



Taff Wenallt Ministry Area
January 2026 Newsletter

‘ Behold, I make all things new . . . ’

*‘ But to all who received Him, to them gave He power to
become children of God, even to those who believe on
His name . . . ’ (St John chapter 1, verse 12)*

*‘ In these last days He has spoken to us by His Son,
whom He appointed heir of all things . . . ’
(Hebrews chapter 1, verse 2)*

*‘ That in the fulness of time He might gather
together into one all things in Christ . . . ’
(Ephesians chapter 1, verse 10)*



1. To us in Bethlem city was born a little Son;
In Him all gentle graces were gathered into one:
*Eia: eia;** were gathered into one.



2. And all our love and fortune lie in His mighty hands;
Our sorrows, joys, and failures He sees and understands:
Eia: eia; He sees and understands.



3. O Shepherd, ever near us, we'll go where Thou dost lead;
No matter where the pasture, with Thee at hand to feed:
Eia: eia; with Thee at hand to feed.

4. No grief shall part us from Thee, however sharp the edge;
We'll serve and do Thy bidding.— O, take our hearts in pledge!
Eia: eia; O, take our hearts in pledge!



(Percy Dearmer)



** ‘ Eia ’ is an exclamation of joy and gladness.*

This is yet another hymn I remember singing in school decades ago. Percy Dearmer, Martin Shaw, and Ralph Vaughan Williams were traditional folk song enthusiasts who compiled ‘ Songs of Praise ’, [O.U.P.] a hymn book widely used in schools in those days.

Christmas Crib Talk

(given by John M Evans, TSSF, in Glendower Court on 11th December 2025)



I expect you recognise what this is! We bought this one when our children were small. You'll see Mary and Joseph, and the angels, and Wise Men, and the animals . . . and the empty crib waiting for Jesus to take His place on Christmas Day. Christmas Cribs are perhaps not so popular these days, but some of you may have set up your own Nativity scene. I'm told that there is a lovely Christmas Crib every year in the gardens of St Peter's Church [off City Road].

[Editorial insertion!]

[Residents of Rhiwbina may like to take a stroll along Lon y Dail. In the corner of a front garden, just before Lon Ganol branches off to the right, you will find Rob's and Trisha's Nativity Scene. This is a very special one for children aged 0 to 90+ (*including the Editor!*) because a new creature arrives at the Bethlehem stable every day! Here's a photograph of last year's montage (*the Baby arrived early last year!*) cropped to a shape which includes the owl in the rafters . . . and the creature — a grey rabbit? — tiptoeing in at the bottom left-hand corner.]



[Back to John Evans's talk:]

I wonder whether anyone here knows where the idea of the Crib came from? Where was the first Christmas Crib we know about, and who set it up? That's right — Francis of Assisi, my favourite saint — in fact, many people's favourite saint these days, what with his insistence on loving and accepting everyone and caring for all creation — really good ideas then, now, and indeed always!

But Francis wasn't always like the saint we still revere centuries later! To understand why he set up the crib you need to know something of his rather surprising background.

Francis's father, Pietro, was a very rich and successful cloth merchant, and he wanted Francis to be a socialite, an 'influencer', as we would say today: to behave like a young aristocrat, so that he could help elevate him, Pietro, to the ranks of the nobility — in much the same way as Shakespeare's father wanted young William to help him procure his own Coat of Arms. Pietro indulged the young Francis's taste for the high life. He was delighted that Francis developed into a leader who could lead the young people of his 'set' in merry and licentious ways.

Apart from partying riotously, however, there was one other thing Francis had to do to become a nobleman: he had to win his spurs in battle. So in November 1202, when Francis was twenty-one years old, he seized the opportunity to take part in a pitched battle against the neighbouring town of Perugia. Assisi lost, and Francis was imprisoned in Perugia for a whole year in harsh conditions. He lost his health, and his will to fight. He went back home with his tail between his legs. After another attempt to take up arms, which he abandoned, he descended into total despair, a failure in his own eyes, in his father's eyes, and a social outcast.

