INFORM



URC
VAN ROAD
CAERPHILLY
OCTOBER 2026

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From our minister …

Annwyl ffrindiau, Dear friends,

This harvest time as we give thanks for our food and God's provision in time-honoured tradition, it has felt slightly surreal to hear new advice coming from the UK Government about the importance of building up small reserves of food.

The Government has advised families to have a small stock of food supplies that could tide them over in an emergency should they be impacted by extreme weather, so households can be 'a bit more resilient'.

It's striking because for so long, consumers have been urged not to panic buy (we all remember the messages against stockpiling at the start of the pandemic) and there has been confidence in the food supply chain in all scenarios. It's also striking for me because in my former work with Christian Aid's media team a lot of the messaging we produced was about helping families in other parts of the world 'develop resilience'.

And here we are, in the autumn of 2026, hearing warnings about the El Niño weather pattern, and yes, not being told to stockpile or to panic, but to be aware of the fact that extreme weather could limit our ability to access food in our usual ways and that being prepared is wise.

Risks to our food supply chain such as climate change, weather patterns and cyber-attacks, all move us into a different era and as with any change we have a chance to

reflect on our response. Do we look inwards, turn outwards, or do both? Harvest services and the Season of Creationtide remind us of our connections and interdependence with God, the earth and one another. My hope is that in hearing the word 'resilience' being associated with our own nations we have a new sense of understanding for, and solidarity with, those both here and overseas who struggle in a much more profound way to feed their families or to look to the future. A BBC headline ran 'Stock up on food to prepare for extreme weather'. I wonder what alternative headline, churches, other faiths and communities might write as we develop a new consciousness of our own vulnerability and are prompted to act? This governmental advice might not be a call for us to simply look after our own store cupboards but be a moment that reminds us of what was always true, that together we are stronger.

Pob bendith,

Clare

PS In October the founder of a women-led Christian Aid partner organisation in South Sudan, where some regions have now been described as experiencing catastrophic malnutrition, will be visiting Swansea (19th October) and Cardiff (20th October). Founder and Director of Hope Restoration South Sudan Angelina Nyajima Simon Jial will be speaking with supporters to help them learn more about the situation in her country and about how we can help families in urgent need through our support for Christian Aid. Keep an eye on https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/

An Elder writes ...

Seeking Help to Walk the Way

I am mostly an independent person, but age and arthritis have made me take stock of that belief. Multi tasking comes naturally to me, after all I have been a wife, mother, midwife, church worker and friend. I have needed help to, " Walk the Way" i.e. that is in the footsteps of Jesus, I have needed that help and still do. When I think carefully there are people who can provide help for me and many others in different ways.

First of all let me mention Daily Devotions which appears on my laptop screen at 06.09 every morning. For this I thank the Revd. Andy Braunston, our Digital Minister, for co-ordinating Daily Devotions. I am provided with a Bible reading, a reflection and a prayer. Some, obviously are more meaningful than others, but nevertheless a good start to the day. Like everyone I have my favourite contributors. The Revd. Neil Thorogood our moderator, is at the top of my list, closely followed by The Revd. Susan Durbar. Neil recently gave us a different perception of art and religion. Susan always sends out a meaningful , helpful message. Both contribute to our Prayer Handbook, another useful tool. The Revd. Gethin Rees recently gave us reflections on how as a church and as individuals we learned from the Covid pandemic.

Last Christmas some of us received lovely calendars. Each calendar provides us with plenty of information of church festivals and events. Every month provides us with a lovely picture overlaid with a verse from the Psalms (thanks Non).

To carry us through September we have Psalm 118 v 14.

'The Lord is my strength and my defence ,he has become my salvation.'

For October we have a beautiful autumn scene and a verse from Psalm47 v2

'For the Lord most high is awesome, the Great King over all the earth.'

These are words of great comfort reminding us of the power and glory of God.If in need of help to, "Walk the Way", it really is easily available for us. In Van Road . we are fortunate to have Clare as our minister and Lewis and Rob as authorised elders. We have Bible study to enrich our lives(thanks Lynda). We also have each other.

If we make use of the resources we have and follow the Great Commandment given to us by Jesus we may be able to , "Walk the Way" perhaps with small footsteps, loving the Lord with all our Hearts and our neighbour as ourselves

Margaret C



From the editor ...

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
21st September - 4th October

'This year the focus is on highlighting 'Fair Pay.' Many farmers are still paid less than it costs to produce their crops, including tea, coffee, chocolate and bananas. Fairtrade tackles unfair pay through minimum prices and the Fairtrade Premium gives farmers protection when markets drop, helping build stronger, more resilient communities.'

