

# INFORM



**URC**  
**VAN ROAD**  
**Caerphilly**  
**February 2018**

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**From our Minister ...**

**Lenten Letter**

We say goodbye to Epiphany season at the beginning of February. And soon, this year, we shall be in the time of Lent.

In Van Road, our midweek Communion falls on Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, and following the example of last year, we shall offer an 'ashing service', where there is the opportunity to mark the start of this reflective time which leads to Easter. The ash is taken from the palms of the previous year which are burned and mixed with a little olive oil, a sign of sorrow and repentance. We read of ashes as a sign of repentance, in the psalms and prophetic books, as well as in the Gospels. It is a powerful symbol, something out of the ordinary. During Lent, we can take time to pray and to think about how we can and should change the direction of our lives.

Some people give things up for Lent, or fast, or take up a discipline of daily prayer or reading, or perhaps doing something practical and helpful for others. The forty days of Lent recall the time Jesus spent in the desert in prayer and preparation, and of course the figure forty occurs in many other significant stories such as the years spent wandering in the wilderness by the Hebrew peoples. If you do the sums, you'll work out that from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday there are actually forty-six days – this was because traditionally, fasting was not required on the Sundays of Lent.

Perhaps it is particularly important to reflect on how 'counter-cultural' the good news of God is, in a world where there are such divisions between rich and poor, such waste of food in the affluent nations, so much money spent on weapons of war, and only the most tentative beginnings of

any attempt to change the ways that the Earth is being polluted and abused by our ignorance and greed.

How you observe Lent is up to you. But I encourage us all to take this opportunity to pray and to think and ask God to help us grow in faith so that we can make a difference in our world.

In Christ,

SPI



GRATEFUL THANKS!

For your support of 3 charities.

Thankyou to all who contributed to the Christian Aid Coffee morning. Due to generous donations and further money donated at the Christmas Services, £330.50 was raised.

The collections at the Christmas Services also meant that £150 was donated to HHI and £150 donated to Embrace.

**A Prayer for Concentration.**

**God help my thoughts! They run away from me**

**In church they flit about, bringing the outside, in.**

**My thoughts spread far across oceans, from earthly concerns then taking flight to thoughts of heaven.**

**Dear, Lord, you can see into every heart and mind, take hold of my thoughts. Bring my thoughts back to me, and hold me in your heart.**

**Amen**

**Prayers**

**We are always looking for articles for Inform. Perhaps you know, or better still, can write a prayer for inclusion in future editions.**

**Thank you!**

**Diane**

**This is the first of occasional reflections from Simon Walking for the Synod Newsletter.**

At this time of year we can find ourselves between reviews of the past year and resolutions for the future. Between the revelation to the shepherds and the search of the wise men. Between Simeon seeing salvation and Anna's hope of consolation. For some of us, we find ourselves in the midst of personal circumstances that drown out any relevance of contemporary culture or resonance with the gospels. Our lives are more than marking off days on a calendar, and some experiences stand out as affecting us more deeply and having more significance than others.

In the Bible, we see the priestly perspective of time as a cycle of seasons and festivals, with references to the moon and the sun, the months and the years. We also see the prophetic perspective of God breaking into the events of history, with a progression of events towards the fulfilment of God's purpose. Time is referred to by the Greek words 'chronos' and 'kairos': chronos is the passing of time measured by calendar or clock as a sequence of events, whilst kairos has the quality of time for making a choice and of God's decisive action. That's why the church leaders campaigning against apartheid in South Africa named their call to action the 'Kairos Document' and why the church leaders in Israel/Palestine did the same in 2009. Although I feel that the latter is less well known and has received less attention.

I was interested to read recently that business consultants are even beginning to realise that workers have a preference for ordering time in one way or another: some of us prefer to run to a routine or schedule, whilst others work towards the next big event or to deadlines. In our house we

sometimes have conversations where the question ‘What time are we leaving?’ is answered by, ‘I’ve just got to put the washing on.’

