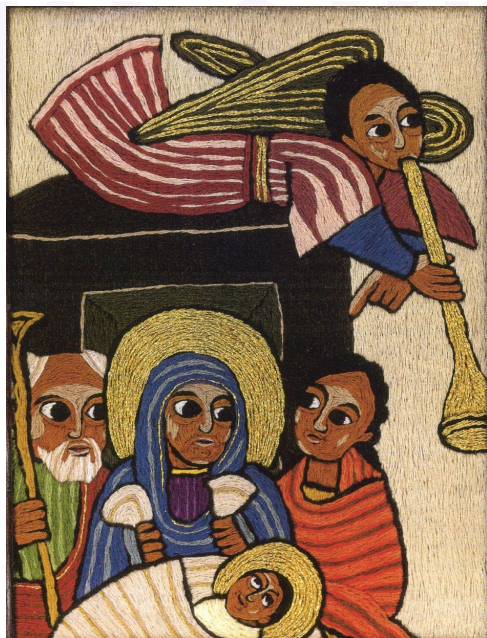


INFORM



URC
VAN ROAD
CAERPHILLY
December 2019
January 2020

CHURCH OFFICERS

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An Elder writes ...

At the festive season everyone joins together to sing many traditional Christmas carols, most of which were learned in school at a young age and are with us throughout our lives. However, do we ever stop to think where these carols may have come from? Below is the beautiful story of 'Silent Night' that I thought you may be interested to read.

The Story of Silent Night

Father Joseph Mohr sat at the old organ. His fingers stretched over the keys, forming the notes of a chord. He took a deep breath and pressed down. Nothing. He lifted his fingers and tried again. Silence echoed through the church. Father Joseph shook his head. It was no use. The pipes were rusted, the bellows mildewed. The organ had been wheezing and growing quieter for months, and Father Joseph had been hoping it would hold together until the organ builder arrived to repair it in the spring. But now, on December 23, 1818, the organ had finally given out. St. Nicholas Church would have no music for Christmas. Father Joseph sighed. Maybe a brisk walk would make him feel better. He pulled on his overcoat and stepped out into the night. His white breath puffed out before him. Moonlight sparkled off the snow-custed trees and houses in the snowy streets to the edge of the little Austrian town and climbed the path leading up the mountain.

From high above Oberndorf, Father Joseph watched the Salzach River ripple past St. Nicholas Church. In the spring, when melting snow flowed down the mountains and the river swelled in its banks, water lapped at the foundation of the church. It was moisture from the flooding river that had caused the organ to mildew and rust.

Father Joseph looked out over the Austrian Alps. Stars shone above in the still and silent night.

Silent night? Father Joseph stopped. Of course! "Silent Night!" He had written a poem a few years before, when he had first become a priest, and he had given it that very title. "Silent Night."

Father Joseph scrambled down the mountain. Suddenly he knew how to bring music to the church.

This time he carried his poem. And this time he knew exactly where he was going -- to see his friend Franz Gruber, the organist for St. Nicholas, who lived in the next village.

Franz Gruber was surprised to see the priest so far from home on Christmas Eve, and even more surprised when Father Joseph handed him the poem.

That night Father Joseph and Franz Gruber stood at the altar of St. Nicholas Church. Father Joseph held his guitar. He could see members of the congregation giving each other puzzled looks. They had never heard a guitar played

in church before, and certainly not during midnight mass on Christmas Eve, the holiest night of the year. Joseph picked out a few notes on the guitar, and he and Franz Gruber began to sing. Their two voices rang out, joined by the church choir on the chorus. Franz Gruber's melody matched the simplicity and honesty of Father Joseph's words.

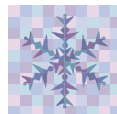
When the last notes faded into the night, the congregation remained still for a moment, then began to clap their hands. Applause filled the church. The villagers of Oberndorf loved the song! Father Joseph's plan to bring music to St. Nicholas Church had worked.

A few months later, the organ builder arrived in Oberndorf and found the words and music to "Silent Night" lying on the organ. The song enchanted him, and when he left, he took a copy of it with him.

The organ builder gave the song to two families of traveling singers who lived near his home. The traveling singers performed "Silent Night" in concerts all over Europe, and soon the song spread throughout the world.

