

The Diocese of Monmouth

Profile for the Benefices of Abergavenny and Govilon



Incorporating

St Mary's Priory & Christchurch, Abergavenny,

Holy Trinity, Abergavenny

St Peter's, Llanwenarth Citra

Christchurch, Govilon

St Faith's, Llanfoist

St Helen's, Llanelen



Map of all seven churches, commissioned by both benefices and designed and created by parishioner Katy Connop. Copyright: KatyAmy – katyamycreative.co.uk

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Christ praying alone, one of a series of paintings by Jeremy Thomas, artist-in-residence at St Mary's Priory, which will tell the story of the Gospels. They are being created as part of the churches' mission and outreach and will be on display at St Mary's and then in other churches in our benefices and further afield.

Copyright: Jeremy Thomas

jeremythomasart.co.uk

Section 1 – Welcome [and Profile Overview]

Welcome to the profile for our two benefices, which we pray will serve as a guide in helping you to decide if the Abergavenny and Govilon Benefices is the place for you to continue to grow and develop your ministry.

The departure of clergy from both benefices has resulted in the beginning of a new chapter in our shared Christian lives. We are all part of the Abergavenny Ministry Area which includes many rural parishes within a ten-mile radius of the town. This is based on the Abergavenny Deanery but divides into three ‘pastoral’ areas – Abergavenny, Rural (Grosmont) and Skirrid (Llantilio Pertholey).

Over the last few years, we have begun to develop closer ties between the Abergavenny and Govilon benefices. We have shared some services, undertaken some joint social events and churchwardens have met together. Christchurch, Govilon, and Christchurch, Abergavenny, celebrate their festival together; Christchurch, Govilon, supported St Peter’s, Llanwenarth Citra, in its re-roofing project (the Govilon parish was carved out of the Llanwenarth Parish in the Victorian period). Each benefice has had its own clergy team and therefore largely have operated separately.

However, the diocese has now decided to restructure its deployment of clergy and that presents us with a significant opportunity to unite the worshipping communities and bring new focus to God’s work in this area. The intention is to have two full-time stipendiary posts to create a new team with responsibility for all seven churches. It is envisaged whoever is appointed to lead the benefice will play a full part in appointing a second priest to the benefice.

The seven churches are:

- St Mary’s, Monk Street, near the town centre, and
- its daughter church Christchurch, in North Street
- Holy Trinity, Baker Street, a fine Victorian town-centre church
- St Peter’s, Llanwenarth Citra, which is a rural parish to the west of the town
- Christchurch, Govilon, in the centre of the village to the south-west of the town
- St Faith’s, Llanfoist, a village church a mile south of the town
- St Helen’s, Llanellen, a village church some five miles south of the town

For ease of reference, we will describe each benefice in its most recent configuration.

1. The Abergavenny Benefice

For a number of years, the benefice comprised four churches, each with its own unique sense of tradition and style of worship but used to working collaboratively under the local banner of AACT (Abergavenny Anglican Churches Together). We are proud that our benefice has contained the Holywell Community, a Benedictine new monastic community, that at any time consisted of up to four young lay members who were exploring their vocation within the church, over a one or two-year period. Our previous vicar was Prior, with our assistant priest acting as Sub-Prior. The Holywell Community has been temporarily suspended awaiting the appointment of a new incumbent, and its future will be a matter for discussion between the diocese and local Anglican community.

2. The Govilon with Llanfoist and Llanellen Benefice

This benefice comprised three churches spread across the villages of Govilon, Llanfoist and Llanellen, all to the south of the river Usk. The immediate area is exceptionally beautiful, sitting in the shadow of the Sugar Loaf mountain and on the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

As you read this profile, we hope you will prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to take on this key role in the next chapter in the life of our church community. The role is a challenging one, but we know that, for the right person, it has the potential to be exciting and deeply rewarding

Section 2 – Our Current Situation

a. About Abergavenny

With a population of just over 14,000 people, the market town of Abergavenny is located within a rural area and maintains many links to the surrounding farming community. Superficially, the town appears affluent and comfortable, and yet it contains one of the most socially deprived wards in Monmouthshire. It is a town of great contrasts, and yet retains the feel of real community, has a strong civic tradition and a reputation for friendliness.

