

Roath News



ADVENT - CHRISTMAS 2021

Free but donations always welcome

THE PARISH OF ROATH, CARDIFF

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The Clergy are always available to minister to the sick and dying. Please inform the clergy of sickness. Holy Communion may be received at home by those who are unable to come to church.

*The Parish Surgery is open on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) between 6.00.p.m. and 7.00.p.m. in Roath Church House to arrange **Baptisms and Weddings**. (Contact no. 20487854).*

Confessions and the Sacrament of Healing by arrangement.

Copy date for the next magazine (Lent) is 14th February

ROATH NEWS

We hope you enjoy this edition of Roath News, the last for 2021 (and the first since Pentecost due to several missed deadlines and general busyness).

The New Ministry Area of Roath and Cathays comes into being in 2022, and it may be that a new 'publication' will be organised. In the meantime we will continue our 'virtual' presence, until such time as 'hard-copy' editions may resume.

A selection of Canon Stewart's weekly letters and Revd Ruth's Thoughts for the Day are included, the weekly newsletters are all available on the website, including diary information and other Parish news.

<http://StEdward.roath.org.uk>



A selection of Letters sent by email from the Vicar of Roath, the Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk during the Coronavirus lockdown

Newsletter June 6

My dear Friends,

At the time of writing meteorological Summer has begun. After the coldest April and the wettest May we wish for a blazing June, and a warm settled Summer to follow. As we enjoy cautiously some of the increasing freedom we have been given we might be making plans as to how to spend our days in the ensuing weeks. Our time and opportunities seem even more precious when we have had such a difficult year. How we balance our work, our daily duties and our leisure time is probably something we now give careful attention more than ever before.

The season of Trinity has just begun in our Church calendar, the longest period within the liturgical year. Prior to this the seasons of the Church year have reflected the anticipation of the birth of Jesus, his Nativity, his youth and the instigation of his earthly ministry. We follow the events and impact of his teaching, parables and miracles. We recall the encounters with all kinds of people from various backgrounds, beliefs and status, some sympathetic and others antagonistic. We conclude with the Passion narratives, the Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord.

The liturgical colour of the Trinity that we use in our churches is green. It reflects and suggests the growth that we see in Creation, particularly in our climate in the natural world. All around us our trees and shrubs are coming into full leaf, plants, flowers are blooming and the fruits and vegetables we grow for our nourishment are flourishing.

This time in our religious life is also to be seen as a period of growth and nurture as we have the opportunity to consider the scriptures in greater depth. We can look at Christ's message and ministry over the coming months and look at how it applies to us and how it can help us in our lives. We also think about how the Church down the ages has sought to share that good news to the nations. In addition

we recall the holy and devout women and men who have striven to follow the example of the first disciples of Jesus in their own circumstances and how they may inspire us in the present and future.

As we organise our lives with all the competing claims that are on us, let us ensure that we continue to make space for our spiritual growth. We always need time to reflect and follow our faith adding depth and meaning to our existence. In our Gospel this week Jesus tells us "If a house is divided against itself , that house will not be able to stand. " (Mark, Ch3). We need to support each other in the world now more than ever and come together in our churches, community and country to help us all.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter July 4

My dear Friends,

"Let all the world in every corner sing my God and King!" is a hymn that many of you will know and remember. It was not however written as a hymn. It came from the pen of the Reverend George Herbert (1593- 1633) one of the famous metaphysical poets. Herbert was from an aristocratic family and was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He became MP for Montgomery and was noticed by King James the First. He seemed set for a brilliant career in public life. However ill health brought on a change of course and he took Holy Orders. He combined his priestly duties with his poetry and produced many pieces which have subsequently been put to music. Herbert was not to see this, for after only three years of saintly and simple ministry, he succumbed to consumption.

George Herbert died thirty years before the Great Plague of 1665, which killed 100,000 people. However diseases which are curable now would often swiftly cause the demise of all ages and backgrounds . Living conditions and health care were vastly inferior to those we enjoy now and both rural and urban poor were vulnerable. Nevertheless throughout history in these shores, tiny

country parish churches and majestic metropolitan cathedrals continued worship during epidemics, famines, floods, civil war and global conflicts. The worship has changed over the decades but often singing has been an integral part of our Liturgy inspiring and encouraging the Faithful . Whether it has been exquisite Choral services in our city churches, hearty congregational hymnody or more contemporary lively worship groups and bands.

Our predecessors would have found it extraordinary that we have been prevented by government decree from public worship including singing. We have had it explained to us the great risks of spreading this deadly virus by breathing out, especially when we sing so we have obeyed this rule in the last months. Gradually we have welcomed music back, first with the piano and then when safe, the organ. Then our directors of music with small groups of specific choristers have beautifully enhanced our services with some anthems and hymns. Now we have the opportunity to sing as a congregation. The Church in Wales and Welsh Government have given updated guidance stating that they are not saying singing is safe but we can manage congregational singing in low prevalence areas and times. We have to wear face coverings and are urged not to sing loudly. We must continue to observe social distancing and hygiene methods.

Nevertheless we are pleased that this aspect of our communal worship of Almighty God will resemble something closer to that with which we are familiar and love. Fortunately our organists, choristers and music directors will still be there to lead us and sing parts of our services as they have done so throughout the time permitted. The pandemic has made us aware of what and who we treasure and value, I hope including those who bring joy and uplifting experience to our Church life. As George Herbert wrote,

"The heavens are not too high,

His praise may thither fly;

The earth is not too low,

His praises there may grow. "

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter July 18, St Margaret's Patronal

My dear Friends,

Many of you will recall occasions in the parish church of Roath when we have welcomed guest preachers on the occasion of our Patronal Festival, St Margaret of Antioch. I was told by a longstanding parishioner early in my time here that most of them would begin by reminding us that Margaret probably did not exist! In the words of the Oxford Dictionary of Saints although Margaret was very popular in the Middle Ages she "probably never existed as a historical person, but only as a character in pious fiction" . It is however in this sense that we remember and revere her for the characteristics and devotion she displayed.

Her legend was declared apocryphal by Pope Gelasius in 494 AD. The story tells that she was the daughter of a pagan priest, Aedisius of Antioch, the place where followers of Jesus were first called Christians. Margaret converted to Christianity and was thrown out of her home and lived as a shepherdess. Olybrius, Governor of Antioch carried her off to his palace and tried to seduce her. She proclaimed herself a Christian and resisted his attempts. Margaret was tortured and tempted in various ways , even being swallowed by a dragon that then burst in two. This image we see in our church both in her ancient statue and modern stained glass. Margaret survived and through her preaching and pattern of life she converted huge numbers to Christianity.

At the end of her life it is said she promised that any one who read her 'history' would have a special place in heaven and would escape from the evils that might beset them. Those who dedicated churches in her name or burn lights in her honour will obtain anything they pray for and pregnant women who invoke her would be safe from the dangers of childbirth and their infants would be protected. Margaret was beheaded with countless other Christians in the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian.

Margaret's promises made her an attractive saint in the medieval period and 200 churches were dedicated to her in the British Isles alone, including 58 in Norfolk. In 1969 her cult was suppressed by the Holy See of Rome. However we still have our churches remembering Margaret of Antioch. Today we may think of her as a

legendary character however her kind of dedicated teaching was of course real in the lives of many early followers of Christ in the ancient world. There were countless martyrs whose names we will never know who lost their lives to cruel vicious tyrants who we recall alongside the story of our patron.

Tragically there are still people persecuted for their faith in the world today. For example in Northern Mozambique 2,658 Christians have been killed since 2017. As recently as 2020, 50 were beheaded in a three day massacre on a football pitch in Muatide. These communities are supported by charities such as Barnabas Aid, named after another saint who worked at Antioch building the infant church. He too was martyred in 61AD. We can pray for our Christian friends and donate to help improve their lives. As we remember all those holy women and men who sacrificed all to keep the flame of faith alive, let us not only treasure their memory but strive to act ourselves in a way worthy of their legacy and help protect Christ's message and spread the love of God.

Best wishes and prayers, Stewart

Newsletter August 1

My dear Friends,

Our Gospel reading for this coming Sunday, the ninth after Trinity comes from the Gospel of St John, Ch 6. The passage we shall hear read comes from a section relating events following the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. Jesus is trying to spend a little time away from the crowds perhaps to rest, recuperate and pray. The disciples find him on the other side of the lake and inquire when he came there. He replies "Truly, truly I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labour for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." Jesus understands that his followers and the crowds that came to hear him need nourishment, hence his feeding miracle. However he wants them to focus on the spiritual life, God's teaching. He wants them to feed their souls before their stomachs.

Later he calls himself the 'bread of life' and says that those who follow him will not be hungry. Taken literally this may be attractive to a malnourished person but Jesus again stresses the importance of the true bread from heaven with its sacred meaning. Later in the gospels we see Jesus sharing bread and wine with the twelve, calling it his body and blood, and commanding them to remember him by repeating this meal. Further on in the Gospel record, Jesus is recognised following his resurrection in the act of breaking bread with those who walked with him to Emmaus.

