

Blaenwysg Braf



Y gwanwyn- 2016 - Spring

The magazine for the six churches and communities
of the Blaenwysg Benefice
in the Upper Usk Valley



Who and where

Rev M P Wilding, Bryn Orsaf, Sennybridge, LD3 8RR 01874 638927

Benefice wardens : Paula Jones 01874 638863
Beryl Price 01874 636271

St Cynog, Defynnog, LD3 8SB

Church wardens : Paul Salisbury 01874 636943
Siân Miller 01874 638855

St Ilid, Crai, LD3 8YP

Church wardens : Gwyn Price 01874 638844
Beryl Price 01874 636271

St David, Llywel, LD3 8RG

Church warden : Lynn White 01874 636293

St Teilo, Llandeilo'r Fân, LD3 8UD

Church wardens : Valerie Lewis 01874 636485
Mervyn Prosser 01874 638261

Capel Rhydybriw, Sennybridge, LD3 8RT

Church warden : Thurza Morgan 01874 638106

St Mary, Traeanglas, LD3 8RE

Church wardens : Ivor Pugh 01874 638158
Bess Jones 01874 636256

Blaenwysg Braf Editorial Team

John Clifford Carn y Castell, Sennybridge 01874 638178
Sue James Ty Siloh, Llandeilo'r Fân 01874 636126
Siân Miller 1, Prospect Row, Defynnog 01874 638855

From the study window

Winter is behind us now and even if it does not feel like it, there are signs of spring all around us. One sign of spring being on its way which I always look for is that of new-born lambs appearing in the fields. What sign reminds you that spring is approaching? One sign which many Christians link with spring and its many signs of life returning or of new life, is that of Easter. The greatest Christian festival with its themes of new life, of resurrection, Easter proclaims that Jesus is alive, alive for evermore. Easter with its promise of new life for all is present in the sacrament of holy baptism. In baptism we are not just made members of the Body of Christ, as if this is not gift enough, but we are also enfolded as members of the kingdom of God, an everlasting kingdom. A kingdom unlike any earthly kingdom, principedom or empire all of which wax and wane and pass away, the kingdom of God is eternal, lasting for ever. We are enfolded in this new, this everlasting life in the sacrament of holy baptism. So then as we see signs of new life emerging all around us, perhaps we should reflect upon the new life of baptism and just what this new life might mean for us. Perhaps we wish for this new life ourselves? Enjoy all the new life which emerges all around you and rejoice in all its great diversity and your place within it.

Holy Lord, open our eyes and ears to the many signs of new creation and help us to rejoice in our place within it.

Paul

Benefice Announcements

As we prepare for Easter, a Lenten Study group will meet on Monday evenings in the Vicarage until March 14th. The materials which we are using are "Migration and Movement" which explores migration and the global movement of people with stories from the world church.

The Annual Vestry meeting for the Blaenwysg Benefice will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 25th April in St Cynog's Church, Defynnog. Remember, if you are on the electoral roll for the benefice, you are entitled to come along to this important meeting.



Regular Services

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
9:30 am	Crai	Crai	Rhydybriw	Crai (Mattins)
11:00 am	Defynnog	Llywel (Family Service)	Defynnog	Llywel
2 pm			Traeanglas	
3 pm		Llandeilo'r Fân		
4:30 pm	Llywel			Defynnog (Evensong)

A combined service is held at 10 am on the fifth Sunday. The next combined service will be on May 29th at Traeanglas. Holy Eucharist is held at Trecastle Community Centre at 10:30 am each Thursday and at 10 am on the first Wednesday of each month at Rhydybriw.

Compline

Come and join us in peace and contemplation. We will be holding new Compline services at 7:30 pm on the third Monday of each month. The first service will be at St Cynog's Church, Defynnog on April 18th, followed by St Ilid's in Crai on May 16th . This reflective service will help us keep a quiet time and we hope will appeal to people who are looking for a different form of worship.

