

HANNAH SEAL

GWENT VALLEYS CENTRE OF MISSION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

Hello and welcome to my latest newsletter! The Gwent Valley Centre of Mission is a partnership between Church Army and Monmouth Diocese which is committed to bringing practical and spiritual hope to the communities within the Gwent Valley, and encouraging people in a journey of discipleship as new followers of Jesus.

Updates.....

If you received my newsletter in the Autumn you will remember that there were a number of events that we hoped would be able to take place. Whilst some things had to change because of changes in covid rules, we were able to do most of what we had planned and it was good to be able to be involved in Christmassy things!

In December we were able to partner with Ffrindiau Tyleri to host **WinterFest** in St Michael's Church. This Christmas Festival saw the church full of people, with stalls from local groups, activities throughout the town and ending in the switching on of the Christmas lights in town. We served hot drinks and mince pies and it was great to be part of the day and to have people comment on how lovely it was to see the church open again and how nice it was for some of the stalls to be indoors! Ffrindiau Tyleri plan to hold some other events this year (around Easter and in the Summer) and we hope that we might be able to be a part of these in some way - although we will be unable to host anything in the church at the moment due to ongoing issues (more of that later).

The following day we were able to host the **Community Carol Concert** in the church too which was fully booked and a wonderful to be able to sing some carols together. We also ran **Holiday Happenings** just as the schools broke up for the Christmas Holidays, and whilst we only had a few families, those that came appreciated being able to do some Christmas crafts together. We had planned to run Holiday Happenings outside last week in half term but due to the weather (it snowed!) we had to cancel but we are hopeful that the weather will be better in the Easter Holidays and that we will be able to welcome families to do some Easter themed activities. We were also invited into one of the residential retirement homes where the ladies who came enjoyed singing a carol or two and making angels. We have been asked to go again near Easter to do a short service and we hope that this relationship will develop.

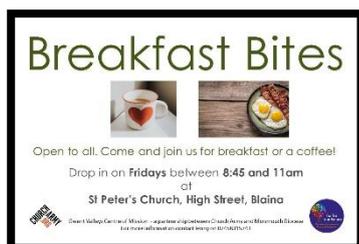


Jenny and Victor arrived...

Jenny and Victor arrived in mid November and it has been good getting to know them. Jenny was commissioned as a Church Army Evangelist in the summer and has taken up the role of Pioneer Evangelist here in the Gwent Valleys COM. They have been settling in and finding their way around and it is great to have Jenny as a colleague in the work here. Jenny is full of enthusiasm and is getting to know people in the area and I am sure that as time goes on she will continue to be a brilliant Pioneer! The local church community have really welcomed Jenny and Victor and people in the village where they live heard about their arrival and have been welcoming too.



New things...



One of the things that Jenny has started in the last few weeks is **Breakfast Bites** It's taking place every Friday morning in St Peters Church, Blaina and is a drop in where people can come and have breakfast. There are no restaurants, coffee chops or places for people to meet with friends in Blaina and so we hope that Breakfast Bites will become a place where people can come and be together. So far it's off to a good start and people have enjoyed the food the chef (Victor) is making!

We are launching **Cuppa and Company** this week outside St Michaels Church, Abertillery. It will run on a Thursday morning whilst the market is in town, and we will be providing a space for people to have a cuppa and chat with other people. At the moment we will be holding this outdoor under some red gazebos which we have been able to buy thanks to a grant from the Diocese, and we hope that people will stop by. We're hoping that the weather isn't too miserable!



Ongoing issues....

Whilst we have been able to do some things as planned, unexpected complications with buildings have meant that we haven't been able to start as much as we had planned. St Michaels Church is in the heart of Abertillery, is a great space and has lots of potential to be a place where people can find a safe space to be, to chat and to discover more of Jesus' love for them. However we haven't been able to use the building in the ways we had hoped. At the moment we are unable to heat the building (and it's often colder indoors than outdoors!) and we now have issues with the electricians which means we are unable to use the building until they are sorted. There is also no toilets and whilst the kitchen is nice, it isn't able to be used in the way we would like to as at the moment it won't meet the necessary levels of compliance in terms of food safety/hygiene requirements. This means that for now, we will be trying to do things outdoors in Abertillery while we seek to find a way forward. We were fortunate to be able to buy 4 gazebos with a grant from the diocese which will enable some things to take place, but as always it is dependent on the weather, and Welsh weather at this time of year is rather cold, damp and unpredictable. However we are trusting that God has it all in hand and we will do what we can.



Patron
HM The Queen
President
The Rt Revd & Rt Hon
Lord Williams of Oystermouth
Chief Executive
Ven Dr Peter Rouch

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Planning ahead...

As we move into the season of Lent and prepare to celebrate Easter, we are planning to hold some Easter related activities during the school holidays. We hope to be able to run **Holiday Happenings** in both Abertillery and Blaina, as well as some other Easter focused events/services. We are also thinking about what we might be able to do around the weekend of the Queens Jubilee celebrations. There has also been some interest in some form of Bible Study or discussion group around questions of faith and we will be looking at the best way forward with this in the coming months.

The next few months will also see a change from the existing parishes into the **Upper Eastern Valleys Ministry Area**, which will be made up of Blaenavon (St Paul, St Peter) Abertillery (St Michael) Cwmtillery (St Paul) Llanhilleth (St Mark) Six Bells (St John) Upper Ebbw Valleys Benefice (St Peter, St David, St Paul, Holy Trinity & St Anne, Christchurch).

The Revd Dominic McLean as the new Ministry Area leader and The Revd Tony Hodges as a Vicar in the Ministry Area. Both will be coming to Monmouth Diocese from the Diocese of Bangor and their licensing will take place in May. Please pray for them as they prepare to move and as they settle into the area in the coming months.

PRAYER

Prayer is such an important part of your support. We need God's help in every aspect of our work.

Thank God for...

- The arrival of Jenny and Victor
- The ways in which we have been able to connect with the local communities
- His faithfulness as we seek to share his love with people

Please Pray for...

- The ongoing issues with St Michaels Church and for us to find a way ahead to enable things to progress
- For "Cuppa and Company" and "Breakfast Bites" that they will become places where people can come together and friendships can grow
- The growing relationship with Davey Evans Court (the retirement home)
- For the plans for activities in Holy Week and around the Queens Jubilee celebrations, that these events will be opportunities to share the hope of Jesus
- Father Dominic and Father Tony as they take up their roles within the new Ministry Area

I also want to **pray for you** so please let me know how I can, by emailing hannah.seal@churcharmy.org

Thank you again for your continued support in prayer and in financial giving. I could not do this job without your ongoing support!



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YOU CAN FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE GWENT VALLEYS CENTRE OF MISSION

Regular giving is the best way to support our work as it helps us to budget, meaning we can focus more on the frontline work. However, every gift makes a difference.

To support Gwent Valleys Centre of Mission please quote reference: **1204**

To support Hannah Seal please quote reference: **2016HSE**

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By Phone

Call 0300 123 2113 to make a card donation over the phone or to request a Direct Debit mandate for a regular gift

Internet banking:

Barclays Bank

Sort Code: **20-49-81** Account Number: **80255459**

Account Name: **The Church Army**

You can use these details to set up a standing order as well as make one-off donations.

By Post

Send cheques made payable to "Church Army" to Church Army, Wilson Carlile Centre, 50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield, S3 7RZ

If you would like to do a fundraising event to support our work please contact Church Army's Fundraising Team on 0300 123 2113.

Thank you so much for your support - every donation makes a difference no matter the size.



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