Gradually but strongly, however, new light broke through. He decided to follow a completely different lifestyle from the one his father had chosen for him. Henceforth he would take Jesus Christ as his model and follow His example as closely as he could. He gave up all his wealth and position and lived like a pauper. He wore patched clothes – tunic, underpants, and a rope belt. Partying was out, sex was out, and his life became as simple as he could possibly make it. During that time, God became very real to him, and he felt that he found Jesus Himself in the poor people – particularly lepers — whom he met. But **his** image of Jesus differed from the one offered at the time by the Church.

You see, when you walked into a church in the 1200s when Francis was a young man, there would be enormous images of Jesus as God. If it was a large church, like the Cathedral of San Rufino in Assisi, where Francis was baptised, there were large statues you passed under on the way in. In the East these were often in the form of giant mosaics inside the church domes. The message was clear: Jesus, God's Son, was a hugely powerful Presence who possessed supreme authority over all things . . . and He could be pretty frightening! Francis, too, believed that Jesus was King of the whole world — he was a very orthodox Christian — but **his** Jesus, the Jesus Francis followed — had another side to Him. From Francis's new standpoint as a poor person himself, **his** Jesus embraced poverty and difficulty, like the people Francis now served. Francis understood that the human Jesus was not a presence to overawe people; He was not figure to inspire fear. No, for Francis, Jesus was someone who was accessible to **everyone**, and **particularly** to the poor. Francis wanted to proclaim that fact as loudly as he could – and to live it out in his own life.

To show people what the birth of Jesus was really like, Francis decided to set up the Biblical scene in real life. One of his friends, a nobleman, helped him. So, on Christmas Eve 1223, St. Francis invited the people of the region to be crammed into the cave's close quarters with animals and straw so that they would **feel** the heat generated by the animals and **smell** the damp hay. The first accounts, written a few years later, describe the cave with a **real** ox and **real** donkey and their hay-filled manger — the only things there.

Francis gave a talk with his usual eloquence, and the atmosphere was magical! One person there thought he saw a lifeless infant in the empty manger, and saw that when Francis lifted the infant up in his arms and the child came to life! Whatever we make of that, it must have been a quite extraordinary event — and it is still commemorated today in the little Italian town of Greccio where it was first performed.

In almost all churches at Christmas, and in some homes, too, there will be a crib scene. Why is it so popular? Perhaps because it conveys the same message that Francis wanted to proclaim, namely that God, Who really is great and beyond our understanding — as any glimpse of a clear night sky will tell us — that **that** God is near to each of us, and comes in humility, even into the dark places within us, to ask for our love.

‘ Born as a stranger, laid in a manger, Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth. ’



‘ The Institution of the Crib at Greccio ’

Giotto (di Bondone) 1267 – 1337

This fresco, painted between 1295 and 1300, is part of a larger cycle depicting the **Legend of Saint Francis** in the Upper Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi, Italy. **Giotto**, the revolutionary Florentine painter and architect, is known as the Father of Western painting in that he made a decisive break from the Byzantine style and brought to life the great art of painting as we know it today, introducing the technique of drawing accurately from life which had been neglected for over two hundred years. He is credited with bridging the gap between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with his introduction of naturalism, depth, and human emotion into his art, and had a profound influence over later masters like Michelangelo.

(I am indebted to a number of online publications for this information.)



BC | AD



BC — AD



This was the moment when Before
Turned into After, and the future's
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

00:00

This was the moment when nothing
Happened. Only dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the earth.



This was the moment when even energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment
When a few farm workers and three
Members of an obscure Persian sect



Walked haphazard by starlight straight
Into the kingdom of heaven.