Confirmation



Would anyone wishing to be confirmed please contact Vicar Paul so that classes may be arranged.

Editorial

At last it has stopped raining, in time for lambing, and we can look forward to Spring and to Easter. This issue of the magazine looks forward too, to the summer with news of initiatives to develop our community buildings and to make our roads safer. Please keep us informed of local news, and contribute articles for future issues. Unfortunately printing costs for Blaenwysg Braf have risen, so if you know of businesses who would consider advertising here, please do tell them to get in touch, also. If you would like to contribute an article of local interest, or would like to advertise, please contact one of the editorial team:

John Clifford, tel 01874 638178, john.migley@btinternet.com

Sue James, tel 01874 636126, tysiloh@gmail.com

Sian Miller, tel 01874 638855, sian.miller@btinternet.com

Please note the deadline for copy for the next issue is Friday 13th May. Advertisements: For a code of conduct contact John Clifford, tel 01874 638178, john.migley@btinternet.com

Epynt a'r Wysg Mînisty Area - making progress

On Saturday 5th December we held the Ministry Area carol service in Penpont Church. This lovely family service was enthusiastically attended by members of both benefices and we look on it as the promise of good things to come.

The ministry area also met for an "Awayday" to learn more about each other at Llangasty Retreat House on January 31st.

In an open session on February 6th, we hosted a "Dementia Friends" information morning at Cradoc provided by the Alzheimers' Society. It was an interesting and thought provoking event and we went away with lots of good ideas about how we can support those in our community who are affected by dementia.

News from the Pews

St Cynog, Defynnog

Christmas seems such a long time ago but we enjoyed welcoming a cheery group of people to decorate our Christmas trees on December 6th and we were delighted that the church was packed with friends and families as the Cylch Meithrin celebrated their Christmas event in the church. Our Carol Service on December 17th was a happy family event. We are looking forward to Spring as the churchyard begins to fill with primroses.

St Ilid, Crai

December saw us enjoy a bingo evening with many from the Benefice having an evening of fun. We thank Wynne our excellent caller and all who generously donated prizes.

Christmas is a wonderful time of year with a very important birth at the centre. Once again we held a Carol service with live nativity scene. Happily, the church was packed. We started by walking, with torches, to the stable where Mary, Joseph and Jesus were joined by shepherds, a beautiful angel and a collection of friendly animals. Readings telling the nativity story were read beautifully by the children of Blaenwysg. A lovely solo by Olivia Thomas and interesting items linked to the nativity from Guides, Brownies, Rainbows and Off the Bus gave us a joyful start our Christmas season. We would like to thank everyone who took part, especially those new to the village (Tom, Vicky and family), and those who return at this wonderful time of the year.

Christmas day saw a pleasing crowd to celebrate the birth of Jesus with tuneful carols. The service was followed by seasonal treats. We look forward to welcoming you again during 2016 and although we cannot promise drinks every time, we will try on the 1st Sunday of each month.

Capel Rhydybriw, Sennybridge

December saw our regular Advent Compline services which gave us the chance to ignore the hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations and meet in calm and prayerfulness. We were delighted to welcome the Benefice in a combined service on December 27th where we joined in joyful singing of our carols and finished with delicious seasonal refreshments.

St Mary, Traeanglas

We were pleased to welcome members and friends to our Christmas Eve service. After the bustle of Christmas preparations, when we came into church the lights of the tree and the feeling of calm and peace helped us enjoy our worship.

With Spring on the way and lambing upon us, we thank the farming community and all those who look after the countryside for us.

St David, Llywel

2016 started with the exciting news that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given permission to start work on the development stage of our grant. The go ahead has been given to the architect to put the detailed specification of work together and then the tendering process can begin.

In our January family service Nicky led our youngsters in an interesting Christingle service and our February family service fell on Valentine's day!

