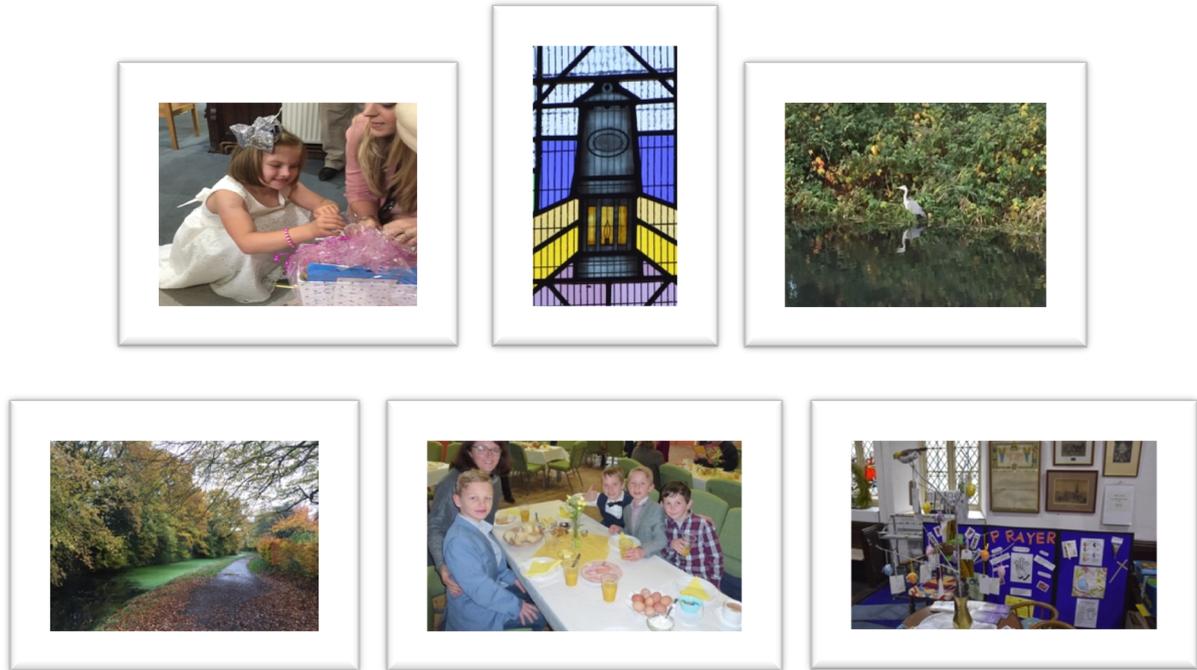


The Ministry Area



The Ministry Area of ISLWYN 2021

Ministry Area Mission Statement:

“Islwyn, a Love without Limit”

From the Archdeacon of the Gwent Valleys

The Venerable Sue Pinnington

Thank you for taking the time to look at this profile for the post of Team Vicar (Designate) in the newly formed Ministry Area of Islwyn. This benefice/Ministry Area offers an exciting opportunity to develop collaborative ministry and mission. The single benefice/parish is currently being established and the 12 churches are growing closer together, realising the benefits of sharing resources, skills and the desire to grow spiritually and numerically. They would like to extend their existing mission and are exploring employing a Youth Worker.

The Ministry Area is led by Fr Mark Owen and has an excellent team of Ordained and Lay ministers who are building an open, inclusive, well organised and collaborative team. Team working and good communication are the key elements of ministry within the Islwyn MA.

However, this post is not without its challenges. These are the same challenges faced by the whole of the Archdeaconry, which covers the eastern post-industrial valleys of South Wales. All our communities face issues relating to poverty and deprivation, but we work hard together to address and tackle these issues.

You will have the support of a Ministry Area Leader, an Area Dean and Clergy Chapter, alongside my full support. I hope you will consider prayerfully if you are being called to the new Islwyn MA. They are places of passion, beauty and poetry. The people are warm, welcoming and have a genuine desire to grow the Kingdom of God in their communities.

For an informal conversation or further information please contact me on 07741 661154 or archdeacon.gwentvalleys@cinw.org.uk

With my best wishes

Sue Pinnington

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Our Mission

“Working as a team, together we are seeking to share in God’s Mission and to make Jesus Christ a reality in the lives of everyone in our communities”



Our Ministry Area/Ministry Area

About us.....why join us?



