

KEEP IN TOUCH



## The Priory Church of St Mary

Keep in Touch

October 2024

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**Team  
St. Mary**

Going forward 'Keep in Touch' will be published four times a year.

It will replace the Team St Mary formal minutes and will be an opportunity to share news and views with the whole congregation.

We will also continue to share prayers and readings that may be of interest with you.

### **A Prayer for Harvest**

God of love, we give you thanks for harvest and for all your gifts in creation; for our world and the heavens, which tell of your glory, for our land, it's beauty and its resources. We give praise that once again your promise has been fulfilled and that seed-time and harvest have not ceased. We give thanks for the fruits of the earth in their seasons, and for all those who work on land and sea, in the city and in industry to bring us our daily food. We pray for ourselves – in our throw away society may we show greater care for your gifts. **Amen**

Lord God, we celebrate your goodness and give thanks for your care. For the food that we eat and for those who have prepared it, For the land that has grown it, and for those who have farmed it, For this county of ours full of bounty and beauty. For all of your gifts We give you our thanks. **Amen.**

### **Genesis 8:22:**

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease"

### **Matthew 9:37-38**

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."



# What's happening in church?



## Building Report

The updated lighting was installed and completed on time. Thank you to John Harris for all his work and your patience whilst the church was closed. The lights look fantastic and are ECO friendly!

The carpet has just been installed in the coffee area – a welcome addition to a social area where we meet old and new friends.

No more work planned this year but lots of discussions about our next project that may include moving the kitchen and updating the heating system.

**ECO Group** - Thank you to Carol Southwell for arranging the talk by a Rocha church representative at the MA service in September – really interesting and quite concerning when the statistics are presented.

We are working towards the Gold Standard and hope to achieve this level by the end of January.

The lighting project has been our greatest achievement in the building and photos will be shared across the MA.

Please contact Carol Southwell if this is an area you are interested in supporting this important work.

## Treasurer's Report (Summary)

Overall income for the 9 months to date this year is slightly up on 2023 and is on target to meet our budgeted income.

Gift Aid recovery this year (for 2023 income) is also up on the previous year. Thanks to Dee for all her work in recording all the GA envelopes received. We need to encourage more efficient ways of giving such Gift Direct (preferred) or bank standing orders. This would greatly simplify Gift Aid recovery.

The MA has purchased several contactless card readers for use by the clergy at major services. So be prepared to come with your cards!

## Expenditure

Two major expenditures recently. The lighting system and the carpeting. These have been funded from our investment fund, St Marys fund (maintenance) and specific donations.

We are entering the colder weather, so we need to seriously consider our use of heating. There have been two letters in the "Times" recently. One from a COE church where the gas boiler needs replacing and the faculty has been refused on the basis that gas is not Eco-friendly and they need to seek an alternative. The second saying that churches need to warm the people not the building.

To date (1/10/24) this year we have spent £4387 on gas which assuming an average congregation of 40 is about £110 per person. Plenty to think about there.

Please contact David Lee, our treasurer if you have any questions.

Altar Guild – led by Betty Lewis the team play an important role in running the church. Are you interested in helping? – we are looking for people to be added to the rota to arrange flowers and wash the Altar linen in 2025 – contact Betty or Sarah Byford if you can help next year.

## What's happening in church?

### Music (Summary)

The choir have been very busy this year with many special services. We have expanded our repertoire over the last few months which has kept Judith busy arranging and recording the accompaniments. The choir has also enjoyed collaborating with ladies from Raglan to boost our ranks for these special services. David Carr continues to play the organ on the third Sunday each month.

On other Sundays we rely on recorded playlists which have been enhanced by our new sound system. This plan has now been in place for an amazing three years and works well.

### Concerts

St Mary's has already held two music events this month and there are more on the calendar. This can be a great fund raiser for the church and to be encouraged, however, we do need more volunteers to help open/ lock church, and we will be producing guidance notes for event organisers.

### Sound Desk

We still need volunteers please! It really is not difficult, and it would be most helpful to be able to expand the rota of volunteers.

**Please contact Judith Lee if you can volunteer to help with sound desk, events or as a DJ.**

Caroline Coggan leads the team decorating the church and porches. Special mention to the work completed in record time by the decorators and cleaners to be ready for our Harvest Service.



**NOW@St.Mary's – meeting monthly in church!** This month the families celebrated harvest with puppets, prayer trees from Lego and leaf rubbing.



### **History Group**

The group continue to research the social history around the church. Plans are unfolding to share the research and collect more information with the community.

**Interested? Or do you have information about the church community? Please contact Debbie for information.**

### **Book Club**

Watch this space – a new book club will be starting in November.

In church and early evening at 5:30pm – everyone will be welcome.