Martin's Story.
Martin is a coffee farmer and assistant manager at Mutira Farmers' Cooperative Society in Kenya. Martin and his community are concerned about how climate change is making coffee growing far less reliable as an income. The global system often leaves farmers with very few options to adapt. For every £3 spent on a cup of coffee, producers typically receive around 4p. Only 8% of the UK's millions cups of coffee is Fairtrade-meaning many farmers are still exposed to volatile prices and climate risk.

FAIRTRADE GUARANTEES

- Minimum Price
- Additional Premium
- Environmental Protection
- Safe and fair working conditions
- Democratic decision making

Look for the Fairtrade logo when shopping and or go to websites such as the Ethical Superstore.

Thank you!

Diane

With All Thy Might!

Thoughts by Rev Malcolm Shapland

Yesterday, Sunday, I was invited by a friend, to visit his childhood church in the Rhondda Valley. We drove through what had been mining towns and villages and through places I have heard of but never visited, until we came to the top of the valley, destination, Blaencwm.

A very well kept, large stone chapel and obviously, not 'empty', like so many of the valley chapels have become. It was bi-lingual, and for the benefit of non Welsh speakers, the service was copied onto a sheet of A4 paper for the whole of the congregation to follow. The building was warm. The welcome was warm and the tea and coffee after service was nicely hot.

The service was led by a member of the congregation, each week they take turns to lead. So they continue to worship and meet.

This is a wonderful example of what a small congregation can do, but that is not all. They are socially aware of their place within their community. They have a Fodbank. They offer children and parent care. They have activities most days and this from a congregation of about 15 people. There are obviously leaders, but they are encouragers, not drivers. The 'encouraged' have taken up the challenge and together they are 'Fighting the Good Fight' with all their might. Not just fighting, but winning.

The story of a small church, which almost closed, but was kept alive by dedicated persons and is still doing much more than holding on. It is a story worth telling and hearing.

I am sure, when on the verge of closure, they prayed for the mountain to be moved, as we have said before, God gave them the shovel, but they didn't lean on it, they dug!

Thanks to John Wade for passing this reflection to me.



BIBLE STUDY DATES for OCTOBER

Thursdays

8th, 22nd

10.30am

Reflecting on the pastoral letters of Paul.

Beginning with 1 Timothy

All welcome!

Lynda

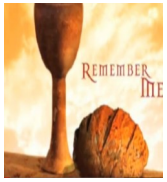
Lectionary Readings

October

4th	**Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19: Isaiah 5:1-7; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46**
11th	**Exodus 32:1-14, Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Isaiah 25:1-9; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14**
18th	**Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; Isaiah 45:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22**
25th	**Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17; Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46**



Pulpit Supply



October

4th, 10.30am **Mr Lewis Lewis-Head**
Harvest Service
Communion
To include items for the foodbank

4pm **Harvest tea**

11th, 10.30am **Mrs June Maxwell**

18th, 10.30am **Mr Andrew Glanfield**

25th, 10.30am **Rev Clare Nutbrown-Hughes**



Eco Information from A Rocha

Greening Your Home This Autumn

Tackle climate change and reduce your heating bills by finding and reducing draughts in your home. Find the gaps that let cold air in and warm air out (keyholes, letterboxes, and gaps around windows, doors, loft hatches and floorboards for example.)

Do what you can to fix any gaps-there are lots of tutorial on how to do this online.

It is also a good time to prepare for winter by putting radiator reflector foil or baking foil behind the radiator. This will reflect heat back into the room.



CRINGES

- Why didn't they play cards on the ark?

  Because Noah was always standing on the deck.
- What kind of a man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

  Absolutely Ruthless.
- What do we have that Adam never had?

  Ancestors.
- The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose.

  But mosquitos come close though.

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.

Phyllis Frayling's funeral was a wonderful tribute to such a well loved lady. Included in the service was this prayer written by Phyllis.

As we sit here in the silence knowing you are the God of sounds and silences

And in your presence is all creation

And in your love all are held.

Thankyou for giving us freedom

to be ourselves.

With freedom to pray and praise,

Freedom to sing a hymn and to pray

Thanksgiving when we choose,

When so many people in your world do not have this freedom.

Help us to shape the world that all humans will live knowing peace and love.

Amen

Van-guard

Classically Caerphilly Lunchtime Concert

Thursday 22nd October

1pm

Free –retiring collection.

