

MAGAZINE OF UNITING CHURCH SKETTY NOVEMBER 2025



“They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” (Isaiah 2.4)



Uniting together - Caring for all - Seeking God



Minister: The Revd Louise Gough

Senior Elder: Pat D

Senior Steward: Maggie C

Church Related Community Worker:

Adella P (Swansea Region of URC)

DECEMBER 2025 & JANUARY 2026 MAGAZINE: All items for inclusion in the next edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D) by 18th November at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, 30th November.



Contacting us: Uniting Church Sketty, Dillwyn Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9AH. Website: www.unitingchurchsketty.org.uk

The building development was funded by the following

The **Methodist Church**



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Assembly Government



The refurbished hall was funded from the sale of the Bethel building

Dear friends

In September (with Howard's blessing), I had the enormous privilege of preaching at the church I first attended as a teenager. In fact, my grandad's founding of the church predated the building, which opened in 1965. Mum and dad married there, I was baptised, my dad and grandparents' funerals were held there, plus my mum's second wedding (at which I officiated). It was the church which nurtured my very new faith, and among the other young people (meeting Sunday and often several times mid-week) and the adult members, I found a place to truly belong. I loved it! So I was thrilled to be invited to lead their 60th



anniversary service.

Everything in the building looked exactly as I remembered it when I left for University – it was absolutely immaculate and had retained all its original 1960s features – with just the addition of a sound desk and screen. Being back filled my heart, but seeing the congregation broke it – where was

everybody? It used to be full. Now the small, faithful, beautiful congregation wonder if they have just had their last anniversary. It's a familiar story. We know how the world has changed, and we could think up a hundred and one reasons why church as we know it, with its stream of generations, seems to have run low or in some cases dry. Perhaps we don't feel it as keenly at UCS, but we had a conversation in one of the committees recently about the fall in numbers. Of course, church isn't all about numbers – God has a different economy and doesn't deal with numerical matters in the same way that we do. In fact, in some of the Bible stories, God chooses the smallest numbers to achieve the impossible! God's values are different, but still there is concern about how we will continue our church's work and life. The question I posed to the particular committee was "what does God want us to do?" I don't believe the question is as hard to answer as we might think, and while we do need to listen to God, the gospels tell us everything we need to know.

The Jesus I meet in the gospels is quite clear about God's priorities, and Jesus himself provided the model. The way I read it, Jesus was someone with a real passion for people – he wanted everyone to know they were loved, loved by God. He wanted people to know that they were forgiven (removing the burdens of guilt, shame and failure), that they had a purpose (expressing God's image within themselves and loving others), that God offered them transformative wholeness. He had special concern for the vulnerable and excluded people, and he called out injustice and proclaimed freedom from oppression. He became angry when religion, the very thing that was meant to point people to God, became restrictive and masked God's loving face. Jesus created a new, unlimited community of people who knew they needed God's love and were active in sharing it with others, so that everyone felt they belonged. Jesus did preach in synagogues. and he went to the Temple; he had friends and places he returned to, but he did most of his work outside religious buildings and he went to where people were.

This challenges me hugely when I think about how settled most church congregations are, and whether we can truly claim to do the things Jesus did. He did, after all, commission his disciples to continue his work (that's us!).

Please be assured - I haven't got an agenda, nor answers (though that would be nice!). Neither do I want to start offering value judgements on the kinds of activities we provide as a church. I'm simply thinking aloud from a painful place. I suspect it's time to seriously consider where we put our time and energy, because our human resources are incredibly precious and we need to direct them where they are going to most effectively fulfil our calling. Where is the Spirit at work, and where do (or what makes) our souls sing?

I want to see the church thrive (I love and treasure it) – but I believe we are called to seek first the kingdom of God and make that our true priority. What does God want us to do? What is God calling us to? Not more and more things – we are busy enough. Perhaps we need to be less busy fulfilling our true calling.

Let's be brave and ask the difficult questions – even if it means the seed falling to die, and then to rise again, something new. (John 12:24).

