

Grapevine

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2024
Jonawr
January



Grapevine is published monthly by: Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches



comprising the parishes of Clydau, Llanglydwen,
Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

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Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

Services for January 2024

3rd January 2024 Holy Communion Bro Preseli 10.30 JW/EL

7th Jan The first Sunday of Epiphany - White

PLACE	TIME	SERVICE	
Llanwinio	9.30am	Boreol Weddi	PH
Llanglydwen	9.30am	Holy Eucharist	JP/JW
Llanfyrnach	11.15am	Holy Eucharist	JP/EB

14th Jan The second Sunday of Epiphany - white

Llanwinio	9.30am	Holy Eucharist	JP/PH
Clydau	11.15am	Holy Eucharist	JP/EL
Llanfyrnach	11.15am	Morning Prayer	EB/HJ/ JW

21st Jan The third Sunday of Epiphany - white

Llanwinio	9.30am	Boreol Weddi	PH
Mynachlogddu	10.00	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW

28th Jan The fourth Sunday of Epiphany – white

Clydey	11.15am	Morning Prayer	EL
Llanwinio	9.30am	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15am	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB

Services for February 2024

4th Feb - The second Sunday before Lent - green

PLACE	TIME	SERVICE	
Llanwinio	9.30am	Boreol Weddi	PH
Llanglydwen	9.30am	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW
Llanfyrnach	11.15am	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB

7th February 2024 Holy Communion Bro Preseli 10.30 CC/JW/EL

Llanwinio	9.30am	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Clydau	11.15am	Holy Eucharist	CC/EL
Llanfyrnach	11.15am	Morning Prayer	EB/HJ/ JW

14th February – Ash Wednesday – Llanglydwen 10.30 CC/JW/EL

18th Feb - The first Sunday of Lent - purple

Llanwinio	9.30am	Boreol Weddi	PH
Mynachlogddu	10.00	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW

25th February - The second Sunday of Lent – purple

Clydey	11.15am	Morning Prayer	EL
Llanwinio	9.30am	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15am	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB

Editorial

Happy New Year, in which we will all strive to make it so; new challenges, as our LMA structure beds in. Any structure involves a hierarchy and in some form, a committee. St. Luke presents Jesus as the hierarchical leader of his movement and the Apostles as a committee after our Lord's ascension. Jesus, during his ministry, was very much

a leader with followers – disciples. That word is derived from the Latin *discipulus*, which can also be (freely) translated as apprentice, pupil, student or trainee: words that, with nuances, mean much the same thing: people who are there to learn. One of the joys – and complications – of English is having more than one word for the same thing. The blame for that lies with King Henry VIII who said there should be one language throughout his kingdom and that should be English. He did row back on that for Welsh speakers but those still using Norman French had to stop doing so and they achieved that by carrying on using French words which became English words. That is why we have at least two nouns for everything. The French for ‘bowman’ is ‘archer’, for example.

To get back to being a dozen after Judas died, the Disciples elected Matthias and they became Apostles when the Holy Spirit descended upon them. The Latin *Apostolo* can also be translated as missionary, which aptly describes what the gift of the Holy Spirit was for. Saint Matthias took the word through Judea and north into modern Georgia, where it is said he was crucified at Colchis.

The early church had a committee, of sorts, in Jerusalem; led by St James the lesser, the brother of Jesus, who was not an Apostle in some interpretations and counts as one in others. St. Paul went to see him and the committee at least twice – in 37 and 56 AD – to sort out differences. The issue then was for whom the message of redemption for sins and a future eternal life in Heaven was for. Jesus is quoted as saying “tell everyone” while the early apostolic missionary work was clearly directed at the Jewish diaspora. And that is logical. St Paul was a pharisee and each place he went he anchored his mission on the local synagogue: to whom he directed his later epistles.

Preaching in the open – in markets or the forum of these towns attracted interest from a wider audience than the Jews who were there and the question was to be a follower of Christ, did one need to adopt the Jewish faith (and its implications) as well? New Testament writings end in a cliff-hanger with the word ‘Christian’ having been coined. It appears three times; in 1 Peter 4.16 and twice in Acts (11.26 and 26.28). Back then it was an insult and meant someone who rejected the authority of Rome – by not paying their taxes. Jesus had said “render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s” (Mark 12.17) which suggests ‘pay your taxes’: the ambiguity is that coins with Caesar’s face on them could not be used in the Temple – hence the money changers who worked there.



St Brynach's Church, Llanboidy had an amazing joint Carol Service with the Trinity Chapel Llanboidy. We had more than 60 people. Thank you to Jeni Parsons, Guto Llywelyn and to both congregation members and people from the village who came to support our service. Thank you to all those who brought mince pies and for Jeni for the mulled wine. On the whole an amazing service.



Above: Lovely morning at Ysgol Y Frenni, learning about the message of Christmas, followed by the making of Christingles. Huge thanks to Rev'd Sian Elin Thomas for leading.

St Paul took his mission to the Gentiles – to Rome in particular – where ‘Christians’ were seen as being the militant wing of Jewry and the persecution of them became the first skirmish of the Jewish revolt. I do not know to what extent the Jerusalem church got behind St. Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. As a Sunday School pupil, I formed the opinion that St. Paul was a committee of one who had hijacked the Apostolic message and re-worked it into his own platform. And that is what saved Christianity for us, as without him, the early Christian church would have perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. It notices that nothing in the New Testament post-dates that destruction in its narrative.

With hindsight, St Paul and St James had compromised and as is so often the case, a compromise may satisfy nobody: ego being what it is. At the time of writing, our Prime Minister is trying to compromise with both – the quite opposite – wings of his party over immigration policy.

