INFORM



URC

VAN ROAD

CAERPHILLY

DECEMBER 2026 JANUARY 2027

Valleys Pastorate Minister

Rev. Clare Nutbrown-Hughes

Tel: 07543 687512

E-mail: valleysministerurc@gmail.com

Church Secretary

Mrs Margaret Craig

Tel: 02920 867487

E-mail: Margaret_craig@hotmail.co.uk

Church Treasurer

Mr Rob Moverley

Tel: 02920 866336

E-mail: robmoverley60@gmail.com

Pulpit Secretary

Ms Lynda Jones

Tel: 02920 884022

E-mail: lynda.jones0058@gmail.com

From our minister … Annwyl ffrindiau,

Having recently experienced our first Hallowe'en in the Valleys and seen the amount of houses embracing the season way beyond a pumpkin or two, I wait with bated breath to see how many Christmas decorations are about to appear on the streets. I feel as if living in a church-owned property there is a decision to be made – do we go big and try to compete (only with Nativity-themed outdoor decorations) or do we stay low-key with our old decorations and accept that we are not going to outshine?

The first Christmas had both the big and the humble. The shepherds who had been sat in the dark and the quiet of night were suddenly plunged into a moment of sheer sensory overload as 'the glory of the Lord' shone all around, the angel brought the news of Jesus' birth and a multitude of heavenly messengers burst into praise for God. I imagine the New Year's Eve firework and drone displays around the world to be nothing in comparison. And then after this overwhelming introduction, the shepherds simply find a little scrap of life in a feeding trough and a young mum who ponders carefully. The wonder of the new born is celebrated through the vast and brilliant and in the quiet reflections of the heart.

I had a real sense of joy at our recent Sunday Club Advent session. It might not have been the turnout we had hoped for, but the theme was 'love came down' and it felt as if we experienced something of that as we shared in crafts and conversation, as the Christmas tunes played and spirits remained high. And of course it was then an absolute

delight to welcome our young guest who threw himself into everything along with his mum and made our afternoon complete.

However you celebrate, big or small, my prayer is that you will be blessed with a sense of wonder this Christmas. Wonder that God came down to be with us, to be with you, so you might know you are not alone, that you are loved, that life and light arrives in the strangest of ways and does not let us go.

I leave you with a poem that captures how wonder cannot always be orchestrated but arrives when it will. And as for decorations, will we go large or be more discrete? We shall have to wait and see!

Every blessing this Christmas,

Yours,

Clare



Motorway Music by Wendy Cope

At last, in spite of everything
The moment does arrive.
This year it was on Christmas Eve,
Teatime, M25
When I switched on the radio
And heard ‘Nowell, Nowell’,
And had to join in singing for
The King of Israel
Along with half the choirs on earth
And all the choirs of Heaven
As I drove through the pouring rain,
Approaching junction 7.
And then my passenger woke up
And came in with his bass.
I wanted to see happiness
Like ours on every face.
In every car the traffic slowed.
The queue went on and on.
The sound of trumpets introduced
Another Christmas song.
Who cares about a traffic jam
While herald angels sing?
Each year the moment does arrive,
In spite of everything.





An Elder writes …

As we get older, I'm sure we all like to recall the past, hopefully we can all draw on wonderful experiences we had at Christmas. Although I have some poor memories as well, mainly because Christmas took too long to come around, advent always seems to take months.

We had our advent calendars and also the advent candle which seemed to burn very slowly. Growing up in a manse with parents who were ministers had its ups and downs. The up was that we lived in a house where playing hide and seek was great fun, with 4 floors and 4 bedrooms and an attic, all the kids on the street were around our house! It might sound idyllic but it was not luxury, we were lucky, we had all we really needed and as kids you don't pay the bills.

My fondest memory of that manse was Christmas, the real tree from the Brecon Beacons being carefully placed in our hallway which was always too big so the angel had to crouch down at the top. Singing carols around the tree, that smell of pine and the dog shaking the tree to get the chocolate, the family coming around for the week before and the week after Christmas. I also recall trying to get out of going to Church so I could play with my toys but we knew that was never going to work.