The connection between God providing 'our daily bread' to give us necessary sustenance, as Jesus taught us to pray, and caring for our religious commitments is a common theme throughout the Scriptures. It is of course continued in the life of the Church in the service of the Holy Eucharist where we share the bread which is for us the Body of Christ. Some of you will remember the old Prayer Book Communion service. In the rubrics, or instructions for this it states "The Bread and Wine for the Communion shall be provided by the Curate and Church wardens at the charges of the Parish. "This is one of the few references to the duties of the Church wardens, those who hold or have held that ancient office will tell you that there are many more tasks that they are called upon to perform. The disciples in this week's gospel, asked Jesus, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus did not reply with a myriad list of jobs that our contemporary church officers and volunteers have to complete. However they should be assured that the things they do really are an essential part of the life of the Church and the spreading of the Gospel. The practical and administrative roles they undertake on our behalf make the worship of Almighty God possible and accessible to his people in our parishes and churches.

A recent example of this will be of great comfort to those of who shivered at Christmas when St Margaret's boiler broke down! (it may be hard to think of that in current temperatures!). In the past week or so a new central heating boiler has been installed and commissioned. A huge amount of work was done in preparation for this with faculty applications, permissions, designs and plans by our warden Bob Hyett. A similar installation was done St Edward's a while back, overseen by warden Kathie Mayer. Thank you as well to all who have contributed to the enormous cost of this. These are

just two of the many important roles they and other officers do for us all quietly and efficiently in the background. We are enormously grateful to all our volunteers whichever part they play to enable us to have somewhere to share the bread of life and for us all to do the work of God, as Jesus says, and believe in him who God has sent.

With every good wish and blessing,

Stewart

Newsletter September 5

My dear Friends,

Fortunately many people associate coming to Church with joyful moments in their lives. It is heart-warming to see the faces of those who have been away for a while in the last 18 months of the pandemic returning to our church services. We all have to understand that for over a year now our weekly Sunday services have had to be different and will not be the same as before for a while. One very happy occasion was marked in St Margaret's on Wednesday this week when a couple were brought by their family as a surprise for a blessing to mark 65 years since they were married in the church. It was also a time for celebration in St Edward's on Tuesday when our wonderful Forget Me Not Cafe reopened in person together with some at home on Zoom . This has continued throughout the pandemic in a remote way continuing the support and friendship to many in these difficult days.

Of course, some come to church and to our clergy for sad times when in our funeral services each week, we commend their loved ones to God's safe keeping. People often come on the anniversaries of their family members' deaths or on other special dates associated with those who have gone before. It is not only for the departed and the bereaved that our churches and the ministry of the laity and ordained is valued. People come for friendship, companionship and a listening ear, sometimes at moments of distress or anxiety. For some this is part of an ongoing process that affects their lives.

Our Bible readings this week both remind us that in different ways we who seek to follow Christ must offer a welcome and support to

all. In the Letter of James, Chapter 2, the writer tells us that we should treat the the poor with the same respect as the rich. " Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the Kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?" In our work with the Paradise Run aiding those on the streets, the support of Danescourt House for the young homeless and volunteering for the Night Shelters, this duty is put into positive action. There are constant new calls on our generosity I know, but we are reminded by James that "Faith by itself , if it has no works, is dead."

Our Gospel reading from St Mark Chapter 7, sees Jesus caring for those with what we might call mental and physical disabilities, a young girl possessed by a 'demon', having " an unclean spirit" and a deaf man with a speech impediment. The language of the Gospel times and the attitudes of the people then were much less enlightened towards those with such difficulties than perhaps we express today. Jesus was able to bring healing and wholeness to those who were afflicted. However as those with mental and physical challenges will attest in our era, we still have a long way to go in our treatment and acceptance of people with such aspects of the human condition in their lives. The inspirational performances and dedication of our extraordinary para-olympians has been wonderful to watch, however we should not forget the more mundane restrictions that affect the daily lives of those with particular needs. It has also been good to hear our sports stars of all backgrounds talking about their own mental health concerns. This should help our understanding and views towards so many who go through and endure these conditions. Let us pray that our churches and parishes will be places of welcome and acceptance for all as our Lord Jesus and the Holy Scriptures guides.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter October 3, Harvest Thanksgiving

My dear Friends,

As I looked at the Harvest readings appointed by the Church in Wales Lectionary for this year, I read from the book of Joel Chapter

2. The section includes these words "The Lord your God...has given the early rain....he has poured out for you abundant rain, the early rain and the later rain as before." You might think that Joel was writing in Roath in the last week of September 2021! We did have a glimpse of the Sun on Wednesday but after a very balmy month we have caught up on our moisture levels. Joel goes on to speak of the result of that rainfall, the harvest that would see the "threshing floor full of grain and the vats overflowing with wine and oil. "The experience of those originally hearing the prophet's words and all who lived in Biblical times would have been very aware of the essential character of seedtime and harvest, the need for a balance between rain and sunshine. They lived in an agrarian society where people depended on the success of growing food to survive.

We in our urban, consumer society are far more detached from the growing of vegetables, grains and fruit to live. I know many enjoy their gardens and allotments but few depend entirely on them for all their produce. Owing to various factors there have however been some shortages of food in our shops and supermarkets recently. Some caused by a lack of workers in the fields, others by delivery difficulties, others because of a lack of available CO2. Inevitably when this happens the practice of panic buying ensues making the shortages worse and persist for longer. (It has happened too with petrol and diesel, though not foodstuffs, the same anxiety for having more than enough prompts such action). Few people remember the real shortages of wartime and subsequent years rationing, more of us will recall strikes and reduced production in recent decades. Nevertheless even in these instances there was rarely a fear of starvation and death.

Sadly such realities do exist in parts of our planet today. We have brothers and sisters in the human family in the developing world who genuinely fear a failed harvest. There are also people living on our streets who through a combination of circumstances find themselves without food, adequate clothing and safe shelter. As we enjoy our Harvest Thanksgiving services this weekend let us remember that it is not only a time of gratitude for all we have received, but also an opportunity for being generous to those in need. The word ' thanks giving ' shows us both of these aspects which is why we in the Christian Church avoid the term 'Harvest Festival'.

We are not able as we have done in previous years to gather large amounts of tinned and dried goods which have been given to our local homeless hostel, the Wallach Clifford or given to food banks because of the situation around the pandemic. However that does not mean there is still great need. If you wish to make a contribution to a retiring collection for the charity you can do this in church on Sunday or if you are not with us you can of course send donations to a cause of your choice which supports the hungry or thirsty such as Christian Aid or Water Aid. These help people improve their own lives, enabling them to feed their families and have a better future. This is a time not to worry about our own small problems of supply but to be giving sacrificially to those for whom a shortage may mean the difference between life and death. As we celebrate the abundance most of us enjoy, let us be ever mindful of the needs of others.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter October 31, Eve of All Saints

My dear Friends,

Many of you will have heard me speak and write about All Saints tide in previous years. It was a festival instituted in the early days of the Christian church to remember the countless women and men who gave their lives in the service of Christ. They spent their days spreading the gospel, establishing new churches and caring for communities of people who needed health, education and basic needs. Many did this work in very difficult circumstances facing opposition and persecution, some were faithful unto death and were martyred. Some of them laboured under great odds and seemed to have failed in their ministry in their own time but planted seeds which bore fruit in future generations. We have forgotten or never known the names of these holy people but we know that their contribution made a difference to how the Church grew.

The festival of All Saints is marked in our churches with our Eucharists and Evensongs, but in popular culture it survives

through the secular interest in Halloween, the eve of All Saints Day. I read some years ago that the retail and hospitality sector regard Halloween as second only to Christmas in terms of people's spending and consumer activities. Decorating our homes with ghosts and witches and carving pumpkin lanterns seems a long way from the service and sacrifice of the Saints of old! I am sure many of our families enjoy these happy celebrations but let us not forget that we enjoy the freedom of faith and the quality of life we have thanks to those who have gone before.

We may not be called to make sacrifices for our Faith today as some people do. Nevertheless we are called to think and act to care for the earth that God created and we have received as our home. The media are full of information about the serious threats to our world from climate change, much of which has been caused over the years by our actions. It may seem overwhelming when we hear of these problems and we might feel powerless to make an effective response. We know that many world leaders will be meeting in Glasgow in the coming days and we pray for them and hope that they will make decisions which will be translated into actions which will help alleviate these issues.

We know that the famous and powerful will be doing their work but just like the nameless Saints of old we as individuals and churches can do our part as well. This will make a difference. Our churches now use low energy light bulbs, have modern more efficient heating boilers and we use eco-friendly cleaning and paper products. (Pandemic restrictions have also made us use less paper in our service sheets and booklets). There are many other things we are doing to try to achieve a more sustainable way of living. I am sure that we will all take this opportunity to look at our own lives and find ways of saving power, fuel and water. We will recycle, reduce and reuse our consumption knowing that is not only good for the planet and future generations but also part of our Christian duty being appreciative of the wonderful world we have inherited.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter November 7

My dear Friends,

We have been watching and listening the leaders of the world gathering over the last week in Rome for the G20 and then much larger gathering in Glasgow for COP26, the climate change conference. Most of them were Prime Ministers and Presidents, elected leaders of democratic countries. Some of the Middle Eastern leaders however come from princely families and enjoy their position through the inheritance principal. In addition our own Royal Family were much in evidence. The Queen was regrettably but quite understandably advised to absent herself owing to health issues, nevertheless her address to the delegates made her usual impact, challenging the delegates to take very seriously their responsibility to act in a statesmanlike manner and think of future generations. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge and their Spouses were also present not least to help offer a warm welcome to the visitors. Prince Charles has long been a champion of the issues under consideration and has used his influence to promote this cause.