In our LMA, we have the joy and blessing of a common purpose in our evangelism. Our problem is that the LMA is an artificial construct to manage clerical resources – so many small churches and not enough clergy. We are all naturally parochial, as that is the way Queen Elizabeth I set up her local government in the wake of her father having split from Rome. He also dissolved the monasteries and did not replace those structures with anything. A traditional parish used to be a church, a school and a hospital. Secularisation of local government progressively shifted responsibility for education, welfare and health away from the parishes, leaving us with just spiritual welfare – and old buildings (and graveyards) – to care for. And those churches are a long way apart. East Landsker is geographically huge and to do anything for all of it means a lot of people travelling some distance.

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Bishop Joanna's retirement saw her chaplain Shirley Murphy released into the wilds of our LMA where she convened a meeting of the clergy and focal ministers (at a central location) to which Grapevine's editor and treasurer were invited. Not all the clergy came to the meeting, so it is just as well it was not a committee, as then it would have been inquorate.

As a focus group, it started to feel its way around the problems, actual and potential, that can hamper our mission:

Like not having a bank account. The LMA does not have one and at the time of writing, nor does my home church St. Clydai. Barclays have closed it – there seems to be some falling out as some churches withdrew from Barclays for ethical reasons and Barclays have reacted by closing other church accounts. In St Clydai's case that was three accounts, which they rolled up into one cheque. The problem with Barclays may be wider than a just church one, as they closed our community hall's account a couple of months ago.

Like not having everyone on board. That is something to pray about as a divided house etc. I was tempted to describe Shirley as a breath of fresh air, a bundle of energy and drive, but then I remembered an Australian lady on Radio 4's Woman's Hour who said she took "You're so refreshing" as a compliment until she found out it meant "rack off, you loud mouthed antipodean." Air – wind – the breath of God in the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit in the new. Shirley has that and it would be churlish and counter-productive to impede the power and direction she brings to us.

Like being such a large area. At least we are all rural parishes with rural parish problems. My concern when Bishop Wyn was making a pie chart of Pembrokeshire was that giving each coastal town a hinterland would have been to mix two different problems under one banner. I learned that when policing in New Hampshire, where the police role – and resources – available to a small-town department like Grantham are quite different to those in the state capital Concord.

The LMA is our umbrella, the Grapevine is one of the tools. Grapevine's primary function is announcing which churches have services and when, so imagine my feeling when I opened the December issue and found that my church's service on 14 January had been left off the chart. Here's hoping it's right in this issue.

The written word is also communication across distance and through time, so in our wide area written communication is a useful tool. It will be more useful when it covers the whole area and we hope that the south will tolerate us. I

would love to produce a guidebook to the LMA's churches, but at one a month it would take the best part of two years to do, so it may have to be two New Year resolutions...

Richard Law

St Davids



ST DAVIDS
ARCHDEACONRY
ARGUS



28th November 2023

2023/46

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
The Sacred Synod of the Church in Wales will take place tomorrow evening in Eglwys Dewi Sant in Cardiff where Bishop-Elect Dorrien will become the Bishop of St Davids, Bishop Dorrien. The purpose of the Sacred Synod is to confirm the result of the election and to allow the other Bishops of the Church in Wales to confirm that Bishop-Elect Dorrien is who he says he is, has been baptised, confirmed and ordained deacon and priest. It is also to ensure that there is no impropriety in relation to the Election – i.e. no bribery or simony.

The Bishops will confirm the election and then sign the legal document that will mean that the Venerable Dorrien Paul Davies becomes the Rt Revd Dorrien Paul Davies, Lord Bishop of St Davids. From that point he will legally be the Bishop and will have all of the temporal powers of the Bishop. He will gain the sacramental powers at his consecration on 27th January 2024. From the moment he is declared Bishop of St Davids, he, Archdeacon Eileen, and I will cease to be Commissaries after serving for over 15 months.

We will then enter the Episcopacy of Bishop Dorrien, which I am sure will be a time of refreshment and renewal for the Diocese as a new chapter begins. Colleagues have already noted that there is an air of optimism and hope again

about the future and I am certain that our new Bishop will begin the task of putting the Diocese back together after the long period of Bishop Joanna's illness and the vacancy in See.

In Bishop Dorrien we will have someone who has experience of running a diocese, having been a commissary for over a year, he can begin the work immediately and is well briefed on the current state of the Diocese and its problems, challenges, and opportunities. I know that he wishes to show the Diocese that all people are valued and loved within it and that he is keen to be back out and about across the three counties to make that evident and to get to meet his flock. The Senior Staff and the rest of the Bishop's Staff will give him our full and unwavering support in his new ministry.

Everyone knows him to be a very open, friendly, and personable cleric who always has time for people. We must all be careful not to abuse this or our previous relationships with him (and I include myself in this). I have already noticed that there are small minority of people who seem to think that because they know him they can circumvent the normal processes and permissions, this is not fair or kind. Bishop Dorrien will always listen to you, but he will not always be able to intervene or wave a magic wand to make things happen the way we want them to.

Please do not put him in this sort of difficult position. He has made it clear that he will not be working this way and wishes to work collegially with the Archdeacons and Dean to ensure things are done properly. Bishops too are bound by the constitution of the Church in Wales and like all of us have to follow the rules and processes that have been set up for all of our protection and benefit.

Rather, I would urge all people in the Diocese, clergy, and laity to pray for him in his new ministry that he may always be empowered by the Holy Spirit to model a Christ-like life and be the Apostle amongst us. Pray that the Diocese may enter a period of renewal where our focus once again turns to the work of the Gospel and helping to embody the values of the Kingdom of God.

In His name

Paul

Archdeacon's Visits

It is my intention over the next year to try and visit each LMA and have a chance to pray with and speak with the Ministry Team (especially the stipendiary clergy) as well as the LMA Officers. I want to be able to speak with you all about how things are going, what is good, what is not so good and to discuss ways we can improve things. Now that we are number of years from the inauguration of Ministry Areas we need to review how things are and what changes may need to be made for them to work better. It will also be good to spend time with you and to pray with you. I will be in contact with LMA Deans over the next few weeks to book in days for these visits to happen. Please make these a priority.

