# INFORM



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

## URC
## VAN ROAD
## CAERPHILLY
## NOVEMBER 2026



**Valleys Pastorate Minister**

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From our minister … Annwyl ffrindiau,

Dear friends,

As if the stormy winds and torrential rain weren't enough to tell us that autumn is here, the clocks went back and there's now no escaping that we are well and truly in a different season.

Even the dog didn't want to go for a walk on some days over half term. As it was dawning on me that my world was shrinking as the nights grew longer and the days wetter, I received some welcome messages and photos from a friend.

They were visiting the garden of Prospect Cottage the home and sanctuary of artist, filmmaker, LGBTQ+ rights activist and gardener Derek Jarman who died in 1994. Jarman had bought the cottage on the shoreline of Dungeness in Kent, wanting to be by the sea after being diagnosed with HIV in 1986. Surrounded by Romney Marsh, the English Channel, a vast expanse of shingle and Dungeness Nuclear Power Station, the harsh environment is not one where we might imagine an inspirational garden would take root. Yet Jarman discovered the very few plants that could endure the unforgiving habitat and collected driftwood and abandoned rusting metal parts from old winching gear and created sculptures. He gathered cobblestones together and stood them upright in miniature stone circles and wrote that forming the garden had acted as a kind of therapy for him at a time when being HIV positive carried with it a sentence of an early death.



At the very start of the Covid pandemic funds were raised, in part through crowdfunding, to keep the garden and

cottage open to the public and today it attracts thousands of visitors. My friend spoke of how despite all that was against the garden and Jarman he had created this place of resilience and beauty that lifts the soul.

November is a month for remembrance. We 'Remember, remember the fifth of November' and of course we commemorate the lives and contributions of those affected by war and conflict on Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday. My friend's day trip brought home to me the importance of when our worlds shrink in the darker months to also remember to notice life and beauty and even create beauty, perhaps in unlikely places. An increased awareness of the small things around us and of how we experience the world, has been shown to improve well-being and has an ancient spiritual grounding too. After a trial run last month at Hope and Market Square in Merthyr Tydfil we have decided to hold a monthly session of Christian Mindfulness in the tradition of Jesus who encouraged his followers to 'look at the birds of the air' and 'consider the lilies of the field' (Matt 6). You are all very welcome to join us. As the seasons switch, here's to us cultivating a sense of gratitude and wonder wherever we find ourselves.

Pob bendith

Clare



## News from around the Pastorate

Prayers have been answered in powerful ways at **Bethany URC** this month in the willingness of others to come alongside members as they look to the future. Not only has Rob Moverley agreed to support the church with organising its finances while the chapel takes stock of its position, but a local freelance church fundraising consultant has also offered friendship and expertise. Some interior building work has been completed and the chapel is looking towards applying for grants for further repairs and improvements as it explores new ways to connect with the local community.

**Hope and Market Square United Church** (URC/PCW) has commissioned a graphic designer to develop a new church logo as part of moves to raise its profile and recognition both online and in the community. This will be part of the new website which is now under construction. Church leaders in Merthyr Tydfil met and have agreed to produce a flier detailing the different sessions held in churches across the town to encourage well-being and tackle poor mental health and loneliness. This will include Hope and Market Square's new mindfulness sessions and monthly Croeso afternoon social gatherings.



On the evening of November 12th members of **St David's Uniting Church** (URC/PCW/Baptist) are going to see Flamy Grant perform at Y Muni in Pontypridd. The American drag artist and powerhouse singer has previously performed at Greenbelt Festival and is currently on their debut tour of the UK. Flamy sings of growing up queer in church in America's Bible Belt and the liberating power of love and of being who God made them to be. The event is sold out but Clare has a spare ticket if anyone would like to join them – first come first served! St David's elders will meet in November to begin to form a strategy building on their Vison Day held in the summer and the Church Meeting will be invited to reflect on some of the initial thinking on November 15th.

Prayers are welcome for all of the churches/chapels.