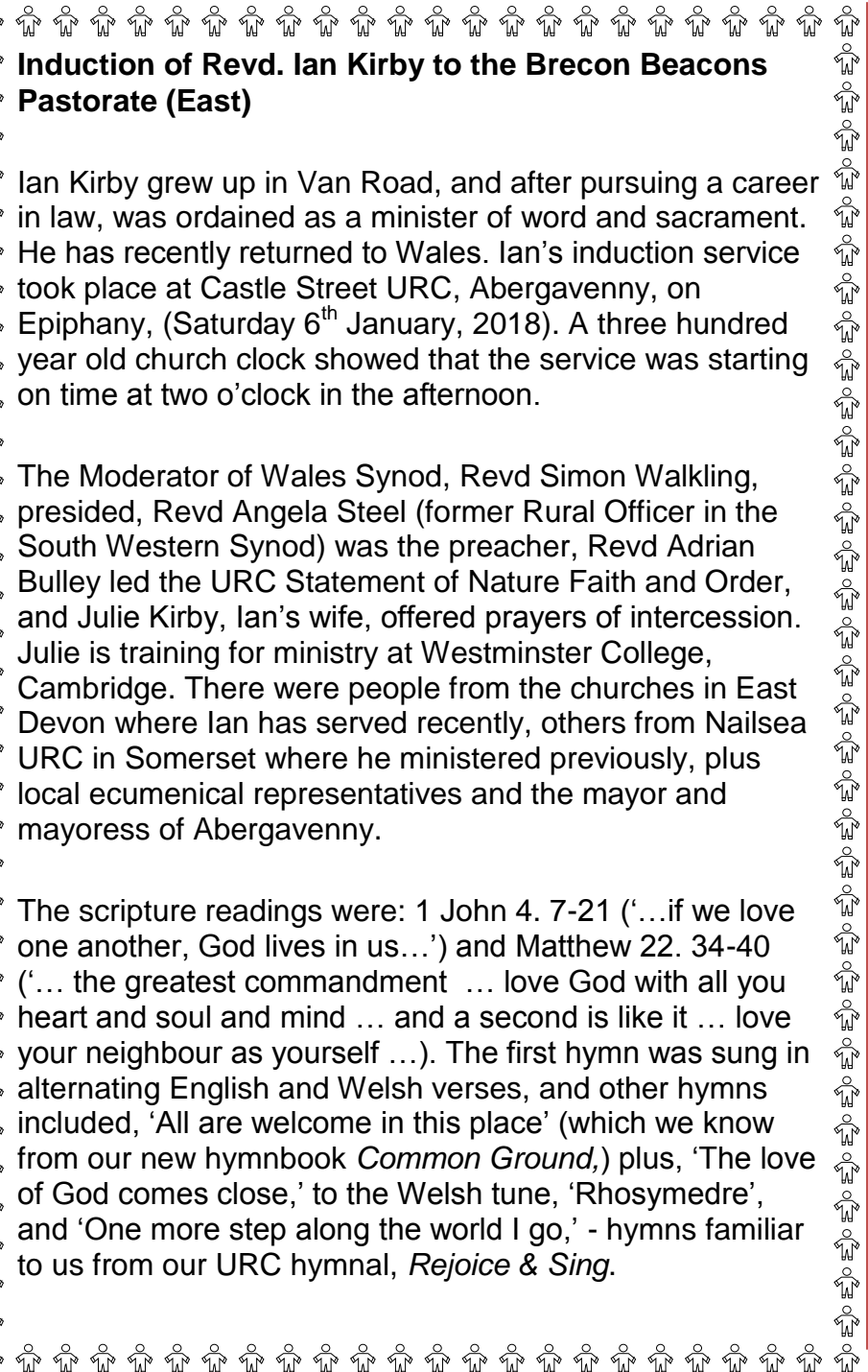
So you may be reading this on what feels like just another day, or on a day that has the quality of being the first day of the rest of your life. It can make a difference to the sense of purpose and significance.

This month Wales Synod are introducing our new structures. We will be linking together changes that have already begun with a cycle of revitalised meetings. Many people will not notice, but we hope that it will help us to focus the Synod resources in ways that will make a difference.

This year the United Reformed Church will be developing ‘Walking the Way’, reminding us that our churches are communities of disciples who make disciples, by developing our own habits of following Jesus. It will be a way of re-invigorating our activities with purpose.