Enthronement

The Enthronement has been set for the afternoon of Saturday 3rd February 2024 in the Cathedral. Please can clergy, serving and retired as well as all Lay Readers please keep this date free. Due to Bishop-Elect Dorrien's popularity many people want to attend, but sadly not everyone will be able to. Attendance at the Enthronement will be by ticket only – all those who currently serve or who hold PTO will be given tickets. The Cathedral has been able to find some additional seating capacity and we hope to be able to also give some tickets to each LMA to send representatives. There will be no ability for people to just turn up on the day and come to the service. Please make this clear to your respective congregations. It is also incredibly important that people who are offered tickets respond by the deadlines that will be set. I have been given the honour of overseeing the Enthronement arrangements on the new Bishop's behalf so any questions relating to the Enthronement should be sent to me.

Clydau

Instead of having 'nine lessons and carols' in church, Clydau opted for an open carol evening in the Bwlchgyroes Community Hall in which the 'lessons' were about the carols, which we sang in a—sort of – chronological order. These are the lessons.

'**Emmanuel**' is a dark and delicate carol: originally written in Latin (Veni, Veni, Emmanuel) the English words are an 1851 translation by priest and scholar John Mason Neale, published in '*The Hymnal Noted*' – a compilation by Thomas Helmore. The 'O' start was traditionally used during the last seven days of



We had an excellent LMA Team Christmas lunch today at the Roadhouse in Whitland. Thank you to all who came and look forward to our next catch up in February.



Joint Carol Service with St Brynach's School at St Brynach's Church, Llanboidy.



advent during the Roman Catholic Vespers service. The Emmanuel of the title appears in the Old Testament more as a sign of God's protection than an actual person. In chapter 7 verse 14 Isaiah writes:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you^la sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and^l will call him Immanuel.

The haunting melody has its roots as far back as 15th Century France and the combination of this ancient tune and translated words is our most popular advent carol today.

LITTLE DONKEY

Before Mary could give birth to Jesus in a Bethlehem stable, she and Joseph had to get there, so they spent the latter part of that first advent travelling, according to chapter two of Saint Luke's Gospel. Nazareth to Bethlehem on foot is ninety miles. He is not in the Bible, but songwriter Eric Boswell penned 'little donkey' which he offered to singer Gracie Fields when they met by chance at music publisher Chappells in 1959. Gracie – and the Beverley Sisters made 78RPM records of it and it was number one in the UK Christmas chart in that year – and again in 1960 after Nina and Frederik recorded it.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The words were written as a poem by an Episcopal priest from Philadelphia - the Reverend Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), who was inspired by his visit to Bethlehem in 1865. Isaiah said that the saviour would be born there; St. Luke and St. Matthew agree he was. Organist Lewis Redner added music and reworked the poem slightly to make a carol of it for their Sunday School in 1868.



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We sing it to a tune called 'Forest Green', which English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams adapted from an old folk ballad whistled to him in 1903 by Henry Garman, a farm labourer who lived in Forest Green in Surrey. The Vaughan Williams tune and the words were published together in 'The English Hymnal' in 1906.

Ar Gyfer Heddiw'r Bore

The Plygain tradition in Wales has its roots in the pre-Reformation Catholic mass held early on Christmas morning. After the Reformation, it took on the form of a communion service, with a shortened sermon, and much singing of traditional Welsh carols.

Attending the service meant staying up all night or getting up very early to assemble in the parish church with lanterns and candles. The tradition continued in parts of the northern areas of Mid-Wales and has spread out again more recently, though the services now tend to be held at times other than Christmas morning itself.

The carol was composed by David Hughes, (1792-1862) of Denbighshire. A gifted poet, he adopted the bardic name *Eos Ial* and competed in some of the local *eisteddfodau* from 1820 until 1835, winning the chair at the Corwen eisteddfod in 1824.

G. Williams

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Away in a Manger

Until the 20th Century, this was known as Luther's cradle song, as it was believed it was written by the 16th Century German priest Martin Luther, whose ninety-five theses published in 1517 started the Protestant Reformation. However, he doesn't mention it and the earliest text for the carol in German dates from 1934.

The first two verses of the carol originated in an American Evangelical Lutheran Sunday School's 1885 collection called 'The *Little Children's Book for Schools and Families*'. The third verse first appeared in an 1892 collection of carols compiled by Charles Gabriel – in one of the thirty-five hymn books he put together. He attributed it to Martin Luther personally rather than to the Lutheran Sunday School. The melody best known in Britain is thought to have been composed by Kentucky lawyer and Presbyterian minister Jonathan Spilman in 1837, before being adapted in 1895 by American William Kirkpatrick.

The image shows the storefront of a shop named 'Pethau Olyv'. The sign above the entrance is dark with white text. On the left, it says 'Gemwaith, Bagiau, Itemau ffasiwn' and 'Coffi & Cacen'. In the center, the shop's name 'Pethau Olyv' is written in a large, elegant script, with the website 'www.pethauolyv.co.uk' below it. On the right, it says 'Jewellery, Handbags, Accessories' and 'Tea & Coffee'. Below the sign, the storefront has large glass windows. The left window features a large white 'P' and a silhouette of a woman in a dress carrying a handbag. Below this, it says 'Jewellery, Handbags, Accessories'. The right window has a circular inset photo of two smiling women. Below the windows, a dark banner contains the shop's name 'Pethau Olyv, Sanclêr' in a white script font.

