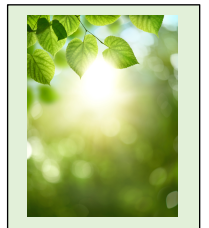


The Priory Church of St Mary

Keep in Touch
May and June 2023



Ascension

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place
As earth became a part of Heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not parted
He took us with him to the heart of things
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness
And sing the waning darkness into light,
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed.

Malcolm Guite

(With thanks to Rev'd Canon Stephen James who shared this during our Ascension Day Healing and Wholeness Service)

BECOMING BETTER STEWARDS OF GOD'S CREATION

Welcome to our combined May and June edition of Keep in Touch. We are exploring what we can do as a church to continue to build an ECO church.

Genesis 2:15

God took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order.

Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, Founded on the covenant of your love.

Leviticus 26: 3-5

"If you live by my decrees and obediently keep my commandments, I will send the rains in their seasons, the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit. You will thresh until the grapes harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting time; you'll have more than enough to eat and will live safe and secure in your land.

God of life,
we praise you for the beauty of creation,
its richness and variety;
yet, through greed and ignorance,
we scar your world with plastic waste
and throw so much away.
Make us more like Jesus,
treading gently on our common home,
and breathe your Spirit on us,
that we may care more deeply for your Earth.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Rt Revd Graham Usher
Bishop of Norwich

Find out more

<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/our-campaigns/environment/>

YR EGLWYS
YNG NGHYMRU



THE CHURCH
IN WALES

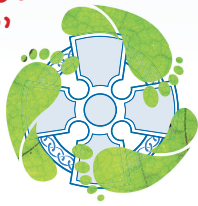
Towards net zero: Where to start?

By making a commitment to reach net zero carbon by 2030, the Church in Wales has set a bold and ambitious target. Navigating a pathway towards that target may seem daunting but as with all major endeavours, it becomes easier to realise when you break it down into smaller steps. Start with quick wins and build up to bigger and more ambitious initiatives. Bring people with you and show them the tangible gains to be realised along the way. Above all, drive action and always aim to show that net zero targets are about real-world changes, not just well-meaning rhetoric.

The following ten points, give you some pointers on where to start but don't take these suggestions as definitive. Be creative. Be vocal. Drive innovation and be the catalyst for change in your community and beyond.

We are facing a climate emergency and the Church in Wales wants to be at the forefront of change. Everything we do should be guided by the principle that:

*"Actions speak louder
than words"*



ECO Church

The team in St Mary's are committed to continuing to grow as an ECO church and successfully gained a bronze award in 2020. We are now working towards the silver award and need your help!

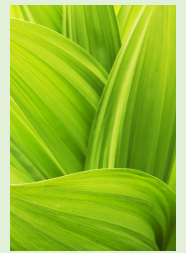
There is a lot of work to do to achieve this award and will need to include five key areas:

- Worship and teaching
- Management of church buildings
- Management of church land
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

You are welcome to join a small team led by Carol Southwell who will be guiding us and leading the work with the wider Usk community and the church community.

Volunteers to help will be welcome to help with practical projects to encourage greater awareness and to make a difference. Find out more about ECO church:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>



BECOMING BETTER STEWARDS OF GOD'S CREATION

Extracts from Monmouth news Posted: 22 April 2021

The Church in Wales recently declared a climate emergency – agreeing to have net zero carbon emissions, ideally by 2030, and to divest funds from fossil fuels.

Bishop Cherry Vann, said: "The Governing Body overwhelmingly passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency, calling on the Church in Wales to draw up an action plan to reach a net zero carbon emission position as soon as possible."

"The question for us is, what are we going to do as a diocese to play our part in saving our planet – God's creation and gift to us? There are many small and simple steps that we can take as individuals, congregations, and at Ministry Area and Diocesan level to help reverse the trends. Churches can aim to become an Eco Church. Working towards an Eco Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold) would be a wonderful way of bringing churches in each of the Ministry Areas together. What an achievement it would be if by the year 2024, we could become an Eco Diocese!"

"This is our chance to show our communities that this is an issue we will join with them to tackle, and our chance to work with and to give the younger generation a voice as we show them that we take their concerns seriously. It is a concern that affects us all."

Building awareness is important and the children in family church have been learning about the environment and what they can do to help. Take time to look at their work on the children's altar in church.



God of all creation,
 open our eyes and hearts
 to the wonder and beauty of creation;
 the changing colours of each season,
 the ancient woodlands and fragile
 flowers,
 the mountain streams and ocean depths,
 and all that grows and lives,
 ensuring our world is renewed and
 sustained.
 Reveal to us our part in the care of
 creation,
 so all can find healing and peace within it,



Churches Count on Nature is 3rd to 11th June – this is a joint initiative that includes the Church in Wales.

You can help – just make a note **what wildlife** you have seen in the church yard and **when** you saw it. A simple form is attached to use or just send an email to Carol Southwell.