Today, cathedral choirs and carollers from New York to New Zealand sing the simple song that was first played in a mountain church in Austria on Christmas Eve nearly 200 years ago.

Emma



Gifts for Life

See the full range at traidcraftshop.co.uk/charitygifts



Dinner for Two (and a Few More) - Gifts for Life
69524 £32

JUST what you wanted

EXACTLY what you need

Do you worry the gifts you give at Christmas will end up in landfill? This year why not try something different and know the gifts you give will help transform lives.

Buying Traidcraft Exchange Gifts for Life does good for the world - giving the people we work with hope, opportunity and independence so they get more from the hard work they do every day.

You'll receive a lovely card and envelope which you can personalise. See the full range at traidcraftshop.co.uk/charitygifts

Exactly What You Need - Gifts for Life
51560 £16



TRAIDCRAFT Exchange

Registered charity number 1048752

From the editor

A Gift for Life.

It's around this time of year that we hear or ask ..

'So what do you want for Christmas?'

Our aim is to give someone something that they would be pleased to receive, so finding the right gift can be difficult.

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are seasons that remind us of the most important gift to the world, Jesus. However, when we look around to the needs of the people of our world, we ask, 'what gifts they would want this Christmas?' Not phones, screens, watches etc. but gifts that will improve their lives. Gifts that should really be theirs by right, such as food, home, shelter, education, work, peace.

If you need to find that special gift this Christmas, perhaps you would consider a gift that would really make a difference, a 'gift for life.' There are plenty to choose from by charitable concerns for example, Christian Aid Charity Gifts, Money for Madagascar and Traidcraft. You can buy a diverse range of gifts from farm animals to tools, to cooking lessons and breakfast. Each gift has a card to give to the recipient explaining what gift you have purchased on their behalf and who will benefit and where.

'God gave His son that we may have life and have it more abundantly.' His is a gift that keeps on giving, a 'Gift for Life.'

Sending love, peace and greetings,

Diane x

PTO for more information and gift examples.

charity-gifts.christianaid.org.uk



Antibiotics for a
mobile clinic

£9.00



Send a child to
school

£15.00



A pair of
chickens

£8.00



A pack of five
mosquito nets

£15.00

moneyformadagascar.org



Beautiful
Books

£10 could
provide 4
books for a
school
library.



Christmas
Smile

£10 could
buy a
Christmas
meal and a
Christmas
present.



Education
for a Bright
Future

£20 will
educate a
child for
one term.

STREET PASTORS

It came upon a midnight clear

Street pastors were in town

They were there to help all those in need

And spread love and peace around.

When most of us are in our beds

Street pastors are alert

Helping the lonely or the lost

And those who may be hurt.

Bottles of water and pairs of flip flops

Street pastors give them away

With a kindly word and a friendly smile

To send them on their way.

Remember street pastors in your prayers

For the night-time help they give

They are striving to make this town of ours

A much safer place to live.

Margery Gray



Young Wives

Carolyn and I would like to wish all our members a very Happy Christmas.

2020 will be a very special year for us all since we anticipate celebrating our fiftieth anniversary. We are very proud of this and hope to hold a special service of Thanksgiving in our church on Mothering Sunday next March and a party at Caerphilly Golf Club on March 30th. We envisage inviting past members, so if anybody knows who used to belong to our group and would like to be part of our celebration, please let me know.

Our Carol Service is on 9th December and the Rev. Malcolm Shapland will officiate. We always look forward to our carols and mince pies on the last meeting of the year.

God be with you all this Christmas.

Carol

One Plus Group.

A very Happy Christmas and new year to all our members and many thanks for your companionship throughout the year. We will be celebrating our eighth Christmas together in my house on Saturday 14th December at 3.30.

If you know of any bereaved ladies that would appreciate the companionship of our group, please let them know that they would be very welcome.

Carol

EPIPHANY CAROL

Brightest and best of the Sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid,
Star of the east the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him, in slumber reclining,
Maker, and Monarch and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom and offerings divine;
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the Sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid,
Star of the east the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant redeemer is laid.

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)



PULPIT SUPPLY

December

1st, 10.30 a.m.

Dr David Jenkins
First Sunday in Advent

8th, 11 a.m.

Mr Lewis Lewis-Head

15th, 10.30 a.m.

