

# St Johns Church Newsletter



## January 2024

### Editorial

The close off date for the February 2024 newsletter will be 19<sup>th</sup> January. Shirley would appreciate receiving the news items that were promised for this newsletter, but because of the Christmas business are now promised for the February one! Please send contributions to [shirleybdraper@gmail.com](mailto:shirleybdraper@gmail.com) or leave in box at the back of the Church.

### Did you know?

Australia and New Zealand had electric jugs long before the UK discovered they were cheaper to boil water in. The first were china jugs that had a live electric wiring on the inside at the bottom of the jug. They did have a lid. Then the jugs became much better with the live element hidden and safer! But this is why Australians and New Zealanders call their kettles jugs!

### News of members

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> St Johns members went Carol Singing around members of the Church who are not able to get out, and ended up singing at two care homes. Ron, Barbara, Ann and Ron Gerrard, Marlys and Mansel, and Margaret Phillips were thrilled to hear carols at their homes. Eileen in Pencoed and her fellow residents, and then the Belvedere residents who know us well because they come each Wednesday to our Coffee mornings, were delighted too. And the singers eat too many pies.

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Megan was presented with a Birthday gift for her 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, and the congregation sang "Happy Birthday"

### Life

Dance as though no one is watching  
Love as though you've never been hurt  
Sing as though no one can hear you  
Live as though heaven is on earth.



**Christmas Tree Festival**  
So many people have added their own little bit to making the trees in the festival

display just beautiful. Thank you to everyone for their hard work which started on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> with the men bringing in the boards to go on top of the seats around the walls. Then the Christmas Trees were set up with lights, baubles, all sorts. The Festival opened on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December.

On display is an ingenious white tree (above) celebrating the recent wedding of Rachel and Michael; an evergreen Oak branch makes a New Zealand Pohutukawa tree which in NZ



has red flowers at Christmas time; the Turkey and Tinsel Tree with pictures of turkeys amongst tinsel; the tree covered in robins; the Poppy tree remembering the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month; the prayer

tree; the Welshcake tree and the Craft tree with marvellous stitched, knitted or crocheted snowmen, Santas, gnomes, plus cakes, mugs and teapots.

A tree that is given and decorated by the Noot family in memorial to Sheila annually is kept and becomes the recycled tree the next year, with angels made from masks, old plastic and so on. There is the Co-op tree, the Lifeboat Tree, and the Guides tree. This year there is a

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tree with lily flowers as decoration and they smell wonderful. The Church looks magnificent as darkness falls about 3.30 and all the lights are glowing. The large figures of the Nativity Scene are left on but on a time switch, so that passersby see them lit up in the front lobby over night from the street.

### Do you know?

The Heart Matters magazine says that sticking to a regular meal pattern and eating earlier in the day rather than late at night is less harmful and could help our health. Skipping breakfast is linked to an increased risk of obesity as well as higher “bad” cholesterol levels and worse cardiovascular health.

### Worship Leaders

Jan 7<sup>th</sup> Rev John Hayton – Methodist  
Covenant Service  
14<sup>th</sup> Rev Stella Hayton – Inner Wheel  
annual service.  
21<sup>st</sup> Rev Stella Hayton  
28<sup>th</sup> Rev John Hayton  
Feb 4<sup>th</sup> Rev Stella Hayton  
11<sup>th</sup> Worship Group  
18<sup>th</sup> Rev Stella Hayton  
25<sup>th</sup> Rev Jason Askew  
Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> Rev Adrian Davies  
10<sup>th</sup> Mrs Kate Wolsey  
17<sup>th</sup> Deacon Jon Miller  
24<sup>th</sup> Rev Norman Gilbert  
31<sup>st</sup> Rev Stella Hayton (Easter Day)

### Advent

The candles on the Advent Ring are lit each Sunday. They represent 1. People of God, 2. The prophets, 3. John the Baptist, 4. Mary, and the 5<sup>th</sup> one on Christmas Day is always Jesus. An alternative representation is Love, Hope, Joy and Peace. On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec, Anne Maggs lit the first candle. Laura and Ieuan lit the second one the next Sunday. On

the third Sunday Peter and his son-in-law Ferrand lit the candles.

### HHI

Gifts on the Spiral Tree on 3<sup>rd</sup> December amounted to £160. Rhys chose a Goat (His family said he always chooses a goat!) his sister Jessica chose education and medical supplies and Megan (who was a baby in the nativity cradle at St Johns on her first visit to our Church eight years ago) chose Animal feed.

### Did you know?

In Tudor times mince pies were often shaped like a manger and sometimes contained a pastry baby Jesus on them. They were made up of 13 ingredients to represent Jesus and his disciples. Meat, mostly mutton but sometimes beef, or a variety of game was used. Gradually types of fruit and spices were replaced the mincemeat.

