

**Worship: All services will be streamed live from the church.**

Contact Pete Fawcett to arrange an invite or use the links Meeting ID: 407 593 4256 Passcode: 123456

**Sunday 9th Jan 11am** Worship with Communion led by Rev Julia Bartholomew and Mark Rodgers. We begin a series on 1 Corinthians celebrating God's grace offered to all.

**Sunday 16th Jan 11am** Worship led by Pete Fawcett and Keith Harrison. The theme from 1 Cor 1:10-17 is 'Beware of divisions!'

**Sunday 23rd Jan 11am** Worship led by Rev's Julia Bartholomew and James Bolton. The theme is 1 Cor 1:18-25 God's Folly.

The service will be followed by short church meeting and a beef hotpot lunch with tea and coffee at the Cricket Club. We hope that you can join us.

**To book in for the lunch on 23rd Jan, please hand an envelope with your name on, containing £10 to Sue Williams or Delyth Beecroft, or put it in the church back door letter box. Places are limited to 30 and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.**

**Sunday 30th Jan 11am. Worship led by Carolyn Ridding and Mark Richards.** We look at 1 Cor 1:26-31 and the call to 'boast in the Lord'.

#### **Thursday Lunchtimes**

**Thursdays 13th, 20th and 27th Jan from 12-1pm**

**Zoom and Soul.** Join us on line for a time of sharing, Bible study and prayer. We hope to be able to restart Soup and Soul in February.

#### **Thursday Evenings**

**Thursday 20th Jan 7:30pm** Meeting for preachers and leaders (venue to be confirmed)

**Thursday 27th Jan 7:30pm** A Worship evening in church for all involved in playing and singing on Sunday mornings.

**Want a chat?** Contact Rev Julia Bartholomew

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**CONNECTED 9 9th - 30th Jan 2021**  
**United Reformed Church, Abbey Road, Rhos on Sea**



Dear *Friends*,

The following words were drawn from the King James Bible and included in Charles Jennens' libretto for *The Messiah* which Handel composed in 1741:

*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd:*

*he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* (Isaiah 40:11)

One of our worship themes through Christmas was not just the eagerness of the shepherds who left their flocks to rush to the stable, but the relationship between the 'sheep' and 'the shepherd'. In the Bible, humans are likened to sheep over 400 times. How insulting it might seem for us to be compared to silly sheep who get lost and stuck and don't always have the sense to find their way home, even when their goal is in sight.

As a teenager I spent a fortnight at the Christian youth centre on Iona. Looking out of the window as I sat and ate my supper each evening I would see a trail of sheep coming down the hill. They came in single file following a well worn path to their evening pasture. Unfortunately there

was one spot where the ground was wet and muddy as the path passed through a boggy patch. The sheep hesitated when they came to this area but then, spurred on by those behind them, took the plunge into the mud. They used to annoy me so much. Were they really so stupid that they couldn't see a way round the muddy patch?

However, we read in Isaiah 53:6 *"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."* Maybe, given our human tendencies to wander away from God, to ignore his purposes for us, and to be lazy and avoid spending time each day with him, we do need a path to follow. Maybe that path is not always the most attractive, comfortable or convenient, but surely what matters above all is that we stay faithful to the way of life that God has called us to. But let's not forget the Christmas message that Jesus comes to bring us joy and peace. The picture on the front page shows a sheep path on Mull. When we walked along it over New Year, it was the most delightful of places to be.

My prayer for us all in 2022, is that we will increasingly find joy in faithfully walking the path that God has called us to.

With every blessing, *Julia*

#### CHURCH FAMILY NOTICEBOARD

I was delighted to receive the beautiful cyclamen for Christmas and send my sincere thanks. It is such a lovely vibrant colour and will give me pleasure for weeks to come. Warm wishes to you all. **Irene Laxton**

Thank you for such a lovely Christmas Eve service all the family enjoyed it. **Caroline Widdowson**

Thank you for prayers for our new grandchild. When Bethany arrived on December 18th, mum Sarah and 2 young children all had covid (dad was just recovering). We had no idea how they would cope without help, so keeping clear was not an option for us. And yes, we both caught it too, but fortunately none of us were particularly unwell, and we all isolated together over Christmas, eating delicious-looking food that we could not taste! Frances and the children waited for 10 days for their first cuddles! We thank God for Bethany's safe arrival, and thank you again to those who prayed. Mum and baby are both doing very well. **Philip and Frances Nye**

**Gift Recycling:** Oh dear! Did Father Christmas get it wrong? Was it Hobbit socks, a jumper several sizes too big/small, a scarf but not your colour, or the umpteenth box of biscuits? Are you thinking about recycling these gifts? A Gift Recycler is one who hoards unwanted gifts until the next round of birthdays/Christmas with the aim of passing them on to other recipients. (Does the word 'Scrooge' spring to mind?). A Gift Recyclee is one who receives a gift which has been recycled – perhaps more than once. The Gift Recycler must be distinguished from the Gift Donor, who gives unsuitable gifts to a charity shop, or a fundraising event – both actions to be admired.

While I might disapprovingly tut-tut to the actions of the Gift Recycler, I have been a happy Gift Recyclee several times. The recycled gift tends to look more expensive than the brand new gift might have been. I have a large, illustrated address book, a matching magnifying glass and letter opener with faux pearl handles, a silk scarf and a Liberty jewellery pouch. My most surprising recycled gift was an ornamental plant pot which I had previously given to the Gift Recycler; it was immediately identifiable because it was still in its original wrapping (JIA)

#### **Santes Dwywnwen Hapus (Happy Saint Dwywnwen's Day)**

Forget St Valentine's Day! Make your romantic feelings known by saying "Dw i'n dy garu dy" three whole weeks earlier on 25th Jan - St Dwywnwen's Day -. St Dwywnwen is the Welsh patron saint of lovers; she lived in the 5th century, one of the prettiest of Brychan Brycheiniog's 24 daughters. Dwywnwen fell in love with Prince Maelon Dafodrill, but sadly, her father had already arranged for her to marry someone else. She was so upset that she begged God to make her forget Maelon. After she had fallen asleep, she was visited by an angel who gave her a magic potion to turn Maelon into a block of ice and to erase him from her memory.