"I stood aloft the mountain, clouds in reach my mortal hand.

Aloft I stood the mountain

Below laid a choired land

Below the rolling valley, the blackened soul of grass,

A place where all time stands

Held perfect in gentle clasp"

Charlie Hasler

Introduction

The developing Ministry Area of Islwyn will serve eleven churches in the South Wales Valleys from Risca in the South, to Pengam in the North. Our churches are a living and active presence in our communities, offering activities as varied as running a community Friendship Group and all-age services in Oakdale, to traditional church services such as Benediction and Exposition, Community Carol Services, open the book in schools and Occasional Offices throughout the area.

The churches increasingly join together for events and to share resources. The ministry team meet together to establish a vision for the area, to help one another out practically and to encourage one another.

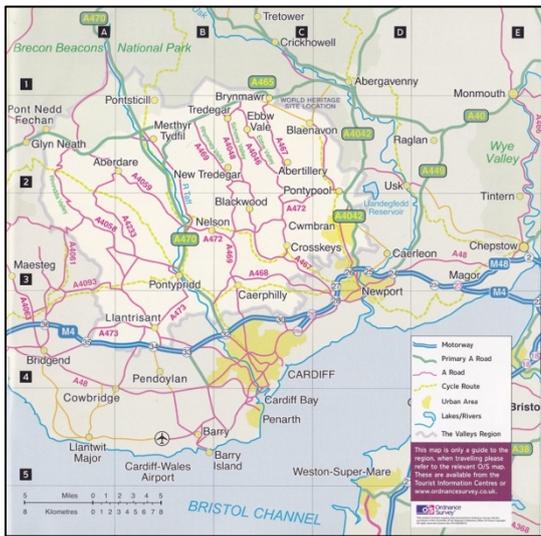
Our area is very accessible, with really good road and rail links, including a valley rail link connecting us easily with our capital city Cardiff.

Throughout the valley there are good hubs of resources including shops, G.P surgeries, dental surgeries and a good range of supermarkets.

The valleys have a vibrant range of sports activities-with rugby at its heart- but also active soccer, cycling, hockey, fitness clubs and pools in the two Leisure centres at Risca and Newbridge.

Past & Present

These valley communities have much in common. The main industry in the area was farming until the discovery of rich coal reserves which led to the population explosion at the beginning of the industrial revolution.



Small local authorities were established in Newbridge, Abercarn and Risca which were later merged into one unitary authority, Caerphilly Borough council. Nowadays all heavy industries have gone; and small light industries, commercial ventures and tourism are being promoted

The Benefice is becoming an important dormitory with access to major towns and cities in the M4 corridor. Links to the national rail network and frequent bus services support this notion.

The new Valley rail service was opened in 2008; greatly increasing transport links between the valley communities and Cardiff.

Today in the Benefice area, there is a mix of local authority and private housing. Much of the former local authority housing has been taken up by ‘the right to buy’.

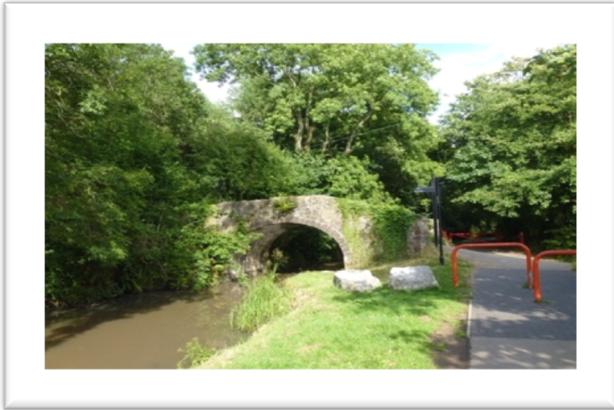
Our Churches and Communities

We seek to help people in our communities and ourselves to discover the ‘Bywyd i bobl, bywyd ar ei orau’ ‘Life for people, life at its best’ that Jesus offers in John chapter 10.

The Ministry Area also has good relationships with many of the local primary schools, hosting school visits, Christingles and involving them in a variety of activities.