There are four primary schools in the town, including one Roman Catholic VA school and one Welsh-medium school, and King Henry VIII Comprehensive school. On the outskirts of the town (but in a different benefice) is a Church-in-Wales VA primary school.

The town, known as the Gateway to Wales, is a popular tourist destination, particularly well known for its annual Food Festival which takes place each September and draws in many thousands of visitors for the weekend. Transport links are good to the rest of the UK, with a regular train service and the M4 motorway only 30 minutes' drive.

b. About Govilon, Llanfoist and Llanellen

The village of Govilon is situated approximately three miles west of the market town of Abergavenny and has a population of approximately 1,500. It is situated at the base of the Bloreng, parts of which are within the Blaenavon Heritage Site, and the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal runs through the village with five access points for people and the Govilon wharf for boats. There is a village shop and pub – however, the school was closed some years ago and children attend primary school in another village; secondary schools are in Abergavenny and Crickhowell. It is a village which is growing – 24 residential units are under construction at one site and planning permission for 52 residences at another. Furthermore, an additional 90 houses for the village have been allocated in the National Park Development Plan.

Llanfoist has within it a local Housing Association estate and several new estates of private houses. The remainder is a mix of private housing and some older council housing, some of which is now privately owned. The population is made up of a mix of all professions and numbers approximately 1,500 people. There is also a private nursing home and a new primary school.

Situated about two miles south of Abergavenny, close to the A4042 Abergavenny to Pontypool road, Llanellen is home to about 500 people. The Bloreng mountain rises up above it while the Monmouth and Brecon Canal passes by on the hillside above. Apart from a well-used village hall, St Helen's church is the only public building left in the village. There is a shop and a well-kept playing field, but the school has now closed. Many of the houses in the village are bungalows and this has contributed to much of the population being of retirement age.

c. The broader context – the benefices as a part of the diocese

The diocese of Monmouth is geographically relatively small but has a distinct character within the Church in Wales. It can, at first, be confusing to realise that the diocesan title of Monmouth does not refer to the town of that name, that the cathedral church is in the city of Newport, and the largest parish church building is our own St Mary's Priory!

The diocese functions as a series of ministry areas. Some years ago, the Diocese of Monmouth became aware of the increasing challenge faced by financial pressures and a decline in stipendiary clergy. The practice of simply joining more parishes under a single incumbent was described by one neighbouring English diocese as stretching the elastic to breaking point. A new vision for ministry and mission was needed to reverse a managing of decline, and to foster the ministry of all God's people. We noted that, in other professions, a team approach had many advantages. For example, the model of single practice GPs running their surgeries from their front rooms has been replaced by medical centres with a multi-disciplinary team with central administration.

The diocese recognised that, for us, this change would involve a culture shift and that it would take time to develop, but we decided to move away from the traditional parish model (while holding on to all that is best in that tradition) to what we now call Ministry Areas, where a Ministry Area Leader would exercise greater episcopacy by (a) working collaboratively with stipendiary, self-supporting, active retired ordained and lay colleagues, (b) fostering and training local people for ministry and (c) having a lighter administrative load so as to be able to model priestly ministry.

In a diocese like Monmouth with its urban, valley and rural communities each Ministry Area is different, but the aim is for each church to retain its local identity by having a focal minister who may be ordained or lay. The Abergavenny Ministry Area has been in existence for three years.

d. The Holywell Community

From its founding, St Mary's, Abergavenny, has been a Priory Church, a place where the monks of the town lived, worked and prayed. During the reformation, King Henry VIII dissolved the monastery but left the church for the local community. Five hundred years later, the local clergy were thinking about ways for the monastic tradition to pervade the life of the parish once more. The Church had been left a property and, in considering what they could do with this, we pondered the idea of re-establishing a monastic community.

This community would be different from its predecessor in that it would take a modern slant, encouraging young people to commit for one year at a time and following the spirit of St Benedict's Rule, rather than a strict adherence, using that time to explore their vocation within the Anglican

Church. A former curate's house near St Mary's was used to house the lay members. The episcopal visitor for the community is Bishop Rowan Williams.