With love and prayers

Louise

WORSHIP SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER

November 2	All Saints' Day	Revd Louise Gough (Communion)
November 9	Remembrance Sunday	Revd Louise Gough & Revd Jennifer Hurd, Wales Synod Cymru Chair
November 16	Revd Simon Walkling, URC Swansea Pastorate Minister	
November 20	Thursday Communion	Revd Louise Gough
November 23	Christ the King	Revd Linda Woollacott
November 30	First Sunday in Advent	Revd Louise Gough & Revd Andrew Pearce

OUR COMMUNION COLLECTION FOR NOVEMBER is *Down to*



Earth - a project based around Gower and South Wales. They believe meaningful outdoor experiences can

change lives. They create remarkable buildings with natural materials, and develop sustainable land management and education programmes. See <https://downtoearthproject.org.uk/>

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1st 2025: COFFEE MORNING IN AID OF MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK) was founded in 1959, to support families, and fund research into muscular dystrophy and related muscle-wasting conditions, of which there are over 60.

MD UK has recently launched its plans and goals for the next ten years.

This includes continuing to support those who live in the community, who live with muscle wasting diseases; improvements in access to transport and changing rooms in public toilets and many others.

Research funding is also an important goal, to find treatments and cures.

MD UK also campaigns to raise public awareness. Awareness can be heightened by fund raising activities such as coffee mornings, marathon runs, golf tournaments etc.

Some, who read this article, will know that I have a personal connection to MD, as it has been present in my family for 100+ years, with no sign of a cure in sight for the type of MD (Facioscapulohumeral Muscular Dystrophy) in my family. There are also others in UCS whose family is affected by Myotonic MD.

Janet N

THE FLOWER ROTA FOR 2026 is now on the notice board in the foyer. If you would like to give flowers one Sunday, please sign your name in the givers column and if you would like to arrange them yourself (which you are very welcome to do) please sign in the arrangers column. If you are unable to get to church and would like to give flowers, please let me know and I will add your name to the list

Thankyou

Rosemary

FROM ACTION FOR CHILDREN:



Please can you convey from the Action for Children charity thanks to Uniting Church Sketty. The benevolence collection for September 2025 raised (including gift aid) £361.25. This money was allocated to the Tŷ Laura project at Langland.

For further information read our website at

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-we-can-help/our-local-services/find-our-services-near-you/ty-laura-short-breaks/>

[Tŷ Laura provides respite care for children and young people who have severe learning disabilities and complex needs. Young people can stay at Tŷ Laura from the age of four years up to their 18th birthday, giving them a high-quality break from home, and their families much needed rest.]

CALLING ALL PIANISTS



The organists are able to cover most Sunday services.

Sometimes, however, we find there is an odd Sunday when we are all unavailable.

We'd really like to draw up a list of people we can call on to play the piano if needed on these occasions.

If you are able to help please either speak to one of us

UCS organists

(Let me take this opportunity to thank the organists who have served us so faithfully over the years. We really do appreciate what you bring to our worship, Sunday by Sunday. Thank you. Ed.)

Catriona Wheeler, Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, has welcomed the progress in talks between Palestinians and the government of the State of Israel.



The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church has consistently called for peace in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory based on our belief that all people are created by God with inherent value and dignity.

The announcement of the "first phase" of a peace deal is

dependent on further agreement and action by the State of Israel's government and Hamas. We pray that it will be a turning point, with an end to killing and a beginning of a better life for all those who have been so badly affected by violence; losing loved ones, experiencing life-

changing injuries and psychological trauma, being forced to leave their homes, losing livelihoods and the fracturing of communities. True peace in the Holy Land will take much more than a ceasefire.

In recent years, we have sent groups from the URC to the Holy Land on visits to observe what life is like for Israelis and Palestinians. We have built relationships with people who live in the area.

Led by this, our General Assembly in 2021 recognised that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, forced house demolitions, and the acquisition of land by coercion are breaches of international law. General Assembly, therefore, urges the Israeli Government to abide by international law and reverse its de facto annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory.

This year at our General Assembly, it was noted that despite previous moves towards peaceful solutions, “atrocities have continued”, citing the Israeli Government’s breaches of ceasefire agreements and the deliberate blockade of aid, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians.

We commend the World Council of Churches statement made this summer, which calls for an end to “apartheid, occupation, and impunity in Palestine and Israel”.