Stille Nacht – Silent Night

Written in German by Joseph Mohr. He was a choirboy in Salzburg Cathedral in his youth and was ordained in the Roman Catholic Church in 1815. He penned his carol a year or two later. The tune 'Stille Nacht' was written by Franz Gruber on Christmas Eve 1818. He scored it for tenor and bass soloists – which that night he and Joseph Mohr performed as a duet. None of the sources we looked at could tell us who translated it into Welsh as Tawel nos dros y byd, **It came upon a Midnight clear**

This is an 1849 poem and Christmas carol written by American Edmund Sears, pastor of the Unitarian Church in Wayland, Massachusetts. The tune we sing is called 'Noel' and was adapted by Arthur Sullivan – better known for the operas he wrote in collaboration with W S Gilbert. He wrote other hymn music too including 'Onward Christian Soldiers' for the Salvation army.

Sual'r gwynt

This delicate carol was written in Welsh by the local-ish William Williams – better remembered by his Bardic name 'Nantlais'. Born in 1874, he attended Newcastle Emlyn grammar school and went on to be minister of Bethany in Ammanford in 1900, being ordained there in 1901. He remained at that chapel for his entire ministerial career, a period of 44 years, during which time he became a very popular and widely known preacher-poet, and a sought-after speaker in conferences all over Wales. He was awarded the Chair at the 1902 National Eisteddfod. His carol was first sung at a Christmas service in his own

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church at the end of 1929. A setting of the music of the original tune for four voices was composed for the carol by David William Jones, *Treorci* (1882-1951). This was published in 'Y Cymro' in 1930. Then in 1937 the words were published in 'Trysorfa'r Plant' with an arrangement of 'Sweet and Low' by John Thomas Rees (1857-1849).

While shepherds watched their flocks by night

This is the first real carol to be written as church music. It is more than three hundred years old and the oldest carol still sung in its original form. Until the year 1800, only the Psalms of David could be sung in Anglican churches and this carol was the first hymn that was not a version of a psalm to be authorised. Written by poet Laureate Nahum Tate, the words appeared in the 1700 supplement to Tate's 1696 "new versions of the psalms of David", one of sixteen hymns they published – the others all being variations on psalms, such as "*through all the changing scenes of life*" based on psalm 34 and a variation on psalm 23: "*The Lord himself, the mighty Lord, vouchsafes to be my guide*". Most carols – widely sung outside of church services, had their roots in folk music and were considered too secular for singing in church services.

Ding Dong Merrily on High

Written by George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934) and first published in his 1924 "The Cambridge carol book". An Anglican priest by profession, he was also a skilled musician, beekeeper and a bell ringer. He collaborated with composer Charles Wood for developing music for his hymns, many from much older folk melodies. Charles Wood was a teacher by profession, at Cambridge University, where his students included Ralph Vaughan-Williams, who among other works wrote the tune to O Little Town of Bethlehem.

Hark the Herald angels sing.

Hymns not based on psalms could not be sung in Anglican churches before 1800 – apart from "*while shepherds watched*". Outside of the Anglican Communion, the Methodist movement had no such inhibition and one of its early leaders was prolific hymn writer Charles Wesley, who penned more than six thousand five hundred hymns – and a lot of sermons. Wesley's objective in writing hymns and carols was to embed the Bible's theology in them so that singing each of his works was also a Bible lesson. This carol first appeared in a 1739 book "Hymns and Sacred Poems" and is sung to a tune adapted from the Vaterland cantata by Felix Mendelssohn.

Good king Wenceslas

Moving on from carols based on the events of Christmas Day, Good King Wenceslas is set on the feast of Stephen – which we usually call Boxing Day. Saint Wenceslaus the first was Duke of Bohemia - now the Czech Republic - from 907AD to 935 and is buried in Prague Cathedral. The tale told in the lyrics was a poem by Vaclav Svoboda, translated into English in 1853 by John Mason Neale and set to music by Thomas Helmore; these two were also responsible for *'Emmanuel.'*

We three kings

Written by John Henry Hopkins Junior, an Episcopalian minister in Pennsylvania, for a Christmas pageant in New York City in 1857. He wrote it to be performed with three soloists each singing the verse by one of the kings and a backing choir doing the rest.

Saint Matthew tells us of the wise men's visit to the infant Jesus in chapter 2 of his Gospel. They first went to King Herod's palace to tell him about the star heralding his replacement's birth and to ask where he might be found. Herod didn't have a new-born heir apparent at the palace, which is what the magi presumably expected him to have, so Herod consulted the priests and they said 'Bethlehem' to which he directed the visitors. Then he sent assassins along to make sure he outlived the new claimant to his throne. The magi did not tell Herod which child in Bethlehem was the heir apparent so his assassins killed all the male babies in a dramatic echo of Chapter 1 of the Exodus. We remember them as 'the holy innocents' on the 28th of December.

The Magi had a lively postbiblical career. They were promoted to kings in the second century and demoted to three from twelve because there were three gifts. They got their names and descriptions by 700AD. Melchior, an old man with white hair and a long beard; Gaspar, beardless and ruddy-complexioned and Balthasar, black-skinned and heavily bearded. Scholars have suggested that the ethnic mix echoes an earlier diverse threesome, Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. Relics of the three kings are housed in Cologne Cathedral.

Calon Lan

Written in the 1890s by local Bard Gwyrasydd - Daniel James of Penybryn. He asked composer Landore John Hughes (1872-1914) to write the tune and for each of them it is their best-known work. We included it in our carol service because we could.

The Holly and the Ivy

We said earlier that the Anglican church only permitted psalms or hymns based on psalms until 1800 when they adjusted their attitude because of the popularity of singing hymns and carols with the public – and to do it the public flocked to Methodist gatherings instead of going to church. This is one such carol, being based on a folk song. It existed in numerous regional variations and has ancient roots – holly and ivy are evergreens, which along with bay, box and yew, often feature in churchyards. The concept of associating these evergreens with life after death or eternal life dates at least back to the Romans. The modern hymn-book version was collected by English folk song collector Cecil Sharp in 1909 from Gloucestershire resident Mary Clayton.

