



# Highway



**Number 387**  
**October 2023**

**Free**

<https://www.merthytydfilministryarea.co.uk>

# Dear Friends

## **IMPROVEMENT!**

Sitting in our caravan in that first week in September I was led to reflect on how caravans have improved in the last 30 years. My last van was a 1994 version. Instead of being the proverbial tin shack with the roof vents, windows and door open and with the fly screens drawn across the caravan was a cool place to be despite the outside temperature. Much of this is due to the advances in insulation and construction. The construction allowing large windows and, in our van, three roof lights. To say the van can be well-ventilated is an understatement. So, as I was seated beneath my 'vine and fig tree' as the saying goes, I continued to reflect on the improvements that had been made to caravans whilst maintaining their basic function of being a mini home on, in my case, four wheels.

I know that in the past I have belittled the 'new and improved' version, usually asking what was wrong with the old but my experience of that week had me admitting that some improvements are good. This, of course, applies to us. The number

of self-improvement books that are on sale is quite staggering and I suspect that most of us would want to be the best version of ourselves possible.

Like a caravan we are made up of many complex interactive parts and so it is important to identify one area that we feel encouraged to improve. I was interested to read an article in the Guardian the other day where a daughter was thanking her mother for stopping her from doing her homework. She was, apparently told that she should go out to play as it was in school that the work had to be done. This meant that she had time to think and it was in that thinking time that inspiration arrived and she still uses that philosophy today to divide work time and play time. Relating to that personally I found with all the wet weather I was taking Lexi on shorter walks in the afternoon. After a couple of months I was finding that my head space wasn't clear and I was feeling under pressure and sometimes quite muddled. It took a while for the penny to drop, it always does with me! I hadn't thought how much I use the walks to think, get my brain in order and refocused. The other effect was that Lexi put on weight! You will be pleased to know that we are on longer walks again and we are both benefiting!

The next thing to note about improvement is the multiple knock-on effects that a decision to improve in one area has. Back to the caravan and the improvement in insulation. I don't know what drove the search for that improvement but probably it was to make the caravan warmer in the cold weather, I have already written about it keeping it cooler in the hot weather. Also, it heats up quicker and costs less to heat. The same process could be done with the increased walking. Lexi and I are fitter, losing weight, my head space is better and I certainly have a greater sense of overall well-being.

We can take this whole concept of improvement into our Christian life. A little more time spent in prayer, a grace before every meal, more time spent reading the bible or allowing more time for simply being rather than doing. These small improvements take little effort or organisation but they draw us closer to God. If practiced over a number of years they do change who we are, for the better. Hopefully when we look back at who we were 30 years ago we too have become the new and improved version, a little nearer to the best we can be, a little nearer to what God wants for us.

Mark

## **ST DAVID'S RE-ORDERING AND RE-DECORATION**

I am delighted to say that after the LCC met with the architect on Monday there was a unanimous decision to proceed with the scheme as laid out by him and for which we already have faculty. It was agreed at that meeting that we would need approximately £600,000 in grants for which we already have £110,000 and have applied for a further £25,000. There will be a lot of paperwork to do between now and Christmas so your support in prayer will be appreciated. It was noted at the meeting that our expenditure is still higher than our income and that we only have 17 months worth of reserve funds. I hope that each of us will look at our own generosity towards the church as it would be a pity to have to close for financial reasons but we could get this work done.

Mark.

Together with grant applications we have several fundraising events coming up and would appreciate the support of all our church family. We would also welcome suggestions for future events.

Dorothy

**In Loving Memory Of**

**Neil Morris**

**17/11/1948 to 11/09/2023**

Early September 2023 was a very sad time for the congregation of St Tydfil's Church. We knew at the beginning of the month that our dear friend Neil was seriously ill. The sad news that he had passed away came early on Monday, September 11th.

Neil was a long serving and faithful member of St Tydfil's Well Church. He embraced all aspects of church life. If we were cleaning, fundraising, socialising or worshipping he was there. He had many roles, from being our church treasurer for many years to being Santa Claus at our annual Christmas fairs. He was fun to be with, he made us laugh and he was everyone's friend.

At the time St Tydfil's Well Church closed and we transferred as a congregation to St Tydfil's Church it was clear that Neil wasn't well. His deteriorating health meant that he didn't attend many services at St Tydfil's. The move didn't seem complete without him and we missed him so much, but he was always in our hearts and never forgotten.

We send all our love to Sue. We send our love too to all of Neil's family. You are in our thoughts and prayers. We remember Neil with true affection. We give thanks for having Neil as our friend and fellow worshipper but most of all, for just being Neil.

St Tydfil's Congregation.

## Knit & Natter is 5 years old!

As another summer comes to an end and we all settle into our autumn routines the Knit & Natter group continues to meet. Next month we will celebrate the fifth anniversary of our formation. November 2018 is always easy for us to remember as the idea for our group came about after the the events organised by Rev Charlotte to commemorate the end of WW1.