Clare



## An Elder writes …

Harvest time is over once more—or at least it should be. In years gone by, we seemed to know when it was time to plough the fields and when the corn and wheat would be ready to provide winter feed. Now, as we experience the effects of a changing climate, the seasons seem less predictable.

This year, the harvest came much earlier and was completed more quickly after the long, hot summer. Yet we have not faced a shortage; God has provided for our needs and more. During the scorching heat, we prayed for rain. Our prayers were answered, and with the rain everything blossomed again: the trees stayed green for longer, and plants and flowers came back to life.

At times this year, it has been difficult to know which season we were in, with mild and warm days when we might have expected cold and rain.

As Advent approaches, we hope for a return to more familiar seasonal weather—perhaps even some crisp, frosty days. More importantly, Advent invites us to look beyond the weather and to wait in hope for the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

As we wait, we pray that peace will come throughout the world, that wars will cease, and that people suffering from famine will receive the help and nourishment they need.

We can keep them in our prayers and support those who work tirelessly through charities such as Christian Aid,



Fairtrade, Save the Children, and many others. What we are able to do may sometimes feel small when we see and hear of so much suffering. Yet every prayer, gift, and act of compassion can make a difference.

My hope is that world leaders will come together, care for the world that God has given to us, and work to make it a better place for everyone.

These words from **Romans 12:12** offer us guidance:

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.



God bless,

*Margaret Baldwin*

**<u>Sunday 29th November</u>**

**Re Induction of Elders during the service.**

**We welcome Dr David Jenkins and Mr Lewis Lewis-Head to join the serving eldership team.**

**Please remember them in your prayers.**

From the editor …

The news has covered the 60th anniversary of the Aberfan disaster, bringing to the forefront again that most horrific day that shocked the world.

I was in school at the time and remember being horrified at what had happened. We were all very upset. As investigations continued it was clear that this could and should have been avoided. It was tragic that negligence and 'turning a blind eye' and not heeding warnings, meant so many families lost their loved ones.

This week we went to see the play, 'The Revlon Girl.' It is a moving and gently funny play about a group of mothers meeting up in an evening to support each other and they decided they needed 'taking out of themselves' and booked a young woman representative from Revlon to do cosmetic demonstrations. They were worried that the community might see this as too frivolous.

The anguish and trauma and anger was evident throughout the performance but the characters were warm and feisty and very believable, capturing the overwhelming sadness they were facing. It was a very moving play and perfectly captured what many went through after the tragedy.

There are still coal tips that cause worry today. We pray they are well monitored. Many have been landscaped which is a boost for the environment.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with all those who still hurt so much all these years later. Diane



## Pray and Support South Sudan

**Rob and I went to a Christian Aid organised presentation in Cardiff. One of Christian Aid's partners, Angelina Jial has been touring the UK with others highlighting the desperate need of the people of South Sudan and how CA is supporting 'Hope Restoration South Sudan, a charity helping displaced communities. Angelina herself lived in several refugee camps for many years as a child so she knows the difficulties and heartache first hand.**

**We heard how the political, economic and climate crisis are making an already challenging humanitarian crisis with 10 million people in need of humanitarian aid.**

**Thanks to Angelina and her team who support displaced communities. Thanks to her courageous leadership, the organisation supports young people through peacebuilding initiatives, provides safe space for girls to receive psycho social support. They support women through livelihood projects, providing emergency support and food, water and sanitation.**

**In a recent statement, the South Sudan Council of Churches expressed their concern, stating, 'The suffering of our people has reached a point where silence is no longer an option.'**

**CA would like people to write to their MPs and AMs**

**to highlight how the South Sudan people's dilemma seems to have been forgotten. For example, the UK government could help by introducing new debt legislation that could unlock billions for countries hardest hit by climate breakdown.**

