

Wrexham

Mission Area

News



No. 27

Lent 2021

Jonathan Smith writes ...

Welcome to this first edition of Mission Area News for 2021. Welcome especially to the Rev'd Dylan Parry Jones who joins us from the Dyffryn Clwyd (Ruthin) Mission Area. Dylan takes over the role vacated by Sam with responsibility for Holy Trinity Church, Rhosyllen, Esclusham and All Saints, Poyser Street. Dylan introduces himself elsewhere in our publication.

It was good to be able to enjoy a degree of normality over Christmas with many of the usual events taking place in creative and innovative ways with both 'in person' and online worship. The new year saw an inordinate rise in Covid 19 rates not least here in Wrexham. While Welsh Government allowed churches to remain open for worship, the increasing risks prompted Welsh bishops to advise that all worship be online unless considered essential. We have complied with their wishes since early January but hope to stage a cautious return to our churches during March in time for Easter. It will be vital that everyone continues to follow the guidelines to the letter regardless of how many doses of vaccine you may or may not have received! I hope everyone will support wardens, clergy and others in maintaining our good record in protecting everyone.



Online worship will continue to be a part of what we offer for the foreseeable future and is just one of a number of positives that we should take forward from the Coronavirus experience. As churches, we ought rightly to consider our flock to include many who for a whole host of reasons are not sitting in church on a Sunday morning.

Whether you are reading this online or in paper form, I hope that you will be encouraged that our churches continue to function and develop by God's grace and that it will encourage you in your prayers and Christian service.

Pob Bendith

With every blessing

Jonathan

Photo: Craig & Ruby Williams

All Saints' and Holy Trinity

Father Dylan writes -

Coming home

Coming to Wrexham Mission Area feels to me like a coming home. I was born in the Maelor, baptised in Gwersyllt, and grew up in Froncysyllte. I came to school in Wrecsam, to Ysgol Morgan Llwyd – when it was on Bryn y Cabannau, and have memories of travelling through Rhostyllen and High town on the school bus. However, my school days were not the happiest days of my life and I left North Wales, I thought for good, aged twenty. I was at uni and worked in Liverpool for six years, I lived in a community in Yorkshire for a bit before moving to London where I worked for a parish before working for the Anglican Communion Office (ACO) for five years. The ACO serves and supports the Anglican Churches throughout the world and it was a magnificent experience which has had a deep impact on my faith and on my thinking.

A bit more about me ...

I belong to a religious community called the Oratory of the Good Shepherd. We are a community of celibate brothers bound together by a common rule of life and support one another in life and service to God. You can learn more online www.ogseurope.org. I also have a three-year-old rescued greyhound-cross called Iggy who is a prominent part of my life. You can find out more about him on his Facebook page!

<https://www.facebook.com/IggyTdog>

Part of a story

One of the many things I learnt about on my journey with the Anglican Communion was the need to be always be moving forward while being nurtured by our past and tradition. My Ghanaian friends talk about 'consulting the Old Lady' both literally in that older women are seen as holders of knowledge and wisdom, and figuratively in that idea that culture and tradition shape us and help us to move forward well. This idea is summed up in the Sankofa, a stylised bird with its feet facing forward and its head reaching backwards for a precious egg. When I first encountered the Sankofa I was reminded of depictions of the pelican in Western art representing the idea of Christians being fed by Christ himself.



Why have I taken you on this little ramble? (I'm afraid they might be something you'll have to put up with from me!) There is an important reminder to us to be drawn from this insight from Ghana; we have to keep moving forward but to do that well we need to draw on our histories, our cultures, and our traditions. These are the things that have made us who we are and where we are. I am really looking forward to learning the stories of Holy Trinity and All Saints, and of the communities we serve together. But I am too excited to see what the next chapter of our story will hold as we move forward. Our stories though begin and end in the greater story of Christ Jesus who loves and nourishes us into being tellers of his story.

Fr. Dylan

dylanparryjones@cinw.org.uk

The Choir Shall Sing ...

Church Music During Lockdown

I readily admit that when we were first asked to record choir music for the weekly online broadcast I was very apprehensive. How would the choir sing together - being apart - with no conductor to follow, and no organ or piano to accompany them?!