God also granted Dwywnwen three wishes – her first was that Maelon be thawed out, the second that God should fulfil the hopes of true lovers, the third that she should never marry. As a mark of thanks, Dwywnwen devoted the rest of her life to the service of God. She founded a convent on Llanddwyn Island of the coast of Anglesey, the remains of which can be seen today. So don your wellies, take a packed lunch, cross over to the island at low tide. The sacred fish that live in the well, are said to be able to foretell whether love and happiness will be yours. (JIA)

## **God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform**

It was a Sunday morning; the church was nearly full because we were dedicating a baby girl to our Lord God. I was holding the baby and praying for her; her parents and my fellow leaders were stood with me and we were all having a time of celebration and rejoicing. Then something happened I will never forget. God spoke to me very clearly.

In the congregation were a husband and wife, Mark and Julie, who had been told after several miscarriages, IVF treatment and examinations that she couldn't have children. Now God was saying to me that I should give that little baby I was holding to Julie and tell her that in one year's time she too would be holding her own baby. My response was instant. No way was I going to do such a thing! If I got it wrong I would probably lose my job and be seen as a false prophet. I couldn't risk it. The trouble was that God told me again clearly that if I didn't do it then one of my fellow leaders would take the baby from me and give her to Julie. In for a penny, in for a pound...! I walked across to where Julie was sitting and did what God had said. I told her that in a year's time she would have her own baby on her lap here in church. The gasps from the congregation were evidence of their disbelief but most of all it was the gasp we all heard that came from husband Mark.

Four months later, Mark told me that Julie was expecting a baby! For the last three months of her pregnancy she was in hospital under permanent care and daily examinations. Then came the birth – and I had got it wrong! I had given Julie a baby girl to hold, but she didn't have a girl, in fact she didn't have a boy either! She had twin boys – two livelier lads you will have never met! What I did get right was that this was the power of God at work - so thank God for Jesus!

Oh! By the way, at the end of the dedication service when I gave Julie the baby, my fellow leader came to me and said, "If you hadn't given that baby to Julie, God had told me to take her from you and give her to Julie myself."  
*by Trevor Mills*

**Christmas and New year Television:** Apologies to those of you who were shocked by some of the TV recommendations in Connected 8. I had not seen all the programmes in advance and was misguided by some of the reviews in the press. I have learned my lesson! Julia

*As a church we are encouraged to treasure our world as humanity causes species extinction, habitat destruction and climate change. David Read shares an alternative perspective. Let us know your views!*

## **THE THREE DREADED 'C's**

There is a great deal of fear around these days, – fear of the three dreaded 'C's: **Covid - Climate Change - Conspiracy Theories** Or does that make four? Listening to people talk, one would think there is nothing else. Are we all going to die of Covid? Is the End of the World Nigh due to Climate Change? Are there sinister Powers at work behind the powers that be?

Readers of the Bible will be familiar with these topics as they feature largely in the pages of Holy Writ. Indeed the Bible starts with the last one of these. So taking them in reverse order – Are there sinister Powers at work behind the powers? The first Bible stories in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, say that indeed there are – God was and is at work from the beginning, and a dark entity /force called Satan was and is also at work. Two invisible, unseen powers at work behind the scenes, whose existence is denied by most people nowadays. The Bible explains why people are capable of doing so much that is good but also have a tendency to do evil. God made us in his own image. But Satan tempts us to fall. To go wrong. St. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Ephesians that *'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against . . . spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.'*

The next major story in the Bible is all about climate change. A catastrophic flood. Incessant rain. Rising sea levels. Inundation on a massive scale. Loss of life. A different climate afterwards. Summer and winter. Dry seasons and wet seasons. Clouds. Rainbows. A fresh start. That's what we all want – a fresh start. And Saint Peter talks of a coming 'day'. *'The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.'* (2 Peter 3:16 NIV) Are we all going to die of Covid? Well, we are all going to die. And the culprit, the evil germ, is called SIN. 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' 'It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgement.' (Hebrews (:27) But there is an antidote; a vaccine – The precious blood of Jesus. One of the great quotes I like is from JN Darby, one of the original Plymouth Brethren movers: 'God is at work behind the scenes changing the scenes he's at work behind.' So it is. So let it be. Until we are all 'Changed from glory unto glory when in heaven His face we see.'

## CHRISTMAS GALLERY

Photos from: Regional elders' gathering, Sunday Carols & readings, some of the twenty singers outside Marmalade cafe, Advent mediation with Sian Roberts, Christmas Eve in the stable.



And God Commanded "Let There be Light" (Genesis 1:3)

Day Length in Wales 2021 - 2022

December 3rd 7h 49min

December 12th 7h 35min

December 21st 7h 30min – Hurray, shortest day

December 30th 7h 34min

January 8th 7h 48min

January 17th 8h 10min

January 28th 8h 44min

..... and then the length of daylight continues to accelerate until June;  
and then it's all downhill until next December! (JIA)

John ch 1 v 1 *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'* – We accept and take on His Word – become the Word – Die – are a Word without flesh – until Jesus comes again. Derek Hall