(*U.A.Fanthorpe – 'Christmas Poems'*)



***The Clergy are always available for the Ministry of Reconciliation and Healing
and the administration of the Sacrament to the sick and housebound.***

Vicars:	Rev'd Peter Mortimer	petermortimer@cinw.org.uk	02920 650883
	Rev'd Anna Harwood	revdannaharwood@gmail.com	07564 012412
	Rev'd Andrew Highway	office@twma.church	02920 624115
Assistant Curate:	Rev'd Henry Grover	henrygrover@cinw.org.uk	02920 624115

FAO those of you with internet access:

our website address is:

www.twma.church

***At 10.00am on Sundays and Thursdays,
services are streamed live from St Mary's.***

You can watch them at

www.youtube.com/@TWMA.church/streams

For enquiries about the calling of Banns, Weddings, Baptisms, and Church Hall Bookings:

the email address is: office@twma.church

The Taff Wenallt Ministry Area telephone contact number is 02920 624115

Or you can write to:

***The Taff Wenallt Ministry Area Office,
The Rectory, 6, Penlline Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff. CF14 2AD***



Easy Fundraising for TWMA

EasyFundraising can help the TWMA – and your church — when you shop online!

8000 leading supermarkets and retailers will donate to the TWMA when you order online from them via the EasyFundraising scheme — and it doesn't cost you a penny!

Some supermarkets will donate up to £6 per online order.

Others offer a percentage based on the value of the order.

Participating firms include:

Amazon, Tesco, Morrisons, ASDA, Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Iceland, & Ocado.

Here's the link to register for the EasyFundraising network:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/taff-wenallt-ministry-area>

All you have to do is:

- 1. Sign up as a supporter**, using the link above;
- 2. Enter the name of your church**, and select 'TWMA' as your 'cause';
- 3. Shop online** via the EasyFundraising website, app, or browser extension;
- 4. Retailers will then donate** a percentage of the value of your order to your church.

Over £60m has been raised so far for various causes, including churches.

We're reliably informed that Llandaff Cathedral has joined the scheme!

Why not give it a try with your next on-line order?

WORD ASSOCIATION QUIZ – all answers contain the element ‘EW’

(Too much to do! No time to conjure up forty JAN words!)

1	Lapwing. (6)	
2	Taxus baccata. (3)	
3	Alias Wormtail. (5,9)	
4	Gladstone. (7)	
5	<i>‘It’s Brains you need . . . ’</i> (7)	
6	Obscene, lascivious. (4)	
7	F.C. (5,9)	
8	Cornish fishing port with a famous School of Art. (6)	
9	Harvey . . . invisible white rabbit. (5,7)	
10	Isaac Abbot. (6)	
11	Sadistic implement used in making the Bayeux tapestry? (6,6)	
12	Where a white horse is stabled? (4,2,6)	
13	Born a prince. (6)	
14	Where horses and falcons were housed. (4)	
15	Morse’s island? (5)	
16	Phillips, wood, Archimedes, countersunk. (5)	
17	Mendips Lake village. (4,5)	
18	Finder, point of, bird’s eye. (4)	
19	Birthplace of Stanley Baldwin. (7)	
20	Marlowe’s came from Malta. (3)	
21	Neath Port Talbot colliery town. (6)	
22	Found at beginning, end, and corners of curving staircase. (5,4)	
23	Droppings and dung of a hunted animal. (7)	
24	Home of a famous garden centre? (3)	
25	Gelert’s treacherous, ungrateful owner. (6,8)	
26	Proverbially in a perpetual drunken stupor! (5)	
27	Black Beauty. (6)	
28	<i>‘Never in the field of human conflict . . . ’</i> (3,3)	
29	Fruity racecourse! (7)	
30	Sant. (4)	
31	Lights out! (6)	
32	Hair-style allegedly improving one’s rowing performance. (4,3)	
33	<i>‘. of wood and drawers of water.’</i> (6)	
34	Tri-coloured horse with wig awry? (8)	
35	Donald. Not Duck, nor . . . , but Scotland’s First Minister. (5)	
36	Successors to the Tudors. (8)	
37	Pond, drop, claw. (3)	
38	Great Whaup. (6)	
39	Jug, pitcher. (4)	
40	According to Shakespeare, she was tamed . . . what a pity! (3,5)	

Happy **NEW** Year to all our readers!