So, while we welcome the chance for peace and the end to suffering in Gaza, we will continue to call, pray and work for a true and lasting peace through dialogue and diplomacy, where the voices of those who have been most affected by the conflict are heard and respected.

A prayer:

God of peace,

How long, O Lord, how long?

We give thanks for any lessening of gunfire and bombardment;
for fragile steps towards quieter skies over Gaza.

Yet we dare not call this silence ‘peace’.

You are the One who hears the cries beneath the rubble,
who weeps with the displaced and the bereaved.

You know that peace is not the absence of war,
but the presence of justice,
the sheltering of every life,
the mending of what once was torn.

Guard us from false assurances, O God,
from leaders who declare “peace, peace”
when there is no real peace. [Jeremiah 6:14]
Stir the hearts of those in power
to listen to the wounded,
to reckon with wrongs done
and to labour for a just, lasting and equitable peace
for all your children — Israeli and Palestinian alike.
Let swords be beaten into ploughshares,
let tears be turned to dancing
and let the Land once more be Holy;
a place where people and planet live and flourish in dignity.
Come, O Prince of Peace.
Make it real.
Make it last.
Make it just.
In Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Revd Lythan Nevard, Moderator of the United Reformed Church Eastern Synod, has been appointed to a new role: Ecumenical Canon of Ely Cathedral.



Lythan was ordained in 1992, having trained at Mansfield College, Oxford, alongside her husband, Phil. They met on the URC Ginger Group – a youth project in the 1980’s and married prior to training for ministry.

Lythan’s ministry has spanned URCs in the North East, the London Borough of Havering, the Devon coast and, just prior to becoming Moderator of Eastern Synod, she was an ecumenical pioneer minister in the new town of Cranbrook, Devon.

She is passionate about mission and discipleship and encouraging people to think about being church differently.

Of her new appointment, Lythan said: “I am thrilled and honoured to become an Ethelreda (ecumenical) Canon at Ely Cathedral. The area shared between Eastern Synod and Ely Diocese is full of thriving ecumenical projects including the two most recent churches to join the URC – at Northstowe and Love’s Farm St Neots.

“I hope that this role as Canon will solidify the good working relationships I have with my Anglican colleagues and lead to further creative ways of working together to share the love of Jesus to our communities.”

(We congratulate Lythan on her appointment and pray God’s blessing on her ecumenical partnerships in Ely and in the Eastern Synod of the URC. Her parents, The Revd Ivor Rees and Delyth, were deeply committed to the ecumenical vision and journey throughout their ministry together and would have been delighted at Lythan’s appointment. Ed.)

CHRISTMAS BAGS UPDATE

A very big “Thank you” to everyone who has requested a bag to fill for our local refugees and asylum seekers. There is, however, still time for others to join us. I know from some of the comments made that it can be fun shopping, trying to think of items to put in a bag for those less fortunate



than ourselves.

Equally, I welcome donations of money to purchase items to fill bags to meet the requirement of 95 adult bags and 48 bags for children of varying ages. If you wish to have a bag to fill, they will be available after the Sunday morning service on November 9th. Requests for a bag can also be given to myself or Jan C stating which category of bag you require.

Categories of bags are: single male, single female, and family (adult couple). The children of families each receive their own bag and these are labelled with the appropriate age and gender. I would be grateful if all filled bags can be returned on or before Sunday 7th December. They will be blessed in church on Sunday, 14th December before distribution to the recipients before Christmas.

Linda J.

Congratulations to Laurie and Jane's daughter Rachel who will marry Ben in York in November. We send them our love and best wishes for a long and happy future together.

Congratulations to Revd Louise and Revd John on their recently announced engagement. We wish them joy for the future.

We remember those who are in hospital, in care homes and nursing homes, those who are awaiting treatment and those who are convalescing. We pray that they will know God's strength and peace, and be able to trust in God's presence with them.

We pray for those who are recently bereaved. May they know 'the peace that passes all understanding', through Jesus our Risen Lord.

We remember with thanksgiving those from among us who have recently died:

Graham B was a faithful member in Bethel and in Uniting Church Sketty after our union. He was a quiet but committed person and he will be much missed. He was latterly a resident of Bloomfield Care Home, but spent quite some time in hospital recently. We give thanks for him and pray for God's peace on his family and friends.