It was at this time that she suggested I work with Jacqui to organise some sort of community group, open to anyone in the area. Her idea was that there would be somewhere for people to meet and socialise. Because we both enjoy all types of crafts we thought a 'knit and natter' group would be a good starting point.

We worked with Charlotte and decided we wanted it to be as informal as possible, open to anyone, not affiliated to any church, have no formal membership and no weekly subscriptions. These were our starting principles and they are still our principles five years on.

St David's Church kindly offered to host us rent free and so we were off!

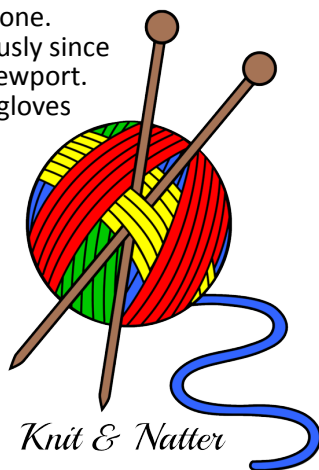
Although we have no formal membership nor weekly subscriptions we find our members are always ready to pay a voluntary £1 per session towards coffee or tea. From this we were again able last month to give a donation to St David's Church as a thank you for hosting us. This time we were able to give £100. We were also able to give £100 to the Baby Bank towards the cost of nappies and other consumables.

We are always working on various projects and have since our inception. Some members continue to work on their own projects, some knit for the baby bank, others just 'natter' and some work on the current project, whatever that may be.

Our newest project is very exciting as it is a reciprocal one. Someone who has supported the Baby Bank continuously since it's beginning also has links to a homeless charity in Newport. We are knitting scarves and hats, as well as collecting gloves and socks, for them to distribute. This is definitely an example of 'one good turn deserves another' and an example of the whole ethos of our group.

We meet every Monday at 2pm at St David's Church. Everyone is welcome. Do not think knitting ability is a necessary requirement! It certainly isn't. The natter element is just as important. We really would love to see you.

Brenda Griffiths.



## The Ministry Area Barn Dance!

As we move forward as a Ministry Area we need to break down the barriers that stand between our churches and to learn to trust and enjoy spending time together. The slogan of our Ministry Area included the word FUN, because we need to have fun together! So to that end we are glad to present the first Ministry Area Barn Dance! Running on the 28th October hosted in Christ Church Cyfarthfa. Tickets are a must and are in limited supply so we can only give two tickets per person. Tickets have been given to your vicar to distribute. We do also have some in reserve for those willing to help out on the night. So, if you are able to help, please do get in touch with Rev'd Marc-Ashton Walford who will be very glad to hear from you! So come have fun! If you are not a dancer that is ok! Just enjoy the ambiance of the night! Dress the part, and enjoy!

## UpsideDown Church

You may remember that last year we had our first UpsideDown Church hosted in St Tydfil's Church where we reenacted the battle of Jericho with the children, immersing them in the biblical story. We had aimed to have our next instalment last February but with the departure of Emilia our children's worker we had postpone and reconsolidate our energy. Now almost one year later since our first instalment we are now back and ready to go again! This time exploring the Paradise that was Eden.



This will be a fun session lasting about 1-1.5 hours for children to learn about our faith. So get inviting! This is targeted at primary school aged children, but if older children want to come, they are most welcome, and they can come and help us out! Sunday the 22nd October at 3pm, this time hosted in Christ Church Cyfarthfa! Children will need to be supervised by a guardian; however, we will have an area for their guardians to chill and enjoy refreshments if they want to make use of it! As always help is always needed, yes on the day, but more importantly over the next couple of weeks. Patrycja Walford will be in the hall of Christ Church Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays 12-4 until all is done creating the props! For more information on this please contact Rev'd Marc-Ashton Walford.

THE MINISTRY AREA

# TWMPATH!

AKA BARN DANCE

Christ Church  
Cyfarthfa

Tickets Now Out!



28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER  
17:30-20:30

# QUIZ NIGHT

## St David's Quiz Night

Wednesday 18th October 7pm at  
Merthyr Tydfil Conservative Club

Come join us for an  
evening of fun and trivia

Tickets £5  
Raffle

**Everyone welcome!**

St David's Church - At the heart of Merthyr Tydfil since 1847

# AUTUMN FAYRE

## ST TYDFIL'S CHURCH



Saturday 14th  
October  
11am-3pm

Homemade  
Cakes & Produce

Crafts  
Cafe

# Sing For Joy!

## Con Voce & Treharmony

in concert at  
St. Tydfil's Church

7.00pm Thursday  
October 12<sup>th</sup>

Entry £6

Tickets available from choristers

## Bible Sunday 29th October

Think for a moment about something you really want. How much would you spend to buy it? How far would you go to get it?

Young Mary knew what she wanted. It took years before she could afford it. She was ready to walk 25 miles over mountainous terrain to get it. Mary just wanted a Bible.