The Church Council and the congregation of St Davids would like to convey our thanks to Paula Jones who has served for some 20 years as treasurer and has now handed over to Joe Roderick. We are all very appreciative for the service that Paula has given to our church during her time as treasurer.

Finally, January brought the sad news that Len Williams had died. He was very popular member of our local community and gave a lot of support to St David's during our recent fund raising efforts. It was heart warming to see so many people at his funeral service and to hear such wonderful singing, stories and memories.

St Teilo, Llandeilo'r Fân

The congregation at St. Teilo's filled the church for two main events in December: the welcoming into the church of baby Rhys William (son of Huw and Eleanor Davies) and Alffi Jac Kenny (son of Andrew and Nerys MacDonald), whose baptisms were held during our Advent service, and our Christmas Eve service. Gwyn, Rhys and Huw Jones read lessons and prayers in these services.

Sadly, we now mourn the death of Alwyn Lewis, a long standing member of St. Teilo's who worked hard to maintain both the church fabric and the churchyard. Our heartfelt condolences to his wife Valerie, and family.

The Committee look forward to planning some summer events at their next meeting.

Migration and movement

From the air it looks as if someone has run an orange highlighter pen around the Lesvos coastline, such is the density of life jackets that litter the coast, from refugees who have arrived from Turkey (the Us co-ordinator in Europe reports). January this year saw 36,175 refugees arrive, compared with 742 in January last year. More than half a million refugees have arrived in Greece in small boats from Turkey since the beginning of 2015. But millions more remain in camps in Turkey and surrounding countries, while seven million people have been displaced within Syria itself.

How we respond with humanity to the refugee crisis in Syria and Iraq has become entangled with our attitude to the increasing numbers of people coming into Europe trying to escape poverty and hardship. So it has been timely to study the Us Lent course, Migration and movement, which looks at economic migration, refugees, and the displacement of communities due to climate change, as well as human trafficking. The course does not claim to have the answers, but it hopes to inspire and challenge Christians to engage more deeply with the issues and to consider how we might respond.

If we look back we can see that no community is static and settled. Two thousand years ago there were waves of migrants into what is now Wales, escaping from invading armies of Romans, and later Saxons. Three hundred years ago there began the great migration of rural people to the valleys to mine coal and produce iron and steel. At the same time, thousands left Wales to begin new lives around the world. - not only in Patagonia! Last summer we met an American who was the great great grandson of a Welsh man who had built two cottages in our village, before emigrating to the United States in the nineteenth century. Young people now gravitate to the towns and even to Europe for employment. Migration is part of our own history, most recently for economic reasons.

Christians have a different perspective, following a master who had 'nowhere to lay his head', relying on friends and followers for accommodation in his journeying around the countryside. We are told to behave as 'strangers and aliens on earth', with our first allegiance to the Kingdom of God. That will be a challenging thought as we debate the issues about membership of the European Union!

Sue James

February 21st 2016

Chapel services - Spring 2016

Horeb Chapel, Crai: Each Sunday at 10.30 am, except for the service on 15th May, which will be at 2.30pm.

Apr 3 rd 2.00 pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle
Apr 17 th 2.00 pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle *
May 8 th 2.00 pm	Zoar Chapel	Pentrefelin
May 22 nd 2.00 pm	Zoar Chapel	Pentrefelin*
Jun 12 th Time tbc	Pastorate service	Brecon
June 26 th 2.00 pm	Ty Newydd	Trecastle*

*these are Communion services.

You may have heard that Saron Chapel at Cwmwysg has had some refurbishment. The chapel members were very grateful to be offered a temporary home by Ty Newydd in Trecastle but by the time you read this, the work will be complete and normal service will be resumed. If you would like to know more about services at Saron, call Maredyd Jones on 01874 636525.

