

INFORM



**URC
VAN ROAD
CAERPHILLY
February 2026**

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**A Message from our Pastorate Minister,
Rev. Clare Nutbrown-Hughes**

Annwyl ffrindiau,

Dear friends,

February must almost be upon us because hearts are appearing everywhere in shops. It feels as if nowhere is exempt from their clutches, neither cushions, nor socks, nor chocolate nor soaps, nor anything in this world is beyond the reach of the bright red heart. Now, don't get me wrong, there can never be too much love in this world, I'm all for spreading the love (I'd be in the wrong role if I weren't!) but I can't help thinking that it's a shame love is represented in such a one-dimensional way.

Love is at the very heart of the Christian faith: 'For God so loved the world' 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might' 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Love is to comfort and inspire us in all that we do. Only the reality is that love isn't always best captured by a racing heart.

Perhaps other images might be a pair of walking boots for those who join us in solidarity on the journey, an outstretched hand, or a paned, or a hug. Those images – or at least the first century version of them – could be symbols for Jesus' ministry too, symbols for a love which changed the world. And more than that he also left his comfort zone out of love, challenging the authorities as they clung to power and used their might to exploit and quash.

What might a 2026 equivalent image of that look like? Perhaps a vigil, a letter to an MP or a jar of Fairtrade coffee.

In these extraordinary times over in the US, churches are mobilising along with their neighbours to protect the people in their communities at risk from the heavy-handed and violent and even fatal actions of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents. Love looks like standing in protest on the freezing streets of Minnesota, volunteering to patrol neighbourhoods to warn of any ICE activity, leading training into how to respond if ICE agents appear at church or are waiting outside. Love is far from fluffy.

In the 1970s there was a popular cartoon 'Love is ...' with two loved up characters (male and female – it was the 1970s!) and each week the phrase would end differently. Mostly it was the loved-up red heart variety of ending, but it did also move away from romance and into other waters about what love might demand of us or how it might alter our views. As we move into 2026 perhaps St Valentine's Day is an opportunity for us to wonder how we might finish the phrase 'Love is...'. What kind of love might we want to celebrate, give thanks for, live out?

Wherever and however February finds you, may you know that you are loved and precious in God's sight.

Pob bendith

Clare



An Elder writes ...

St Dwynwen's Day was celebrated in Wales on 25 January. But who was St Dwynwen? St Dwynwen is the Welsh patron saint of lovers, which makes her the Welsh equivalent of St Valentine.

Dwynwen lived during the 5th century and legend has it that she was one of the prettiest of Brychan Brycheiniog's 24 daughters. Dwynwen fell in love with a prince called Maelon Dafodrill, but unfortunately her father had already arranged that she should marry someone else.

Dwynwen was so upset that she could not marry Maelon that she begged God to make her forget him. After falling asleep, Dwynwen was visited by an angel, who appeared carrying a sweet potion designed to erase all memory of Maelon and turn him into a block of ice.

God then gave three wishes to Dwynwen. Her first wish was that Maelon be thawed; her second that God meet the hopes and dreams of true lovers; and third, that she should never marry. All three were fulfilled, and as a mark of her thanks, Dwynwen devoted herself to God's service for the rest of her life.

She founded a convent on Llanddwyn, off the west coast of Anglesey, where a well named after her became a place of pilgrimage after her death in AD 465. Visitors to the well believed that the sacred fish or eels that lived in the well could foretell whether or not their relationship would be happy and whether love and happiness would be theirs. Remains of Dwynwen's church can still be seen today.

The Bible has a great deal to say about love. In fact, the Bible says that "love is of God" and "God is love" ([1 John 4:7-8](#)); in other words, love is an essential characteristic of who God is. Everything God does is driven and influenced by His love.

Mark 12:31

"The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." – Mark 12;

This verse emphasizes the importance of loving our neighbours as we love ourselves. It's a call to empathy and respect, reminding us that our relationships should mirror the love we nurture within ourselves. It encourages us to be compassionate.

The Bible says that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ ([Romans 8:38-39](#)). God's love does not wax and wane; it is not a fickle, emotional sensation. God's love for sinners is why Christ died on the cross. God's love for those who trust in Christ is why He holds them in His hand and promises never to let them go ([John 10:29](#)).

Lynda



From the editor ...

The 17th February (Ash Wednesday) is the start of Lent, a time of reflection and preparation leading up to Easter. As the date of Easter itself changes from year to year it can feel a short or long time from Christmas to Epiphany.

However, we are encouraged to take advantage of this time to reflect on our lives and service in recognition of Jesus's time of 40 days and nights in the wilderness.