I saw three ships come sailing in

Folk song collector Cecil Sharp came across ‘three ships’ in the early 1900s but it goes way back. A version was published in Derbyshire around the time Nahum Tate was writing ‘*While Shepherds Watched their flocks by night*’ and it appears in “*Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern*” by William Sandys in 1833. His book also included, for the first time in print, carols that have become classics, such as “*The First Noel*” and “*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*”.

As to what this one means, academics link it via ‘Three’ to the three kings, suggesting that their camels are ‘ships of the desert’. Another source mentions the three ships that carried the relics of the three kings to Cologne Cathedral, which is a stretch as that’s a long way inland. One source said the coat of arms of King Wenceslas has three ships on it but on the picture of his grave his shield device looks like a polish eagle.

We wish you a merry Christmas.

It’s a traditional west country ditty, sung by carol singers who are out collecting money for their efforts. The modern arrangement is by Arthur Warrell (1883-1939) who wrote a complicated four-part piece for the University of Bristol Madrigal Singers, which he and they performed in a concert on December 6th 1935. It was published that year by the Oxford University Press and again in 1961 in “*Carols for Choirs*”.

Richard Law

Whitland, Cyffig, Llanboidy

Llandysilio, Clunderwen

The Reverend Kingsley G Taylor, BD MA 01994 240494 LMA Dean
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Reverend Shirley Murphy Priest in charge of St Mary's Whitland,
Cyffig Church, Cyffig, St Tysilio Llandissilo,
St David's Clunderwen & St Brynach Llanboidy

Reverend Carol Court – Priest in charge of St Clydai, Clydey,
St Brynach, Llanfyrnach, St Cledwyn, Llanglydwen, St Dogmael,
Mynachlogddu & St Gwynio, Llanwinio

Reverend Sharon Edge — Assistant Curate in LMA of East Landsker
Dr Canon Jeni Parsons — Active Retired Priest in St Brynach Llanboidy

Lay Worship Leader — Mr. Nathan Jenkin

Services in January

Sunday 7th

Epiphany 1

10.30 am	Holy Communion	St Tysilio	SE
11.00 am	Matins	St David	NJ
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Brynach	JP/SM

Sunday 14th

Epiphany 2

8.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	SM
11.00 am	Matins	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St David	E
2.30 pm	Holy Communion	Cyffig	KT

Sunday 21st

Epiphany 3

9.00 am	Holy Communion	St Tysilio	KT
11.00 am	Matins	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Brynach	SM

Sunday 28th

Epiphany 4

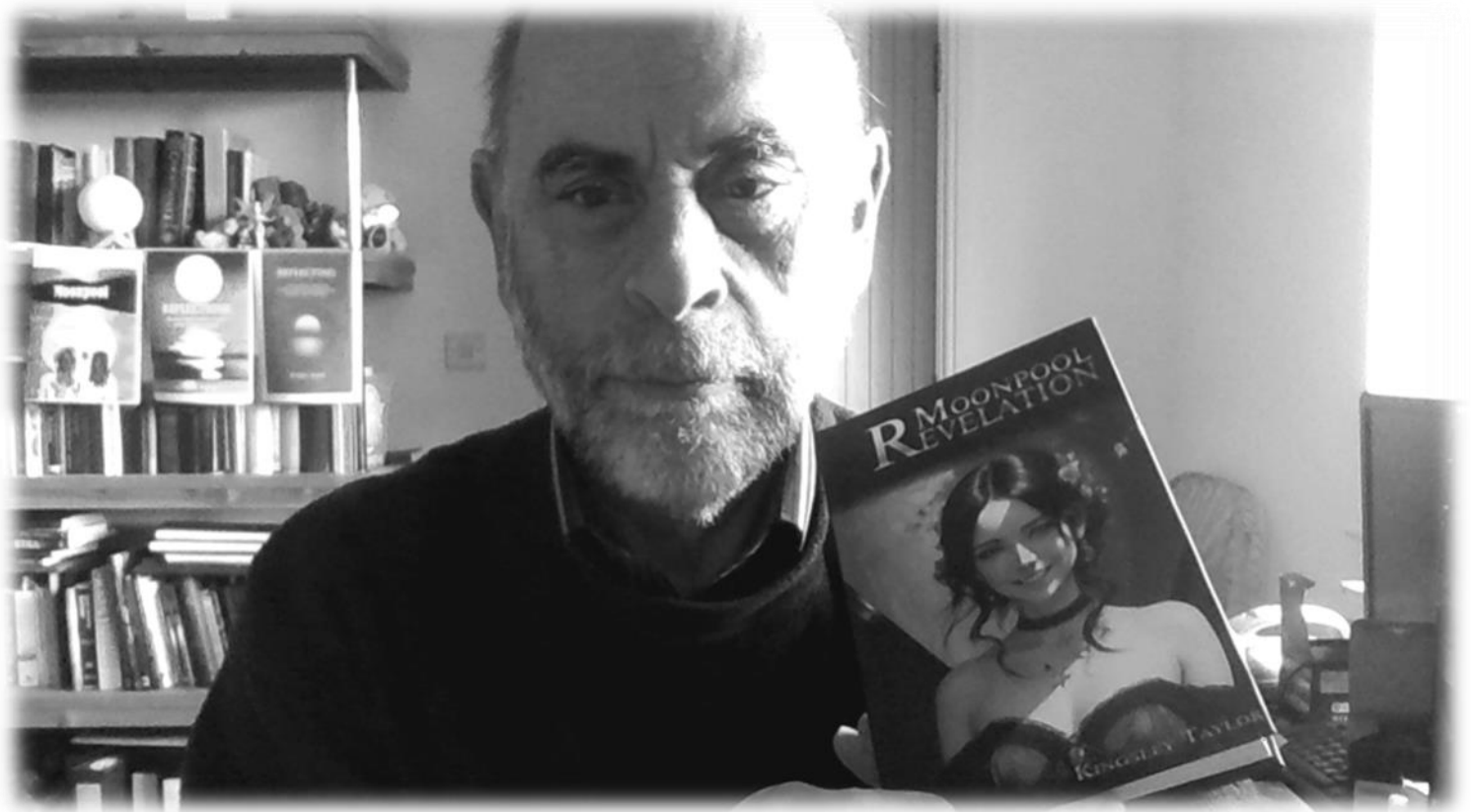
8.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	SM
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT

11.00 am	Holy Communion	St David	SE
2.30 pm	Evensong	Cyffig	KT

New Year

Time is a mystery, the universe spins, the planets dance in their orbits around the sun, people go about their lives, time marches on. Every generation makes the same mistakes it doesn't learn from the past, empires rise and fall, wars come and go. Every new year we reflect on the year that is past, was it a good one or a bad one or a bit of both, and we wonder about the year to come with our hopes and fears. Life should be lived in the present, joys should be grasped as they happen, happiness is what you make it, do not regret anything that is gone for it cannot be undone. Whatever comes make the most of it and live.

Moonpool Revelation



I have a new book out, it follows on from the last one and brings the story up to date. The first chapter is Good Friday to Easter but from an unusual perspective. Why is it Moonpool Revelation and not just Moonpool 2? In fact it should be Moonpool Revelations because there are a few revelations, for among other things it deals with the arrival of Christianity but not as the Roman Church would have us believe! So, I may get into trouble with the Catholic Church, quite apart

from it being the recollections of a Nature Spirit (Did I mean Pagan Goddess?)
And the question again is, do I actually meet Moonpool?

Kingsley

Llanboidy

This morning we had a wonderful joint Carol Service with St Brynach's School at St Brynach's Church, Llanboidy. It was lovely to see so many parents and members from the community come and support it.

Shirley said we should read a chapter of St Luke's Gospel each day in December, starting with chapter one on the 1st and onwards to chapter 24 on Christmas Eve, thus to have the whole account of Jesus's life and works in one lesson and for this task I turned to 'The Unvarnished New Testament', a literal translation by Andy Gaus. His work amplifies the differences in style of the Gospel writers with Luke being the best writer. Academia takes the view that Luke wrote what became the Acts of the Apostles first and his Gospel later – as one narrative – for Theophilus. There is much speculation about who he was but no conclusion. The theory I like is Luke writing it for the Jerusalem Temple. Theophilus ben Ananus was High Priest 37-41 AD when he was in his thirties, so while 'Acts' could not have been written until after Paul's journeys – 61 AD at the earliest – Theophilus could still have been around then, one of the grandees of the Sanhedrin. High Priests were not like Popes, serving until death: more like prime ministers, appointed, dismissed, repeat. Mattathias ben Theophilus held the post 65-66 AD and was well placed timewise to want an objective explanation of St Paul's mission and what Jesus was remembered for. He was dismissed by the revolt leaders for being too moderate.

The two themes – 'Jesus the biography' and 'what Paul did next' were separated by later editors. Scholarly diligence places this during the reign of Domitian (81-96AD), with which I politely disagree. I don't mind Acts and the Gospel being one and separated and maybe added to by later editors but the original compilation must have been earlier than 81AD and probably during Nero's reign (54-68AD). Nero started well; he had abolished secret trials and capital punishment only to reintroduce judicial murder for Christians in 64AD after the great fire of Rome. And bumping off people he didn't like without trials way

before that. The way his dark side emerged as his reign progressed is either the origin of the phrase ‘absolute power corrupts absolutely’ or a practical example thereof.

Back to chapter 1, in which Luke sets out the results of research that he must have undertaken in Jerusalem and at least in part in the Temple Library. The 6AD census is known from outside the Bible and the Jews kicked off about it because it defiles their laws. It didn’t turn into open revolt due to the diplomatic efforts of the High Priest (at the time) Joazar and that would have been documented in the Temple Library: which became inaccessible to the likes of Luke when the first Jewish revolt caused the Romans to besiege the city in 66AD. The Temple was destroyed in 70 AD and all that therein was, such as the library. Once Rome put Christians on their to-do-in list, nobody would have been commissioning Luke to write what he did. My position is that scholars are dating Luke to when later editors got going on it.

Luke opens with introducing John the Baptist’s parents (in the days of Herod the King) by their pedigrees and moves on to do likewise for Mary and Joseph. This is important because the Jerusalem Temple priesthood were a hereditary group descended from Aaron – that’s the lineage of John the Baptist’s parents while Joseph is a descendent of the House of David – the kingly line that all the Old Testament prophecies say the new king will emerge from. Packing a punch in every line, Luke introduces the angel Gabriel – first sighted in the Book of Daniel (9.20) – and gives us Mary’s song of joy when she goes to see the pregnant Elizabeth, whose baby ‘quickness’ – starts kicking – when Mary visits. That is one of clues to Luke having medical knowledge, a little detail from that pregnancy.

Mary’s song become the *Magnificat* which we recite after the first lesson of Evening Prayer. The chapter ends with Zachariah’s prophesy after the birth of John, which becomes the *Benedictus* we recite at Morning Prayer. And all that in 80 verses.

Chapter 2 starts with the decree from Caesar Augustus (reigned 31 BC-14 AD) for a census when Syrias Cyrenius (Quirinius) was governor (6-12 AD) for which Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem where Jesus is to be born, wrapped up and put to bed in a grain crib, because there was no room for them in the living quarters. Meanwhile the heavenly host share the good news with shepherds watching their sheep by night – that is natural because they wanted to tell



Three new grandmas—Kathie Dubben with Clara; Jean Phillips with Albie and Eunice Batchelor with Teddy



someone and everyone else was asleep. The shepherds go to see Jesus and to tell his parents about the angels.