Luke's gospel goes into detail about the birth of Christ, Mathew mentions it a little, Mark & John don't mention it all. Thanks to Luke, otherwise the birth would be a lot of guess work. The main message I get from the story of the

birth, is that we don't need much to make a moment special.

We might remember fondly the great gifts that we have received and our family who have been overgenerous, however I'm sure there have been moments even more special when we have received the most special gift anyone can give and that's love.

The story of Christmas is about love, the love of parents to a child and the love of God to us all through his son.

When Clare was doing her story in Messy Church in November, she showed this love in her message and we shared the love with each other and also our community who joined us. This beautiful message tied together in one simple message through the birth of a baby.

Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 which explains the gifts we have been given by God to be used in our lives, 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is Love.'

I hope that we can enjoy the gifts we have and use them during this Advent & Christmas to show others that God loves and cares for us all.

Lewis



From the editor …

It was wonderful to catch-up with Alun and Jute on Sunday 15th's service. They were once loyal members of Van Road before they moved house.

The service they presented was very thoughtful and heart warming. They have been workers / ambassadors for the charity Health Help International for many years. HHI has roots in Zambia and India. Jute and Alun concentrate their support in Zambia, Jute goes there every year and sometimes Alun goes too, taking suitcases of supplies that have been requested.

HHI funds individuals and communities with medical/ health needs, accommodation needs and developing skills for people to become more self sufficient, such as teaching sewing skills.

They shared with us the wonderful work of HHI workers and we were introduced to individuals who had had their lives changed by the charity. They paid for 2 wells to be dug, helping villagers with irrigation for crops and access to clean water. Many of the villagers we saw had disabilities and they were given wheel chairs and training as needed. The hospital was also grateful for the supplies given and HHI also paid for individual treatment for patients as necessary.

Alun and Jute gave us a brief but wonderful insight into HHI's work. Please keep them and all they support in your prayers. If you would like to donate go to the HHI website.

Diane

Pastorate News

Hope and Market Square, Merthyr Tydfil, has sent £200 to HHI raised through donations given for coffee and handmade cards over the year. They also coordinated a collection of 102 Christmas shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse appeal. There was a real sense of joy at the ordination and induction of a new elder at the end of November after a year in which the church has lost many dear friends. Elders had a thought-provoking first meeting with a Christian graphic designer who is helping the church develop a new logo and explore its identity with a view to raising the church's visibility. The women's choir Cantorion Cyfarthfa (who sang at Clare's ordination) are putting on a Christmas concert at the church on Saturday 12th December at 3pm, tickets £8, all are invited.

Eating out together a few times a year has become a tradition at **Bethany Chapel**, Ystrad Mynach, and the congregation enjoyed a Sunday lunch together with family members after worship at the end of November. URC Synod of Wales Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer Chris Atherton visited the chapel for the first time to hear of emerging plans to develop the building and the chapel's community presence.



Following approval by its Church Meeting **St David's Uniting Church**, Trefforest, is now exploring establishing a congregation for LGBTQIA+ people and their allies. This would aim to provide a safe worship space in the Valleys with a sense of welcome and belonging which has not been offered in faith settings. Following its Harvest Appeal, St David's was delighted to donate over £600 to Pontypridd Foodbank. Everyone is welcome to join St David's Guild sessions held on Wednesday afternoons at Pontypridd Museum 2-4pm. The Christmas programme includes Christmas crafts on December 9th and live Christmas music on December 16th.

FOOD BANK

FOOD AND/OR MONEY GREATLY APPRECIATED

Coffee Morning

Saturday 5th December

10.30am-12.

Pulpit Supply

December

6th, 10.30am	**Rev Andrew J. Davies**
13th, 10.30am	**Mr Lewis Lewis –Head**
16th, 10.30am	**Quiet Advent Communion** **Clare Nutbrown-Hughes**
20th, 10.30am	**Carols and Readings** **Ms Lynda Jones** **(we will sing requests)**
25th, 10am	**Rev Clare Nutbrown-Hughes** **Christmas Morning Worship**