From the Registers

We gave thanks for the lives of :

Thomas Price (Tom) Evans of Sennybridge
Ivor John Bowen formerly of Defynnog
Leonard John "Len the Black" Williams of Sennybridge
Mary Jenkins of Sennybridge
David Alwyn Lewis of Llandeilo'r Fân

We welcomed Rhys William Davies and Allfi Jac Kenny MacDonald into the Church on December 13th 2015 at St Teilo's.

Community Action for Road Safety (C.A.R.S)

As we approach milder and hopefully sunnier weather we will have to endure the invasion of motorbikes. The motorcyclists have undoubtedly had their bikes in a warm and safe habitat during the last few months. Many will not drive them if they know they are going to get dirty, and many haven't the wet weather and winter skills to drive them. But the damp and muddy days are coming to an end, and we will definitely see and hear motorcyclists during the spring and summer. Some may have changed their machines for more powerful ones, and others would have thought about getting a motorbike for the first time. It is with this in mind that there ought to be a concern amongst the motorcyclists and our communities. Local people do not want crashes, injury or deaths outside their front doors. We are trying to be positive and accommodating in liaising with Dyfed-Powys Police over this issue. We have had several meetings with Dyfed-Powys Police over the last few months, and a selected group of local residents will be trained locally to use speed guns with the Police in the next month or two. The guns can only be used in 30 or 40 m.p.h. restricted areas, but we hope that this initiative will make an impact locally. Delegates associated with the group range from Libanus, Llanhamlach, Llanspyddid, Brecon, Lower Chapel, Bwlch, Cwmdu, Trecastle and Sennybridge.



The invasion of bikes and the speed affects all the communities in the same way and the Police are aware of the ongoing problem. Of course, many motorcyclists adhere to highway laws and are not a problem whatsoever. However, the small percentage of drivers in cars, lorries and motorcyclists who have no consideration for the law and other road users is a growing problem and worrying for all of us. They are a big problem to those drivers who use the Brecon Beacons for pleasure, because people generally categorize all road users like the worst they see. Obviously this is not a true reflection on the way we all perceive drivers. If you have any further realistic solutions to the situation or you would like to support our quest to save lives and injury on our highways please get in touch. Dave Howells...Trecastle 01874 638290 Dr David Rees 01874 636427 or your local community councillor.

Trecastle Community Hall

Over the last few months a refurbishment has taken place at the hall. The Hall Committee has been lucky to source funding for new windows which were installed in November 2015, and we have also had a new flat roof installed above the toilet and storeroom area of the building. The interior is undergoing a complete repaint and the work is ongoing in the rooms which we have upstairs. The Hall has been used for a few more events than usual, and the committee were pleased to be asked to host an Agincourt Workshop by the Education section of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. Seven primary schools visited Trecastle for the workshops that took place at the end of January and the beginning of February 2016. The children and staff who accompanied the children were very complimentary about the warmth of the building and the comfort it offered. The Hall committee has since decided to host The Six Nations Rugby, and have been able to arrange the use of a large screen for that purpose. The Hall will also have Wi-Fi installed during March 2016 and more events will be hosted in the hall during the next few months. Please check Trecastle website for a regular update of events planned. Cinema and a Horse Racing night have been suggested. [Read more about it on www.Trecastle.org.uk](http://www.Trecastle.org.uk)

EISTEDDFOD FLYNYDDOL SENNI

Y Neuadd y Pentre
Dydd Sadwrn, Mai 14eg, 2016
Sesiwn y plant: 2.00y.p.
Oedolion: 7.00y.h.
Rhaglenni gan: Siân Norgate
01874 636621

Off The Bus Club ...



What a wonderful time Christmas is and children enjoy it more than anyone. Off the Bus Club had a round of festivities to celebrate the birth of Jesus, starting with an end of term party where they had great fun with some balloons. Who would have known that they are perfect sheep, shepherds and angels for the Church and Chapel carol services?

Off the Bus has had a busy January discovering some of the lessons to be learnt from St Paul's travels in Acts.