Well the first step was to restart our weekly Thursday night choir practice but using the online Zoom platform. Not all the choir are online but we had 8 choristers to start with, and later 4 from the St. Margaret's Singers joined us. Matthew our bass, knew of a free music app and we were able to download this, and each week we brainstormed ideas and ironed out any problems encountered.

Well that's just the tip of the iceberg of course. Recording music is certainly one of the biggest musical challenges I have encountered.

The members of the choir have been absolutely wonderful in their dedication, week after week, sending me their recordings to edit together, sometimes spending two or three hours on a hymn until it was right. I compare it to the analogy of the swan - serene and calm - but underneath the water paddling furiously!

Rather amusingly, the choir received a considerable backward compliment at Christmas, when Facebook blocked our carol service (- we had recorded 12 carols for this -) but they thought we had illegally 'lifted' them from Lincoln Cathedral choir's recordings!

One of the other bonuses of the internet age of course, is being able to enlist help from people not just in Wrexham (Jayne and Helen Belton-thank you!) but former choir members from all over the country - David and Kath in the South West and Sharon in Shropshire. Thank you all.

Technology has allowed us to - CARRY ON SINGING!

*David Evans,
Organist and Choirmaster,
St. Margaret's Church*

Image by Sriom from Pixabay free download



Hope Street Update

Hope Street have held a successful quiz online with over 100 taking part and takeaway vouchers from the Fat Boar as the prize. Regular Sunday services are up and running online as is a further Alpha and youth and children's activities. The Bishop has blessed the building on Tuesday 23rd February and it is hoped that it will be open for some in-person activity very soon.



Online Worship

During Lockdown many churches everywhere have developed online worship, reaching many who do not normally go to church, as well as regular worshippers who are unable to attend. Here is a list of online worship available from Wrexham Mission Area churches.

During restrictions it is advisable to check websites and social media or to email or phone for current information.

St Margaret & St Mark

Sunday service on the church Facebook sites at 4.00pm each Sunday and then available on their web pages.

A 40 minute service of the word featuring a sermon and music digitally recorded by the choir of St Margaret's and contemporary music from Josh Smith and friends at the Tin Can.

St James & St John

Sunday Service on Facebook available at 10.00am each Sunday and then available on their web pages.

A 30 minute service of the word with a sermon and gentle contemporary worship music.

St Giles'

Sunday Service recorded live at the church each Sunday morning and uploaded to You Tube in the afternoon. Also available on the church Facebook site and their web pages.

A traditional Eucharist with hymns and sermon. Evening Prayer is also available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays each week on the same platforms.

The Facebook sites for each church are easily accessed by googling 'Facebook'. It is easier if you are a Facebook user already.

Google "You Tube St Giles Wrexham" to find the channel.

Everything is available on the web sites to view without strings attached although there may be some delay in the material being put up.

Go to the Mission Area Web page: <https://plwyfwreccsam.org.uk/> and click on the church in question.

Holiday Hunger



In our previous Mission Area News we detailed progress relating to our holiday hunger project on Caia Park. The progress made means we are now researching and experimenting regarding next steps. This has included a pilot project run during February 2021, coordinated by Josh (Church Army) and using the Caia Park Partnership kitchen facilities (thanks guys!). With lock down during January and February 2021, we have also had to adapt our arrangements to keep the Caia Park Food Bank outlet operating out of St Marks buildings. A huge thank you to Iris, Lisa, Mark and Sue Vening (YWAM) for standing in the gap for us and to Bob Oppen (YWAM) who has created a new storage facility for food stocks at St Marks. Thanks, Bob.



Art Ellinson

St Mark's Church, Caia Park – Children's ministry during the time of Covid

When lockdown started in March 2020, myself and Church Army Officer Chris Lawton, somewhat hastily got together a list of the families with whom St Mark's Church had built relationships through our Sunday morning 'Holy Kids' group and weekly after school Club.

Thereby commenced a weekly routine of delivering resources to over 30 families, which little did we know would be ongoing a year later, augmented by in-person children's activities as and when restrictions have allowed.

Whilst many churches have developed great on-line activities, we recognise that many of our children and families on Caia have limited access to digital resources and so have aimed to provide materials accessible to all regardless of whether they have internet access. Our home packs aim to include a Bible passage with some child-friendly explanation, puzzles and colouring and a craft activity each week.