The Ministry Area has a significant ministry in the community through the pastoral offices. There is potential to form a small team of pastoral visitors with a vision to strengthen our ministry to the community through the Occasional Offices and home visiting. There are several nursing homes in our Ministry Area of which members of the church lead a monthly midweek service. As a church we are rich in relationships within our communities and are filled with anticipation for where God is leading us beyond our church walls and how we join God in the work he is doing there.

With the changing organisation of the Diocese and Church in Wales we are seeking as a Ministry Area to develop a sustainable model of ministry by building a team of lay and ordained ministers with different and complementary gifts. This Ministry Area ministry team will be led by the MA Leader and supported by the pastoral and pioneer priests working together as a team to enable the flourishing of all God’s people in the local community.



The Mon & Brecon Canal Risca

Our worship together

The Ministry Area enjoys worshipping in both traditional and emerging patterns of worship and is committed to exploring ways of worship that are relevant and appropriate for people of all generations. Even so we recognise that our culture of worship is still far removed from the everyday experience of many in our local communities, and this is something that we would want to prayerfully consider as we move forward.



Schools & Community Links

There are 16 primary schools, and 3 comprehensive schools within the Ministry Area. Two of the primary schools, are Welsh medium schools. There are examples of the above schools attaining excellent reviews with ESTYN. One of the comprehensive schools has an integrated sixth form.

In addition, Coleg Gwent, Crosskeys Campus offers a wide curriculum at A level; as well as an abundance of vocational courses. A wide opportunity also exists for adult education; such as the courses offered at Oxford House in Risca.

There are medical centres and dental practices throughout the Ministry Area. Several hospitals are easily accessible in Newport, Ystrad Mynach and Cardiff.

There are a number of community libraries – some providing essential IT support and/or community group venues.

There are 2 thriving leisure centres – both with pools – which provide a valuable centre of activities for people of all ages.

Clergy and Licensed Ministers

The Ministry Team



Father Mark Owen is our Ministry Area Leader, and also our Area Dean. He has oversight of the 12 churches that make up the proposed Ministry Area of Islwyn.

The Ministry Area is currently supported by;

non-stipendiary ministers house for duties

Revd. Jane Butler halftime Team Vicar

Rev Nick Adams Priest Pioneer half time stipendiary

Rev Lisa Taylor stipendiary Priest Curate

Non-stipendiary Priest Curate Rev Heulwen Rees

non-stipendiary ministers house for duties

Revd. Trevor Morgan

Revd. Stephen Smith House.

2 Readers, several retired clerics and a strong group of Lay Eucharistic Ministers.

All clerics work throughout the benefice.



Churches

Our Churches and Communities

- in the North (Blackwood with Fleur-de-Lis Cefn Fforest).

The Islwyn Ministry Area spans the populations of Blackwood, Cefn Fforest and Fleur-de-Lis (with the adjacent community of Pengam) and has churches in each of those communities.



St. David's, Fleur-de-Lis



St. Thomas's, Cefn Fforest



St. Margaret's, Blackwood

St. Margaret's serves the town and Ministry Area of Blackwood (the biggest town in the Ministry Area, population: 8,500). A group for adults and pre-school children runs at St Margaret's church. 'Little and Large' aims to offer something to adults as well as their children (and grandchildren) who might otherwise feel isolated at home. Adults and children can take part in crafts, play, singing and conversation.



'Little and Large' group

There are strong links with the local Methodist church and an active social life which includes cheese and wine parties, Christmas bazaars and a Summer fete. The hall is well-used by Mother's Union, Brownies, a club for older people and a community choir amongst others.

St David's and St Thomas's make up the Ministry Area of Fleur-de-Lis. They both have thriving community activities. St David's hosts a dementia café run by the Alzheimer's Society with volunteers from church, Mother's Union, art groups and a local history group amongst other activities. The church holds a 'light up a life' service annually which is very well supported. St Thomas's has craft clubs which also offer friendship and a listening ear to its members. A Reader led a Lent Course, *Christian Faith in Encounter with other faiths (Churches Together)* and she often leads services in the church.