This is the start of another set of monthly concerts by the talented students of The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

All welcome, tell your friends!



FOOD BANK

FOOD AND/OR MONEY GREATLY APPRECIATED

PHYLLIS

I have been asked to say a few words about Phyllis. Where do I start?

I have only known Phyllis a short while—well, about 20 years or so. The first time we spoke was when she and Frank moved into number 21, Goodrich Street. She came out onto her doorstep while I was across the road sweeping my front step and shouted over, “Has everyone got to do that?”

I laughed and replied, “No, but I wish they did!”

Without missing a beat, she called back, “I’d better get my sweeping brush, then.”

We got chatting, and she asked about the church at the bottom of the street. She said it looked rather derelict and wondered whether it was still open. I told her that it was, and she asked whether there would be room for her and Frank if they came the following Sunday.

I assured her there was always room, but warned her that there would not be a proper preacher that day—she would have to put up with me, as I was leading the worship.

True to her word, Phyllis came the following Sunday. In fact, she attended almost every Sunday after that. It was the beginning of a friendship that would last for many years. From that very first conversation, you could already see the warmth, humour and sincerity that made Phyllis so special to all who knew her. We became friendlier and friendlier as time went on, and I suggested that she come along to the “Young” Wives group with me on a Monday. Once again, she asked, “Are you sure I can come? I’m not a church member.”

I replied, “Yes, I’m sure you can. Quite a number of the ladies have no connection with the church at all.”

As time went on, Phyllis became a member of Van Road giving commitment to both the church and her Lord.

We became great friends over the years. I remember once saying to her that she had a lot of friends, to which she replied, “No, I have a lot of acquaintances, but I have two true friends whom I know I can turn to if I need anything. One is my friend Viv, whom I have known for years, and the other is you. You welcomed me when I moved to number 21 and made me feel that I belonged there.”

Phyllis and I had a great rapport and bounced off each other. More often than not, we were thinking exactly the same thing, especially when it came to working in the church.

We enjoyed quite a few trips away with the church, including weekends in Trefecca and Brecon, and a wonderful trip to Iona in Scotland. I feel very lucky to have those memories. The last holiday we had together was on the Isle of Wight in August 2025. Three of us shared a room, and it was absolutely hilarious. I will leave the details to your imagination!

It was the second holiday we had enjoyed together, and we had planned another for Christmas. Sadly, by then Phyllis had become too ill to travel. However, as soon as we returned, she wanted to hear all about the trip—every detail of the holiday. I saw many sides of Phyllis that perhaps not everyone got to see. She could be quite feisty and outspoken at times, and she was never afraid to say exactly what she thought.

When Phyllis became Chairperson of Vanguard, she could quieten a room with just a few words. You would immediately sit up and pay attention. Yet, for all that, she was one of the nicest and kindest people you could ever wish to meet. She had a heart of gold and treated everyone with respect. Well, I say everyone—but, like all of us, there were some people she got on with perfectly well without necessarily taking to them!

It has been very sad to see her so ill over the last year or so. Yet I never heard her complain. Only in the last month or two would she admit that she was not feeling very well, often adding with a smile, “This getting old is funny.”

I will miss her very much, but for her sake I am grateful that the Lord has taken her into His loving care. She is no longer in pain, and she is where she wanted to be—reunited with her beloved husband, Frank.

All I can say is this:

“Phyllis, I hope you behave yourself until we meet again one day and can cause a bit of havoc together once more. You are at peace now.”

God bless.

Margaret B.



Pastorate News

Where's Clare?

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 Sundays with us will be on October 25th and 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:

04/10/2026 - Bethany URC
11/10/2026 - Bethany URC/Pew Sunday*
18/10/2026 - Bethany URC
25/10/2026 - Van Rd
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'.

Harvest Service at Bethany





PENBLWYDD

HAPUS,

JOHN

Many thanks for all you do.

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 GROUP

(formerly YOUNG WIVES)

All ladies welcome

Meets fortnightly on a Monday

7.30pm

28th September, 12th October

HARVEST TIME

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

HARVEST AUTUMN WHEAT BEANS CAULLIFLOWER

CABBAGE TOMATOES ONIONS LEEKS
BEETROOT COURGETTE SWEDE APPLES
PEAR PARSNIPS OATS CARROTS
POTATOES BROCCOLI GRAPES

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





I am the true vine, and my father is the gardener, He cuts off every branch that does not produce fruit and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.

John 15:1-2