What started as one group has now become two groups – Holy Kids and Holy Kids 2, in recognition that some of the children are rapidly becoming teenagers and need a more grown-up approach. Holy Kids 2 is still somewhat in its infancy, however Covid-secure in-person sessions during the autumn, led by our Church Army Officer Josh Smith, saw a snooker table set up at St Mark's, table football dug out of storage and craft activities enjoyed, including the creation of pottery candle snuffers, which were used during our Christingle Service to enable the candles to be extinguished without blowing them out!

*< Quinn—one of our Holy Kids—
shows us his craft*

*Candle snuffers made by our Holy
Kids 2 group for the Christingle
Service at St. Mark's >*



We have been grateful for a grant from the Caia Park Partnership and contributions from a number of individuals to support us in our work with children and families during this time. Practically, we are very thankful to Youth With a Mission (YWAM), who have assisted with in-person sessions at St Mark's, the delivery of activity packs and the production of publicity materials. Our families also enjoyed the gingerbread cookie jars provided for us by Hope Street Church at Christmas.

Continued>

We have received tremendous practical support from Xplore! Science Discovery Centre, based in Wrexham Town Centre, who provided three fantastic hands-on sessions in St Mark's during the autumn, and activity packs which were delivered out to our families in early January of this year. We are currently shaping a programme of three further in-person sessions with Xplore! at St Mark's, hopefully to take place in late spring/early summer, when we will be looking at how science relates to themes in the Bible.

We are also busy preparing 'Pamper Packs', which we look forward to delivering over Mothering Sunday weekend to mums, grand-mums and other carers.

Elaine Smith, St. Mark's, Caia Park

Clair from Xplore! launching one of a number of rockets made by the children, on the grass outside of St Mark's Church



Bible study

The Lent devotions I am using this year (Sinclair B Ferguson, *To Seek and to Save*, The Good Book Company, 2020), begin at Luke 9:51: *When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*

Earlier in this chapter, Luke has told us about Peter's confession of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi (Luke 9:18-20; cf Matthew 16:13-20). It was after Peter's astounding declaration, that Jesus is *the Christ of God*, that Jesus started telling his disciples that he was going to *suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised* (Luke 9:22). Jesus knew all that was going to happen to him when he arrived in Jerusalem the following Passover. So when the time came for him to begin that journey, *he set his face to go (NRSV), he resolutely set out (NIV), he gathered up his courage and steeled himself for the journey (The Message) to Jerusalem.*

Jesus dreaded the agonies which he would suffer as he hung on the cross. Just before his arrest, he begged his Father to *remove this cup from me* (Luke 22:42). Luke goes on to tell us that, *being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood . . .* It's no wonder he had to gather up his courage and steel himself, even to begin the journey to Jerusalem.

Of course, Jesus knew, as we do (but his disciples didn't realise until much later) that the events in Jerusalem were a pause on the way to his final destination: 'the highest pinnacle of the universe, to be seated at the right hand of the power of God (see 22:69)'.

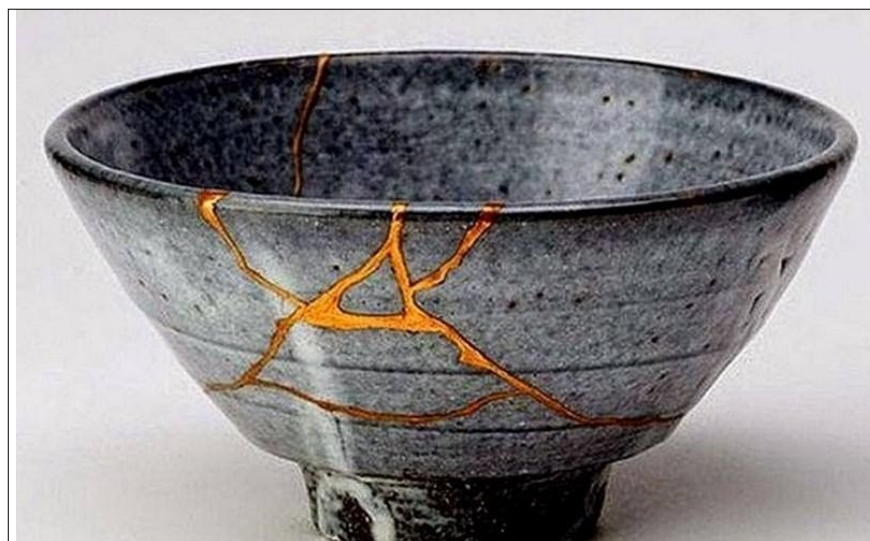
The emphasis in the following section of Luke's gospel is on Jesus' teaching. As he and his disciples undertake this journey, Jesus is both showing and teaching them how they're to follow him, and the route they must take with him. He promises them that they will ultimately share in his glory. But he also shows them that the only route that leads to glory is the way of the cross (cf Luke 9:23). May we gather up our courage and steel ourselves for our own journey, secure in the knowledge that Jesus has gone before, that by his Spirit he travels with us, and that we will one day see him face to face, *seated at the right hand of the power of God* (Luke 22:69).