During the five years of its existence, the focus of the Community revolved around outreach and mission to the surrounding area, acting as a core for the congregation to gather around in reaching people with the Gospel. The Community was always looking for new opportunities to bridge the gap between church and town and was involved in various outreach projects. From parent and toddler groups to youth drop-in centres, their days were built around prayer and serving the local community. Alongside volunteering at already established projects, the community set up and took on their own outreach initiatives. These included:

- All Age Worship, *pictured*
- School Assemblies
- Day in the Life of a Monk tour
- A Mums' and Toddlers' group



The Community kept a regular pattern of daily prayer, either together or as individuals: public services held in the Priory Church were Lauds (08:15), Sext (12:00) and Vespers (16:30); Mass was also celebrated each day. After Lauds on Wednesdays, they practiced Lectio Divina and on Saturdays reflected on a section of The Holy Rule. On Fridays, they joined with St Mary's Priory Choir for a choral service at 1900. Compline was said privately.

As a result of their time in the community, past members have variously moved on to:

- training and ordination as deacon (to be priested September 2020)
- being admitted to a religious community
- becoming a church youth worker
- realising that a religious vocation is not for them

From the start, the Holywell Community was a vital part of the life of the benefice and was greatly valued by us all. We would hope that our new incumbent would want to play a part in re-establishing and further developing this unique institution.

e. Outreach and fellowship

1. Abergavenny Benefice

The Anglican community within Abergavenny has always made a priority of its outreach role across the town. Five years ago, under the leadership of Fr Mark Soady, we decided to create an overarching group to coordinate our outreach activities which we called Abergavenny Anglican Churches Together. The joint churchwardens of the benefice form the executive, but a specific outreach committee meets regularly to work on the specifics of the various projects we undertake. These have been as varied as:

- A Walking Nativity play in the town centre (organised by the Council of Churches) *pictured*
- Carol singing at residential homes and pubs
- Shoe-cleaning for commuters on Ash Wednesday
- Lenten Study groups;
- A Walk of Witness on Good Friday in the town centre (organised by the Council of Churches)
- The Abergavenny Parables – working with a local primary school which saw pupils ‘re-tell’ the parables through art, stories and cartoons
- Godly Play and other activities for children, for instance Easter and Christmas activities days
- A project by a professional artist to create paintings of the New Testament to be displayed in St Mary’s and, eventually, in other churches
- Christingle service attended by upwards of 400 people from babes in arms to 90 year olds



St Mary’s Church, an historically significant building with world-renowned monuments, is open to the public seven days a week; Holy Trinity is similarly normally kept open throughout the week; St Peter’s is open each day from Easter to Harvest; Christchurch is open to the community on a regular basis. All our churches provide places for private prayer and contemplation.

We run a number of special fellowship events each year; normally these will include a day trip to a place of interest as well as occasional suppers, quizzes, concerts and other outreach events. There is a strong Mothers’ Union branch within Abergavenny.

The *Four Churches* monthly magazine is edited by a professional journalist and distributed to the congregation, visitors, and sent electronically to our twin parish in South Africa, as well as to friends in America.

2. Govilon Benefice

Christchurch has an active ladies’ and men’s fellowship group who meet on Monday evenings; the men’s group undertakes the general maintenance of the Church. We have a regular bible study group and operate Messy Vintage in our local nursing homes. In Govilon village there is also a Baptist church and, while recognising denominational differences in worship style, offering Christian support to the village is the focus and joint services are held at key times, for example Remembrance Sunday. Most recently during the Coronavirus Pandemic a few parishioners from Christchurch and the Baptist Minister have provided a volunteer group for villagers who are shielding/self-isolating, thus building links with the community.