All Saints' Church, Rhiwbina — Ladies' Circle

Spring Programme 2026

- | | | |
|---------------|--------|---|
| 8th January | 2pm | Eucharist — <i>followed by refreshments in the Church</i> |
| 15th January | 2pm | Magistracy in the 21st Century: 'No more twinsets and pearls!'
Oonagh Scott & Sheelagh Lloyd Jones
Charity Table: books, jigsaws, anything in a box or packet. |
| 29th January | 2pm | The Life and Times of James Howell and his Store.
Sue Trepleton
Charity Table: books, jigsaws, toiletries. |
| 12th February | 2pm | Capt. Sir Henry Morgan — A Welsh Pirate.
Roger James
Charity Table: books, jigsaws, anything in a bottle or tin. |
| 26th February | 2pm | <i>Presentation of a cheque to our charity 'Maggie's',</i>
<i>followed by:</i>
'The Old Grey Whistle Blowers Recorder Group'
Charity Table: anything with a Welsh connection. |
| 12th March | 2pm | Introduction to our new charity: MND: Motor Neurone Disease
Charity Table: books, jigsaws, plants, flowers, garden related items |
| 26th March | 2:30pm | Afternoon Tea at Whitchurch Golf Club |



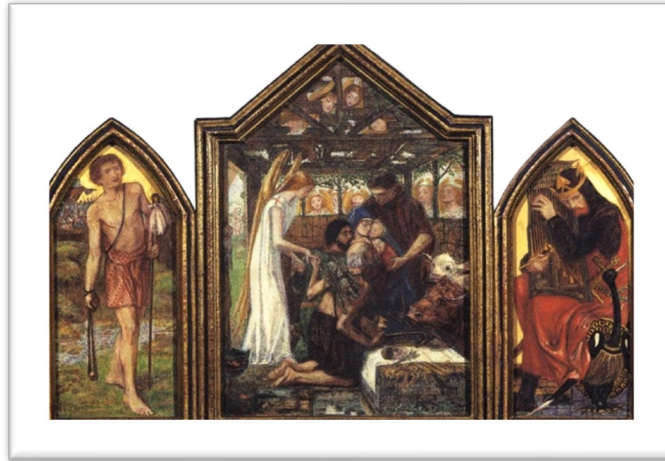
*Our objective is to maintain a circle of Christian friendship for the ladies of
All Saints' Church, Rhiwbina and the wider community.*

*'Friendship bears all things,
'Believes all things,
'Hopes all things,
'Endures all things, . . .
'True friendship never ends.'*

CHAIRPERSON : KATHLEEN JONES : TELEPHONE 07768 272702



A Message from Bishop Mary



During Advent it has been wonderful to attend and celebrate Holy Communion in the Cathedral early in the morning close to an amazing piece of art in the Illtyd Chapel. The Rossetti Triptych, entitled ' *The Seed of David* ' by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, depicts the birth of Jesus and highlights His connections with young and old, as well as with the poor and the powerful.

The shepherd-boy David preparing to fight Goliath is on the left side of the Nativity scene, and King David in his finery, playing a psalm, or song of praise, is on the right. In the centre, the infant Jesus is shown, visited and worshipped by a shepherd and a king, as well as being surrounded by His parents, the animals and the angels.

It's an amazing and precious work of art to observe at any time of the year, but in Advent it offers a great reminder of how we bring the whole of our lives before God: our youth and experience, our gifts and our need. Inevitably, Advent and Christmas hold memories for each of us about our childhood and our family. For me, I find encouragement in the idea that **every** part of our lives— our folly and foolishness, our naivety and weakness, as well as our gifts and talents, our creativity and achievements — **all** of this has a place in God's presence. God wants our whole selves.

All of this might remind us of the artist's sister, Christina Rossetti, whose famous words of poetry we sing in the carol, ' *In the bleak midwinter* ': ' **What can I give Him, poor as I am?** ' We are given the answer: ' **What I *can* I give Him: give my heart.** '

Here is a call to be wholehearted in our faith. It gives us a reason to be hopeful, reminding us that God accompanies us every step of our way. God does not abandon us when we let go of God. God is there for us at every stage and age of our lives. The important thing for us is to keep noticing the points of connection and to let God's love and grace speak to the **whole** of our lives, guiding us always in God's direction.