Our Churches and Communities – in the center (Oakdale, Pontllanfraith, Mynyddislwyn, Ynysyddu)

This area takes its name from Mynyddislwyn, a mountain community with the ancient church of St Tudor. A Sunday Eucharist is held once a month (with a congregation of about 30 people) with a midweek Eucharist on Tuesday evenings through the Summer months. St Tudor's hosts an annual Heritage Day, an annual service of animal blessing and a community carol service attended by up to 300 people. The church is also used from time to time for community events such as concerts and for the Occasional Offices.



Ynysyddu was originally developed as a community around a colliery. The church of St Theodore has strong links with the village communities, and particularly with the schools in both Ynysyddu and the neighbouring community of Cwmfelinfach. The schools celebrate Christmas, Easter and harvest in church, supported by members of the congregation. There are positive relations between the church and chapels in the area. There is a weekly Sunday Eucharist in church (with a congregation averaging 18), a small group meet to say evening prayer together on Sundays and there is a midweek communion service. St Theodore's recently hosted an Emmaus nurture group for the MA.



Our biggest church community, St Augustine’s, is in Pontllanfraith which has a Sunday congregation for the Eucharist of about 60. There is also a sung evensong and midweek communion service (often taken by a Reader). St Augustine’s has a choir which sings for special occasions including choral services for the major festivals. There is a good connection with local primary schools and with a young people’s musical and drama group which holds events in the church. The church has an adjacent hall and car park, which makes it a popular venue for community groups to hire and for joint services within the MA and Deanery.



Oakdale, like Ynysddu, was built to service a colliery. It has a village structure built around a square with a library, medical Centre and a few local shops. The village has been significantly expanded with new housing.



The church building is 60 years old and has an average Sunday congregation of 24 and a midweek communion service. From time to time the church holds all-age services which increase the congregation to 50-80 people. The church has strong links with the two local primary schools (one English medium, one Welsh medium), with the curate currently being part of both Governing Bodies. The Welsh medium school comes into church each Christmas and both schools have been involved in all-age services. Both schools also invite clergy into assemblies.

Easter Assembly

Members of the congregation run a thriving toddler group each week in an attached hall. St David's Guides meet their weekly and enjoys warm relationships with the church. The hall is also hired by various community groups. The modern, three-bedroomed vicarage is opposite the church, a short walk from the village Centre, with two good primary schools (English and Welsh) and a new comprehensive school all available locally. Lay Eucharistic Ministers, together with members of the congregation and clergy support, offer a monthly communion service in a local residential home which provides care for people with dementia. A women's fellowship group meets regularly and is the hub of activities which act both to raise funds and build community. This includes a recent fashion show (photo right).



Oakdale has a strong sense of community and considerable potential for outward-looking mission and finding new ways of being church together. There are a number of people within the congregation who are willing and able to develop all-age provision, to lead worship and to try new things. We have a vision to reach out to the wider community and to develop different ways of making relationships and of worship that meet the needs of today's varied community. Prior to lock down and Covid 19 a group of lay members support by a Priest s started Café Church which sadly has been put on hold due to restrictions.



We enjoy one another's company, have a group of committed people – and hope that you will join us.

St. Mary the Virgin is the Church for Risca



St Mary's Church was built in 1853 in the gothic style. St Mary's is erected on the site of a medieval church dedicated to St Michael. The average congregation on a Sunday is 30-35. There is a regular small Sunday school; age range 5-15. There is an active core of workers who are beginning to look at mission outside in our local community. The building is in good condition and our church finances are 'healthy'.

We provide 'coffee & cake' on the first Sunday of each month to extend fellowship, and at Harvest and Easter we provide a 'Parish Breakfast' in the church hall, which is well received and supported.

To extend our connection with families at Baptism, we started to give 'Baptism Baskets' to each child, and this has been very successful - we look forward to exploring other ideas of widening this connection with families after Baptism.

The church has plans to install a toilet and basic kitchen in the church building - these are at present in the hands of the architect.

For the past 2 years we have taken part in the **CADW scheme of "Open Doors"** – this has been well received and resulted in many visitors to look at church records, look at the features of the church, view the new 'Miners window' and chat with local people over a cup of tea & coffee



It was exciting to see people coming to the church to look at local records, tracing family histories, and visiting to see the new Miner's Window.