Rev. Malcolm Shapland
Communion
followed by a 'Winter Warmer' lunch

22nd. 10.30a.m.

Rev. Val Fernandez

Christmas Eve

24th, TBA

Rev. Malcolm Shapland

Christmas Day

25th, 10.am.

Rev. Peter Noble

29th, 10.30am

Miss Lynda Jones

Ecumenical advent Service
Tuesday 3rd December , 7pm
at St Catherine's

Mid-week Communion
Wed 11th December

10.30a.m.

Rev. Malcolm Shapland

PULPIT SUPPLY

January

5th, 10.30 a.m.	Mr Dave Clarke
12th, 10.30am	Dr Peter Speakman
19th, 10.30am	Mr Robert Moverley
26th, 10.30am	Rev. Malcolm Shapland

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sun 19th, 6pm, Service at St Helen's
to include recommissioning of Street Pastors

Mid-week Communion

Wed 15th January

10.30a.m.

Rev Malcolm Shapland

CHOIR / SINGING GROUP

We have been fortunate to welcome Peter Speakman
into our worship in recent weeks and he and Dave
Clarke have volunteered to get a choir or singing group
together They would like to hear from any would be
choristers

(don't think perfect pitch is essential.)

Rotas for December

Stewards
Margaret Craig
Cathy Vernalls
Communion
Diane Moverley
Rob Moverley

Rotas for January

Stewards
TBA
TBA
Communion
Enfys Hawthorn
Emma Fitzgerald

If unable to steward or serve

Please ask ANOTHER to cover

FLOWERS

December	
1st	Mrs Jan Holdsworth
15th	
22nd	
29th	

Many thanks to all who donate flowers for worship



That Time of Year

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

NATIVITY	GABRIEL	HEAVENLY HOST	BABY
STABLE	SHEPHERDS	STAR	MAGI
BETHLEHEM	MARY	JOSEPH	JESUS
LOVE	SAVIOUR	PEACE	REJOICE
EPIPHANY	ADVENT	CRIB	CHRISTMAS

We hold in our prayers -

Jean Mutter Frank Frayling Roy Collins
 Rev Malcolm Shapland Chris Harling
 Jane, Carolyn and families Vernon Holland
 Sally Ball and family
 Judy and Rod Jarman
 Chris and Alan Powell



Lectionary Readings



December

- 1st **Advent.** Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122;
 Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44
- 8th Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;
 Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12
- 15th Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10;
 James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11
- 22nd Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
 Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25
- Christmas Day** Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
 Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
- 29th Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18;
 Matthew 2:13-23

Lectionary Readings



January

- 5th** John 1:10-18; Jeremiah 31:7-14; John 1:1-9
Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14;
- 6th Epiphany.** Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Matthew 2:1-12;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-6
- 12th** Acts 10:34-43; Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29;
Matthew 3:13-17; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
- 19th** Isaiah 49:1-7; John 1:29-42; Psalm 40:1-11;
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
- 26th** Isaiah 9:1-4; Matthew 4:12-23;
Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY

On 11th December

to

Our wonderful friend and organist,

Margaret Webb

Sending our Love and Best Wishes

The VAN-guard Centre

Charity Registration number 1109193

December 2019 – January 2020 Report

Review.

26th October – A Night at the Theatre: Musical Theatre and Opera Classics.

A wonderful concert with three experienced soloists and an accomplished pianist, Lee David Bowen, Richard Lee Thomas, Angharad Watkeys and Nicola Rose. A good size audience thoroughly enjoyed the evening as did the performers. For those who missed the concert, there will be an opportunity to see them next autumn, when they make a return visit.

3rd November

The Tommy Cooper Society's Defibrillator campaign continues. We were invited to present a defibrillator to the village of Llanbradach. It was very pleasant surprise because we didn't realise there was sufficient funding left from the 2018 Gala Concert to purchase another machine. It was a well-attended presentation at the Community Centre when a demonstration on the use of the machine was also given. The village hopes to have 4 defibrillators in all, as and when funding allows. In addition to the one we presented, Ebenezer Baptist Church also pledged to provide one which means they are half way to accomplishing their aim. We wish them well in their endeavours.