There is a 100+ club, which meets monthly, whose aim is to raise funds to support the church and is supported by non-members of the church. A branch of Mothers’ Union is also part of the church. Tea and Chat also takes place once a month; there is a church magazine and the Phoenix community choir was

founded in the church. For keen gardeners there is a thriving gardening club in the village. Parishioners also carry out volunteer work in the local hospital and charity shops

Community events are also organised by the church and each year a summer fete, Christmas fayre, bonfire display, with hot dogs, and carol services are held. Other events are organised on an ad hoc basis, for example, in September 2019 Christchurch hosted a flower festival. During the year the church raised £2,700 for charity. Each month the church identifies a charity to receive a one-off donation, equating to 12 donations over the year.

f. Worship traditions

Our two benefices have a broad range of churches ranging in style from highly informal evangelical Free Churches to Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic and, of course, Anglican. Abergavenny's Anglican Churches are active members of the Council of Churches in Abergavenny which is affiliated to Churches Together in Wales (Cytun). This strong ecumenical group, within the town, meets regularly and works co-operatively on matters such as our local Food Bank. The Revd Aled Edwards, Chief Executive of Cytun, has described Abergavenny as the most active ecumenical town in Wales.

Within the Anglican churches of both benefices, there are a range of worshipping traditions, which are set out in more detail in Section 4.

Section 3 – Our new leader

a. The priest we need

Our new incumbent will need to be someone who is comfortable dealing with the ranges of Church tradition across the area. They will be keen to encourage and develop the styles and traditions of worship in each church and, equally, be able to challenge and stimulate new approaches where appropriate. It is a strength of the benefice that most people are able to find, within the Anglican churches, an approach to worship that fits their particular preference. Such a 'catholic' range of practice does, of course, present challenges, but also offers a rich tapestry of opportunity.

Our new incumbent will need to be highly organised and a team builder who is willing to delegate. They will need a sense of humour and bring a forward-looking, optimistic approach to the role.

The congregations of the seven churches are committed and enthusiastic, but many are elderly, and we would hope for someone who could encourage and draw in younger worshippers. While Abergavenny is a largely English-speaking area, there are members of our congregations whose first language is Welsh. We would therefore welcome someone who is able to speak, or willing to learn, Welsh, though this is not an essential requirement of the post.

Whilst we are clear that our new priest need not necessarily become the Prior of the Holywell Community, we are looking for someone who would actively support and encourage the re-establishment, maintenance, and development of our modern monastic community. There are currently three properties under control of the Parsonage Board within the benefices, as follows:

- (a) a modern four-bedroomed vicarage at St Mary's offers a good level of accommodation adjacent to the Priory Church;
- (b) Govilon Rectory stands opposite the church and is a modern family building with ample car parking and large gardens.
- (c) Holy Trinity Vicarage is a large five bedroomed Victorian property situated next to Holy Trinity Church and the Rachel Herbert Charity Alms Houses.

Please see also the Person Specification (appendix 1)

b. The Ministry Team

Within Abergavenny we are fortunate to have Fr Jeff Pearse who is our non-stipendiary part-time priest; we also have a number of retired clergy who are licensed to officiate within the benefice, as well as experienced licensed lay ministers, all of whom provide significant support that has enabled us to maintain a range of services in all four churches. The Govilon Benefice has previously been served by a house-for-duty priest, assisted by retired priest Fr Francis Buxton.

As well as the Parochial Church Councils of each church, all of which meet regularly, there are a number of groups and individuals who provide a range of voluntary support to the work of the benefice. In Abergavenny we also have three paid members of staff - the vicar's part-time PA (who is based in the Tithe Barn), a Facilities Coordinator for the St Mary's Priory site (which is run as a commercial enterprise), and St Mary's sub-organist.

c. Caring for our clergy

We are aware that in an age of ever-decreasing numbers of stipendiary clergy, the role of priest is a challenging one that demands much of the individual. We are committed to ensuring that our new priest is able to function effectively in a safe, happy and supportive environment. We encourage our clergy to take regular leave to ensure they are able to 'recharge'. We are also committed to allowing members of the clergy time for reflection and personal spiritual growth, particularly through undertaking retreats and study time.

Section 4 – Information about our churches

St Mary's Priory

St Mary's is located in Monk Street near the town centre; it is a Grade 1 listed building on the site of a medieval monastery. Parts of the church date back to the 11th century, and it contains a range of very fine monuments as well as the internationally-renowned wooden Jesse figure; the tower contains a fine ring of ten bells, said to be the finest in Christendom. There is a strong choral tradition with a choir of 35 adults and children. There is a Garden of Rest for cremated remains.