The Rev'd Sarah Errington

Kinsugi and Mental Wellbeing

During the past year it has been hard not to feel the effects of the pandemic, not just on our physical wellbeing but also on our mental health. We see daily pictures of the pressure on frontline workers, those who are furloughed, children and young people, but all of us have probably suffered, anxiety, fear, or loss at some point in these long months of isolation from friends, family and church.

At the recent Archdeaconry Clergy Synod, we were given the opportunity to build greater awareness of mental health and wellbeing, when we completed Mental Health First Aid Wales' Mental Health Awareness course. As well as gaining information on the signs and symptoms to look for in others we were given resources to support those who need to regain mental wellbeing.



Having struggled with depression myself, this is a condition close to my heart; I have found great strength in the idea of Kinsugi. Kinsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery, it isn't about gluing together the cracks and fissures so that they can't be seen, but filling them with Gold making them a feature. God loves us for who we are, however broken we might be.

Kinsugi Hope is a charity based in the UK, founded by Christians, Patrick and Diane Regan, their vision is for "A world where mental and emotional health is understood and accepted, with safe and supportive communities for everyone to grow and flourish." In trying to achieve this they are setting up support groups, to find out more go to <https://www.kintsugihope.com/>

If you would like to talk to someone about mental wellbeing then please contact a member of the clergy or email me revjo20@gmail.com

Rev'd Jo Mackriell

St. James'

Most of St James' Christmas celebrations took place as planned in Church, although with much reduced congregations as was to be expected. The one service which we transferred online was our Crib Service, which was enjoyed from the comfort of people's own homes on Christmas Eve.

The Church Council decided that we should close the church building immediately after Christmas, until such time as the Level 4 restrictions are lifted. Our online services continue each week, with a service on our Facebook page at 10.00 am each Sunday morning.



Last year, at the beginning of Lent, a mixed group of folk from both St James' and St John's started The Prayer Course, an eight-week journey through the Lord's Prayer in eight sessions which include video input, discussion and a practical prayer activity. When we went into lockdown last March, the course came to an abrupt halt. This year, we decided to start again, running it on Zoom. As the course has eight sessions, we decided to start at the beginning of February, so we could complete the whole course by Easter. Over the first two sessions, a total of 13 people joined in, and we're enjoying learning more about how to pray, and deepening our relationship with God.

We wait to see how we might be able to mark the events of Holy Week and Easter.

Rev'd Sarah Errington

St John's

Our Christmas celebrations were muted this year, of course, but we enjoyed some services in church and others online. The online 'scavenger hunt' Christingles were very imaginative! Participants were challenged to find items at home which represented to them the same things as the elements of a traditional Christingle represent: the world, love, light, and the good things God gives us. Along with the Christingle service, we found ways of adapting our annual Carol Singalong, and the Crib Service as online events. Moving into Level 4 Coronavirus restrictions just before Christmas left us with very small congregations for midnight and Christmas morning communion services.



In the New Year, we held a service in Church on Sunday 4 January, before we decided as a Mission Area to suspend in person worship once again. Our online services are supplemented each week by "Roots at Home" material, which is emailed or delivered to all our members, as well as being available on our web-site. For Lent, we are running The Prayer Course in conjunction with St James' (further details are on the St James' page of this MA News). Other provision for Lent and Easter is under consideration.