Whether you are just browsing for interest or looking for something specific; whether you feel in between things or at the fresh start of this new year; may you know with the shepherds and the wise men, Simeon and Anna, the priests and the prophets, that God is with you, and in the midst of all that is happening. May our work together be part of God’s eternal purpose of drawing creation into loving relationships of peace with justice.

Yours in Christ,                      Simon



## **Induction of Revd. Ian Kirby to the Brecon Beacons Pastorate (East)**

Ian Kirby grew up in Van Road, and after pursuing a career in law, was ordained as a minister of word and sacrament. He has recently returned to Wales. Ian’s induction service took place at Castle Street URC, Abergavenny, on Epiphany, (Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2018). A three hundred year old church clock showed that the service was starting on time at two o’clock in the afternoon.

The Moderator of Wales Synod, Revd Simon Walkling, presided, Revd Angela Steel (former Rural Officer in the South Western Synod) was the preacher, Revd Adrian Bulley led the URC Statement of Nature Faith and Order, and Julie Kirby, Ian’s wife, offered prayers of intercession. Julie is training for ministry at Westminster College, Cambridge. There were people from the churches in East Devon where Ian has served recently, others from Nailsea URC in Somerset where he ministered previously, plus local ecumenical representatives and the mayor and mayoress of Abergavenny.

The scripture readings were: 1 John 4. 7-21 (‘...if we love one another, God lives in us...’) and Matthew 22. 34-40 (‘... the greatest commandment ... love God with all you heart and soul and mind ... and a second is like it ... love your neighbour as yourself ...’). The first hymn was sung in alternating English and Welsh verses, and other hymns included, ‘All are welcome in this place’ (which we know from our new hymnbook *Common Ground*,) plus, ‘The love of God comes close,’ to the Welsh tune, ‘Rhosymedre’, and ‘One more step along the world I go,’ - hymns familiar to us from our URC hymnal, *Rejoice & Sing*.



The best views were to be had from the upstairs gallery in this old church in Abergavenny. The service concluded – though the old church clock still stood at two o'clock! So it is right twice a day. Perhaps the intervening hour seemed like no time at all, and reflected the timelessness of God.

We then went two doors down the street, to the Methodist church hall. As is customary, food and drink was provided in abundance as those supporting Ian and Julie on this special day spent time renewing old friendships or making new acquaintances.



The churches in Brecon (East) pastorate include: Abergavenny, Bethlehem (Talgarth), Gilwern, Maesyronnen with Glasbury, and Pennorth with Llanfilo.



### *Pulpit Supply*

#### *February*

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 4th, 10.30am  | Mr Richard and Mrs Sarah Edwards |
| 11th, 10.30am | Mr. Clive Maslin                 |
| 18th, 10.30am | Rev. Stephen Lewis<br>Communion  |
| 25th, 10.30am | Dr David Jenkins                 |

#### Mid Week Communion

Ash Wednesday 14th February  
10.30am  
Rev. Stephen Lewis



## Caerphilly Food Bank Request

Presently the food bank is exceedingly well stocked but can always use UHT milk and tinned fruit and rice pudding as these are not donated very often. Cash donations are also welcome.

Thank you!

### YOUNG WIVES

February

*Mondays 7.30pm*

5th Mr Daniel Curtis

Wales Air Ambulance

12th Mrs Carol Jones — Quiz

19th HALF TERM —NO MEETING

26th Rev. Malcolm Shapland



## The VAN-guard Centre

Charity Registration number 1109193

February 2018

### End of year 2017 review

VAN-guard's activities in December brought to an end a very busy year. The 'Cantare at Christmas' Concert was once again a special, annual event, attended by a large audience. David, Angharad and Ryan were superb as always bringing their professional expertise to VAN-guard. Unfortunately some folk intending to come along to the concert had already succumbed to the illnesses that had begun to affect communities across the country.

The year ended on a musical note with a concert given by the Caerphilly Community Chorus on 30<sup>th</sup> December, when the choir hosted young visitors from Perth in Western Australia. The youth choir consisted of 11 and 12 year old students from the Anglican Girls' College in Perth. It was a delightful concert enjoyed by a well-attended audience. The young students, teachers and chaperones' were excellent ambassadors for their country. The London based agents, responsible for the tour, were happy to return to VAN-guard, some seven years after their previous visit with the American Alumni Choir from the University of Minnesota.