We also remember Tom O'M. He and his late wife, Sally, were faithful members of Bethel, where Tom was also an elder. They moved to live near Edinburgh (back to their roots) to be near their family. We give thanks for Tom (who always wished to be remembered to his friends in Bethel) and pray for God's peace and comfort for Fiona and Alistair, and the whole family.

We were saddened to hear of the very sudden death of Haydn P. Haydn and Sandra have been good friends of our church in recent years, and we will miss his quiet presence among us. We pray God's peace for Sandra and their family.

HARVEST IN IMAGES (by Janet and Noel)





With our thanks to all those who gave time, imagination and gifts to make our display, our celebration and our donations to the Food Bank possible.



Maybe you are a complete tea-leaf and drink lots of cups a day. The church seems to run on tea – we’ve always got the kettle on. I even saw something on Facebook a while back about the different shades of Methodist tea! I’m sure there must be different shades of URC tea too!

So – a very mini quiz for you, all about tea:

1 How many cups of tea do we drink in the UK every day?

- a 100 million
- b 50 million
- c 30 million

2 Smallholder farmers produce around how much of the world's tea?

- a 15%
- b 30%
- c 60%

3 Tea provides work for how many people globally?

- a 13 million
- b 10 million
- c 3 million

4 What is the price of an average tea-bag today?

- a two or three pence
- b ten pence
- c 7 pence

(Answers on back cover)

Tea is a huge industry – we drink such a lot of it. Do we ever stop and think about where it comes from? Or do we just reach into the cupboard for that convenient tea bag?

Our Harvest Service was held on the last day of Fairtrade Fortnight, October 5th. The campaign for this year is “Brew it Fair” – all about tea. Transform Trade reminds us that we are all connected through trade – the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the devices in our pockets are all part of a global story. But the system is set up to make a tiny percentage of the world extremely wealthy. Meanwhile, producers are exploited – underpaid, undervalued, and forced to work in unsafe conditions.

Through fairtrade, we can really make a difference. Even with our tea-drinking habits!

So – here are some facts about tea and the tea industry to think about every time we reach for that tea-bag:

When it comes to tea:

- unfair purchasing practices focused on maximising profits further up the supply chain encourages poor employment practices, aimed at lowering the costs of production. This results in low incomes. Tea growers need a living wage.
- there are low standards of health and nutrition on tea-estates.
- there are poor working conditions – tea cultivation is labour intensive – workers must walk long distances between the collection point and where they pluck tea. They often carry 30 kilograms or more of green leaf tea over uneven, slippery and sometimes steep ground. They have to cross drainage ditches with no safe crossing facilities. They have to try to avoid snakes and parasites and don't have protective clothing and there are no control measures for dangerous machinery.
- there is gender inequality – women do most of the work and often face violence as well as discrimination; they have no voice in committees, the growing areas are far away from hospitals which causes problems if women are pregnant, and there have been serious allegations of harassment on tea farms and estates.
- tea is a climate sensitive crop, and extreme weather conditions affect the production and the price of tea – climate change is a huge threat to the tea industry and especially the vulnerable.

Because of all these concerns about tea, 250 people in Kenya who grow the tea we drink, have written a letter – a letter that we can send to our MP through the Fairtrade Foundation website – there are details on the notices if you want to do this.

From Revd Louise's address at the Harvest Service

Tŷ HAFAN CONCERT: *Paul E would like to invite us to attend one of these concerts on December 7th by the renowned Treorchy Male Choir (I don't know why the word 'Voice' has been dropped from the choir's name!) Paul has followed in his mum's footsteps in being an enthusiastic supporter of Tŷ Hafan, the children's hospice. It is completely dependent on donations for its wonderful work with children and their families. If you can't actually attend, speak to Paul about making a donation.*

Celebrate Christmas with
Treorchy Male Choir
and Special Guests
on **Sunday 7th December**
Presented by **Sian Lloyd**



Brangwyn Hall, Guildhall, Swansea
2:30pm & 7:30pm

Tŷ Hafan 
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE
HOSBIS I BLANT

Kindly supported by

 **euro**
COMMERCIALS

WILL WE BE TRAVELLING ON A HYDROGEN FUELLED BUS NETWORK IN SWANSEA BY 2027?