One of the things that we have often wondered while we've been in lockdown is, how did we cope before when we weren't: St Giles' under normal circumstances is the busiest church I've ever come across, with a massive range of activities almost on a daily basis. And now, as we begin to look to reopening for public worship once again, we draw a deep breath before it all starts again.

For myself, as the vicar, there is always something to do, and in common with most clergy, I can never actually feel that I have done everything I needed to do, because there is always more. But this is, of course, Lent, and although we are preparing for what we hope will be a public celebration of Easter, it is still also a time for taking stock of our lives, both physical and spiritual.

We all yearn for a time when we can get back to normal, but we all know that the new normality will be different for us all, and for me, personally, I suspect the publication of *Deliverance* may change some aspects of my life forever as I wonder what the new normal might be like.

But one of the things we can all usefully do this Lent is to pledge that when we all emerge from lockdown, the new normal will be a better normal – a time when are able to spend more time in our relationship with God, but also when we seek to build up our relationship with one another as the body of Christ.

So take time this Lent, spend time with God, spend time talking to one another, and prepare in our hearts for the joy of the Resurrection at Easter.

Rev'd Jason Bray



Wrexham Mission Area

Mission Area Leader: Rev Jonathan Smith

Mission Area Administrator: Ann Owen

01978 355808 or 07751 422594;
office@wrexhamparish.org.uk

St. Giles' Parish Church LL13 8LS

Sundays: 9.30am All Age Worship; 11am Said Holy Eucharist (available later on YouTube and Facebook)
Thursdays: 11am Eucharist
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: about 5pm Evening Prayer on YouTube and Facebook
Vicar: Rev Dr Jason Bray. 07957 222418;
vicar@wrexhamparish.org.uk

Curate: Rev James Tout

St. Margaret's, Garden Village Chester Rd LL11 2SH

Sundays: 8.15am Said Holy Communion
9.30am Worship with recorded music. Holy Communion
2nd & 4th Sundays
(Please let us know if you are coming to ensure a space)
4.00pm Online Service on Facebook posted on website afterwards
Wednesdays 11.00am Said Holy Communion

Vicar of St. Margaret's & St. Mark's:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Jo Mackriell:
curateofwrexham@outlook.com

St. Mark's, Caia Park, Bryn Eglwys Rd LL13 9LA

11.00am Worship with recorded music. Holy Communion
1st & 3rd Sundays
4.00pm Online Service on Facebook posted on website afterwards

Vicar of St. Margaret's & St. Mark's:
Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Jo Mackriell:
curateofwrexham@outlook.com

St. John's, Rhosnesni, Borrass Rd LL13 9ER

Sundays: 2.30 pm: Sunday Worship (1st & 3rd); Holy Communion (2nd & 4th)
Sundays 10 am: Sunday Worship streamed to:
<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsWrexham/>
Vicar of St. John's & St. James'
Rev Sarah Errington: 01978 266018;
vicarstjohnswxm@gmail.com

During restrictions it is advisable to check websites and social media or to email or phone for current information.

St. James', Rhosddu, Rhosddu Rd LL11 2NW

Sundays: 11am: Sunday Worship (1st & 3rd); Holy Communion (2nd & 4th)
Sundays 10 am: Sunday Worship streamed to: <https://www.facebook.com/StJamesWrexham/>
Wednesdays 10 am: Holy Communion
Vicar of St. John's & St. James's:
Rev Sarah Errington.: 01978 266018;
vicarstjohnswxm@gmail.com

Holy Trinity, Rhostyllen, Esclusham, LL14 4DW

Sundays: 9.30am Sung Eucharist (3rd Sunday: Family Eucharist)

Contact for All Saints' & Holy Trinity:
Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

All Saints', Poyser Street, LL13 7RT

Sundays: 11am Sung Eucharist (Family Service 3rd Sunday)

Contact for All Saints' & Holy Trinity:
Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

St. Mary's, Bersham

1st Sunday: 11am Morning Prayer to be resumed when singing allowed
Contact: Lloyd Fitzhugh
01978 263522 lloydfitzhugh@gmail.com

Church Army Officer:

Capt. Josh Smith
07983 881412 j.smith@churcharmy.org.uk

WREXHAM MISSION AREA NEWS

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