### 2018 began with a music event.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January we received a visit from Saya Okada, the Japanese pianist, who last played at VAN-guard in November 2015, before she returned home, her studies at RWCMD having been completed. Saya asked to come and visit the church and play the piano once again while on a visit to the U.K. It was lovely to see her, exchange news and listen to her play once more. A small group of about ten people listened to her wonderful playing before sharing

refreshments and chatting with her. Now back in Japan, she teaches piano in a school as well as continuing to give piano recitals. Saya sent us a message to say that the welcome she received was as warm as ever and she had been pleased to visit us once again.

**4<sup>th</sup> January** an evening concert was given by the 'Chords Mixed Choir' from Cardiff. Katie Phillips, a very talented student of Angharad was the guest artist. It was a most enjoyable event with proceeds in aid of the 'Forget Me Not' Choruses, choirs for Alzheimer's sufferers and their carers. The audience was unfortunately small which was disappointing, but we still raised £300 for the charity's funds to help sustain their good work. The choristers loved performing at VAN-guard and are more than happy to make a return visit.

**17<sup>th</sup> January** saw the first of this year's lunchtime concerts. Clare Eccles, soprano, and a post graduate student at RWCMD gave a superb recital. She was accompanied by two very accomplished musicians, Jeslyn Asir on piano and Ruth Rose on violin. Parts of the repertoire were unusual and unknown to the majority of the audience, but made for a most enjoyable experience. It was return visit for Clare, who performed last summer at VAN-guard as part of the Champagne Quartet. We hope they will all come back and perform for us again.

We are fortunate to have such wonderful talent on our doorstep.

#### **Community Groups.**

All our groups have returned after the Christmas break and we are delighted to have them back.

#### **Good wishes.**

We wish our Trustee David Fortey well as he commences on a tour with Swansea Opera's performance of the Barber of Saville. The nearest performance to us will be at the New Theatre Cardiff on 20<sup>th</sup> February.

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 10.00 a.m.-11.30 a.m.**  
Constituency Surgery by Mr. Wayne David M.P.

The next VAN-guard Management Committee Meeting -  
Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 10.00.a.m.

### **Concert Diary Dates 2018** **February**

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>. Lunchtime Concert at 1.00p.m.**  
**Tickets £5.00.**

**Recital by Matthew Clark, Baritone, lay clerk at Gloucester Cathedral with accompanist Oliver Morrell.**  
Matthew returns to the VAN-guard Centre with a programme of music from the Romantic Period with songs by Mahler, Richard Strauss and Elgar.

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Lunchtime Concert at 1.00.p.m.**  
**Tickets £5.00.**

**Dan Phelps, pianist and composer from Rhondda Cynon Taf,** presents an hour of original soothing, solo piano works from his three albums, 'Pathways', 'Shadows' and 'Reflections'. This will be his first visit to VAN-guard and we look forward to his recital.

### **March**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March Recital by operatic tenor Ryan Ross (TBC)**

Ryan was a member of the operatic workshops held at VAN-guard last July and performed in the concert at the end of the course. Dutch/American, Ryan, will be singing some pieces which will be new to audiences here as well as more familiar pieces.

**April**

**Sunday 15th 'Young Stars' Perform their Spring Concert 2.00 p.m.**

**May**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> Operatic Tenors' Concert 7.30 p.m.**

Tenors Lee David Bowen and Richard Lee Thomas come together to perform at VAN-guard. This will be the first performance by both these artists at VAN-guard.

**July**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> The David Hawthorn Memorial Gala Concert –evening performance**

The Noteworthy Mixed Choir from Maesteg is in great demand and we are pleased to have them come to perform here. Their Musical Director, Ryan Wood, is well known to us through his involvement with Cantare, Only Men Aloud etc. The Concert Compere will be David Fortey.

**Other concerts are being planned**

**Mair**

**CAERPHILLY COMMUNITY CHORUS CONCERT PROGRAMME**

**The Chorus will be giving three concerts at VAN-guard this year.**

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 3.00 p.m. Spring Concert

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.30 p.m. Summer Concert

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 p.m. Christmas Concert

We are delighted that the Chorus will perform at their home base.