This was a headline in South Wales Evening Post in July. Bob and I had an opportunity to test this out on a trip to the Royal Welsh Show on a Hyppo Bus (see photo), a new hydrogen fuelled bus running out of a hub on Fabian Way, developed by Marubeni Europower and Hyppo Hydrogen Solutions, and sponsored by Transport for Wales.

*I must admit to being slightly worried – the bus was full – would it explode if we crashed, would it have the range of mileage or “run out” of fuel? The Manager of the new Company reassured everyone that we would indeed arrive safely and in time. It was a new experience and our journey was efficient, it was very quiet and **the emissions are only water vapour so very eco !***



The Director of Hyppo said “This service highlights Marubeni’s commitment to Wales and cements hydrogen’s role in decarbonising public transport. The demand speaks for itself— we’re exploring more deployments across Wales.”

I am not a scientist (though Sandra did study Geography in Swansea! ed) but I was so impressed I decided to investigate further:

Hydrogen Buses:

Cities like London, Tokyo, and Los Angeles are beginning to incorporate hydrogen fuel-cell buses into their public transport plans and transit fleets. These buses offer quiet, clean, and efficient transportation options, capable of covering long distances on a single tank of hydrogen. There are over 5,600 buses in use worldwide, the majority of which are in China!

Recent articles in Technology magazines from March to July 2025 highlight:

- A pilot project for Sizewell C workers using new hydrogen buses in Suffolk to reduce construction emissions.
- Surrey now has the largest county fleet comprising 34 hydrogen fuel cell buses, including 11 double-deckers now operating in north Surrey, joining the 23 single-deck buses introduced last autumn on Metrobus's Fastway and Redhill-area services.
- Internationally, a German operator ordered 12 hydrogen buses from the UK manufacturer Wrightbus in May 2025. The total number in Germany is now expected to reach 130 by the end of 2025.
- Manufacturers like Wrightbus are also expanding their service network for recharging, opening a centre in Bruhl, Germany, to support its growing operations.
- Meanwhile, Hyundai has delivered new fuel-cell buses for testing in Abu Dhabi.
- While hydrogen fuel-cell buses have been running in London since 2004, these had all been single decker buses. In June 2021, the world's first hydrogen fuel-cell double-decker bus – the Wright StreetDeck Hydroliner – entered service on Route 7.

There are, of course, Challenges and Considerations:

Despite its potential, hydrogen-powered public transportation faces several challenges that must be addressed if a future without emissions can be achieved:

Production and Distribution: The production of hydrogen is energy-intensive and can rely heavily on natural gas, a fossil fuel, for its production. However, green hydrogen produced using renewable energy sources is more sustainable but also more expensive. Also, efficient distribution networks will be needed to make hydrogen more widely available.

Cost: The cost of hydrogen fuel cells and the associated infrastructure is still high. Economies of scale and technological advancements are needed to bring down these costs and make hydrogen a more competitive alternative to traditional fuels.

Energy Efficiency: While hydrogen fuel-cells are more efficient than combustion engines, they are less efficient than BEVs (Battery Electric vehicles) in terms of the total energy conversion process, from

production to use in the vehicle. Improvements in energy efficiency are essential for hydrogen to be a truly sustainable solution.

Public Perception and Safety: Hydrogen's association with highly flammable properties raises safety concerns. Robust safety measures and public education are necessary to build confidence in hydrogen technologies.

So, our experience on our trip to the Royal Welsh Show would support the following comment by Hyppo and we can only hope for a future where public transport is based on zero emissions!

“This sold-out service proves hydrogen’s real-world potential — tackling hills and distance without emissions. Each bus replaces diesel equivalents and takes cars off the road, especially in rural Wales, that’s a win-win for the environment.”

Sandra C (a member of Green Friends)

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP FOR ADVENT AND EPIPHANY

We have now finished our study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians. I think we had an enriching time together, with about 20 people attending each session.