**If you would like an example letter to send to Westminster or the Senedd, please ask Rob or myself.**

**If you would like to donate money please go to the Christian Aid Website or speak to Rob.**

**(Information courtesy of Christian Aid.)**

**Please pray for ……**

- **Those bereaved or injured by violence**
- **For those displaced due to conflict and the impacts of climate change**
- **For those in need of shelter, food, water and medical supplies.**
- **For Christian Aid partners, supporting communities through training, improving access to clean water and sanitation, offering counselling, supplies and shelter.**
- **Wisdom for leaders to play their role in securing a just and lasting peace.**
- **For the church to be a light, bringing comfort to those in need.**

**Diane**



## AUTUMN SYNOD MEETING

As part of our annual review of commitments to the Ministry and Mission fund churches in Wales were asked to commit to a figure of £456 per member to the Ministry and Mission Fund for 2027. The elders agreed to this figure which equated to £8,748 per year.

At the Synod in October we had a discussion about the Ministry and Mission fund (M&M) following a general Assembly Resolution that came out of the Church Life Review. We were reminded that the Wales and Scotland Synods are nett beneficiaries from the Ministry and Mission fund i.e. the M&M contributes more to the cost of Ministry in Wales than the Wales Churches contribute. But that is why we have the M&M. It recognises we do not all have the same resources, both as individuals, as Churches or as Synods. We were also reminded that M&M doesn't just pay for Ministry. It pays for things like Education and Learning, Children's and Youth Work, Mission Programmes and Publishing. We had a concrete example of money being spent on training when Bethan Noble was commissioned as an Assembly Credited Lay Preacher - that needed training for her to achieve this - a step on her way to train as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the United Reformed Church.

To help us understand the biblical context of the M&M our Moderator, David Salisbury led us in a bible study based on Paul's letter to the Corinthians. the text was:

2 Corinthians 8: 1-15

'We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the

saints— and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.

‘Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something— now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.’

We were encouraged to reflect on the following questions when reading this passage:

What surprises you?

What challenges you?

What gives you hope?

I have been asked to a conference in the new year when the United Reformed Church will be spending more time on looking at the Ministry and Mission fund - wish me luck!

Rob



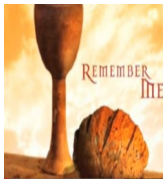
## Lectionary Readings

### November

| | |
|---|---|
| **1st** | **Joshua 3:7-17; Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37; Micah 3:5-12; Psalm 43; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12** |
| **8th** | **Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25; Psalm 78:1-7; Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13** |
| **15th** | **Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123; Zephaniah 1: 7, 12-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30** |
| **22nd** | **Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46** |
| **29th** | **Isaiah 64:1-0; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37** |



## Pulpit Supply




**November**

**1st, 10.30am** **Ms Lynda Jones**

**8th, 10.45am** **Remembrance Sunday**
**Eldership**

**15th, 10.30am** **Jute and Alan Williams**
**HHI news from Zambia**

**22nd, 10.30am** **Mr Lewis Lewis-Head**

**29th, 10.30am** **Rev Clare Nutbrown-Hughes**
**1st Sunday in Advent**

**Also to include re induction of Elders, David Jenkins and Lewis Lewis-Head**





## Eco Information from A Rocha

As winter creeps in, homes are really important. God calls us to give nature a home, too. Does your garden have a bird feeder? Could your balcony or windowsill do with some plant life. Perhaps have a bird box, hedgehog highway or whatever.( For a hedgehog highway do make sure the neighbours are ok with you making a small hole in a shared fence.) Think about the possibility of a new recycling, heating or shared transport can make a difference.



## BIBLE STUDY DATES for NOVEMBER

**Thursdays**

**5th and 19th**

**10.30am**

**Reflecting on the pastoral letters of Paul.**

**Beginning with 1 Timothy**

**All welcome!**

**Lynda**

## We hold in our prayers -



**Phylis Frayling's family and friends.**

**Rev Malcolm Shapland's family, David Jenkins**

**Enfys Hawthorn, Dorothy Lewis, Carol Booth**

**Hilary and Steve Akerman**

**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, 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.**

**A fair and just solution to the war with Iran.**

## FOOD BANK

**Many thanks for the food and money donated for the Foodbank**

**The weight of it all was over 46kg.**

**FOOD AND/OR MONEY CONTINUALLY TO BE GREATLY APPRECIATED**

## Van-guard

**Classically Caerphilly Lunchtime Concert**

**Thursday 26th November**

**1pm**

**Free –retiring collection.**

**This is another monthly concert by the talented students of The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.**

