group too big or small.

Our Mothers' Union continues to thrive in Margam Abbey with four new members admitted in 2024, bringing our total membership to 22. We have had excellent speakers and enjoyed visits including one to Our Lady of Margam Catholic Church last July. Our Christmas lunch at Blancos was most enjoyable and last October a number of our members attended a charity lunch in aid of 'Save The Children'. We continue to give money to the Caravan and other MU charities, and look forward to the year ahead, when we can share fellowship and, with God's help, uphold the values of the Mothers Union'. A Happy healthy and peaceful 2025. Our Mothers' Union meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 2pm and new and prospective members are always welcome. In February, we will be reading out our favourite pieces of poetry.

Music: We have a fledgling choir at the Abbey, under the watchful eye of Nigel Wills and are looking for more members (ability to read music, desirable but not essential). Choir practice is Sunday at



9.30am. For further information contact Nigel on 07825 702119 or wills.nigel@gmail.com.

At 7pm on Saturday March 15th, The Ed Jones Jazz Quartet again play in the Drill Hall.

From the 17th - 19th of February there are singing tutorials in the Drill Hall, with Maestro Maurizio Colacicchi and at 6pm on Saturday the 22nd of February, an Organ/Concert Pianist Maurizio Colacicchi with Soprano and Mezzo Soprano (tbc); the music of Francesco Paolo Tosti and Luigi Denza, arranged via the Italian Institute.

The Craft/Children's Corner continues to thrive, by the enthusiasm of Liz, who with Francesca, Katie and Ceri-Anne are running 'Messy Church' (Theme: Creation) on Wednesday the 26th of February (in half term).

Looking Forward - In the church on Saturday the 1st of March, we have a 'Welsh Themed' day; costumes, food, and music. We can't wait. Stations of the Cross commence followed by Lenten lunches in preparation for Easter. Do join us.

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Cogitations of an Old Codger

John Berry BEM

Editor's Note: It was a delight in December to be invited to the launch of John Berry's book "Cogitations of an Old Codger". As John says this book is "the musings of a (sometimes) maverick. A brief, autobiographical glimpse into a very full life: no skeletons — no scandals — no fights!" Congratulations, John, on this publication. Here is short excerpt to give you a flavour of its contents.

Together

"Next Sunday we will exchange pulpits with the Methodists."

To a nine-year old choirboy a pulpit was a rather large wooden structure that the vicar mounted every Sunday to talk to the congregation – as he had his back to us we choirboys didn't take much notice of him at that point! Now my mind was in a whirl – will the Methodist pulpit be as nice as ours and how will they move such a big item! Exchange of pulpits meant that the preacher would be from another Church, our vicar would go to their service. It was the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 1945.

Ten years later I was in uniform in Germany, as the organist in the Anglican church the padre talked with me about the Week of Prayer. He knew I played occasionally for the Roman Catholic (RC) and the Free Church services. He had Ministerial contacts with the Lutheran Church in the local town.

The Anglican Church (Church of England or CofE in the armed forces) was the main church building. When fully opened it could seat five hundred, though our weekly congregation was about fifty. The RC and Free Churches plus the local RC and Lutheran congregations were invited to join our Sunday morning worship in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Although he had been keen for this service to take place, the Padre became increasingly nervous, would anyone turn up, would they know the hymns (choice of hymns was left to the organist – we knew who would be responsible if there was a disaster in that area!). The Lutheran Minister had been asked to preach. Then the RC priest made

Holy Spirit

Adrian Warner

After a funeral in Porthcawl in January 2025, a parishioner quizzed me about my religious philosophy. Reluctantly, I explained; he said "you must publish this", so . . .

With a long life behind me I have come to imagine myself ten thousand miles away from the earth. Looking back I see about eighty religions including a few major ones. Their devotees sincerely believe their own creeds and avidly practise prescribed rituals, they have 'ordained' leaders and their own calendars of special annual events. Excellent. Mostly, however, they seem to each aver that they are "the true religion" and can 'prove' the others false. But they are all correct and they have something else - individuals care for each other.

Now from space, with ghostly hindsight perhaps, I can see that all the eighty creeds should be put into a retort and heated gently. The initial vapour coming off would be the mingling of the highest essence of each. This would be a treasure indeed : wholly Holy Spirit.

Cogitations continued

it known he would be present, so he was invited to lead the prayers. On Sunday morning the church was set up optimistically with some three hundred chairs - more and more had to be brought in until the church was packed to standing room! Then, consternation, it was realised that the Burgermeister (Mayor) was in the congregation; he had to be brought forward and a seat found for him beside the Station Commander!

The first hymn was The Church's One Foundation to the tune Cruger. It was one of those back-of-the-neck hair-raising moments as the entire congregation joined in the singing. All the hymns were set to music by German composers finishing with Thine Be the Glory to Handel's Judas Maccabeus.