Next to the church is the Priory Centre, opened in 2000, and containing a large hall with mezzanine balcony, a kitchen and a music room.



Outside are two courtyards and the medieval Tithe Barn, owned by the church, which has been converted into a visitor centre. Both the Priory Centre and the Tithe Barn are marketed commercially, and a site-wide facilities coordinator is employed for this reason. St Mary's is a member of the Major Churches Network. We are honoured to have HRH The Prince of Wales as our Royal Patron who maintains a keen interest in all we do. St Mary's has a mainly Anglo-Catholic style of worship and a small proportion of its congregation would expect Eucharistic services to be taken by a male priest.

Website: www.stmarys-priory.org

Our annual report: <https://stmarysprioryabergavenny.wordpress.com/2020/03/09/annual-report-2019/>

Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 93

Pattern of Services:

Sundays: 0800 Eucharist (said), 09:30 All-Age Eucharist (1st & 3rd Sundays),
11:00 Choral Eucharist, 18:00 Evensong

Weekdays: Daily Eucharist - Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, 08:30; Weds 10:00; Sat 09:00

Monastic Services: Morning Prayer 08:15, Midday Prayer 12:00, Evening prayer 16:30

Fridays: Choral Evensong 19:00

No. on Electoral Roll: 145

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: 20 members meet approximately nine times a year

Ministry Share: £83,500 for St Mary's and Christchurch

What we are doing now:

We are the central place of worship for the whole town, leading acts of remembrance, celebration and mourning for families and communities, many of whom are not regular members of the congregation. We maintain a daily pattern of worship and minister to a significant number of visitors to the church throughout the year.

What we would like to do:

We would like to see the church continue to grow as a centre for active and involved disciples, enabling lay and ordained ministries, and we hope to see the Holywell Community re-established in some way. We would

aim to work with our new incumbent to enable a shift in the average age of our congregation with a higher percentage of young people and families taking an active role.

The challenges we face:

- ministering to a town whose population's average age is ever increasing
- a culture that is largely secular and is openly sceptical about the value of the Christian faith
- ensuring healthy finances
- maintaining a Grade 1 listed building



Christchurch, North Street

Christchurch was built as a Chapel of Ease to St Mary's in the 1870s to provide a place of worship for the workers who came to the town to build the railways. It is a Grade 2 listed building made of tin which is then cedar-wood clad both inside and out. We also have a hall, formerly a schoolroom, used by both church and community.



Website: www.stmarys-priory.org

Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 19

Pattern of Services: Eucharist twice a month at 09:00, Evensong on the first Sunday at 18:00 and Morning Prayer on the third at 09:00. The church has also held Civic Services, baptisms, wedding and funerals plus Nine Lessons & Carols with the lessons read by local schoolchildren, who also use the church for their Harvest Thanksgiving

No. on Electoral Roll: 32

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: As per St Mary's, plus occasional congregational meetings

Ministry Share: As per St Mary's

What we are doing now:

Christchurch is very much a community church where the relatively small congregation works well as a team to both keep the church active and alive and to provide space for the community around it. Our style of worship is 'middle-of-the-road' Anglican. The hall is used weekly by an art group for vulnerable adults and for yoga, for regular coffee mornings run by church members and attended by our neighbours, for occasional meetings run by civic organisations, for charitable fundraising and for birthday and baptism parties. Members of the congregation also meet regularly for coffee outside of church.

What we would like to do:

We would like to grow our congregation which, like many, is ageing, although we have had some younger parishioners join us. We want to continue being a centre for the surrounding community and to perhaps be able to open the church every day for quiet reflection – although we do facilitate this when asked by local people on an individual basis.