For the love of a brother

Somewhere I have always wanted to visit is Byford's Forest in Belgrade, Serbia named in memory of my late elder brother Tim.* On Christmas Day 2022, during exchange of gifts, my nephew Edward, son of my late younger brother Simon, announced he was going to take me there - and so last week Edward, his mum Vicky and I embarked on what for me was a very special journey – steeped in precious memories and family love. Sarah Byford



** Timothy John Byford, television director, author and educator, who lived in Serbia since 1971, studied birds in Belgrade's Banjica Forest from 1986 to 1989 and collected data on all 68 species. He began an initiative to protect the forest but died in 2014, before the forest was placed under protection. In 2015 The Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and the Belgrade City Secretariat for Environmental Protection, declared the forest a natural monument and the name was changed to Byford's Forest.*

St Mary's in the Community



Team St Mary

Please help us to continue our work in the community – everyone can be involved.

Share our work with the new poster on page 6.

Contact Reverend Sally or one of our local church wardens: Carol Southwell or Sarah Byford

Celebrating the Coronation

On 7th May The Priory Church of St Mary joined the rest of Usk's community in Bridge Street celebrating the Coronations of King Charles and his Queen Consort in style and with great enthusiasm. Willing volunteers from the church provided a free crown making workshop for children - this proved extremely popular and by 3.00 p.m. 100 crowns had been decorated, assembled and worn with pride by participants, some of whom modelled their crowns in the Fancy dress competition!



And the celebrations continued.

At 6.00 p.m. a crowd of over 200 people flocked into St Mary's for a joyful service of Celebration and Thanksgiving, which was a truly ecumenical and community focussed event. Following a warm welcome by Rev'd Sally, St Mary's Choir and Monmouthshire Community Choir, accompanied by organ and trumpet, joined forces to lead the congregation in a magnificent rendering of Vaughan Williams setting of 'The Old Hundredth' (All People That on Earth Do Dwell), originally arranged for the Coronation of the late Queen Elizabeth II. This was followed by joyous congregational hymn singing, with readings and prayers delivered by representatives from all three Usk churches, the Prison, and the Town Council. St Mary's Choir sang two songs fit for a King and the congregation joined in enthusiastically with the Community Choir's bilingual Welsh Medley.

The service concluded with closing prayers offered by Father Bernard, the two National Anthems and a retiring collection which raised an amazing £584 is to be shared between the church and the Usk Food Kitchen. A big thank you to all who participated in the service and to everyone who donated so generously.

Strawberry Tea
Keep the date
Saturday 8th July –
tickets available
June.



Adam of Usk (1377-1421)– members of the history group enjoyed the launch of a new book when they joined author Malcolm Johnston and Usk Castle Friends in church to learn more about Adam and his chronicles. Interested to hear more? Contact Carol, Sarah or Debbie.



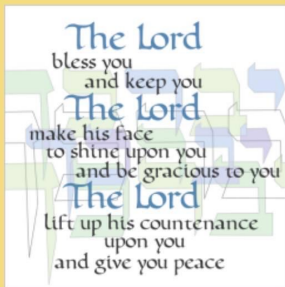
Usk Civic Service
will be held in
church on 4th
June.



Don't forget Just 5 minutes Mondays and Thursday on Facebook.



Thursday 27th April
Just Five Minutes



Churches Unlocked

it is just one week until the Churches Unlocked festival begins. The website is here - <https://www.churchesunlocked.org/>
Many churches are included, along with four of the churches in our Ministry Area - Mamhilad, Bettws Newydd, Llanover, and Llangybi.



Tuesday and Thursday Lunch Sessions are becoming busier at our Hot Food Kitchen in Usk.
If you have time to help, at least once a month please call.
No Experience Needed
Tel Gloria 07429 023559

Churches Count Nature on is 3rd to 11th June 2023

What wildlife have you seen and when?

What did you see?	What was the date?

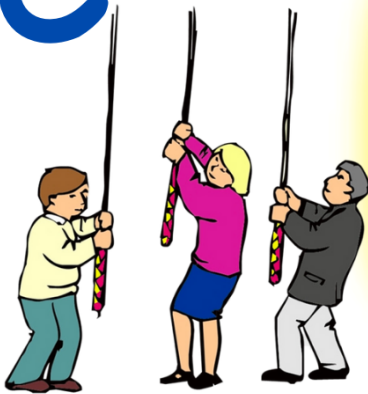


Email results to Carol or leave near the children's altar for collection:
cprsouthwell@gmail.com



Celebrating St. Mary's

so much more than Sundays



bell ringing



Baby and Toddler Group



family church



ladies group



ladies choir

activities with local Ukranian families



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t
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r
y

g
r
o
u
p

contact Rev.Sally if you would like to join in.
revdsally@gmail.com 07813 264429