Our monarchy has evolved over the centuries from being all powerful in matters of state, foreign policy and military might and within the Church to being the Constitutional Monarchy that we now see. The nineteenth century economist and essayist, Walter Bagehot wrote extensively on the role of our Kings and Queens. He famously stated "The Sovereign has, under a constitutional monarchy such as ours, three rights - the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, the right to warn." Our Queen has had 70 years of experience of not only being consulted by our own Prime Ministers but also having met all the US Presidents of those decades and countless other national leaders from countries large and small from every corner of the globe. She has earned the rights to encourage and to warn that she did in her address.

In our church life we have just begun the Kingdom Season, a period of the ecclesiastical calendar that leads up to Advent. During these weeks we consider our Lord's teaching on the Kingdom of God, a very different kind of rule from that known at the time of Jesus'

earthly ministry. Some Kings at that period were absolute dictators, tyrants and had supreme power over their subjects, unchecked by democratic processes. Some were benign and caring sovereigns, loved and respected by their people. In our Gospel reading this week from St Mark, we hear Jesus proclamation of the good news of God saying "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news. " Biblical scholars and theologians have mused over the centuries trying to decide whether this was to be the announcement of a single event that would change the governance of the world to God's pattern or whether it was the beginning of an era that people would in their own lives subject themselves to a way of life that would follow Jesus teachings and message of love.

The Kingdom of God is the central theme of Jesus teaching borne out not only in the rest of this gospel but also in Matthew and Luke. Its arrival is good news but it brings judgment as well as salvation and so demands repentance as well as faith. Some feel that the Aramaic word that Jesus used we have as Kingdom, might be better translated as ' kingship', the emphasis being on the rule of God rather than some territorial area where his power is exercised. The Old Testament has this idea of the kingship of God running through it, the psalms, prophets and books of history and law speak of him ruling the earth. They also look forward to a time when this rule will be asserted in a way that would see all people acknowledge this and be obedient to his will. Over the coming weeks we will in our scripture readings, reflections and hymns explore what the Kingdom of God means for us today as we seek to be citizens of this nation, subjects of this Sovereign Lord, Jesus.

Best wishes and prayers
Stewart

Remembrance Sunday 2021

My dear Friends,

2021 sees the Royal British Legion celebrating its centenary. It was brought together by young men in their thirties and younger who had

returned from the horrors of the First World War determined to support their comrades especially the injured and destitute. It has in the past hundred years maintained its principles of campaigning, welfare and remembrance. This month this has been very much in our thoughts, prayers and activities. The work of the Legion is supported by the Poppy Appeal, we might be surprised by its origins. A French lady, Anna Guerin, a teacher and performer, was inspired by the poem 'In Flanders Fields' by the Canadian army surgeon, Lt Colonel John McCrae. She thought the bright red poppy could be adopted as a symbol of remembrance and hope for a peaceful future. A mere six weeks before Remembrance Day, 11th November 1921, Madame Guerin visited the Legion's offices in London with her suggestion. Some were sceptical but they took up her offer of producing one million poppies in France at her expense. A further eight million were produced in Britain. The first 'Poppy Day' raised £106,000 (£5.3million in today's money). This enormous success resulted in Earl Haig deciding it should be an annual event.

There are many representations of the poppy around nowadays and the Legion encourages different ways of raising funds for the six million people who still benefit today from its work. We in Roath are very proud and moved by the efforts of members of our churches of St Edward's and St Margaret's and many individuals of all ages from our parish who have made some extremely special poppies this year. If you come into St Margaret's you will see a magnificent pulpit display made from knitted poppies and a wreath from crocheted poppies. This will also later be displayed in St Edward's. Our Forget me Not Friends have also made remembrance pebbles and our Cub Scouts and Sunday Schools have made wood poppy crosses which have been arranged in our church yards. In our war memorial church of St Edward over 100 wooden poppy crosses inscribed with the names of our own fallen recalled in our parish war memorials will be arranged on the church window ledges.

I do hope that these special visual tributes will encourage us to give generously to the Royal British Legion, there will be opportunities to do this in church this coming weekend. For those who are at home you can see photos of some of our poppies on the Llandaff Diocesan website. You will also see there a special new prayer for Remembrance Day written by the Reverend Caroline Downs. Some

COMMEMORATIVE POPPY DISPLAY

In December 2020, just prior to the 2nd Lockdown of Covid 19 in Wales, some members of St Margaret's Church and St Edward's Church embarked on creating a display of poppies to commemorate all those who had lost their lives in active service. It was anticipated that the display would be used for many years to come.

The poppies were knitted or crocheted during the winter of 2020/2021 by many parishioners, members of the Knitting and Crochet Group and friends, who were keen to have a "project". We amassed over 500 poppies.

The next part of the project entailed sewing them on to a backing fabric. Once the main display had been created, the remaining poppies were used to create a wreath.

Although the majority of the poppies are the traditional red, a few purple poppies were added to represent the animals who were killed during various wars.

With many thanks to all those who took part in this project.

11 November 2021



of us will be in church at our various services this Sunday, others may be at Cathays Park for the National Service, some may be at home watching or listening to the broadcast services, wherever we are we can all unite in our Act of Remembrance. We join our prayers with those throughout the Nation and Commonwealth as we give thanks for those who made the ultimate sacrifice but also look forward with hope. We have many freedoms today thanks to those who went before us, let us use that liberty in the service of others with Christ's message of love, reconciliation and peace.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter November 21, Christ the King

My dear Friends,

This Sunday we join with our Christian sisters and brothers throughout the world in celebrating the Feast of Christ the King.

This was a festival introduced to the Church Calendar comparatively recently in history, in the nineteenth century. This was a period when in many parts of Christendom earthly kings and queens were in some places at the peak of their power, wealth and influence. However it was not long before sovereigns like the Tsar of Russia, the Kaiser of Germany and Austro Hungarian Emperor were all to lose their thrones in the wake of the First World War. The subsequent rise of republics, communist and socialist regimes saw the power move from hereditary monarchs to the people, allowing them to chose their leaders and governments.

By contrast the Church wanted to promote the Kingdom of Heaven ruled over by Christ the King. Throughout this season in our readings in church, we have heard Jesus speak about what his kingdom would be like and what it would mean to be subjects of that state. For him it would be a place where all were welcomed and where the outcast, sick and poor would be cared for and valued. Hence his following grew as he went through the country and met people of different backgrounds and life experiences. This message was not universally welcomed, some of the Jewish religious leaders saw him as a threat to their authority and thought the claims that he was the Messiah were blasphemous.

In our Gospel reading this week we return to the narrative of the final days of Jesus ministry when he is brought before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. He has been handed over to the secular occupying power by Caiaphas accusing him with the knowledge that the Jews could not put him to death but the Romans could execute him if found guilty. "Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate asks Jesus, he replies asking if the governor is speaking on his own or from the point of view of others. Pilate would obviously be concerned if Jesus sought secular power. The Jewish Sanhedrin were more worried that he claimed to sit on the throne of God. Jesus states "My Kingdom is not from this world..." Pilate does not want to discuss the nature of Jesus' rule but wishes to establish the veracity of his claim, he persists "So you are a king?" Jesus answered "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice".

Jesus' Kingdom is not a secular nation apart from God but a land of people in relation to God. Jesus opposes the lies of those who condemn him with his message of truth. Those who pledge their allegiance to Christ as king have a very different calling to those who follow religious leaders like Caiaphas and Annas or the imperial rulers like Pilate. All of us who seek to be part of Jesus' kingdom must work for the truth, share his message of love and care even when those who have power around us seem to be following very different paths. This message that Jesus proclaimed 2000 years ago is still as valid today as ever before and those who rejoice to call Christ our King do so with joy as our lives are enriched here in this world and in the life to come. It is however a Kingdom that requires our energetic and committed response that it may be renewed for every generation, we need to pray sincerely and devoutly "Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven".

Best wishes and prayers

Newsletter November 28, First Sunday in Advent

The Ministry Area of Roath and Cathays (RCMA)

My dear Friends,

If you had been walking in the cold, crisp November sunshine through our area 1,000 years ago you would have been in the rural manor of Roath with farms, homesteads and fields all around you. Go forward to the twelfth century and you would be told that the single manor had been divided into three owing to the territorial appropriations of various monastic houses. The first two were called Roath Tewkesbury and Roath Keynsham and later joined by Roath Dogfield. If we look today at the areas that they covered then we would see that they include the present day council wards of not only Penylan and Plasnewydd but also Adamsdown and Cathays. All these were cared for by the tiny Chapel of Ease on the site of our present parish church, dedicated to St Margaret. A priest would have been provided by the Abbey, his annual stipend was £4, 6s, 8d, fortunately this has since been increased but no longer is the allowance of 20d for shoes paid! As recently as 1869 much of the district was still rural before the huge explosion of population, housing, industrial and commercial growth which results in the streets we see now. (I am indebted to Mr Jeff Childs' excellent book on Roath for the historical information).

The parish boundary map of that time in the nineteenth century curiously mirrors much of what the Diocese of Llandaff proposes today as the Ministry Area of Roath and Cathays (RCMA). A great difference being the increase in population, in 1861 it was 3,044, the area we are called to serve today is 73,000. We also of course have many more places of worship. Our Anglican family will be ministered to in the five churches of St Edward, St German, St Margaret, St Martin and St Michael. The clergy will be the Reverend Ruth Coombs, the Reverend Caroline Downs, Father Irving Hamer and myself.