That was my first real interdenominational service. Over the years since then i have experienced many different forms of recognising the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



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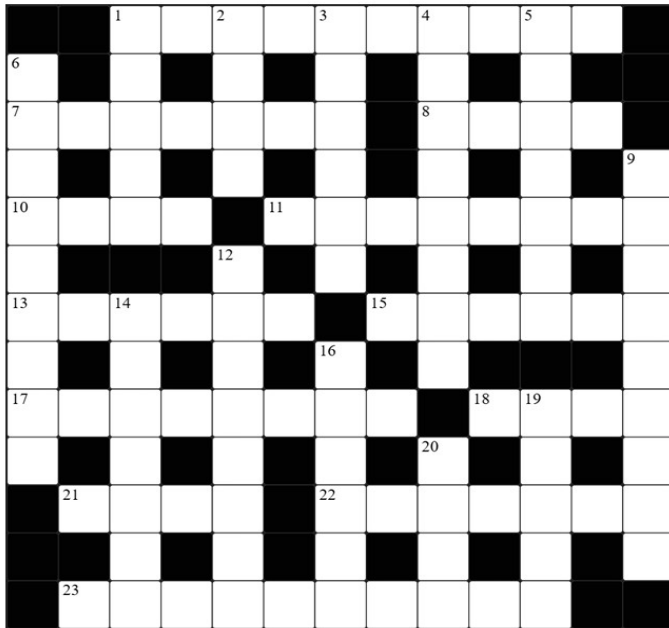
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Quick Crossword



Across

- 1 Badly dealt with (10)
- 7 Countryside walker (7)
- 8 Liberated (4)
- 10 Curved structure (4)
- 11 All people (8)
- 13 Fought with swords (6)
- 15 Material for violin strings (6)
- 17 Indoor footwear (8)
- 18 Scrutinise (4)
- 21 Fortified wine (4)
- 22 Bind tight with clothes (7)
- 23 Unhappy (10)

Down

- 1 Imitate (5)
- 2 Sodium chloride (4)
- 3 Come to the destination (6)
- 4 Postponement (8)
- 5 Soon (7)
- 6 Morning meal (9)
- 9 Judicial penalties (9)
- 12 Tyrannical (8)
- 14 Capital of Kenya (7)
- 16 Jail (6)
- 19 Trainee officer (5)
- 20 Female horse (4)

Quick Crossword Answer (page29)



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Monday: Mass at 12.00
Wednesday: Mass at 11.00

MARGAM ABBEY, Margam

Sunday: Mass at 08.30 & 11.15
Wednesday: Mass at 10.00

ST DAVID'S, Nottage

Sunday: Mass at 09.30 & 17.00
Thursday: Mass at 10.30

ST JAMES, Pyle

Sunday: Mass at 11.15
Wednesday: Mass at 10.00

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, Newton

Sunday: Mass at 08.30 & 11.15
Evensong at **18.00**
Tuesday & Friday: Mass at 10.30

ST MARY MAGDALENE, Maudlam

Sunday: Mass at 09.30
Wednesday: Mass at 11.00

ST THEODORE'S, Kenfig Hill

Sunday: Mass at 10.00
Family Mass 1st Sunday of the month
Margam Calling - 5.30pm every other Sunday
see www.margamcalling.org.uk for details
Wednesday: Mass at 10.00

*For details of all other services,
visit www.margam.org.uk*

Pause for Thought

Dance in the Rain

Life isn't just waiting for storm clouds to pass
It's learning to dance in the rain.
It's looking for rainbows and seeking for joy
And knowing that love will remain.
This life has its problems, it's worries and woes
And each of us must take our share.
But look at the seasons and all that they give
There's beauty around everywhere.
And seek for the wonder, the laughter and love
The friendship to warm heart and mind.
Go forward with courage and follow your star
And leave past misfortunes behind.
Hold fast to your hopes and keep them all safe
Your daydreams are never in vain.
Be strong and be cheerful in all of life's storms
And learn to dance in the rain.

*A poem by Vivian Greene which was read at
Doreen Lewis's Thanksgiving Service
on Friday 3rd January 2025*



Margam Ministry Area

Clergy:

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Porthcawl Churches Office PorthcawlChurches@gmail.com
Fr Wayne David 01656 858935 WayneDavid@cinw.org.uk
The Rev'd Dr Duncan Walker 01656 740500 revduncan.walker@hotmail.co.uk
The Rev'd Claire Stowell 07813 767956 stowellclaire@gmail.com

Reader:

Mrs Grace Wylde 07966 083196 gwylde16@outlook.com

Chair of the Ministry Area Council:

Mrs Wendy Xerri 07752 487467 wendy@xerri.wales

Area Wardens:

Mr Gareth Baker 07791 367918 gareth.baker@acuitylaw.com
Mr David-Lloyd Jones 07747 151205 davidlloyd.jones@btinternet.com

Treasurer:

Dr Paul Smart 01656 788086 pmsmart@aol.com

Safeguarding Officer:

Mr Dave Xerri 07850 129079 dave@xerri.wales

Church subwardens:

All Saints, Porthcawl	Mrs Helen Owen	01656 785763
	Mrs Judith Shawe	01656 786446
Saint John the Baptist, Newton	Mrs Liz Singer	01656 785628
	Miss Denver Whale	01656 782573
Saint David, Nottage	Mr Clive Edwards	01656 784698
	Mrs Catherine Powell	07875 834740
Saint Mary Magdalene, Maudlam	Mr John Roberts	07851 122804
	Mrs Eileen Edwards	07530 989433
Saint James, Pyle	Mrs Vanessa Evans	07817 787544
	Mrs Dawn Edwards	07419 822913
Saint Theodore, Kenfig Hill Margam Abbey	Mrs Margaret Phillips	07748 678827
	Mrs Wendy Greensmith	01656 300691
	Mrs Bev Gulley	07530 421220

Hall Bookings

Parish Hall, Pyle	Sue Roberts	01656 741030
All Saints, Porthcawl	porthcawllallsaintshall@gmail.com	
St David, Nottage	Clive Edwards	01656784698
St John the Baptist, Newton	Amanda Church	07534 973557
Margam Abbey Hall	Bev Gulley	07530 421220
St Theodore's, Kenfig Hill	sttheodoreskh@hotmail.com	



**A Visual Snapshot
of the
Ministry Area**

**Christmas
and
the New Year**



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