### The Dog



He sits and begs,  
he gives a paw,  
He is as you can  
see  
The finest dog you  
ever saw

And he belongs to me  
He follows everywhere I go  
And even when I swim  
I laugh because he thinks, you know,  
That I belong to him  
But still no matter what we do  
We never have a fuss  
And so, I guess it must be true  
That WE belong to US  
*Arthur Guttermav*



## Another day

God didn't add another day to your life to suit you. It was added to suit someone who needed you.

## The difference between the US and UK

The Americans write their dates backward 12.31.23 means the last day of December 2023 and is a Waltz Day.

## And what about spelling?

15 + 15 is thirty

16 + 16 is thirty too!

## And what about words

Do you know that the word diaper originates with brickwork in building. It is the name for the diamond shape used as a pattern in bricks. Hampton Court Palace is covered in diapers inside and out! Diapers are in the cobble path of the manor house and gardens of Aberglasney Manor House, near Carmarthen. Look for them the next time you go there, and if you see a brick wall. It makes you wonder if a family with the name of Diaper, therefore being a bricklayer, immigrated to America and name babies' nappies diapers!! People were often named after the trade they did. But no nappies were named after similar geometric shapes cotton.

## The Christmas Fayre

This was held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December and raised over £1,000 for Church funds. The many prizes of the Raffle collected and organised by Peter were won by so many different people. Thank you all for your contributions, to the raffle, for the stalls, and on the day.

## The Concert on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

Mollie and Peter with their daughter Penny, and her husband Farrand, organised this

marvellous concert in amongst the Christmas Trees, starting at 4pm, and invited anyone to come to the church. Dilys and Mike sang, Sue told a story, Liz did the MC! There were three kings, and many more items. In between the congregation sang old carols like "Ding Dong Merrily on High", "O Christmas Tree" and more popular ones like "The 12 days of Christmas". Even verses in German and Welsh were tried! It was just lovely to hear the organ being played again, and Mollie and Penny did a duet with one on the organ and the other on the piano. Thanks to Nick for all his hard restoring the organ. The congregation then adjourned to the Hall for mince pies and stollen. A different event that was enjoyed by members, friends and visitors alike.

Thank you, Ferrand, Mollie and Penny



Sue, Ann and Stella all cheerfully dressed



## Dates

27<sup>th</sup> Dec No Coffee Morning

3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 10am Coffee Morning

8<sup>th</sup> Jan 1pm Sharman's shepherds pie

15<sup>th</sup> Jan Craft Club Restarts

19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2pm Church Meeting

21<sup>st</sup> Jan 3pm Deer Park Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

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### **Epistle from the United Reformed Church**

2023 has felt like a year in which we've been surrounded by change and uncertainty. In many ways we are still feeling the tremors of the pandemic, and war has rumbled on with its tragic consequences in Europe, and we have watched with horror as terror and war explodes once again in the Middle East.

It was in a place of trouble and fear that a baby was born to Mary. The Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the one who offers healing, reconciliation, and hope to all in the gift of salvation.

Thank you for your ministry this year, which continues to bear the Good News of Jesus in the midst of a broken world. In these times it is an extraordinary thing, and we pray you will know God's blessing in the year to come.

### **Epistle from the Methodist Church in Wales**

This year we would like to especially reflect on "good news". When the angel Gabriel appears to Zechariah in the Temple, he announces that he has been sent to bring "good news". When the story moves and Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, just her mere presence causes the baby in Elizabeth's womb to leap with joy. So great is Mary's joy that she cannot keep it all in and she bursts into song, declaring the "mighty things" that God has done for her. When the angel appears before the shepherds he declares, "I am bringing you good news of great joy" and makes clear the extent of this good news by adding "for all the people".

There the heavenly host lose all sense of decorum and suddenly all their faces are lit up and the night sky is illuminated with angels declaring "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours". The shepherds, outcasts from society, with a terrible reputation, respond to

this good news with a wonderful simplicity and urgency. They hear a promise of good news and they go and seek it out with haste. This passage reminds that this is not an arm's length, cautious Christianity, this is a way of life in which good news is just that. It is something to be enjoyed and experienced ... and shared!

### **Epistle from Wales's Christian Leaders**

Jesus was born in a land occupied by the Romans. He was born away from home because of an imperial census. There were family tensions around Mary being pregnant and Jesus was laid in a feeding trough because there was no room at the inn. Herod killed the boys in Bethlehem to get rid of the threat to his power. All these are part of Christmas, along with our joy at God's love and the traditions which help us celebrate.

This Christmas we may be aware of tensions in families, and the difficulties of making ends meet. This year we remember the wars in the land of Jesus' birth, Ukraine and other parts of the world. We also remember that this year was the centenary of the Wales Women's Peace Appeal.

We need peace in our world. We may want to be free of tension in our families. We may long for five minutes of peace for ourselves in all the Christmas preparations. But surely we can all find space to reflect and make time to pray for peace this Christmas? We are praying for joy and hope for us all.

### **Something to remember as the festive season ends.**

The greatest gifts we have are family and friends. Forget resolutions and leave regrets behind as the year turns and have a happy New year.

Blwyddyn Newydd dda

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