(The Churches of St Anne, now known as 'Urban Crofters' and St Teilo, now 'Citizen Church' have been established as individual parishes in the Diocese and in the Central Cardiff Area with their own priests and church councils).

Those of you who regularly read 'Llandaff Matters' and these letters will know that over the last year your clergy, parish officers, PCC and church committee members have been much occupied with meetings and arrangements for reorganisation of our parish as part of what is happening throughout the diocese. There are over a hundred parishes being consolidated into 29 Ministry Areas. The Bishop's Decree states that these will come into being on the 1st January, 2022. Under the new regulations there will be a single Ministry Area Council replacing the existing PCCs. We will still have our individual church committees as we do now, doing most of the day to day tasks in and around our churches. I thank God regularly for the dedication and hard work of all who serve on them. The Ministry Area will however have a Ministry Area Council (MAC) chaired by a lay chair, Mr Mike Payne (MALC), appointed by the Bishop. He will be joined by the clergy, officers and representatives of all five churches. We have proposed that there will be three representatives from each church to ensure a wide and comprehensive membership and a strong voice and worthwhile contribution from each congregation. Members of the MAC will be the trustees of the MA. We will also need two Church Wardens for the Area, one elected by those on the electoral roll and the other appointed by the Ministry Area Leader (MAL), the role I am to take. In the coming weeks please pray that individuals will come forward for nomination to these important and significant roles. Also consider whether you or someone you know might be willing and able to take on one of these tasks. We will also have to keep our volunteers in the various church committees as they are essential to the smooth running of our churches.

These changes will come into force in the New Year. Part of that process will entail us having a Special Vestry Meeting in St Margaret's on Monday 17th January at 7pm to which everyone on the combined electoral roll of the proposed Ministry Area will be entitled to attend and vote. This meeting has to be called by the Area Dean, the Reverend Dyfrig Lloyd as the other clergy need to be re-licensed before taking up our new responsibilities. Please speak to our Wardens if you want to check you are on the Electoral Roll which is undergoing revision at this time.

The First Sunday in Advent begins our new church year. It will be as you can see a challenging, demanding and exciting year for us all as we continue in this new initiative to help us fulfil the Diocesan Vision. We aim to work together "to tell a joyful story, grow the Kingdom of God and build our capacity for good" as the Vision states and show that Roath and Cathays is a place where "Faith Matters" today as it did 1,000 years ago.

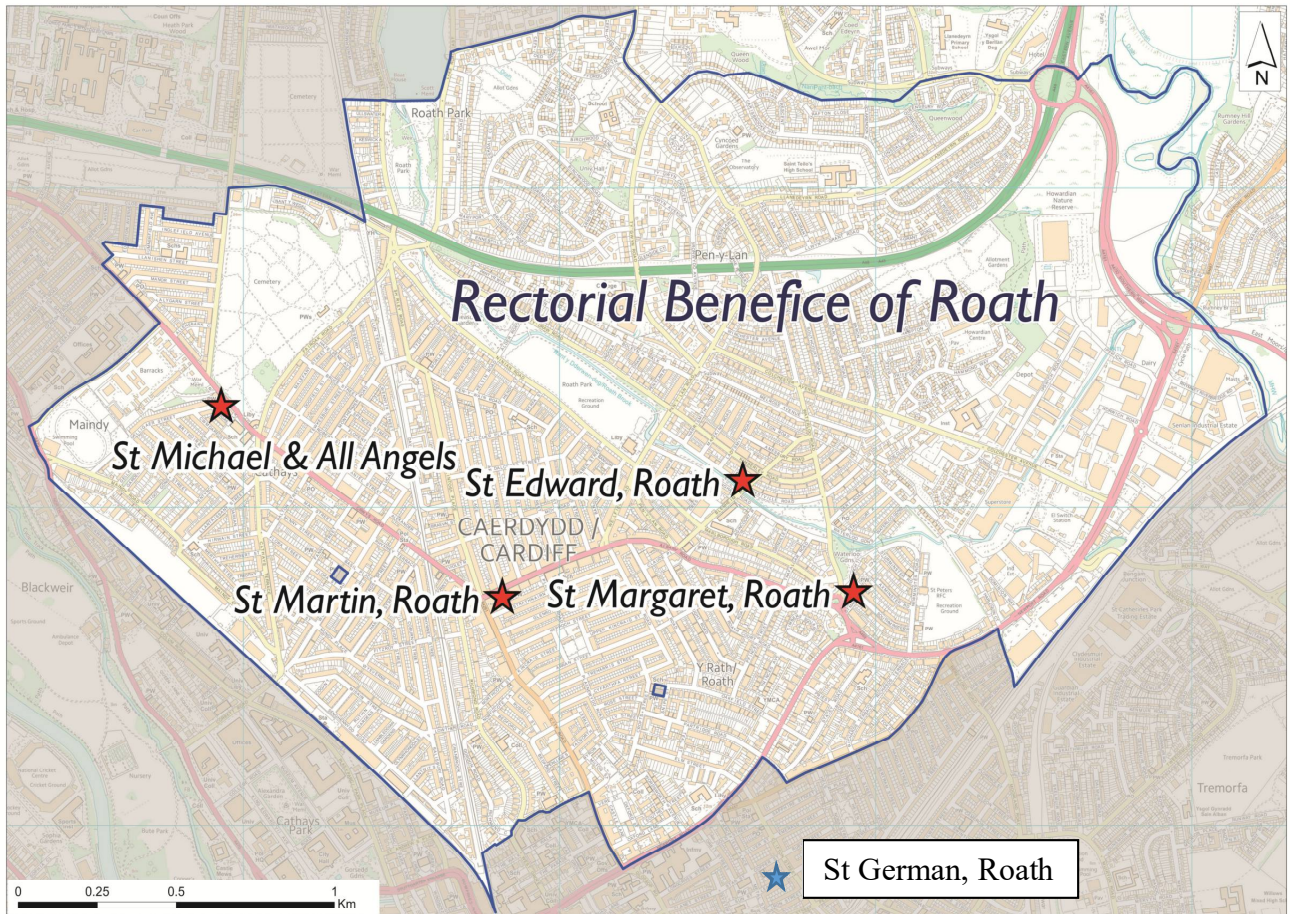
Best wishes and prayers



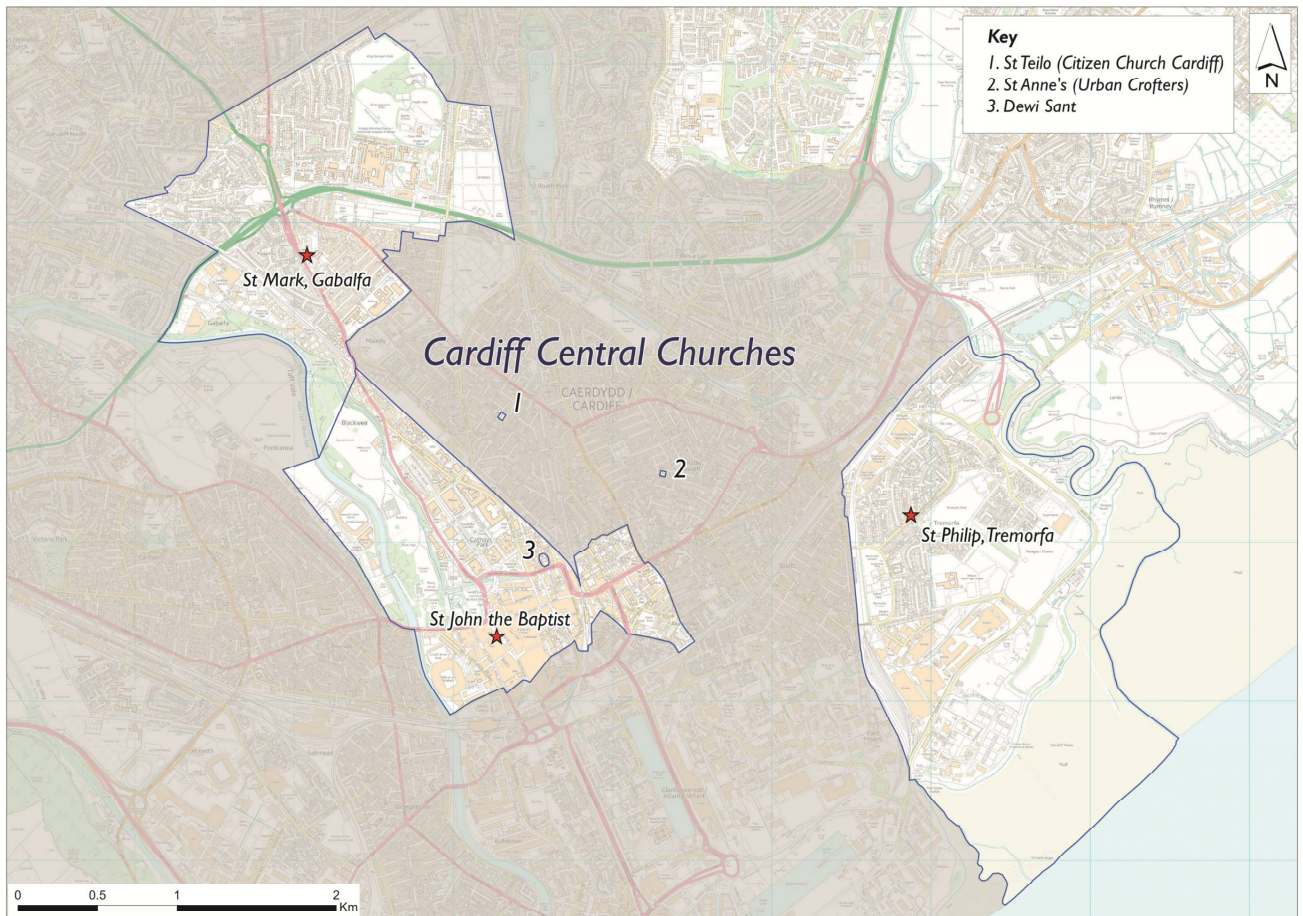
The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk, Vicar of Roath

**I have spoken to many of you by telephone. If any of you want to
chat please ring
02920 487854 or 07794 157604
It's good to talk!**





Boundary changed to include St German after the map was published



Thoughts for the Day

A selection of letters from the Reverend Ruth Coombs

July 11 - Thought for the Day: Sea Sunday

Mark 6: 14-29

Our gospel reading for today is a bit gruesome. Herod is troubled by the news of the disciples going about and healing people, and the stories that it was Elijah or even John the Baptist raised from the dead. This caused a problem for Herod because it was him that beheaded John the Baptist.