12th-22nd November -The 7th Arts, Crafts and Literary Exhibition

Another successful exhibition with the number of entries growing each year. As well as the art work, wood carving

and knitted items were on display plus literary entries of short stories and poems. We are grateful to all those who supported the event and all who helped to put up the exhibition which is a strenuous and very time consuming activity. Dr. Hefin David A.M. judged the art work and The Chair of VAN-guard, Mrs. Jackie Askey, adjudicated the written work. We continue to present the David Hawthorn Art Award and the George Askey Literary Award. The Visitors' Choice is always a great way of involving the public. We were pleased that the Rainbows' exhibited a joint project and there were a few pupil entries.

28th November

The Welsh Adult Learning Organisation held a regional meeting with a half day conference. They enjoyed their time with us last year and asked to come again.

The VAN-guard Concert Series up to Christmas 2019.

Sunday 8th December at 2.00 p.m. Tickets £10.00

'Cantare at Christmas'

Christmas for many of us begins with the Cantre Christmas Concert. We look forward to great entertainment from our good friends, David Fortey, tenor, OMA; Angharad Morgan soprano, Welsh National Opera Chorus, with their outstanding accompanist Ryan Wood. Their concerts are always a great delight and we enjoy Christmas music performed by such talented people that have become good friends to us. It's always good fun to wonder what shoes Ryan will be wearing! It wouldn't be Christmas at VAN-guard without this event.



Friday 20th December at 1.00 p.m. Tickets £5.00

The First Christmas Concert of 'Caerphilly Winds and Strings'.

Many folk are looking forward to this performance after the group's very successful concert last July. They have increased in number since the summer which is indicative of the effort made by Mr. Nigel Jones to establish and expand the group. There will be a delightful selection of music for all to enjoy, so come along to this lunchtime concert and experience a very relaxing hour of beautifully performed Christmas music.



Also

Friday 13th December at 7.00 p.m. Tickets £5.00

The Caerphilly Community Chorus Christmas Concert with Plas y Felin Junior School Choir

This will be the Chorus' first concert with their new Musical Director, Mr. Tomos Gwyn.

It's good to have the Chorus perform at their home base in their eleventh year. Mixed choirs are quite rare in this area, so why not come along and support them and the children who will be performing.

2020

VAN-guard plans to take a break from events in January because at the start of 2019 we had a few cancellations due to very bad weather and illness among performers. People also need to get over the busy Christmas period. We shall of course be commencing with more concerts as and when performers become available. We have concerts booked during the spring, summer and early autumn already and interest shown by other performers. I shall provide

information in future reports. In the meantime the regular groups will restart after the Christmas break.

Health and Well Being Sessions.

This is a new venture for us. There are two free 6 week sessions planned in the first half of the year. The first commences on 28th February, in the morning, and will deal with Chronic Pain. These sessions are led by experts in their field and are funded jointly by NHS and GAVO. More details will be available in the New Year.

The VAN-guard Management Committee wishes to thank all who have supported our various activities during 2019. We wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Mair

Change of Dates:

Fellowship and Bible Study in December and January.

The only Advent Bible Study session will be held on TUESDAY 10th December at 2.00p.m.

In January we will commence in the week the schools restart. We shall meet on Thursdays 9th and 23rd at 10.30 a.m. (meeting together on Thursday mornings in weeks 1 and 3.)

Thank you to all who have supported the sessions in 2019.

Mair



PLEASE CAN YOU HELP?

We are very fortunate to have members who regularly give of their time to clean the church toilets, kitchen, meeting rooms. We say a big thankyou to them. However, the Sanctuary area is not so lucky, Periodically external cleaners come in to clean but in the interim it needs some attention, this being to dust, clean window sills (polishing is optional.) Surprisingly, this cleaning does not take long but it does need doing every weekend.

If you can help please sign your name against a date in the 'Cleaning Book' at the back of the church. **THANKYOU!**

ACROSTIC

Christ
Holy
Righteous
Immanuel
Shepherds
Trust
Magi
Amazing
Stable



Madagascar School Update

- During September, Madame Noro visited Van Rd Church and explained her role in the Mission School in Ambohidratrimo, Madagascar.
- She spoke about some of the challenges of keeping the school open, and also her aspiration to get the school renamed after David Griffiths, a Welsh missionary who first visited Madagascar 200 years ago.
- One of the challenges the school faced was the roof which was letting in water. She did not believe it would survive another rainy season.
- Following her return to Madagascar, we have had the great news that over £7,000 was raised through 'Money for Madagascar' which has been used to replace the roof.
- The builders worked over the Bank holiday weekend to ensure the school would be ready for when the new term started at the beginning of November.