Matthew tells us of Jesus' trials and temptations set by the devil. I am always impressed by Jesus' replies to the goading. He has the right answer at his fingertips, quite a 'put down.'

It must be great to have an impressive or clever response or retort when something is said to you that you feel needs a response. However, perhaps like me, when you think of something to say it usually comes too late, 'Why didn't I say....?'

People often ask what you are 'giving up' or 'taking on' for Lent. I always avoid an answer as I feel I know I am unlikely to stick to it. However, this Lent I have decided to watch the news each day and prayerfully reflect on it. 'No great commitment you might say' and I would agree with you, but it is something I want to do and it is something I can achieve.

Diane



Pulpit Supply



February

1st, 10.30am Mr Rob Moverley (communion)

8th, 10.30 Dr. David Jenkins

15th, 10.30am Mrs June Maxwell

**22nd, 10.30am First Sunday in Lent
Rev Clare Nutbrown-Hughes**

Young Wives



Mondays 7.30pm

All ladies, any age, welcome

Winter break until 2nd March

Bible Study

Taking a winter break.

**An announcement on restarting will be given in
due course. Lynda**

Lectionary Readings



February

- 1st** Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15;
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12
- 8th** Isaiah 8:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9; 1
Corinthians 2: 1-16; Matthew 5:13-20
- 15th** Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or 99;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9
- 22nd** First Sunday in Lent
Genesis 2:15-1, 3:1-7; Psalm 32;
Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Jokes— oh dear!

What did the classmate say when asked why they kept walking next to the same person at school?

“I was told I’m supposed to walk by Faith!”

Why didn’t anyone want to fight Goliath?

It seemed like a *giant* ordeal.

Which king liked to do things on his own? *Solomon.*

Which Bible character was the best musician? Samson—he brought the house down.

February Suggestions from A Rocha

This Lent why not take part in ‘Climate Steward’s Carbon Fast’

Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God. The carbon fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation.

Weekly, in March A Rocha will make suggestions and prayers for how we can reduce our carbon footprint in manageable ways.

Find out more -

Climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/



Van-guard Events



**Thursday 19th February
1pm**

**Concert with students of the
Royal Welsh School of Music and Drama**

No charge, Retiring collection.

Thursday February 26th

7pm

**Touring Opera -
'Gresford , Up From Underground'**

By

New Sinfonia

Featuring Caerphilly Community Chorus

at

Blackwood Miners' Institute

We hold in our prayers -



Rev Malcolm Shapland

Enfys Hawthorn

Carol Booth Cathy Vernalls

Hilary and Steve Akerman

Phyllis and family Marian Bevan and family

Barbara Stewart Diana Hibbert

Dave Jenkins and all the family

**The people of Gaza, Israel and Palestine and the fragile
peace.**

All those without a home or warm shelter.

**Those countries facing hardships, particularly in
Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran, Sudan and Yemen
and all those desperate for their safety and future,
particularly the people of Ukraine.**

Those people helping to welcome and settle refugees.

**World leaders that they make sound, fair and just
decisions particularly in the USA new administration.**

Permanent peace in Gaza and a just peace in Ukraine.

Calendar of Regular Events in the Church

Coffee Morning, 10.30am First Wednesday each month

Communion service 2nd Wednesday each month, 10.30am

‘Only Boys Aloud’ rehearse Every Monday, 6.30,

Caerphilly Chorus rehearse Every Friday, 7pm,

University of the Third Age (U3A) First Friday each month
1.30pm (usually)

U3A singing group Thursdays fortnightly, 2pm

‘Young Wives’ (All ladies welcome) Every Monday 7.30pm

Bible Study , 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the month, 10.30am

NB Some activities stop during school holidays. Please check for any changes to this list.



Coffee Morning

Wednesday 4th February

10.30am

Raising funds for RNLI



Morning Has Broken

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

BLACKBIRD BROKEN MORNING SPOKEN EDEN
SINGING FRESH SUNLIT HEAVEN GOD
DEWFALL SWEETNESS GARDEN RECREATION
ELATION BORN LIGHT DAY FIRST BIRD
WORD PRAISE

CHURCH ELDERS

Ms Lynda Jones 02920 884022

Mr Robert Moverley 02920 866336

Dr Peter Speakman 02920 883968

Mrs Phyllis Frayling 07870 752306

Mrs Margaret Baldwin 02920 867027

Mrs Cathy Vernalls 07527 598127

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

to

Mrs Diane Moverley

dianemoverley60@gmail.com



**Be joyful always; pray continually;
give thanks in all circumstances, for
this is God's will for you in
Christ Jesus.**

1 Thessalonians 5:15-18