Pulpit Supply



January

3rd, 10.30am **TBA**

10th, 10.30am **Mr Robert Moverley**

17th, 10.30am **TBA**

24th, 10.30am **TBA**





Santa has a senior moment

Lectionary Readings

December

6th	**Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8**
13th	**Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-14; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; Luke 1:46b-55; John 1:6-8, 19-28**
20th	**2 Samuel 7:1-11,16;Luke 1:46b-55 or psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 26:25-27; Luke 1:26-38**
24th	**Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20**
25th	**Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14**



Lectionary Readings

January

1st	**Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46**
3rd	**Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18**
6th	**Epiphany Isaiah 60;1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12**
10th	**Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:1-4**
17th	**1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51**
24th	**Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20**
31st	**Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28**



Eco Information from A Rocha

December

Make Christmas greener one day at a time. Fun, practical, biblical and thoughtful, Olivia Warburton, who heads up her church's Eco group, offers 111 easy eco tips to go greener at Christmas, in her book, 'Dreaming of a Green Christmas: Sustainability and creation care for busy people,' Here's one of its tips: Make your own decorations from recyclable materials, such as dried orange slice ornaments, sticks of cinnamon, loo roll fairies or giant paper snowflakes. Turn scrap paper into paper chains. Foraged materials like pine cones and holly can be used for wreaths, which can then be recycled at the kerbside' To consider others go to:

Arocha.org.uk/make-Christmas-greener-one-day-at-a-time/

BIBLE STUDY DATES

Thursdays

3rd December (last before Christmas)

10.30am

January 14th and 28th

Continuing to study the first letter of Timothy.

All welcome!

Lynda

We hold in our prayers -



David Jenkins

Enfys Hawthorn, Dorothy Lewis, Carol Booth

Hilary and Steve Akerman Laurie Sansom

Barbara Stewart Diana Hibbert

Those affected by the earthquakes in Venezuela and Indonesia.

The people of Gaza, Israel and Palestine and those involved whether willingly or not, in the Iran war.

All those without a home or warm shelter.

Those countries facing hardships, particularly in Madagascar, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran, Sudan and Yemen and all those desperate for their safety and future.

Those people helping to welcome and settle refugees.

World leaders that they make sound, fair and just decisions.

Permanent peace in Gaza and a just peace in Ukraine.

A fair and just solution to the war with Iran.

Those working with charities such as Christian Aid and HHI.

Van-guard

Sunday 13th December

3pm

Caerphilly Chorus Christmas Concert

£7 (cash only)

Raffle and Refreshments

Classically Caerphilly Lunchtime Concerts

Thursday 10th December

and Thursday 21st January

1pm

Free –retiring collection.

A regular monthly concert by the talented students of The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

All welcome, tell your friends!



Van-guard

Thursday 17th December

7pm

Blaize O'Callaghan and friends

RWCMD

Offer a Christmas themed concert featuring popular operatic and musical theatre numbers

Van-guard

Saturday 19th December

10 am

Menter Iaeth

Sadwrn Siarad

A morning of Welsh based chat with the opportunity to listen to Cor Cymraeg Caerffili

URC Patchwork Quilt



Churches across the URC have been asked to decorate a square of fabric to represent the life of their church Margaret B kindly rose to the challenge. We also had to say a few words about what gave us joy in our church, we wrote ,' Friendship, care and support for each other.. and music!. The square will be added into a large quilt.

Calendar of Regular Events in the Church

Communion service	**2nd Wednesday each month, 10.30am (TBC each month)**
'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)**

Ladies Social Group (All ladies welcome) Fortnightly on a Monday 7.30pm
Bible Study , Usually 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the month

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

LADIES' SOCIAL EVENING

Mondays 7.30pm

Last meeting this year

November 30th

All welcome!

No meeting then until the new year.

The Christmas Story

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

CHRISTMAS CAROLS WISE MEN MYRRH STABLE
FRANKINCENSE JOSEPH ANGELS SHEPHERDS
HEROD MARY CENSUS STAR EGYPT
HOLLY GOLD GIFTS EPIPHANY JOY LOVE
PEACE HOPE CRIB LORD

CHURCH ELDERS

Ms Lynda Jones	02920 884022
Mr Robert Moverley	02920 866336
Dr David Jenkins	02920 882463
Mrs Margaret Baldwin	02920 867027
Mr Lewis Lewis-Head	07769 340245

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

to

Mrs Diane Moverley

dianemoverley60@gmail.com





We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.