The challenges we face:

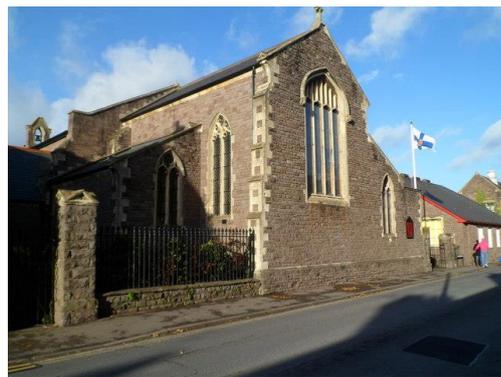
- Staying relevant in this secular society
- Continuing to encourage younger members of the congregation
- Being hidden away up a side street – even people living further down the street say they don't know where Christchurch is. We're getting over that through flyers and community events
- Continuing to look after our building, although it is in good shape



Holy Trinity Church, Baker Street

A Victorian church on Baker Street flanked by eight almshouses, the vicarage and church hall, Holy Trinity was founded by Rachel Herbert for the poor of Abergavenny. The services are described as charismatic catholic with a blend of a traditional Eucharist service with contemporary praise.

Website: www.holytrinityabergavenny.wales



Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 30

Pattern of Services: Eucharist Services Friday 10.15, Sunday 10.30, Christmas Day, plus occasional services such as World Prayer Day, Christian Aid Week etc.

No. on Electoral Roll: 33

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: 10 including Wardens' meeting every six weeks

Ministry Share: £14,263



What we are doing now:

We are a strong, supportive community of mature Christians, many of whom are born again in the Holy Spirit and are aware of the Spirit's presence during times of worship. Apart from the regular services, there are also prayer meetings for women and men during the week, Little Footprints (a baby and toddler group) *pictured*, Godly Play sessions, weekly community coffee mornings and monthly Sunday soup lunches. The hall is used regularly for both community and commercial purposes and there is a fully equipped Godly Play space in its upper room.

What we would like to do:

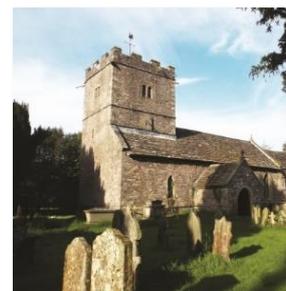
We would like to see deeper growth in our individual and collective spirituality as well as in numbers. We want to continue to show God's care within our community through being a generous, open and compassionate church and tell people about Jesus through action and words. Whilst seeing ourselves as part of a much wider Christian community in Abergavenny, both within a wider Anglican and ecumenical context, we also seek to maintain our particular identity. We are actively seeking a new minister who will work with us to further develop and achieve our vision.

The challenges we face:

As with most Church-in-Wales churches we have an aging congregation, many of which are the volunteers helping to run the church, we need to allow these people to retire and be replaced with new parishioners.

St Peter's, Llanwenarth Citra

St Peter's is a Grade 2* stone church just outside the town in the picturesque Usk valley. Built on an ancient site, it has historic importance as the parish church of Aberstruth, a huge parish which stretched as far as Abertillery to the south. Seating about 140, the building has a single nave and chancel. It has the only burial ground in the incumbency. There are two ancient Yew trees, one of which is thought to be over 1,750 years old. Although there are only three houses near the church, the church maintains a good-sized congregation. It is a popular venue for smaller weddings.



There is a village hall ¼ mile away which is part-owned by the church and is hired out and used for meetings. Occasionally, it has been used for services e.g. during the building project in 2018.

Website: <https://www.stpetersllanwenarth.org.uk>

Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 16

Pattern of Services: Sundays: 10:00 alternating Eucharist and Morning Prayer
Additionally, there have been Welsh services and a pets' service. We have also welcomed additional services of compline during Holy Week.

No. on Electoral Roll: 26

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: nine members meeting about six times a year

Ministry Share: £8,452

What we are doing now:

St Peter's is in the middle of a major restoration project. The first phase, completed in 2018, renewed the roofs of the nave and chancel. The total cost of the work was nearly £200,000. The money came mainly from grant funding [HLF] with local fundraising activities and events raising about £25,000. Support for the church came from a wide area and brought together people from the community who were not necessarily regular churchgoers.