God of hope, thank You for this season of Advent with its invitation to learn, reflect and draw closer to Your love. Thank You for artists, writers, musicians and poets who point us to the mystery and gift of faith. Bless us with courage to resist the temptation to fill our lives with all that distracts us from Your call. Help us to notice the opportunities we have grow as Your children. Guide us each day in the paths of peace and holiness. Amen.

New Year's Resolutions!

Do you make them? Do you *keep* them? Or do you think that there's no point in making them because by mid-January, with everyday life back to its frenetic norm, you'll have forgotten what they were in the first place?

I never get around to making New Year resolutions. It's not that I'm under any illusion about my ' manifold sins and wickednesses ' — it's just that I'm always ill over Christmas! I have a theory that the bugs wait for me to stop running around like a mad thing and sit down . . . and then they pounce! And when they do, if I'm lucky enough to have the luxury of being able to snuggle up in the warmth of my bed feeling sorry for myself, I have to confess that New Year's resolutions do not even enter my thoughts!

On the Eve of Bin Day last week, I thought I'd get rid of some old paperwork — perhaps I was already seasonally ill, because I never **normally** throw **anything** out? But anyway, my eye alighted on two ring-binders full of Thursday Eucharist readings, now redundant because there's a new TWMA system in place: each reader in turn takes the reading **book** home to practise, returns to church the following Thursday bearing the book, reads the Lessons, and then passes it on to next week's reader — rather like the baton in a relay race, though at a more leisurely pace and (one hopes!) much less prone to dropping it. Brim-full of (unaccustomed) virtuous housewifely zeal, I started to rip the redundant pages from their poly-pockets and throw them in the recycling bin.

Then I made the mistake of starting to read them, and it was then that I realised that some of them were really rather special (much too good to throw away!). There were verses which prick my conscience because they remind me of past misdeeds I'd much rather forget; there are others which comfort my troubled soul; and many which, like spiritual helium balloons, lift me high and fill me with exultation through the sheer glory of their words.

So I confess I didn't throw **all** the sheets of paper away! The next Newsletter, whatever the season, is never far from my thoughts, and it was with this in mind that I thought I'd share some of those verses with you in case you don't have time to 'do' New Year's Resolutions, either!

' Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ' [*Romans 8, verses 35, 37 – 39*]

' The Lord will fulfil His purpose for me. Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever. Do not forsake the work of Your hands. ' [*Psalms 138, verse 8*]

‘ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.’
[Hebrews 13, verse 8]

‘ Out of the deep have I called to Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice! O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will redeem Israel from the multitude of His sins.’ *[Psalm 130, verses 1,7 & 8]*

‘ If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea: even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.’

[Psalm 139, verses 9 & 10]

‘ Let everything that hath breath, Praise the Lord!’

[Psalm 150, verse 6]

‘ And when you turn to the right, or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying: ‘This is the way: walk in it.’

[Isaiah 30: verse 21]

‘ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’

[Philippians 4, verse 13]

‘ The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

**Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word,
hearkening to the voice of His word!**

Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His ministers that do His will!

Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion!

Bless the Lord, O my soul! ’

[Psalm 103, verses 19 – 22]

**‘ And He said unto me, ‘ My grace is sufficient for thee:
for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ ’**

[2 Corinthians 12, verse 9]

‘ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint, or grow weary, His wisdom is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. They who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.’

[Isaiah 40, verses 28, 29, 31]

A Message *from the* TWMA Clergy Team

Dear Friends and Family of the Taff Wenallt Ministry Area,

As we look back over this past year, the clergy team want to offer you our deepest thanks for your patience, understanding, and remarkable support through a season of great change.