From reading the gospel according to Mark we discover that Herod liked John. At times John was challenging but Herod seemed to enjoy his company. It seems they had quite a good relationship despite Herod imprisoning John because John had been very clear that Herod should not have married his brother Philip's wife Herodias. This outspokenness meant that Herodias hated John and wanted him dead. Her chance came on Herod's birthday when her daughter danced so beautifully that Herod rashly promised her anything she wanted, up to and including half his kingdom. The daughter dutifully seeks guidance from her mother, who seizes the moment instructing her to demand the head of John the Baptist on a dish. The girl does her mother's bidding and Herod although much troubled by it, felt that he could not back down in front of all his undoubtedly important and influential guests. He had to be seen as a man who keeps his promises. In order not to lose face he has John killed and his head is presented in front of everyone to Salome. We don't know how that made Salome or the men who carried out the deed feel, but we do know Herod was terribly upset, but it didn't stop him keeping his promise.

Promises or oaths are very important and I'm sure we can all think of a time when we were disappointed when someone either broke a promise, or "over promised and under delivered". It's rare that our promises are a matter of life and death but for some people in some circumstances they are.

Today is Sea Sunday when we recognise the work done by seafarers across the world and the work that they do. Life at sea can be difficult dangerous and there are promises made and rules to be kept.

The Code of Conduct for the Merchant Navy states, "In any emergency or other situation in which the safety of the ship or of any person on board or the marine environment is at stake, the Master, Officers and Petty Officers are entitled to look for immediate and unquestioning obedience of orders. There can be no exceptions to this rule."

The American equivalent is the Merchant Mariners Oath, "I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will faithfully and honestly, according to my best skill and judgment, and without concealment and reservation, perform all the duties

required of me by the laws of the United States. I will faithfully and honestly carry out the lawful orders of my superior officers aboard a vessel.”

There are similar examples from all around the world and we are all perhaps more familiar with this piece of international maritime law, “The shipmaster has an obligation to render assistance to those in distress at sea without regard to their nationality, status or the circumstances in which they are found.”

These maritime promises are there to help and support seafarers in times of trouble, to ensure they spring into instant action to help save the lives of others. Unlike Herod’s promise which brought pain and death, the seafarers’ promise brings hope and saves lives.

Seafarers are extremely important to this country. 90% of goods that come here arrive by ship. That is much of the food we eat, the equipment in our hospitals, our phones, cars, petrol, just about everything. Seafarers work long shifts, seven days a week, often for nine months at a time. In these times of pandemic, many haven’t been home for over a year. They are far away from their family and loved ones, always at sea or a stranger in a foreign land. So let us give thanks for our seafarers and their promises; for all they do for us. Maybe today we can make a promise to keep them in our prayers, not just on Sea Sunday, but every time we pray. Amen.

July 25 - Thought for Day: The Feast of James the Great

Matthew 20: 20-28

I wonder how many of you have been watching the Hundred - a new style of cricket where teams play a one hundred ball match. It’s very exciting and I think doing a great job to raise the profile of the women’s game, but the rules are a bit confusing. I had to look them up when I saw someone bowl a 10 ball over, then another bowled a five ball over. One quick read online and that was sorted, both are permitted. So no arguments, no cry foul, no “it’s not fair”.

If only life was this simple, with the rules written down somewhere. Well of course there are rules that are written, the laws of the land, secondary legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance, the list goes on. Yes these are helpful but as many of us have found during the pandemic they can be confusing, complicated and we sometimes don’t understand them and get things wrong.

The “unwritten rules” of life are even trickier to discern especially as many of these are cultural and community focussed. All well and good if you are local and understand the customs, but potentially really challenging for the stranger or newcomer. And of course the consequence of getting it wrong can be hurt, worry and at worst being outcast. These rules are always changing and evolving too. My father was brought up to open a door for a woman. I was

brought up to open a door for anyone coming behind, especially if they have their hands full.

In the times of the Early Church there wasn't the same amount of custom and practice associated with the "new faith". We know through the gospels and the various letters that teaching and understanding was a continual process whilst Jesus was performing his earthly ministry and afterwards. Indeed we are still developing, teaching and learning; and building new traditions, customs and practices.

Today's gospel reading clearly demonstrates that there was confusion and some lack of understanding. James, together with his brother John is one of the apostles that always seem to be with Jesus when he doesn't want everyone around him. One special example for me of this closeness is the Transfiguration when Jesus took James, John and Peter with him up the mountain where Moses and Elijah appeared and Jesus was transfigured, his face and his clothes becoming dazzlingly bright. This must have been an incredible moment for James and the others, and one made them feel special. I was priested on the Feast of the Transfiguration so that sense of specialness is something with which I can really identify.

It's easy to imagine the proud mother of her two sons James and John feeling that her boys are different from the others, are more special and so she does what a lot of mothers might do in those circumstances, she asks Jesus to give them a special place in heaven, as close to him there as they appear to be on earth. It's clear that she understands the faith and their belief in Jesus otherwise why would she ask? However it's also clear that she doesn't understand "the rules". Jesus gently tells her that it is not within his gift to grant such a promise. It is for God that decides. Jesus asks the men if they are prepared to walk a similar path to himself and they say they are. Indeed James does walk a similar path as he is the first apostle martyr, put to death by Herod.

However, the other apostles are not so charitable when they hear what their mother has done. They are angry with James and John for thinking they can get favourable treatment. Jesus puts them all straight and reminds them that in order to be first they must first be last, we cannot be master we must be servant, just as he is the Servant King.

It doesn't matter what our status is in life, whether we are rich or poor, famous or totally unknown, who we or do not know. The road to eternal life is believe in him, repent of our sins and commit ourselves to him. We sometimes miss the meaning of the words "believe in Jesus." The Greek word for believe literally means **to trust** or **to have faith** or **to depend**. It is sometimes translated as **to obey**. So when Jesus says we are to believe, he is also saying we should trust or depend on him. This is our Christian commitment. It is more than intellectual knowledge about him. Those who are "first" in this life will not obtain eternal life unless they believe in Christ, repentant of their sins

and commit themselves to follow him. Those who are poor and insignificant in this life can gain eternal life by faith and might have great rewards in heaven for faithful service. So it's down to each one of us, with the help of God and each other, to trust in the Lord, to lead a good and Christian life, knowing we are loved and having the hope of eternal life. Amen

August 15 - Thought for the Day: The Assumption of Mary

Luke 1: 46-55

Today we remember Mary, the mother of our Lord and perhaps there is no better way of doing so than by focusing on her song of joy. Perhaps best known to most of us as the Magnificat, sung at evensong.

I can remember our visits to my grandfather when I was child. Quite a long drive for the day, we would always have chicken, vegetables from his garden and apple Charlotte for dessert. He was a man of regular habits and we always knew when it was time to go home as he would put on his black overcoat, his bowler hat, pick up an umbrella and walk through the village to evensong. He never missed a service. As I got older I became more curious about evensong and started attending when I could. I soon grew to love the quiet and reflective nature of it and the beautiful haunting words of the Magnificat, learning to sing a number of different settings. And of course we are lucky in Roath to still have regular Choral Evensong services to enjoy. Sadly fewer churches are still holding them.

Mary sang the song when she was given the news that she was to bear God's son. Not the most usual response from a very young unmarried woman discovering she was pregnant. A more usual response might be shock, worry, denial, guilt. Here was a young, uneducated girl engaged to a much older man in an arranged marriage, as was the norm in those days. How was she going to tell Joseph, would he quietly send her away, or worse publically break off the arrangement? Would she bring shame on her family as well as herself and make Joseph a laughing stock. It would be unremarkable if these were the thoughts rushing around her head when she received the news. But Mary's acceptance and sense of duty was her paramount reaction.

It shows her as a person of faith, someone brought up to respect the Lord and the law, and yet here she is rejoicing in breaking all those rules. Her song is overwhelmingly joyful, "My soul doth magnify the Lord..." She trusts in God from her very soul. She gives her life over to God completely, not just for the short term, during the exciting time of becoming a mother to a very special baby. Mary keeps her obedience all through her life.

At times she admonishes Jesus, when he goes missing for three days and frantically searching for him she finds him in the Temple. In response to her chastisement, Jesus just says they should have expected him to be in the Temple, his father's house.