Mary Jones lived in a small village in Wales at the end of the 18th century. From an early age, Mary loved to hear stories from the Bible. Every Sunday she attended her local chapel and enjoyed listening to people reading from the Scriptures.

When Mary was only nine years old, she decided on the most important thing in her life. She wanted to read from her own Bible. Unfortunately, Bibles were hard to come by. They were expensive and Mary's parents couldn't afford to buy one. So, Mary decided to do odd jobs for people and earn enough money to buy a Bible.

Six years later, Mary had saved enough money for her special book. Although the nearest shop which sold Bibles was in Bala, 25 miles away, undaunted she set out on her long journey. In Bala, she discovered that the book shop had sold out of all the Bibles! We can only imagine how upset and disappointed she was.

When the bookseller, Thomas Charles, heard about her long walk and that she would return home empty handed, he gave her his Bible. Later, Thomas Charles wondered if there were other children (and adults) around the country who wanted a Bible but had problems getting one.

Soon after Mary's visit, Thomas Charles went to London. Here, he met influential people including William Wilberforce and shared with them the story of Mary Jones. From this meeting came a response to Mary's situation. On 7th March 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed. Its purpose was to provide Bibles throughout the world, in a language people could understand and at a price they could afford.

After this, other national societies were created and in 1946 the United Bible Societies was established to co-ordinate the work worldwide. Today, there are over 100 Bible Societies, working in nearly 200 countries. While they are busy with translation, production and distribution programmes, there are still countless numbers of people who do not have the Scriptures.

If we own a Bible, let's give thanks we have God's Word in our hands and, where possible, support a Bible Society with their valuable work.





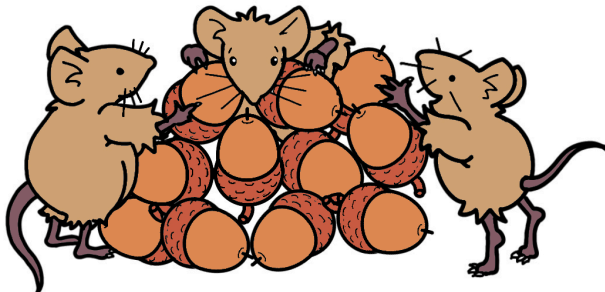


## Harvest at St Tydfil's

As usual the church was seasonally decorated for harvest, we even had hazel nuts from a tree in the grounds, as well as plenty of conkers. It is always good to thank God for his goodness in providing what we need. Thank you to everyone for the items donated. It was all taken to the food bank the following day. Merthyr Cynon food bank were very grateful for the donations of both food & cash. Unfortunately the need for people to receive help from them continues to grow, and our help is really appreciated.

We will be keeping the basket at the back of church for any future donations.

Liz Lewis.





# CALENDARS ARE AVAILABLE AT ST TYDFIL'S CHURCH £7

Calendars are now available from St Tydfil's Church. They cost £7 each, a proportion of which will be given to St Tydfil's. If you would like to purchase one but can't get to St Tydfil's please get in touch & I will try to get it to you. Email or text is best as I often have my phone set to silent.

Liz Lewis.

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Mob. 07896005890

**St TYDFIL'S CHURCH, Merthyr Tydfil**

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Eucharist & Kids Church

**St DAVID'S CHURCH, Merthyr Tydfil**

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY 10.30am Holy Eucharist

**Ss PETER & PAUL'S CHURCH, Abercanaid**

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Eucharist

**CHRIST CHURCH, Georgetown, Merthyr Tydfil**

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Eucharist

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH, Dowlais**

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Eucharist

**CHRISTCHURCH, Pant**

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY 10.30am Holy Eucharist

**ONLINE**

SUNDAY 11.00am Dowlais & Pant Facebook and YouTube Service

**St JOHN'S Troedyrhiw**

SUNDAY 11.00am Holy Communion

**St MARY'S, Merthyr Vale**

SUNDAY 9.30am Holy Communion

WEDNESDAY 10.15am Holy Communion

All services may be changed or added to especially on Saints' Days.

Please see the Ministry Area website for details

<https://www.merthyrtydfilministryarea.co.uk>

**MINISTRY AREA OFFICE**

01685 388805

(10.00–13.00, Mon, Tue & Thur)

The office e mail address is:- [lyndaattheoffice@btinternet.com](mailto:lyndaattheoffice@btinternet.com)

The readings for next Sunday and various church news sheets can be seen and downloaded from the Publications page of the Ministry Area website at <https://www.merthytydfilministryarea.co.uk/publications>



QR Code for the  
Ministry Area Website

### **Next issue**

Please let me have anything for November 2023  
by Sunday 29 October 2023. Preferably earlier.

Next issue is due out 5 November 2023

Please e-mail your articles to  
[kenlewis.merthytydfil.church@gmail.com](mailto:kenlewis.merthytydfil.church@gmail.com)

All named articles are the work of that person. Publication does not imply agreement with the opinions expressed. Ken Lewis, Editor.