The second phase, estimated at £260,000, will restore the tower and install an accessible WC and servery. This will be a 'game changer' and will open up the possibility of much wider use of the church; its excellent acoustic makes it a good concert venue. Our regular congregation is largely elderly, inclusive and friendly; we enjoy a simple form of worship. We have well-attended parish lunches in the Hall at Harvest and Christmas. We support the education of a child in an Orphanage in Uganda through links with a local charity.

What we would like to do:

We would like to complete the second phase of the restoration so that we can concentrate on expanding the Christian use of the building beyond one hour on Sunday. We have ideas to stage Arts Events to raise the profile of the church and to encourage more people to come in. We have opened the church every day from Easter to the end of October for several years. From the visitors' book we see that many people appreciate being able to enter and enjoy the tranquillity the church offers. With the addition of a toilet and servery area, we hope to extend hospitality so that walkers and visitors might use these facilities.

The challenges we face:

We have an ageing congregation and need to bring more people in. The maintenance of the churchyard is at present largely carried out by one person; this is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term. We are also improving the facilities in the hall with grant funding so that it can begin to generate income.

Christchurch, Govilon

Building of Christchurch began in 1848 and the Church was consecrated in 1860. In 1865 the Parish of Llanwenarth Ultra was created and Christchurch is part of this along with St Faith's in Llanfoist and St Helen's in Llanellen all of which is in the Deanery of Abergavenny. Christchurch is well maintained and there are no issues. The kitchen in the church enables us to share fellowship after services or functions.



Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 16

Pattern of Services: Sundays: 11:00 Holy Eucharist with Sunday School, Wednesdays: 10:00 Holy Eucharist

Previously the church offered Messy church on a monthly basis and this averaged 12 children and their families.

Evensong is held as a joint monthly service with St Faith's and St Helen's and rotates between the three churches; this is entirely Lay-led.

No. on Electoral Roll: 31

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: nine members meeting monthly

Ministry Share: £9,796 with no issues about payment!

What we are doing now:



Whilst we are a busy parish, as evidenced elsewhere in this profile, there is always the need to assess the effectiveness of the current provision and develop new ideas. In its current condition the church building is restricted with activities it can hold. There is the potential to alter the interior layout to make better use of the space for community use. Links with the local school and community groups is also an area of potential growth. Training is always appreciated, especially outreach, building Church for the future. Grants to

help with finance for the development of the church would be welcome.

What we would like to do:

We are seeking a prayerful, committed and compassionate priest and pastor who will enable us to grow spiritually and who will be keen to positively represent the Church in the wider community. We can offer our new priest the encouragement and support of a dedicated team that includes a Licenced Lay Minister

The challenges we face:

Christchurch needs to become a church for the 21st century and a warm welcome awaits the right person to lead our development and help build a church for the community and future generations.

St Faith's, Llanfoist

The Church of St Faith's is a Grade 2 listed building, with parts thought to date to the thirteenth century, situated at the edge of the village near the road to Govilon. The church was extensively rebuilt in the late 1800s by Crawshay Bailey and there is limited car parking for approximately six cars. There is a church hall some distance from the church, which was originally the Llanfoist reading room, erected in 1911 but completely refurbished in 2012.



The church is in reasonable order but will soon require more maintenance. The Quinquennial inspection identified numerous items of work amounting to approximately £50,000 but lack of funds has prevented all but emergency work being carried out. The churchyard at St Faith's is kept tidy by a paid grass cutter. It is full, except for a small area set aside for cremated remains. The churchyard contains the grave of Crawshay Bailey, the Ironmaster, which is a listed monument. There is an organ, but no organist, and new hymn books have recently been purchased; music is provided electronically by CD. There is a primary school in Llanfoist of approximately 100 children, which is well supported. The rector has attended some assemblies and the children have attended the church for special services, typically at Harvest and Christingle.

Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 11

Pattern of Services: Sundays: 09:30 Holy Eucharist
Evensong is held as a joint monthly service with Christchurch and St Helen's and rotates between the three churches.

No. on Electoral Roll: 19

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: Five members meeting quarterly

Ministry Share: £7,057 (no arrears)

What we are doing now:

Our congregation is mainly made up of elderly, retired people. Last year there were no baptisms, one funeral and no candidates for confirmation. The church magazine *The Channel* was produced until recently by the Govilon Lay Reader, with regular contributions from the three parishes in the group. Recently it was replaced by a weekly letter from the priest.