Egyptologist Bob Brier investigated this episode for a TV show. He went to Bethlehem where a shepherd said abiding in the fields was an April to October job. In Bethlehem, Bob saw that the houses were living quarters over stables and came to the view that giving Mary and Joseph the stable was how to give them privacy for the birth.

Nobody minds Jesus having 25 December as his official birthday. The short days and long nights either side of the winter solstice on 21 December were occasion in the wild and woolly north for a party since ancient times – Yule. We kept the party, changing it to the feast of Christmas and we also call it Yuletide.

A week later Jesus is circumcised and named; then they travel to Jerusalem – five miles from Bethlehem, which today would be two hours on foot - to sacrifice according to the law. There they meet Simeon whose comments on meeting baby Jesus became the *Nunc Dimitis* after the second lesson in evening prayer and Anna, the first of several women who contribute uniquely to Luke's narrative. He got more accounts about Jesus from women than Matthew, who seems to have recorded what men told him. Anna also recognises Jesus as the saviour and gives thanks to God. Then it's 85 miles back to Nazareth from which the Holy Family travel to Jerusalem annually for the feast of Passover. When Jesus was twelve, he stayed behind to interact with the Temple scholars and wasn't missed from the caravan for several days: in fifty-two verses.

Luke twice says Mary stored these vignettes in her heart – the age 12 one and what the shepherds told her. Anecdotes I like to believe Luke collected when in Jerusalem with St Paul in 56 AD (Acts 21:18) – along with other stories about Jesus, mostly from women. The dating evidence for Christmas causes some academic turmoil as chapter 1 v5 says Herod was still alive during Elizabeth's pregnancy and she was only six months ahead of Mary. Herod the Great died in 4BC, but he was the first of five men who could be called King Herod.

Herod Archelaus ruled Judea, Idumea and Samaria from 4 BC to 6 AD, Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea from 4 BC-39 AD, so fitting Luke's precise clues into the historical jigsaw places the start of Elizabeth's pregnancy in 4-5-6 AD before Herod Archelaus was deposed and Jesus being born in 6AD when the census took place, despite the best efforts of Judas of Gamala to prevent that happening.

We cannot place the birth of Jesus in 6 AD because in chapter 3 (Thirty-Eight verses including the Jesus family tree back through King David to Adam) Luke sets John the Baptist launching his mission “in the fifteenth year of Tiberias Caesar’s rule (29 AD) with Pontius Pilate governing Judea (26-36 AD) and Herod



**Always Pray
To Have Eyes That See
The Best In People,
A Heart That Forgives The Worst,
A Mind That Forgets The Bad,
And A Soul That Never
Loses Faith In God.**

**Amen
Kelly’s Treehouse**

being governor of Galilee (4BC-39 AD...during the High Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas...". Annas was High Priest 6-15 AD and his son-in-law Caiaphas held the post 18-36AD. He calls Herod Antipas 'governor' and that title would also have been applicable to Herod Archelaus, so Luke would not have called him a king. Luke also says that Jesus was approaching age thirty.

Age thirty pushes Jesus' birth back into Herod the Great's reign and he was on the throne when the census decree came from Caesar Augustus. Scholarship also suggests that Luke's Greek could be translated as meaning the census *before* the 6AD one – that being the one everyone had heard of because of the revolution it almost started.

Nothing outside the Bible suggests that the journey to Bethlehem has anything to do with the census. In Matthew's Gospel, Mary and Joseph seem to be residents in Bethlehem until the three 'wise' men tip them off that Herod is on the warpath. The common ground is prophecy placing the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem and that's where Matthew and Luke agree it happened.

The classic nativity scene re-enacted in numerous movies including 'Ben Hur' and the animation 'The Star' is a compilation of Luke and Matthew. Luke gives us the journey to Bethlehem, no room at the inn, angels and shepherds. Matthew gives us wise men, their gifts, the star, the flight to Egypt and the slaughter of the Holy Innocents – although the last two vignettes do not feature in the carols. Mark and John skip the nativity altogether.

Chapter 3 includes that Temple research of Joseph's ancestry, because "***He (Jesus) was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph,***" (Luke 3, v23). These first three chapters contain a lot of collected research, which reads to me as though copied from somewhere else. There seems, when reading the Andy Gaus translation, to be a change of controlling mind behind the pen on starting chapter 4.

Richard Law

There is only one True Light

In this world that is full of fake news and lies, we have a wonderful message of the true light that has come into the world. We are learning the hard way that no society can live on lies yet lies and fake news are rampant in our society today. You may have come to the point where you doubt everything that is being said to you. In this world you do not know who or what

to believe. Is there anyone you can trust? We live in a world of broken promises and in our schools the most basic certainties are being challenged. We live in a day where we call light, darkness and darkness, light.

However, the true light that gives light to everyone the Lord Jesus Christ into the world as come into the world. When John wrote this letter people looked to Rome for guidance and light and they looked to the Greeks for knowledge. The Jews relied on the scriptures and the temple but John is telling them that the true light that enlightens every man has now come into the world.

This world is filled with various lights but not the true light. There are false lights, reflective lights and artificial lights. There are plenty of lights that are false in this world. The world we live in is not like Star Wars where the baddies wear black and the goodies wear white. There are false lights shining in many places. Many years ago, the Cornish coast was littered with sunken vessels which had been lured onto the rocks by false guiding lights. The ships which were in distress were pirated and looted. It was a lucrative business. In stormy weather locals would go out with their lamps to guide the ships to shore and safety but what they were really doing was directing them onto the rocks



causing them to be smashed apart and the cargo to be washed up on the shore. These ships were being guided by false lights. This is how it can be in your life too as this world is full of people holding lanterns to show you the way but they will lead you to destruction.

The Bible warns that this can happen even in church life. There are many false prophets who are speaking in the name of God but they are not true lights. The Bible tells us that in the church at Corinth there were teachers who came into the church and misled believers. We are warned that in the last days people will turn aside from the truth and believe falsehoods. False teachers were found in the church at Corinth making big claims. (2 Cor 10:13-15) We live in a world of con-artists and some come under the guise of light which is why people are fooled into believing them.