While enjoying refreshments and chatting about the church, some visitors asked about service times.



Our Church hall is well maintained and used very regularly by a variety of local groups- this brings in a very useful income. We see possible outreach opportunities with some of these groups.

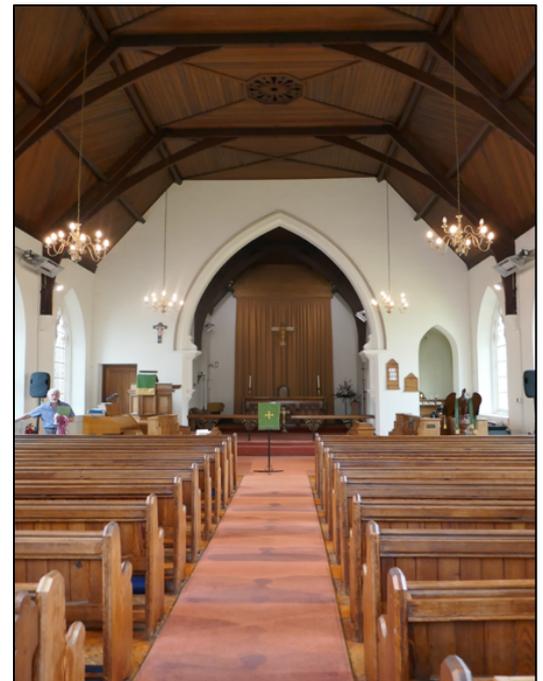
We desire to employ a Youth Worker in the future, connections with young people in our church can be developed, and we are looking forward to reaching out with new mission opportunities.

St Margaret of Antioch serves the Pontymister area.



St. Margaret's is also built in the gothic style and was dedicated in 1911. There is a Eucharist service on a Wednesday morning, with an average congregation 18-20 (followed by coffee in the hall). During Lent, Lenten Lunches are provided on a Wednesday in the church hall every week.

The church hall is next to the church and is used by local groups including Guides and Brownies.



St Luke's Abercarn



Constructed as an Anglican church, the building was given by Sir Benjamin Hall and his wife Lady Augusta (Lady Llanover) to serve the needs of the Welsh speaking Anglicans in 1853. About 10 years later, this church was given to the Presbyterian Church in Wales when the then vicar asked for permission to hold one service a month in English. Weekly Services have been held by The Church in Wales for the past forty years, on a shared basis with the Welsh Presbyterians when the original St Luke's fell into disrepair. A lease was negotiated in 2013 with the Presbyterian Church (at a peppercorn rent) and has six years to run. The Church is in regular use for Services, Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals. There is at present a small but faithful congregation.

We have many connections with our local community. There is a monthly service in the local residential complex, and there are links with the local Scout/Cub group. The LEM is chaplain to the local branch of the British Legion. A café in our local library was set up and is still supported by members of our church. We have also begun to develop links with the local Welsh Medium School.

These links are greatly valued in our local community.



St Paul's Newbridge



St Paul's Church Newbridge was consecrated on 23rd May 1929; replacing the original tin church situated in church road.

The present church is built in the style of a 14th century building and built of local stone. The impressive east window and Reredos were donated by L.T Edwards Esquire in February 1960. Mr Edwards was High Sheriff of Brecon 1957.

St Paul's has a steady congregation, who welcome newcomers to their church. They have begun to meet for tea and coffee after Sunday Eucharist once a month. The congregation is actively involved in donating contributions to the local food bank. There are strong links with the local British Legion, with the present priest being their Chaplain. Local schools visit the church regularly for concerts and educational visits; and are visited by the priest to take school assemblies. A local residential complex is visited monthly.

The church hall is next to the church and is used by a local group for their meetings and occasionally for local musical events.

St Peter's Church Pantside Newbridge



St Peter's Church Pantside, Newbridge is currently only used for services for some festivals in the church's year. It is primarily used as a community hall.

This year we are launching a new Pioneer project in the Pantside area, supported by a 0.5 FTE stipendiary priest. We hope to develop a new worshipping community at St Peters.