At times she is excited for him and maybe pushes him a little, at the wedding at Cana when the wine runs out and she tells Jesus, who respond that his time, "...has not yet come..." and then performs his first miracle.

And she grieves for him, knowing she will be a mother who does what all parents dread, bury their child. After his death she remains faithful to the end in the care of John, his beloved friend and disciple.

Mary would know scripture from listening to teachers and preachers of the Jewish faith. We can see how some phrases of her song of joy echo that of Miriam and Moses before her, in the Song of the Sea in Exodus chapter 15, "I will sing to the Lord. The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him." Although the Song of Miriam is now simply a fragment echoing the beginning of Song of the Sea, scholars have for some time thought that either the rest was suppressed, or that Miriam originally sang the whole song, which was later attributed to Moses.

The Song of the Sea is a victory song, when God triumphs over Pharaoh. The song of Mary is a song of obedience to God; both show the important place of women in the Bible. They demonstrate the importance God places on the part women play in his plan. Not just rich and powerful women, but simple, otherwise ordinary women and girls that are central characters in the choreography of the life of Jesus.

So today we remember Mary as a mother of courage, steadfastness and duty. A role model for mothers everywhere; and for everyone who takes on the role of guiding, supporting, and chastising when necessary, a young person to help them to be the best that they can be, wrapped in love, until their life's end. Amen

September 12 - Thought for the Day: Trinity 15 ['911']

Psalm 116, Mark 8: 27-38

This weekend marks the 20 anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3000 lives were lost, including 67 British people, and so this day is marked around the world.

Some do so at memorial services, some in the memorial gardens, at ground zero, in London and elsewhere. Some at home quietly, others in the majesty of the mountains, or by still waters.

It's a time to remember and to reflect, to mourn. Some will be thinking why her, why him, why them? Some will remember the relief of learning that their loved one was spared. Some will still feel guilty, why not me? Why was my life spared when my brothers, sisters, friends were not?

I can remember watching the destruction of the twin towers, having spent the day closeted away from the outside world in all day "emergency" meeting in a

room with no windows. The first I knew of it was picking up my car from the garage and wondering why they were showing a disaster movie. I then realised this was real. This was life imitating art, in the most appalling manner. I remember my husband's relief when friends from America emailed to say they and their loved ones were safe.

I was in London on 7 July 2005, the day of the London bombings. I can remember the distress of my colleagues as the news unfolded, and some of us due to be at our meeting weren't there. It turned out we were the lucky ones. No-one from our organisation was hurt. The journey back to Wales, in two taxis was surreal. I remember reflecting on how and why over 100 of us were all spared. It felt like a miracle. In the days and weeks that passed I do remember thinking why them and why not me?

It's natural that when we are hurting or grieving that we may want to pay others back for the hurt they have inflicted, or turn our anger on ourselves and our unworthiness to be spared. Our readings from the psalms and the gospel according to Mark can help us overcome these feelings.

The theme of deliverance from death in psalm 116 is very appropriate for this weekend. Verse 3 tells us, "the snares of death encompassed me; the pains of hell took hold of me: by grief and sorrow was I held. Then I called upon the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, I beg you, deliver my soul.'"

It's a psalm often said on Maundy Thursday in Holy Week, when we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples in the context of Passover. When we read Psalm 116 on Maundy Thursday the psalm's celebration of deliverance from death takes on a unique character. It is not read as testimony to what God has done in the past so much as it gives hope for deliverance in the future. The psalm's images of death now apply to the coming suffering of Jesus. The celebration after deliverance draws us into the suffering of Jesus as his offering to God and to us. Jesus himself has become a sacrifice and we now benefit from his faithfulness to God. It gives us hope.

In the gospel reading, which is mid-way through Mark, Jesus reveals for the first time to his disciples that he will face, rejection, ridicule, death and resurrection. Peter's response is very human. He rebukes Jesus and says this can't be the way it will be, our Messiah cannot be rejected and killed. Peter loves Jesus and cannot bear the thought of losing him. After all the work they have put in together, it's just too hard to bear. Jesus puts Peter straight. It's not for us to think of him in human terms, we must focus on the divine, we must follow him and take up the cross. That's not easy and it's not meant to be. Jesus speaks of us losing our lives for his sake, and for the sake of the gospel.

Taking up our cross means being willing to suffer the consequences of following Jesus faithfully, whatever those consequences might be. It means putting Jesus' priorities and purposes ahead of our own comfort or security. It means being willing to lose our lives by spending them for others. Using our

time, resources, gifts, and energy so that others might experience God's love made known in Jesus Christ.

At the same time as we remember and mourn this weekend, there is also hope today. The first Afghan refugees have arrived in Cardiff, they are relieved and happy in their accommodation. It may be temporary but it is good. Over the coming weeks and months, more will join them, will join us to begin new lives amongst us. I hope and pray that they will be welcomed and loved by all they encounter. Our God is a God of truth, justice and love. Let us show our Christian faith by offering others our truth, our justice and our love

October 24 - Thought for the Day: Bible Sunday

Mark 10:46-52

October 24 is Bible Sunday, when we think about the work of the Bible Society throughout the world, bringing God's message of hope to millions in their own languages. A truly amazing gift and we thank them and their supporters for all their hard work.

It also marks the last Sunday of Trinity season and the rich gospel text is one of many examples that make the Bible so readable and so fascinating. The story of Bartimaeus is a story of faith and hope, a wonderful combination. It also gives us real insight to the hierarchy of society in Biblical times and gives us the opportunity to reflect on how far, or not, society has moved on.

It's important to remember that this passage comes at the end of Mark's gospel. There has been a thread running through the gospel of a lack of appreciation of Jesus, and a lack of understanding of his power and what that means for the disciples and for people more broadly.

Last week it was James and John's turn to get everything wrong by putting themselves first and thinking they were somehow more important, or closer to Jesus than their peers. I find the story of Bartimaeus a refreshing change from some of the complexities and nuances contained in Mark's gospel.

Jesus and his followers, I imagine quite a crowd of people, had been through Jericho and were coming out of the city. Bartimaeus happened to be sitting by the side of the road. We don't know if this was his "usual pitch" but given how difficult it would be to navigate the countryside in those times, I tend to think this is where Bartimaeus may have felt as safe as he was going to feel. It is clear from the text that he wasn't expecting Jesus to come by.

Bartimaeus is sitting on his cloak, begging. As a disabled person, he had no standing in society at all. There was no government support, he would rely on his family, any friends he might have (and they would have been few and far between given the Jewish laws and customs at that time), and of course by begging.

When he hears that it is Jesus coming by he begins to shout out to him. Maybe he heard all the noise and asked what was going on, but he is very quick to make the most of the situation. This is a unique chance for him. He must have heard some of the stories of what Jesus had done and maybe he had spent time thinking about the miracles Jesus has performed. He certainly knows a lot about Jesus because when the crowd tell him off for shouting, (I mean how dare such an outcast from society even contemplate trying to catch someone's attention? People would have been shocked and maybe a bit embarrassed by it), Bartimaeus shouts even more loudly and calls Jesus the Son of David. He recognises Jesus' royal lineage. Nowhere else in the gospel according to Mark do we find Jesus called by this name.

Then Jesus does something different too. Instead of quietly going to Bartimaeus and engaging privately with him, he calls him to come to him and some in the crowd relay the message. Bartimaeus is full of anticipation and eagerly throws off his cloak and goes to Jesus. The throwing off of the cloak is really significant. His cloak is one of his few possessions, he would sit on it to beg, wrap it around himself when he was cold, use it as a blanket at night, so why throw it off and abandon it? Bartimaeus knows something momentous is about to happen, that his life would be changed in an instant.

When Jesus asks him what he wants, he doesn't dress it up, he doesn't talk about how devout a Jew he is, how often he prays, how he keeps the laws, he simply tells Jesus he wants so see again. We don't what illness, condition or accident caused his blindness but Bartimaeus has had the gift of sight and wants it back. He knows that Jesus can grant him that desire. Jesus recognises the faith Bartimaeus has in him, and tells him it is his faith that has made him well.

Bartimaeus is the only one healed in Mark's gospel that immediately joins Jesus and his disciples. He lives out his faith with Jesus. The ending is significant because he follows him "...on the way." In literal terms he has moved from the side to the centre of the road, from the periphery of society to the heart of community with Jesus and his followers, he belongs.

The message for us is both straightforward and incredibly complicated. It tells us that despite all the secrecy, and misapprehension that unfolds throughout this gospel that we can gain spiritual insight into the mysterious ways of God through the person and ministry of Jesus.

With some shouting Bartimaeus down wanting to keep him anonymous, others encouraging him and supporting him, and Jesus' compassion, this story also gives us an opportunity to reflect on faith and community; and on wider society, its virtues and its shortcomings. Amen

October 31 - Thought for the Day: All Saints

John 11:32-44

This is a very well-known piece of scripture, usually referred to as the raising of Lazarus. I think we are all familiar with it. Jesus is sent a message to come to the aid of an ill man, he arrives, the man dies, and Jesus raises him from the dead. Another miracle, another telling of the amazing things Jesus has done. But there is so much in this passage, if we stop to look at it a bit more closely.

Although it's about Lazarus, it's really centred on Martha, one of the sisters of Lazarus. Of course we have met Martha and her sister Mary before, when Martha is doing all the work and Mary simply sits and listens to Jesus. When Martha complains she is told it's all right for her to be busy and Mary to sit. The two sisters demonstrate two fundamental parts of Christian life faith - prayer, reflection and scripture; and works.