The next series will be around Christmas, on the theme, **‘A JOURNEY WITH THE MAGI’**, There will be three sessions before Christmas (Advent) and two after Christmas (Epiphany), as follows:

December 2nd, 9th and 16th

January 6th and 13th

All in the Wesley room
from 10.00 to 11.30am

We will use a study resource prepared for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and will be led by the Revd Noel Davies.

‘SWEETS FOR MY SWEET’

The Searchers appeared at Glastonbury recently – apparently, they hold the record for the longest continuously performing group. Those with memories of the pop scene of the '60s will remember the song. “Sweets for my Sweet, sugar for my Honey”

Scene setting:

Born into a Methodist manse, I was fed on afternoon tea, at home or in church, for most of my early life. Sandwiches, scones, fairy cakes etc. (Church, of course, included tea mixed in huge enamel pots with sterilised milk!)

Throughout my life I have never felt a meal was complete without a sweet dessert. I always had a sweet tooth. I used to bake cakes with my mother when I was small – Mary Baker’s Sponge Mix, I recall. Since I’ve been alone, I’ve enjoyed baking cakes. Pretty tasty too!



However....

Many will know that since before originally coming to Sketty in 1990, I have had an interest in the ministry of healing. Much more recently, I have come to recognise that healing is not about making people better but of enabling people to live well. Having open heart surgery does also concentrate the mind! A friend trying to lose weight prompted me to pause making cakes.

In society, we have seen almost an epidemic of type 2 Diabetes, which relates significantly to patterns of obesity and unhealthy diet.

For that reason, I ask myself if it is appropriate that, in the church, we make such a priority of baking and selling cakes and sweets. I can be

accused of being a killjoy, but is not the abuse of sugar a comparable health problem to abuse of alcohol?

I recall our Millenium celebration in Berlin to which we invited members of an AA group, associated with our congregation, with a promise of non-alcoholic punch to toast the new century. It was much appreciated.

Should we give at least a little thought to obesity and high cholesterol? I recognise my own vulnerability in this.

I appreciate that some of us really enjoy baking, and it is a way of offering skill to raise money for good causes, which means we would have to find alternatives. But it may be worth considering whether we might avoid encouraging sweet consumption as a contribution to a healthier society. I hope this stimulates some thoughtful conversation, anyway!

Revd John



In the brief exchange with Revd John that followed receiving this article, he sent me a recipe for a cake (see photo) made only from stewed apples and high cocoa content chocolate, which is kept in a fridge. This raised for me a very profound philosophical question (no space to discuss it here and it would require greater minds than mine!): ‘When is a cake a

cake and when is a cake a dessert?’ Ed.)

THE PRISON FELLOWSHIP

I am sure that most of you will know that for a number of years the above group have held their monthly prayer meetings in our prayer room.

Because of the groups’ personal commitments etc. this has now had to cease. However, I have been asked to say a huge thank you to the whole church for your love and support. You have been welcoming and encouraging and generous in your donations and it has been a wonderful way of sharing our ministry with you. We will be happy to keep in touch, with Angel Tree needing annual support, and it would be our greatest desire to see some of your congregation joining us as the need for new members is very pressing. This is a glorious ministry, where we see God’s hand at work directly in the lives of prisoners we meet. Please would you ask your congregation if anyone would consider joining our group and continuing the connection between us”

Originally, the group agreed to meet fortnightly in the old Brunswick Methodist Church and I have details of their meetings. They add, “whether you are a doer or a prayer, both are needed and are essential” I would add that I learned that, this year, the Swansea group – which has been in existence for over 33 years, with the belief that “no one is beyond hope” – set up a campaign to make a “Welcome Directory”. All they asked was that churches in the area register with them whether they would be willing to receive prison leavers into their congregation. Shockingly, **there are no entries from Swansea**. I have asked Maggie to refer this to the Leadership Team for discussion. **Jan C**

As we reflect on this challenge, we could well think about imprisonment using these words from the New Testament:

In his well-known parable, Jesus says that when the Son of Man comes, he will say to the righteous, ‘Come you who are blessed by my Father...for when I was in prison, you visited me.’ (Matthew 25.36)

Paul knew imprisonment, thanked those who supported him and saw his chains as a means of witnessing to the Gospel: ‘...I am put in prison for the defence of the Gospel.’ (Philippians 1.12-16)

The Letter to the Hebrews encourages Christians to exercise a ministry among those in prison: “Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” (Hebrews 13.3)

What is the relationship between justice and mercy in our Christian life?