Cwmcarn

The church in Cwmcarn was closed in 2017, but ministry and mission have not stopped! In 2019, we launched Christmas/Christingle in the local pub, which has now grown to include a service on Easter Day. A new bi-weekly Church, Chat and Coffee session, "Faith Cake" in the pub, will launch in 2021. There continue to be strong connects with the local community centring on events such as Remembrance Sunday.

There is also an active ministry in the local primary school with weekly visits and assemblies.

	Sunday Average
St Mary's Risca	34
St Luke's Abercarn	20
St Pauls Newbridge	38
St Margaret (Wed)	18/20
St David's Fleur-de-Lis	25
St Thomas Cefn Fforest	20
St Margaret's Blackwood	18
St David's Oakdale	25
St Augustine Pontllanfraith	55
St Tudor Mynyddislwyn (Once a month)	34
St Theodore's Ynysyddu	18

The Vicarage at Risca



The Vicarage at Risca is a large 4 bedroomed house in a desirable area of the town. It is within easy walking distance of a local primary school and the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal. There are 3 very good-sized reception rooms, and a kitchen with utility room. There is also a ground floor cloakroom.

There are 4 bedrooms with a family bathroom. There is gas central heating.

There is an enclosed garden at the rear of the property. The front of the house enjoys panoramic views.

Risca has a good range of local shops and supermarkets within easy reach. There are good transport links from Risca to Newport & Cardiff by local bus services and Valley link trains to Cardiff (station in Risca)

There is a local Leisure centre in Risca, adjoining Risca Comprehensive School, with swimming pool and outdoor all-weather courts.



Risca Park

Services

St Paul's Newbridge

Sunday Eucharist 10 am (followed on 1st Sunday of month by coffee & cakes)

Thursday Eucharist 10am

St Luke's

Sunday Eucharist 10 (followed alternate Sundays with tea & biscuits)

St Mary's

Sunday Eucharist 10 am (followed on 1st Sunday of month by coffee & cakes)

St Margaret's

Wednesday Eucharist 10am (followed by tea & biscuits)

St David's Fleur-de-Lis

Sunday Eucharist 11am

Wednesday Eucharist 10.30am

St Thomas Cefn Fforest

Sunday Eucharist 11am

St Margaret's Blackwood

Sunday Eucharist 9.30am

Wednesday Eucharist 10am

St David's Oakdale

Sunday Eucharist 9.30am

Wednesday Eucharist 10am

St Tudors Mynyddislwyn

Sunday Eucharist 1st Sunday of the month 11am

Tuesday Eucharist through the summer only 7pm

St Augustine's Pontllanfraith

Sunday Eucharist 11am

Sunday Evening Evensong 4pm

Thursday Eucharist 10am

St Theodores Ynysyddu

Sunday Eucharist 9.30am

Sunday Evening Said Evening Prayer 4pm

Thursday Eucharist 10am

New Beginnings

The Diocese of Monmouth is developing 16 Ministry Areas throughout the Diocese. Each Ministry Area will be a single Benefice and Parish, with a Ministry Area Council to which all the Churches send representatives. The MA will have united finances and be served by one MA Ministry Team of ordained and Lay people.



Going Forward



Ministry & Worship.

We would like to explore new opportunities to develop our worship; to make it accessible, inclusive and vibrant. We recognise that we need to change in order to encourage the community to become more involved in the worshipping life of our churches.

All our main worship is Eucharistic using the 2004 Service Book. We would describe ourselves as “high side of middle” with vestments being worn at all services.

We enjoy other styles of worship, including Healing and Taize; and are keen to be guided in developing other areas of worship.

Mission Outreach & Engagement

We believe that God wants to do incredible things in our Valley, and we want to join in with His Mission.

We would like to develop a new **Mission Action Plan** which will develop our current work with schools, local nursing homes, Food Banks and community groups; as well as engaging in new opportunities for outreach. The whole Ministry Area congregation is being encouraged to identify their gifts and to use them to serve God, the churches and the local communities.

Education Youth & Children

Schools

We value greatly our ministry in schools and want to grow this by encouraging further engagement by Lay members and our new Youth Worker.

We look forward to this area of ministry flourishing.

Baptism



We have a “**Baptism Basket**” scheme running successfully in Risca, which has proved to be very popular. This has started to be introduced to other parts of the Ministry Area.