Our passage today opens with Martha kneeling at Jesus' feet. It would have been a convention for Martha to kneel before Jesus as a mark of homage and respect. But in this instance, kneel is not such a good translation. Martha literally falls at his feet. She is distraught following the death of her brother.

Sadly, there will be few of us, if any, that haven't experienced the loss of a loved one. Today is the 9th anniversary of my mother's death and I can still recall it vividly and how it impacted on each family member. My mother was a woman of faith, which brought comfort to her, and for us in the following days and months.

Martha is a believer, her family is close to Jesus. Lazarus is his friend, and some scholars think may have been a bit of a mentor to the young Jesus. So, although her body language is submissive, Martha has a bone to pick with Jesus, "Lord **if** you had been here, **my brother would not have died.**" If Jesus had come when he was sent for, rather than finishing what he was doing, the outcome would have been very different.

We too often dwell on the "if only". We focus on the past and what might have been different if we had, or more often, if someone else had done something different then our lives would be different. But we can't change the past, anymore than Martha can change the past. Her brother has been dead for four days. Focussing this very human and natural reaction is important here. We can easily identify with Martha and Mary's grief. The "if only" is often dwelt upon when someone dies.

It can be a way of finding our way through our grief. It also can hurt the person it's directed at as well as articulating the grief of the one who says it.

Jesus receives Martha's sharp message in a very human way. He sees the people around him crying and he begins to weep. Some of the Jews present soften a bit and recognise that Jesus too has lost someone he loves. Others are less charitable. After all if he can make the blind see, surely he could

have come quicker and healed his sick friend? I image the scene as chaotic and very highly charged, emotions are running high, and Jesus bears the brunt of all this anxiety.

Jesus asks to see Lazarus and Martha immediately objects. Lazarus has been dead for four days in a hot country. His body will be decomposing and smelling. That's partly why tombs were used with heavy stones covering the entrance to deter the interest of wild animals.

It's now Jesus' turn to remonstrate with Martha. By this time in his earthly ministry Jesus is frustrated and disappointed. His followers still don't fully understand or trust in him. They still "don't get it." Martha still doesn't get it. She doesn't simply accept and trust whatever Jesus is about to say or do, she still has to question. Jesus reminds her, and everyone else yet again that if they believe they will see the glory of God.

Jesus then prays. This is not for his own benefit because he knows what is about to happen, it is for Martha and Mary's and the Jews, and yes for **our** benefit that he prays to God. Then he calls out in a loud voice at the mouth of the empty tomb, "Lazarus come out", and Lazarus comes out wrapped in burial cloths. It's important that Jesus both prays and calls him by name. It reinforces the prophecies in John chapters 5 and 10 when he calls his sheep by name and they come out of sin and death.

The passage ends with an incredible twist. The bonds of Lazarus don't simply fall off; there is no Jesus flourish, as one might expect.

More significantly, Jesus tells the people there to unbind this man who has died. Jesus starts the process but the community are part of the restoration to life.

What a powerful message for us. We as a church community are charged with being part of the healing process, we must help in the restoration of individuals and society to wholeness. It's a big ask, and one that we must attend to with care, compassion and diligence.

There are many who feel broken at the moment, with impact of the pandemic, economic worries, climate change, violence and oppression. The tasks ahead may look daunting, but if we can enjoin the community to participate in this healing, just as Jesus urged the community in Bethany to be a part of it, with the help of God, we can.

November 14 - Thought for the Day for Remembrance Sunday

Mark 13.1-8

Like many other families, wars have touched ours. My grandfather was a prisoner of war in the Great War, my father lost his much older brother in the Second World War and my mother's eldest brother was wounded. More recently my then brother-in-law went straight from several tours in Northern

Ireland to George Island days after the last shots were fired in the Falklands and there was an uneasy peace.

But there was one thing in common with all these men, no-one ever talked about it. Their silence was deafening, “mustn’t dwell on the past”, “it’s just what everyone did”, and even “I don’t want to talk about it”. Their wishes were respected and rightly so, but in order look to the future we must remember the past.

As generations come and go the memories grow fainter, our children and our children’s children don’t understand, don’t know, maybe they become less curious or maybe the fact that there is war and conflict constantly somewhere in the world, has made us grow a little less sensitive to the impact of war.

Yes it’s true we haven’t had a war here in Wales for many years, but we do contribute many service personnel to the armed forces. In 2017-18 5% of Navy and Air Force and 6% of Army recruits came from Wales. We have a strong tradition of training young people in our service colleges and many young people in Wales join the different cadet forces. Many of these have served in recent conflicts across the world, the Falklands, the Gulf, Afghanistan to name but a few.

We only have to cast our minds back a few months to the withdrawal from Afghanistan and loss of lives then to know that the horror of war is never far from us. War has been a near constant in the history of humankind. About 20 years ago a group of academics and historians compiled some disquieting information. Since 3600 BC (that is 3600 years before Christ), the world has known only 292 years of peace. During the 5,600 years until 2018, there had been over 14,351 wars/conflicts, in which 3.64 billion people had been killed. Of all war fatalities over the past half millennium, three-quarters occurred during the twentieth century—including roughly 26 million in World War I and 53 million in World War II.

War is no stranger in the Bible, wars are not new, since Cain and Abel humans have fought to gain what they didn’t have, annihilate entire cultures, or ‘right a wrong’. The Old Testament is full of stories of bloody wars.

In the gospel according to Mark, Jesus says, “When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” This seems a strange thing for a loving God to say, and the disciples and all who heard it would be terrified. How do we reconcile all this talk of war and death with salvation? It’s not easy, and certainly not easy for anyone lying in a trench or girding their loins to go into battle, but the comfort of faith is there.

When I was training as a Lay Reader one of our tutors had been an Army Chaplain and he talked of Eucharist services before going into a conflict zone, or on a “reccie”, or into full battle. The altar was the drop down at the back of an army jeep, the bread stale biscuits and the wine cold tea. The service personnel in his care needed these acts of worship and so did he. They didn’t

ask, where is God in this? They knew God was in it with them, walking alongside them, watching over them as they died. No it didn't lessen the pain but it did bring comfort.

We can't undo the last 5,600 years, but we can look to the future, strive to do our bit. We can stop chasing the things that result in war - greed, envy, self-righteousness. We can focus on the world to come. A world foretold by prophets where, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Micah, Isaiah). We can begin to understand what is meant in the Kohima Epitaph, ***When you go home, tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow, we gave our today*** Amen

November 21 - Thought for the Day: Christ the King

John 18.33b-37

On the feast of Christ the King we reflect on what it means to swear allegiance to a particular person.

In the gospel according to St John, Jesus is set before Pilate.

Pilate asks him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" This is a very dangerous question because under Roman rule to call anyone but Caesar a king is punishable by death. Pilate knows this. He recognises Caesar as a king and serves and obeys him. By asking the question he is putting the onus on Jesus to decide his own fate. If he says yes he is signing his own death warrant. What Pilate doesn't know is that at no time in his ministry does Jesus call himself king. He refers to the kingdom of God but does not set himself up as a king. Jesus responds to Pilate by asking him a question. This is another social taboo. In Roman culture a person of less rank or class does not ask a superior a question. By answering a question with a question, Jesus tacitly calls into question Pilate's authority over him.

Being the most senior Roman representative in the area, Pilate would not spend any time, or have any interest in, Jesus' life and ministry. He quite possibly doesn't know anything about Jesus, because Jesus simply isn't important enough. This is shown when Pilate asks him, "What have you done?" He is trying to be judge and jury in a case he knows nothing about, no wonder he tries to get Jesus to do the hard work for him.

In their dialogue Jesus refers to his kingdom, but not his kingship, and then the sting in the tail, "...I came into the world, to testify to the truth." Pilate doesn't see that one coming and it throws him off course. What should he do with this man before him? In the next verse of the passage Pilate asks Jesus, "What is truth?" A very good question and one we should ask of ourselves.

When I was called for jury service I was privileged to sit on three different trials, one as foreperson. Each time my fellow jurors and I were assembled before a trial we swore the jurors' oath. The oath typically takes the form, "I

swear by almighty God that I will faithfully try the defendant and give a true verdict according to the evidence." This oath is usually sworn on the holy book of your religion. As a Christian I swore my oath on the Bible. It was a very solemn moment and it made me acutely aware of the responsibility I had individually, and we had collectively to both seek and tell the truth. The fate of the people before us lay in our interpretation of the facts and I prayed every day that the truth would be unearthed and that justice would prevail.

As Christians we should expect to live our lives according to truth, but in the modern world that's not always easy. We can become trapped into saying yes when perhaps we should say no. By saying yes all the time we can get more and more work heaped upon us, giving us less time to be still with God, let alone spend time with our families. Young people get coerced into risky behaviours because they find themselves unable to say no to their peers, or someone in a position of power. Older people can be victims of scams because they don't know how to say no to the person on the phone or the doorstep.

Christ our King says no to Pilate, he resists the power of the Roman hierarchy and its authority. Jesus simply says his kingdom is not from here. Jesus has authority of a different kind, authority from God and a power based not on strength and oppression, but on truth and justice. An authority he bestows on us if we follow the truth.

Pilate famously washes his hands of Jesus and hands the sentencing back to the Judean authorities. There is no trial or verdict here. Jesus has already been tried and found guilty in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This encounter with Pilate is merely to decide the consequence of the verdict, and we all know what that is.