A LAD IN A MANGER - 2025

Twenty-five years ago, this was the title of our first church pantomime, and so Sketty Madcaps were born and the rest, as they say, is history. I wonder how much of the “history” you can remember? Can you remember who took part and who supported? Can you remember the choir and the children involved? This coming year, our church celebrates a very special anniversary, and so Madcaps thought that perhaps we might look back, before we looked forward. Hence on **Thursday, 4th December, Friday, 5th December and Saturday, 6th December, Madcaps will be offering you an updated version of the greatest story ever told.**

J.C.S. Madcaps
present

A lad in a manger

A nativity pantomime



Thursday 4th & Friday 5th December 7pm

Saturday 6th December at 2:30 pm

Tickets £8 (includes refreshments)

Ticket from John, member of Madcaps or email
unitingchurchsketty@gmail.com

What better way to start our church's and our personal Christmas celebrations? Please do book one, or even all the dates in your diary to come and support us. All money raised will be for church funds, but more importantly, we will be coming together with family and friends to remember the reason for the season.

Can you come – oh yes! You can!

Jan C.

THE REPAIR CAFÉ



Some of you may know that I volunteer for the repair cafe in St David's Church, Loughor, that is now one of only three churches in Wales given an Eco-Church Gold

Award. Their strategy is broadly similar to our church, including worship, sustainability, technological change and community interaction initiatives.



So what do we do? Firstly, we are not as brilliant as the Repair Shop on the BBC, but we do have our sewing ladies (no pink hair or nail varnish) who repair clothes and soft toys. The men concentrate on general repairs for electricals, bicycles, toys and garden items. Do we succeed every time? No, sometimes we

diagnose the fault but do not stock replacement parts. Sometimes we can advise the client to go away and buy a certain part that we fit; recently a £250 lighting kit was repaired for £1.50! Sometimes we advise the client to throw it away before it catches fire or they get electrocuted. However, most repairs are reasonably straightforward.

Are the clients satisfied? Firstly, they effectively get a repair for nothing.

Some like the companionship, hot drink and a biscuit.

Whilst the repair is undertaken, we share stories and experiences. There is also the sentimental value. I

recently repaired a cassette player for a lady who can now continue to listen to her late husband singing.

This form of community outreach that piggy-backs on the green work of stopping repairable items going to landfill or incineration is consistent with our Christian values of love, care and stewardship of the planet.



The team shares knowledge and expertise and I learn from them. Each can bring new ways of thinking. I recently repaired a decapitated doll using a cable tie (found in your car). I also sewed up her underwear to cover her modesty and washed her hair, hat and clothes. So let us also be proud that our green strategy is also making a difference.

Laurie H.

CELEBRATING NICAEA IN SWANSEA



‘The service on September 28th, in both Welsh and English, embraced many different churches, and included music from a local Asian Christian fellowship, as well as singing from the Minster Choir, a new hymn (see below) written for the occasion by Susan Durber (WCC President from Europe), and a new song from Matt Redman.

In her sermon, Durber emphasised the need to be sure that we know what our shared faith really is, given the co-option of it seen in recent divisive marches in the UK. “We believe in one God, who is with and for all people,” said Durber.

She also described the service as a joyful occasion marking a new beginning for ecumenism in Swansea. She brought greetings from the fellowship of the WCC—and reported that the churches of the city of Swansea sent their greetings back.’

From the World Council of Churches Weekly News

(Look out for information about the next ecumenical service to be held at the Minster on the first Sunday of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18th 2026 at 3.00pm)

Come, O God, of loving mercy
in these times of unbelief.
Let your holy, sacred, presence,

touch and heal our human grief;
may we see your own true being
manifest before our eyes,

for we need your tender blessing,
answer to our deepest cries.