What we would like to do:

Ideally, the person who takes up the position of Rector needs to be able to communicate with all walks of life; able to make a three to five year plan of improvement and expansion and have the ability to motivate and communicate with young people. The new incumbent must help our Church to become a warm, vibrant, living family church, having the ability to motivate to form the foundation for the future.

The challenges we face:

Any plans for the future are held back by the elderly age profile. We are currently stagnating. Before Covid-19 there was a very successful bi-weekly coffee morning which reached out to, and was attended by, many non-church attendees; this was also a considerable source of income.

St Helen's, Llanellen

Largely rebuilt in the nineteenth century St Helen's church may date back to the thirteenth. It stands strongly in the centre of the community and features a most unusual small tower turret and spire mounted on the west gable end of the Nave.



The approximate number of residents in Llanellen is 500 and consists of a large majority of older residents. The Village has a large proportion of bungalows which tends to attract more people of this age group. The church, village hall and shop are sited in the village. We also have a well-kept playing field. We have no public house – we are on the perimeter of Llanover Estate, where the late Lady Llanover would have no drinking establishments.

Facts and Figures:

Average Sunday Attendance: 14

Pattern of Services: Sundays: 09:30 Holy Eucharist
Evensong is held as a joint monthly service with Christchurch and St Faith's and rotates between the three churches.

No. on Electoral Roll: 19

Size of PCC and frequency of meetings: 12 members meeting quarterly

Ministry Share: Approximately £11,000 in arrears

What we are doing now:

In 2019 there were two baptisms, one wedding and six funerals. A local team of clergy and some lay ministers lead our worship. Outside of that we enjoy a monthly coffee morning which is usually attended by between 40 and 50 people. Our 100 Raffle club generates about £1,000 each for church and churchyard after providing for prizes, but paying our way is a struggle. We are not meeting our obligation to pay the Parish Share in full.

What we would like to do:

- have more and younger people part of our life and undertake more fundraising
- have more grant support for care and improvement of our building
- be given concession for our unpaid share (currently about £11,000)

The challenges we face:

We are held back by our age profile (average age about 70), and not having been able to attract younger people.

Appendix 1 - Person specification

Spiritual Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person committed to prayer • Spiritually fed by the rhythms and nature of worship • Willing to consider the potential of working with a modern monastic community
Theology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadly-based theological and missiological sympathies • Theologically able and articulate • A confident and engaging teacher and preacher
Vision for Mission and Delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A passion for the gospel and for sharing the good news with others • An outward facing leader able to contribute to the emerging Diocesan vision • A strategic thinker with the capacity to develop a specific vision for the mission of the benefices of Abergavenny and Govilon • Experience of leading a church into growth, of growing congregational capacity and inspiring young people • A person who sees the potential in wider partnerships for the gospel and who will enjoy working within both in the ministry area and the wider diocese
Engagement in community and public issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the context of rural and urban communities with the desire to embrace the challenges and opportunities for mission and service • A relationship builder who has experience of building effective partnerships outside the Church • At ease in a culture that is largely secular and is openly sceptical about the value of the Christian faith
Formation of others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced in the formation of congregations in their community and Christian life and witness • An encourager of lay people in their Christian discipleship • A stimulating preacher who engages both Christians and non-Christians • A priest with wisdom and spiritual depth
Management of Resources and structures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the responsibilities of clergy in relation to both resources and legal requirements • Financially literate and with sufficient management experience to oversee and hold the accountability for the business and commercial life of St Mary's Priory
Leadership and working with others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team player, an instinctive partnership worker who enjoys both working as part of a team as well as being an effective team leader • Understands the challenges of the leadership responsibilities required of a team leader • Able to delegate where necessary in order to work efficiently and effectively
Safeguarding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of ensuring a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults • Satisfies the requirements of the Church in Wales's policies on safeguarding
Personal Qualities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diligent and dedicated to parish life • A sense of humour • A forward-looking, optimistic approach to life