Mair

**We hold in our prayers -**

**Those affected by the cyclone in Madagascar and the extreme weather in USA.**

**Vernon Holland Bill and Jean Mutter**

**Dorothy Banfield and family**

**Tony Moore Phyllis Colwell**

**Russell and Carole Boothe Barbara Lloyd**

**Margaret Baldwin**





## Together in Prayer

Perhaps you might invite those who lead the prayers of intercession week by week in your church to incorporate this prayer calendar into their prayers. A single document containing the prayer calendar for the whole of [2018](#) is available to download.

**Week 05** 4th February Pray for Salisbury Park United Reformed Church, Wrexham, Christ Church, Milford Haven the General Secretariat and staff at Church House in London Pray for Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

**Week 06** 11th February Pray for St. John's United Reformed Church, Buckley and Mount Zion United Reformed Church/Congregational Federation Church, Haverfordwest Pray for Ireland and United Kingdom

**Week 07** 18th February Pray for Mold United Reformed Church/Presbyterian Church of Wales and Keyston United Reformed Church Pray for Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands

**Week 08** 25th February Pray for Parkfields Community Centre, Mold and Nolton Haven United Reformed Church Pray for Portugal, Spain, Italy and Malta

Prayers for countries and regions of the world are based upon the World Council of Churches publication

["In God's Hands: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle"](#)

## Lectionary Readings

February

4th Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; Mark 1:29-39; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

11th 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; Mark 9:2-9; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

14th Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-19; Psalm 51:1-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 14-21; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

18th LENT

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

25th Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

February

Thurs 4th, 10.30am Fellowship and Bible Study  
7.30pm Caerphilly Council of Churches  
Windsor Road Presbyterian

Fri 2nd, 2pm Ecumenical Prayer meeting

Wed 7th, 10.30am Coffee with Enfys

Wed 14th, 1pm Lunchtime Concert  
with baritone Matthew Clarke

Thurs 15th, 10.30am Fellowship and Bible Study

Fri 16th, 12 noon –1pm Start of Lent lunches  
at Wesley

Wed 28th, 1pm Piano Recital with Dan Phelps

## LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday March 3rd, 6pm

Concert arranged by Morgan James



## Thank you to our Choir !

The enthusiasm and hard work of our Christmas choir was inspiring. We felt so much more confident this Christmas Eve, and I hope the congregation felt that the choir enhanced the worship. It was good to welcome all ages of singers.

So, what next? Perhaps we could sing some hymns and chants from our new hymn book, Common Ground, during Lent? Perhaps an anthem for Easter Day? ...

## GOOD NEWS!

**Rev. Peter Noble's Induction to LlanfairUniting Church**, Penrhys is on January 29th, 1.30pm.

We send him best wishes for his new ministry.

## ENVIRONMENT

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

ENVIRONMENT    LITTER    CONSERVATION    PLASTIC  
 COMPOST    RECYCLING    PAPER    STEEL    CARD  
 REUSE    REFUSE    BAG FOR LIFE    CARE  
 BEAUTY    WONDER    POLLUTE    WASTE    HILL  
 RIVER    SEA    OCEAN

## ROTAS

February	March
Stewards	Stewards
Enfys Hawthorn	Hilary Akerman
Dorothy Woodward	Steve Akerman
Communion	Communion
Cathy Vernalla	Margaret Baldwin
Margaret Craig	Phyllis Frayling

If unable to steward or serve

Please ask ANOTHER to cover

## Flowers for February

<b>4th</b>	<b>The Moverleys</b>
<b>11th</b>	
<b>18th</b>	<b>Cathy Vernalls</b>
<b>25th</b>	

Thank you to all who donate flowers for worship

## CHURCH ELDERS

Mrs Margaret Baldwin	02920 867027
Mr Lewis Lewis-Head	02920 889958
Mrs Enfys Hawthorn	02920866840
Ms Lynda Jones	02920 884022
Mrs Diane Moverley	02920 866336
Mr Robert Moverley	02920 866336
Mrs Cathy Vernalls	02920 887112
Mrs Phyllis Frayling	02920862285

Any items for the next edition should be  
submitted by the 19th of the month

to -

Mrs Diane Moverley

dianemoverley60@gmail.com

(or if not on e mail then items can be left  
in the box at the back of the sanctuary)



*I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart;  
I will tell of all your wonders.*

*Psalm 9:1*