There is one who came from heaven
living, dying, on the earth;
Jesus, heart full of compassion,
Now we praise you, seen in glory,
God, the Father, here made known,
telling your eternal story,
ever present, always home.
Give us grace to live this Gospel,
in these times when faith is weak;
Jesus' face reveals your image,
God in fullness, all we see.

finding in each life real worth.
In that precious one among us,
**ho-mo-ou-si-os* with you,
stands revealed your loving being,
born of Mary, saviour true.

Holy Spirit, life bestowing,
coming from the Father's heart,
in this world of such division,
give us grace to play our part;
bringing peace and living union,
that the world may know your grace,
seeing now your loving nature,
holding all in your embrace.

**'Homoousios' is the Greek word that made it possible for Christians, in 325CE, to agree a common statement about Jesus Christ. It means 'of one being'.*

Susan Durber

AFFIRMING OUR SHARED FAITH: THE RHYTHM OF FAITH

In 'The Rhythm of Faith', I have tried to reflect the heart-beat of our shared faith across the centuries. It is a response to Susan Durber's encouragement to us, in her beautiful and inspiring sermon at our celebration in Swansea, to recognize the moving, costly and precious gift of the Creed as a unifying and courage-giving expression of our common faith. We used these words in our worship in UCS on October 12th.

We believe...

In ONE God who is LOVE –
exploding into life
in galaxies and stars –
earth's vast diversity.

We believe...

In Jesus on the earth –
his being, one with God.
The One who called the Light –
born Light of Light for all.

Humanity and Love –
are one in Jesus' birth.
Mary and Spirit joined –
God's miracle on earth.

The One who is for all –
through all eternity,
God's mind and heart and goal –
walking the paths we tread.

His cross at Pilate's hand –
Love suffering to the end.
A sign of sacrifice –
of giving all for all.

The darkness of the grave –
our fear and despair,
Becomes the raising place –
deep Life-restoring Love.

The raised, high-lifted Lord –
of life and love and hope;
Bound in the God of Love –
beyond, above all things.

And now, he still comes close –
will come as once he came,
In judgement and in love –
to challenge and to change.

God's kin-dom built in love –
brings harmony and peace,
Its justice shapes the earth –
a promise God still keeps.

We believe...

The Breath, the Spirit came –
from God, but Jesus-breathed,
Giver of cosmic life –
God-Jesus-Spirit praised.

We believe...
The Church is called by God –
one family set apart,
A universal bond –
proclaiming Love's 'no end'.

We confess...
One baptism joins us all –
in one communion bound:
Forgiveness, mercy, grace –
gifts of God's love to all.

Looking forward...
Our future is not dark –
despite the dread we feel.
In Jesus all is raised –
God's age to come is here!

This we believe; this we confess.
So we look forward now in hope.
May it be so for us. Amen.

Noel



Illustration by Josh Koch from a fresco of the Council of Nicaea in the Basilica of St. Nicholas, from the Text and Canon Institute website

TOOLS FOR SELF-RELIANCE

A farewell and a legacy.....

Thousands of skills

Thousands of jobs created

Thousands of lives enriched

Thousands of tools recycled

Thousands of laughs

Loving friendships formed

Yes, our workshop is closing in

Porthcawl. Everyone is sad, but there is much to rejoice about. We have been repairing and refurbishing tools for 17 years with volunteers, over the years, totalling 50.

After a year of contemplation our group, because we have failed to secure new premises and many of our volunteers are coming to terms with the ageing process we have decided to call it a day. But it is also the increase in shipping costs and the burdensome requirements of legislation.

Over the years some 25,000 completely renovated tools and a similar number of useable un-refurbished tools have been sent to Kenya, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania and Ghana. Tools have been provided for 17 trades e.g. carpentry, building and mechanics.

Specialised tools for bee-keeping, solar panel installation and electronics

have also been sent, as well as materials, sewing kits and sewing machines.

Rev John Hanson, who has been our contact for taking tools to Porthcawl wishes to express his gratitude on behalf of the team for the support received from members of UCS

from Janet N (photos and text)



Answers to the Tea Quiz:

Question 1: *100 million cups pf tea are drunk in the UK daily*

Question 2: *60% of tea is produced by small-scale farmers*

Question 3: *Tea provides work for 13 million people globally*

Question 4: *On average one tea bag costs between 2 and 3 pence*