People believe in having some instinct to lead them but Jesus tells us, "Be careful that the light within you is not darkness." The darkness can be caused by ignorance or polluted motives or wrong thinking or wrong desires. If the light in your heart is darkness, how great is that darkness? The heart is deceitful above all things.

Be careful when people are speaking to you about enlightenment. All over the world people claim they have some light to impart that you need to know about because they have these insights. Be careful not to be fooled by the false hope of their enlightenment and the progress of human learning and various ideas of how to make this world a better place. Look at this world with all its so-called progress, the terrible wars and killing. This is not the hope of the Christian. There are many false lights.

There are many attractive lights, in Times Square this year, the lights are not to be switched off because so many people are attracted to the place. Jesus is the true light. He is not a reflected light. He is the real thing. He is not an artificial light. When we look at the night sky, we see the moon and stars. It is a great sight to behold but you know, the moon, light is reflective light of the sun. However, John tells us that Jesus Christ is the real thing. He is the light. John the Baptist was sent to bear witness to the light. When Jesus was asked about him he said that John was a bright and burning light. There was something about him and just as the moon reflects the sun's rays, John the Baptist reflected Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Jesus told His disciples, "You are the light of the world." They too were to reflect the light of Jesus Christ.

Community Carol Service at Bwlchgroes village hall



Many people are disappointed in the Church and those who profess to be Christians. They say, "If Christians are like that I don't want anything to do with them." Down through history some awful things have happened in the Church and just like the moon, there are dark spots that we can see. There are some great Christians but even these can let you down. It is a fact that the Church has erred. Be careful. Jesus is the only true light. The ultimate truth is not found in the Church but in Jesus Christ.

Jesus came into this world. He came from outside. He was sent by God the Father. (John 3:16) He said, "I am not of this world." This is the news we have to share. True light is from above. Jesus is God Himself, uncreated light, the heart of God revealed. What we need to know is that for our salvation, God has come to us from above. This is the revelation we need. This is the great story and news we need to tell people. "In the dark street shineth the everlasting light." Christ is no false dawn. His light gives life and the bright rays of hope, joy and love and life. He is the One who is uncreated light. He is not some prophet or someone who has had a revelation. Jesus Christ is the ultimate reality.

Jesus Christ is the true light that enlightens everyone. Scientists will tell you that they do not know where light comes from. It is not the sun. In Genesis we read that God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. Then on the 4th day He created the sun and the moon. This world was made by Him and He

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gives physical light to all men, even to Putin and to Hamas. The Lord Jesus Christ told us that this is what God does. "He makes the sun to shine on the good and the evil." This is what happens. It is not that such people are saved or that they are going to heaven when they die, the Bible does not teach such things. However, it does teach about the goodness of God and His great mercy and kindness and that His kindness is experienced by everyone in full measure. Many people in the world have been affected by the Lord Jesus Christ and have been enlightened to some degree Jesus has come into the world and shines on every home. All the world needs His truth.

The light of Jesus shines forth for those who have not known God. You can know Him. Jesus has revealed Him to us. You can know of His great love. His heart was revealed to us in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the light that shows us the way out of our darkness. He shows us what is false and what is true. What He said is all true. He will give you eternal life and He will forgive you your sins. He will love you no matter who you are, religious or not, educated or not. If you come and believe in Him and trust in Him, you will have the light of life. The day has dawned. The sun has risen. During the ministry of our Lord the multitudes basked in His light. He shone in His pure and loving life, His gracious words, His mighty and benevolent deeds and especially in His self-sacrificing death.

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*“Light of the world, for ever, ever shining,
There is no change in Thee;
True Light of life, all joy and health enshrining,
Thou canst not fade nor flee.*

*Light of the world! Undimming and unsetting
O shine each mist away!
Banish the fear, the falsehood and the fretting;
Be our unchanging day.”*

Chris Rees, Minister, Bethania Baptist Church, Narberth

PARTRIDGES AND PEAR TREES

I was fascinated to read Shirley Murphy’s explanation of the Christmas carol ‘The twelve days of Christmas’. There are alternative explanations, however, for the first gift – a partridge in a pear tree.

One is that the French for ‘partridge’ is ‘perdrix’, pronounced ‘pair-dree’ – hence ‘pear tree’. Why an English partridge should appear in the same line as a French one is just as much of a mystery, though.

The other three common explanations all involve illiterate peasants mis-hearing monks singing in Latin. But what were they singing?

One suggestion is 'apertuit in aperto' – '[Mary] gave birth in an open space' (ie a stable).

The second is 'parturit in aperto' ('she gives birth in an open space'). This idea has the advantage that 'parturit' sounds a lot more like 'partridge'. But mis-hearing 'aperto' as 'a pear tree' is a bit of a stretch.

The third and final explanation solves this problem by suggesting the monks were singing 'parturit aperte' – 'she gives birth openly' (ie not in secret). But then there's no room for the 'in' (oh hohoho).

As for the rest of the song, I suppose all the birds are explicable as comestibles, certainly the geese and the French hens. And we know of at least one pie which contained four-and-twenty blackbirds, or colly birds (or, as our carol puts it, 'calling birds'). But consuming turtle doves or swans would surely bring a knock on the door from the Conservation Police.

The maids? Well, milking is what they did, pre-feminism and milking machines. Ladies have always danced, strictly or otherwise. And perhaps the lords are a-leaping to catch the Speaker's eye.

All in all, I should stick with Shirley's interpretation – food for the soul, rather than stuffing the stomach. Talking of which, I've always been a bit surprised that after all that chicken, blackbird, goose, turtle dove and partridge the last line isn't: '...and a whole crate of Ga-ha-vis-con!'



Jonathan Copus



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