God

You could have come
with miracle and magic,
in a flash of light,
in a hurricane of judgement,
or that the earth shook
and the universe trembled.

But you chose to come in
a baby's new born cry,
you chose to make your coming known
to working men on a cold hillside,
to wandering scholars
to an innkeeper
and to the beasts of the field.

Because you came, a baby,
born to a young girl,
you brought miracle and magic and mystery
into ordinary things
and the whole creation sings at your coming
and is blessed.

(from the Prayer Handbook, December 25th, 2000, Heather Percival and Janet Lees)

YOUNG WIVES

From 7.30pm

December

- | | |
|------|-----------------------|
| 9th | Carol Service |
| 16th | Carols and Mince Pies |
| 23rd | No meeting |
| 30th | No Meeting |

January

- | | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| 6th | No meeting |
| 13th | AGM |
| 20th | Mrs Juthica Williams -HHI |
| 27th | Dr. David Jenkins-The Inside Story |



Christmas Isn't Christmas
(Until it happens in your Heart)

**Christmas isn't Christmas till it happens in
your heart**

**Somewhere deep inside you
is where Christmas really starts.**

So give your heart to Jesus

You'll discover when you do,

**That it's Christmas, really Christmas
For you!**

Carol Owens—USA

CHRISTMAS CRINGES

- **How did the ornament get addicted to Christmas?**
- He was hooked on trees all his life,
- **Why was Santa's little helper depressed?**
- He had low elf esteem
- **What do you call a child that doesn't believe in Santa?** - A Rebel without a Claus.
- **What do you call Santa's little helpers?**
- Subordinate Clauses.

Together In Prayer



Please pray for ...

December

1st Hope and Market Square United Church,
Merthyr Tydfil. Moderator, staff and churches
of Yorkshire Synod.

**Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and
Niger**

8th Bethany URC, Ystrad Mynach, Moderator,
staff and churches of East Midlands Synod

Liberia, Sierra Leone

15th Hall Street Church, Llanelli, Moderator, staff
and churches of West Midlands Synod

**Cape Verdi, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau,
Senegal**

22nd Hill URC, Mount Pleasant, Swansea,
Moderator, staff and churches of Eastern
Synod

29th Tabernacle URC, Mumbles, Moderator, staff
and churches of Southern Synod

Ghana and Nigeria

Together In Prayer

Please pray for ...

January

5th Gloddaeth United Church, Llandudno, Temple URC, Swansea, Moderator, staff and churches of Wessex Synod

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yeman, Iran and Iraq

12th Uniting Church, Sketty, Swansea, Moderator, staff and churches of Thames North Synod

Turkey, Greece, Cyprus

19th St. Paul's Uniting Church, Penmaenmawr, Christ Well URC, Manselton, Moderator, staff and churches of Southern Synod

Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Western Sahara, Tunisia

26th United Church, Rhyl, Albany URC/Methodist Church, Haverfordwest, Moderator, staff and churches of Scotland Synod

Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland



Diary Dates



December

Wed 4th, 11am

Coffee with Enfys *

Fri 6th—Sun 8th

Christmas tree festival

Sun 8th, 2pm

Christmas Concert- Cantare

Tues 10th, 2pm

Fellowship and Bible Study

Fri 13th, 7pm

Caerphilly Community Chorus Christmas Concert

Fri 20th, 1pm

Christmas Concert by 'Caerphilly Wind and Strings'.

Sat 21st, 10.30am

Coffee and mince pies, at Rob and Diane's proceeds to Christian Aid,

January

Thurs 9th, 10.30am

Fellowship and Bible Study

Sun 19th-25th

Week of prayer for Christian Unity

Thurs 23rd, 10,30am

Fellowship and Bible Study

* Note time change and no Coffee Morning in January

CHURCH ELDERS

Mrs Enfys Hawthorn	02920 866840
Mr Lewis Lewis-Head	02920 889958
Mrs Emma Fitzgerald	02920 821525
Ms Lynda Jones	02920 884022
Mrs Diane Moverley	02920 866336
Mr Robert Moverley	02920 866336
Mrs Cathy Vernalls	02920 887112

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)