We see baptism as a key area to grow our ministry with young families.

Sunday School

We have a small committed Sunday School at St Mary's Risca, but we would like more members.

We were very proud of our special family of teenage boys from Sunday School, who had the idea of helping others in our community. They had seen homeless people in Newport town centre and suggested making 'Treat boxes' for them. We shared their idea with our congregation who supported them by donating items for the boxes. They filled the boxes with treats and a prayer; and distributed them, with their mum, in Newport town centre. This idea expanded to donating items for Christmas to a Homeless centre in Abergavenny.



Uniformed Organisations

We have always had good links with the Guides and Brownies in Risca and the Cubs and Scouts in Abercarn, but there are *many* children's organisations in our area, and real possibilities to expand this ministry. We also have good links with Guides and Brownies in Cefn Fforest, Blackwood and Oakdale.

How we Work



We are committed to working as a team of Clergy and Laity together.

We recognise that only by working together can we share the gospel and grow the church.

Developing, supporting and encouraging this teamwork is a priority for us.

We are open to new ways of working as a team, making the transformational love of God known in our communities.

Our Vision



Working as a team, together we are seeking to share in God's Mission and to make Jesus Christ a reality in the lives of everyone in our communities

Our New Team Vicar

POST OF TEAM VICAR

We are walking in faith, through challenging times during the creation of the Ministry Area and are ready to welcome a new priest; who is committed to working as part of a team; as we seek to proclaim the Gospel and serve our communities. We feel we are ready to embrace a new chapter in the life of the churches in our area and would like a priest who can to lead us in a journey of spiritual, missional and numerical growth.

We are open to all applicants, regardless of gender or marital status, but are eager to recruit someone with a strong faith and a heart for mission and community. We are open to applicants from Wales, the rest of the UK, or from further afield.

We recognise that the church exists as much for the people who do not come every Sunday as for those who do, and so we would like actively to explore new ways of connecting with our communities.

We want to increase our presence in the lives and communities we serve and would encourage people of all ages to join in our services and activities. We want to live out a Love without Limit.

We would like to continue to expand and develop our ministry to schools, families and young people.

We are excited about the further development of a Ministry Area and are fully committed to growing our relationships, working together and discovering new gifts.

Additional Information

- The post holder is accountable to the Ministry Area Leader and serves as a member of the local ministry team in the Benefice
- S/he will receive a full stipend and be part of the Church in Wales non-contributory pension scheme
- Accommodation will be provided
- Agreed full expenses will be paid
- A disclosure and barring service (DBS) check is required

Experience

- An appreciation of Ministry Area ministry and community relations, and the ability to develop the church's role and forge links within the community
- Engagement with and pastoral support for people of all ages

Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

- Excellent interpersonal skills including the ability to build relationships with church members and community groups, as well as figure within the wider Church
- Someone who believes in the importance of teamwork and collaborative ministry, including the ability to motivate, inspire and effectively co-ordinate volunteers, colleagues and community partners.
- The ability to forge, maintain and develop good relationships with schools, young people and their families within the Ministry Area
- Ability to think strategically, turning ideas and possibilities into clear and implementable plans

- The ability to inspire, encourage and equip church members to assist with the running of the Ministry Area and to take ownership of Ministry Area activities and initiatives
- The ability to draw the best from a range of worship traditions, and preach in a variety of styles to a broad range of listeners
- Good organisational skills
- Excellent communication skills, including ICT literacy
- A full U.K. Driving Licence

General Attributes

- The vision to drive and facilitate change
- Enthusiastic about inclusivity, equality and diversity
- High emotional intelligence and resilience
- Willingness to be flexible in working practices, e.g. hours of work
- Enthusiasm and energy to be fully involved in Ministry Area activities

One personal quality we really hope you have is a sense of humour.

We can't wait to share a laugh with you and see you build a relationship with each and every one of us. We believe it all starts with a cup of tea and a piece of cake. We are sure there will be disagreements and fall outs along the way, as well as many joyous occasions, but we are loyal, committed and loving congregations, who will walk alongside you through it all.

Our Valleys hospitality is some of the best and we assure you of a Warm Welcome