**All welcome, tell your friends!**



## Remembrance Sunday – 8th November

This year, the eldership will be taking our Remembrance service. A church member has often said that the loss of life in the two World Wars and other conflicts is counted in the millions. However, each life lost was an individual loved and mourned by someone. This year, we will be telling the story of those who have gone before us who took part in service to our country.

All my family members gave their service in reserved occupations; Uncle Glyn serviced train engines in the "Sheds", he was also a member of the Home Guard. My grandfather, who I never met, worked as a miner in the local coal mines and my Uncle Ern produced steel in Port Talbot and Ebbw Vale.

I used to enjoy listening to the stories of Megan Griffiths, a former member of this church. As a teenager she volunteered to become a land girl in Merthyr Mawr. The experience gave her independence and confidence at a very young age and she enjoyed dancing with officers at local events!

If anyone would like their loved one remembered you are welcome to take part in our service or, alternatively, we will be happy to tell their story on your behalf.

We will remember them, Lynda





## Pastorate News

**Where's Clare? Update.**

We thought it might be an idea to update you on where our minister is each Sunday, so that even when Clare is not with us we can feel in touch with her and the other churches in the Valleys Pastorate. As you know we share her with the three other pastorate churches at Merthyr Tydfil, Ystrad Mynach and Trefforest and she also has a regional role which encompasses three further churches - Llanfair, Penrhys, Edwardsville URC, Treharris and Bethesda'r Fro URC, Saint Athan - so on any Sunday she could be at any one of these (or on holiday or attending training). Clare's next Sunday with us will be on Advent Sunday on November 29th and look out for details of when she might next be with us for a midweek Communion service in the meantime.

During October and November, Clare's Sundays will be as follows:



01/11/2026 - Holiday
08/11/2026 - Pew Sunday*
15/11/2026 - St David's Uniting, Trefforest
22/11/2026 - Hope and Market Square, Merthyr
29/11/2026 - Van Rd

Please do remember her and the other churches in your prayers. But also remember that even when she is focused elsewhere, it doesn't mean we can't contact her. She is always our minister wherever she is and likes any opportunity to catch up and hear how things are.

*The pastorate group decided earlier this year that Clare should have four Sundays a year participating in worship (as opposed to leading it) either in the pastorate or elsewhere, these are called 'Pew Sundays'.

## 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**

**November 2nd, 16th and 30th**

**All welcome!**



## OLD TESTAMENT

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | H | H | A | I | N | A | H | P | E | Z | N |
| D | A | A | H | H | G | C | I | M | Z | G | A |
| C | N | G | G | H | B | E | E | Z | R | A | H |
| B | O | G | R | E | H | T | S | E | O | M | U |
| H | J | A | C | A | R | A | D | O | L | S | M |
| A | S | I | M | H | A | I | M | E | H | E | N |
| I | J | O | B | Z | A | P | O | P | H | Z | I |
| M | S | A | M | U | E | J | D | G | G | E | H |
| E | H | I | H | A | B | A | K | K | U | K | C |
| R | T | S | R | K | N | S | M | K | K | I | A |
| E | O | U | KU | I | S | A | I | A | H | E | L |
| J | T | C | E | S | S | A | M | U | E | L | A |
| H | G | L | G | H | A | I | D | E | B | O | M |

JOSHUA HABAKKUK JEREMIAH EZEKIEL DANIEL

SAMUEL NEHEMIAH JOEL HOSEA AMOS
MALACHI ISAIAH OBEDIAH MICAH NAHUM

ESTHER RUTH AMOS ZEPHANIAH EZRA

HAGGAI JOB JONAH

## 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

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**We will remember them**