See David Wilmott or Caroline Coggan for details.

### **Farewell**

This month we have said a sad farewell to Dave Prosser who was a member of the church for over 50 years.

Over 250 people attended the Service of Thanksgiving in the church that Dave loved.

Goodnight and God Bless

Watch this space:

- The team are looking at more opportunities to hold services outside and explore new ways to worship - ideas welcome.
- The team are exploring opportunities for a Parish or MA retreat

# What's happening in our community?

## Little Hill Growing Group

Little Hill Growing Group has been going well. We are at the end of our second major growing season and have had lots of successes with our planting, although a lot of produce was slow to get going due to the cold wet spring. We have our regular core members who attend every week and several other members who attend if/when they can.

Every week I ask a selected group of people involved in our community, including Sally, to suggest the names of those who might benefit from a Gift Bag. The system seems to work very well.

Alongside the produce in the Gift Bags, we include some group information with our email address and details of our Facebook page, which enables recipients to find out more about the group and message us, should they wish to. The messages that we receive are wonderful and a great boost to our members.

I am posting regularly onto our LHGG Facebook page so that anyone who is curious or interested can look at it and see what we are doing.



Social Group led by Dee Seabourne continue to organise a great opportunity to get together -The Harvest Lunch was a great success with over 40 people joining together to celebrate.

A few of our volunteers after the lunch.



## Open the Book

New book, new song and Makaton all for a new school year!

Special welcome to Steve O'Brien who has joined our group of volunteers.



# What's happening in our community?

## October 2024

### Toddler Group

We have now been back in session for three weeks and have already welcomed 4 new families. We have also gained two more volunteers! Fabulous!

The Bishop visited during her trip around the MA and seemed to enjoy chatting to the families

We have applied again for a grant from the Roger Edwards Educational trust to purchase more equipment for the group. We will know in November whether or not our application has been successful.

We should also like to thank HOMMA for a generous donation from their Mission Fund which has paid a month's rent at The Grange. We rely on 15 families attending in order to cover our week's rent of £30. Refreshments for both children and adults are donated so the rent is our largest outgoing. The gift from HOMMA has enabled us not to have to increase the £2 charge .



### **Support for Ukrainian Refugees**

Support continues as we work with the Chernobyl Children's charity. We supported three trips in the summer and a Christmas party is planned on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025. Volunteers will be welcomed – please contact Debbie

Ladies Group – continue to meet monthly and support many of the social events and services in church. All are welcome to join this social afternoon. Contact Carol Southwell or Heather Evans for details

### **Raven House Trust**

We will continue to collect food at special times of the year, and this was particularly successful at Harvest and we will be collecting in early December for the Trust and the Usk Food Kitchen.

### **Usk Food Pantry**

Discussions have commenced with partners in Usk to locate a Food Pantry in church – all in the team were in agreement.

### **Details to follow**

### **Ministry Area**

MA walk was a success as we forest bathed during a sunny autumn day!



### **Leading your Church into Growth**

The successful series of workshops has come to an end. But all are committed to talking forward with a special service on 24<sup>th</sup> November and local planning meeting in St. Marys in January.

More details of the MA activities can be found on the draft minutes on the noticeboard.

**Film Location** - The church has been registered as a possible location for films and tv. This is a great opportunity to share our beautiful church and raise funds.

### **Used Stamps**

To support the RNIB who collect used stamps please save your stamps and place in the collection box in the coffee area.

## November Events

**2<sup>nd</sup> November:** All souls Service starts at 4pm in church

**9<sup>th</sup> November:** Big Breakfast in Memorial Hall starts at 8am

**10<sup>th</sup> November:** Remembrance Sunday starts at 10am in church  
Followed by service at memorial at 10:40am

**24<sup>th</sup> November:** **Leading your Church into Growth Service at Usk School**

**30<sup>th</sup> November:** Usk Town events in Bridge Street will include:  
Carol singing and Children's workshop

## December Events

**4<sup>th</sup> December:** Dementia Service in church at 2pm

**7<sup>th</sup> December:** MA walk at Llandenny (details to follow)

**22<sup>nd</sup> December:** Carol Service in church at 6pm

**24<sup>th</sup> December:** All Age Crib Service in church at 4pm

**24<sup>th</sup> December:** Midnight Mass in church at 11:30pm

**25<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Day Service in church at 9:30am

**29<sup>th</sup> December:** MA service (details to follow)



The Team meets twice a year – please contact Sarah Byford if you are interested in joining

## Help!

We need help with a number of tasks that keep the church going e.g. locking up, washing tea towels– see Sarah Byford for details.

We are also looking for a local warden and a treasurer – please see Reverend Sally for more information as help and support available.