So where does this leave us? It leaves us striving to give our allegiance to Christ our King; and we swear that allegiance by living our lives as he teaches us, through truth and justice, through prayer and worship and through good deeds. To Christ be the Glory. Amen.

ST EDWARDS NOTES – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2021

NEW VOLUME for the Church Bookshelf – A copy of WALES AND THE INCORPORATED CHURCH BUILDING SOCIETY 1818-1982, by NEIL FAIRLAMB, previously Rector at Beaumaris and now Parish Priest at All Saints Tilford Surrey. Described as a “*celebration of voluntary effort*” it is a fascinating account of “*the relationship between a London-based organisation and the churches of Wales*”. Lots of local churches get a mention including St Germans, in the opinion of the author, “*the best church built in Wales in the 19th century*”. Thanks to Neil for providing this free copy for our small and distinguished library. Also to the AMS/Friends of Friendless Churches Newsletter Summer 2021 for the publication information.

SUNDAY SCHOOL is back and has had the bonus of being outdoors on many of the fine Sundays we have enjoyed this Autumn. Thanks to Jane (& Geoff) for setting up each week, and the other helpers who have been delighted to be BTN (back to normal). As we start to think about the Festive Season, we are already looking forward to the Sunday School Presentation.

SAYING GOODBYE Some of us were privileged to be able to read/sing/play in farewell to Doreen (Balley) whose funeral took place in November. A long-time member of the congregation, and her daughter paid tribute to her wonderful Mum. May she Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

RESUMPTION of GROUPS & ACTIVITIES Alan and Kathie have been much involved in the return of many of our music/artistic groups now restrictions are easing. Thanks to them, and (amongst others), the Good Gym Runners who have provided help and support several times during recent times.

THE FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES

- The Friends of Friendless Churches was established at a meeting held on 3 July 1957 in Committee Room 13 of the House of Commons.
- Led by Welsh journalist, politician, sportsman and polymath Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, the founding committee was a group of friends with a passion for protecting the ecclesiastical heritage of England and Wales.
- The group sought to become friends to friendless churches, to “secure the preservation of churches and chapels, or of any part thereof, in the United Kingdom, whether belonging to or formerly used by the Church of England or by any other religious body ... for public access and the benefit of the nation.”
- Initially focused on campaigning and grant-aiding, in 1972 the charity began to take ownership of buildings. The residual tower of St Matthew’s at Lightcliffe, Yorkshire was the very first friendless church adopted by the Friends of Friendless Churches.
- Ivor and his influential friends saved countless historic churches — hopeless cases, lost causes — from ruin, neglect and demolition. We are proud to continue their legacy.

Friends of Friendless Churches - Rescuing places of worship in England & Wales with 28 Welsh Vestings

Anglesey – 4

Dyfed – 1

Monmouthshire – 5

Gwynedd – 7

Ceredigion – 1

Carmarthenshire – 1

Pembrokeshire – 6

Powys – 2

Denbighshire – 1



NEWS FROM THE LYCHGATE



Julia Griffiths has handed over to me to provide News from the Lychgate in future. Thank you, Julia, for your contribution over the years.

At last we are getting back to some sort of normality in our Church life, with being able to sing hymns although from hymn sheets not books (thank you, Gary, for arranging these), sit next to each other, resume the Intercessions, etc. We are now welcoming groups to our church, Friends of Llandaff Cathedral, Cyncoed Golf Club, etc.

We very much miss the presence of Gill Day. We look forward to seeing her again in person. Gill has been involved in our Parish life for so long, it is strange not seeing her, come back soon, Gill!

For a few years before Covid, in Advent, we donated £3 for a carnation in memory of loved ones for our Christmas floral display. Although we won't be able to display a Remembrance board, perhaps you would like to donate again this year. A collection box will be in church from Advent Sunday. Would you like to help our 'flower ladies'? No experience required! See Pat Hyett or Joan Brooks for details.

No doubt you will have seen our beautiful 'Poppy Drape' below the pulpit in church. Over 500 poppies were knitted or crocheted by many Parishioners from St Margaret's and St Edward's, together with members of the Knitting and Crochet Group and other friends, enough for a wreath as well!

Ladies Circle restarted in September, albeit in a different form, meeting on the third Tuesday of the month at 1.30 in the afternoon in the hall of Roath Church House – no stairs to climb!! The next meeting on Tuesday 21 December at 1.30, will be the Christmas one, all welcome. It is hoped to continue meetings in the New Year on the third Tuesday of each month – watch this space!

Are you able to spend a couple of hours to help clean the church? It is only a few times a year and your help would be most appreciated, contact Rachel – email – RachelKilby@hotmail.com

Congratulations are due to Sheila Rowe who was 89 on 17 November, only another year to the big 90 Sheila!

So many 'regular' faces are missing from our congregation, please think about returning – we miss you!

Lastly, some Christmas details –

We will be having our usual cash collection throughout Advent raising funds for The Huggard Centre.

Our service of 9 lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday 12th December at 3.00 pm

Finally, a big 'thank you' to Rev Canon Stewart who has not had a Sunday 'off' since March 2020. We appreciate all you do for us!

Sally reports of the sad passing of Sue Sanders who was a valued member of our St Margaret's choir for many years. When I first joined the St Margaret's choir I was nervous and Sue made me feel very welcome and she would help me and my husband Stephen, we will miss her quirky remarks that always made us laugh, Her funeral service was held in St Margaret's on Friday 19th November 2021. Sue was a very special lady and friend to me and my husband Stephen and we will miss her terribly.

We would like to extend our deepest condolences and love from ourselves and everyone from St Margaret's to her children Graham and Lizzie at this sad time. **REST IN PEACE SUE AND RISE IN GLORY.**

Also I would like to report a big thank you to Julia Griffiths for her support /rapport over the years with me writing the news from the lychgate and I wish her and her husband Teifion all the best and hope to see them very soon back in church. I want to welcome Pam Hall to the News from the Lychgate and hope that we can have the same rapport that myself and Julia had over the years.



Christmas Greetings &
A Prosperous New Year
to each & every one of you

Pam & Sally



Poster found in a Church in
France... (translated):

"When you enter this church
it may be possible that you
hear "the call of God".

However, it is unlikely that He
will call you on your mobile.

Thank you for turning off
your phones. If you want to
talk to God, enter, choose a
quiet place and talk to Him.
If you want to see Him, send
Him a text while driving."



Parish Diary

Advent – Christmas 2021

Sun 28 Nov 2021. 6.30pm. St Edward's Church. Advent Carol Service.

Fri 3 Dec 2021. 7.00pm. St Edward's Church. Concert: Nicole Boardman, Giordano Ferla, Rebecca De Coverly.

Sat 4 Dec 2021. 7.30pm. St Edward's Church. Concert: Bach Family - *Ulrich Von Hecker (Viola) and Despina Homatidou (Harpsichord). Sonatas for viola and obbligato harpsichord. Tickets £10.*

Sun 5 Dec 2021. 6.00pm. St Edward's Church. Choral Evensong.

Wed 8 Dec 2021. 7.00pm. St Edward's Church. Roath Local History Society.

Sun 12 Dec 2021. 3.00pm. St Margaret's Church. Nine Lessons and Carols.

Tue 14 Dec 2021. 2.00pm. St Edward's Church (also on Zoom). Forget Me Not Cafe and Party. - *Day Club for people with memory problems and their carers*

Sat 18 Dec 2021. 11.00am. St Edward's. Coffee Concert.

Sun 19 Dec 2021. 3.00pm. St Edward's Church. Nine Lessons and Carols.

Fri 24 Dec 2021. 4.00pm. St Edward's Church. Carols around the tree (no Service at St Margaret's this year)

Fri 24 Dec 2021. 11.30pm. St Margaret's Church. Midnight Mass.

Fri 24 Dec 2021. 11.45pm. St Edward's Church. Midnight Mass.

Sat 25 Dec 2021. 8am. St Margaret's Church. Said Eucharist.

Sat 25 Dec 2021. 9.30am. St Margaret's Church. Sung Eucharist.

Sat 25 Dec 2021. 11am. St Edward's Church. Sung Eucharist and Sunday School Nativity.

**SUNDAY AND WEEK-DAY WORSHIP
IN THE PARISH OF ROATH**

(For Holy Day Celebrations see Weekly Newsletter)

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH WATERLOO ROAD

Sun: 8.00 am Holy Eucharist
9.30 am Sung Eucharist
9.30 am Sunday School R.C. House
(every Sunday during school terms)

Wed: 9.30 am Holy Eucharist

ST. EDWARD'S CHURCH BLENHEIM ROAD

Sun: 11.00 am Sung Eucharist & Sunday School
6.30 pm Choral Evensong
Wed: 10.15 am Holy Eucharist

Conventional District of Tremorfa
ST PHILIP'S COMMUNITY CHURCH
TWEEDSMUIR ROAD

Sun: 9.30 am Family Communion
Tues: 3.15 pm 'Messy Church' (in term-time)

Check the websites/newsletter for up-to-date information on services

Copy date for the next magazine (Lent) is 14th February

Please send hard-copy (typed, hand-written or cut-out) to the Parish Office; email contributions to:

Sue Mansell, smmansell@icloud.com

or Gwynn Ellis, rgellis@ntlworld.com, (preferably using Arial font 12)



For the latest information on Covid Guidance and Church services please visit our Website <http://www.roath.org.uk/>

Articles in this magazine reflect the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the editors, or the official teachings of the Church.