As well as the transition to a single Ministry Area bank account, which required many of you to update Standing Orders and navigate new systems, we have also walked together through the retirement of our former Ministry Area Leader, Father John Davis.

These changes have brought significant shifts in the daily life of our worshipping community, and we recognise the impact they have had on all of us; yet throughout it all, you have shown such grace, steadiness, and commitment. Your willingness to support each other throughout those changes quietly and faithfully has been a true blessing to us all, and a powerful expression of the unity and hope we share in Christ.

Sadly, this is not to say that the Ministry Area Leader vacancy has been without its difficult challenges. It has not been all plain sailing. We are indebted to the retired and visiting clergy, along with the Lay Worship team, for their readiness to help in conducting services. Thank you for the part **you** play in sustaining the ministry to which we are called together: your practical, prayerful, and financial generosity enables our community to move forward with confidence.

As we step into the year ahead and look forward to the arrival of the **Reverend Theresa Parker** as our new Ministry Area Leader, we do so with gratitude for all that God has already done among us, and with a renewed expectation for what He will continue to build in and through this Ministry Area.

With every blessing,

The Clergy Team

(Taff Wenallt Ministry Area.)

Dates for your Diaries:

Date:	Time:	Venue:	Event:
Wednesday 24.12.25	Christmas Eve		
Christmas Eve	5.00 pm	All Saints' LN	Crib Service
Christmas Eve	5.00 pm	All Saints' Rhiwbina	Christingle
Christmas Eve	8.00 pm	All Saints' LN	'Midnight' Mass
Christmas Eve	11.30 pm	All Saints' Rhiwbina	Midnight Mass
Christmas Eve	11.30 pm	St Mary's	Midnight Mass
THURSDAY 25.12.25	CHRISTMAS DAY – THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY		
Thursday 25.12.25	10.00 am	All TWMA Churches	Holy Eucharist
Friday 26.12.25	10.00 am	St Mary's	Eucharist - St Stephen's Day
Sunday 28.12.25	First Sunday of Christmas		
Sunday 28.12.25	10.00 am	All Saints' LN	TWMA Combined Service

Please note that there will be no Eucharist services in the Ministry Area on
Wednesday 31st December 2025 or Thursday 1st January 2026

Sunday 4.1.26	EPIPHANY SUNDAY		
Sunday 4.1.26	10.00 am	All Saints' Rhiwbina	TWMA Combined Service
Sunday 4.1.26	2.30 pm	All Saints' LN	<i>Sine Nomine</i> Rehearsal
Wednesday 7.1.26	10.00 am	All Saints' LN	Eucharist
Wednesday 7.1.26	10.00 am	All Saints' Rhiwbina	Eucharist & Coffee Morning
Thursday 8.1.26	10.00 am	St Mary's	Eucharist & Coffee Morning
Thursday 8.1.26	2.00 pm	All Saints' Rhiwbina	Ladies' Circle Eucharist
Saturday 10.1.26	10.00 am	All Saints' Rhiwbina	ASR Working Party
Sunday 11.1.26	Baptism of Jesus — normal services resume		
Tuesday 13.1.26	6.00 pm	All Saints' Rhiwbina	Evening Eucharist
Sunday 18.1.26	Second Sunday of Epiphany		
Sunday 18.1.26	2.00 pm	All Saints' LN	<i>Sine Nomine</i> Rehearsal
Sunday 25.1.26	Third Sunday of Epiphany		
Sunday 1.2.26	Presentation of Jesus in the Temple		
Sunday 1.2.26	10.00 am	St Mary's	Combined TWMA Eucharist
Monday 2.2.26	Feast of Candlemas – forty days after Christmas Day		

Warm Welcome Spaces at All Saints' Rhiwbina
Wednesdays 11.00 am to 12.30 pm

Free Warm Welcoming Safe

All Saints' is a registered **Warm Welcome Space**, offering warmth and local connection. Everyone is invited to join us for a warm space, warm welcome, and a place to belong. Soup and hot drinks are provided. Spread the word so that people in our community know there's a warm welcoming space waiting for them just around the corner.