Shoots - as some of the children are getting older we starting to hold half-termly pizza and DVD evenings for years 4 to 7. Our last evening was held in January when we had a lively time watching and discussing 'Treasures in the Snow' sharing pizza and popcorn. Our next evening will be on 20th from 5pm to 7.30pm at Aberhyddnant. Give Liz a ring (636797) if you would like to come along.

We are open to all children from Sennybridge, Trecastle and Crai (and the wider area) of primary school age, all welcome.

For more details please contact Liz on 636797 or liz@abercottages.com

Mothering Sunday

Crai Church will be holding a Mothering Sunday service at 9.30am on Sunday 6th March with hot drinks and cake to follow. All families welcome.

Defynnog Church will also hold a service on March 6th at 11am where we will remember the importance of mothers in our lives, whatever our age.



Spring Calendar

Tues March 8th 7pm	Sennybridge WI: South Powys First Responders	Maescar Hall
Tues March 8th 7:30pm	Trecastle Ladies Guild : Annette Canley talks about head massage.	Trecastle Community Centre
Fri March 25th 2 - 4:30 pm	Children's Easter Crafts	Trecastle Community Centre
Tues April 5th 7pm	Sennybridge WI: Who do they think they are? Old photos with Mrs A Noble	Maescar Hall
Tues April 12th 7:30pm	Trecastle Ladies Guild : Graham Robson talks about the Falklands	Trecastle Community Centre
Tues May 3rd 7pm	Sennybridge WI: Resolutions and Bring & Buy	Maescar Hall
Dydd Sadwrn 14 Mai	Eisteddfod Heol Senni	Neuadd Heol Senni

Weekly Diary

Mondays	3:45 - 5pm	Off the Bus Club	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Mon - Thur	9:30 - 12:30 pm	Cylch Meithrin	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Tuesdays	1:00 - 3pm	Toddler Group	Sennybridge School
	5:30 - 7 pm	Brownies (age 7 - 10)	Sennybridge School Hall & Youth Wing
	7:00 - 8:30pm	Girl Guides	Sennybridge Youth Wing
Wednesdays	1:00 - 3:30 pm	Afternoon bowls	Maescar Hall
	5:00 - 6:00 pm	Rainbows (age 5 - 7)	Sennybridge School Hall
	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Short Mat Bowls	Maescar Hall
	6:30 pm	Knitting Club	Trecastle Community Hall
	7:30 pm	Trecastle YFC	Trecastle Community Hall
Thursdays	6:30 - 7:30	Zumba	Maescar Hall
	7:30 pm	Trallong Ladies Choir	Maescar Hall
	7:30 - 8:30 pm	Bell ringing	St Cynog's Church, Defynnog
Friday	pm	Sennybridge Junior Football Club	Riverside Park (football ground)

Monthly Diary

First Monday	Community Garden Club	Crai Village Hall
First Tuesday	Sennybridge WI	Maescar Hall
Second Tuesday	Trecastle Ladies Guild	Trecastle Community Hall
First Wednesday	Merched Crai	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Third Wednesday 10am -12 noon	Brecon & District Mind Coffee Morning	Maescar Hall
Last Wednesday	Craft Club	Neuadd y Plwyf Crai
Third Thursday	Worship Meeting	Bronydd Mawr Farm

Easter Colouring



Brecon, Sennybridge & District Gymanfa Ganu

May 22nd at 6pm at
Brychgoed Chapel.

Rehearsals for the
Gymanfa are:

May 1st at 2pm, Saron,
Cwmwysg
and May 15th at 2pm in
Senni Hall

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Did you know that when the Queen opened the Usk Reservoir in 1955, commemorative plaques were unveiled at the entrance to the walk way and on a specially erected tablet. Sadly, these plaques were stolen and the stonework damaged. Over the winter months, the Upper Usk Valley Rural Alliance has been working with Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water to replace the stolen plaques and restore the stonework. We hope to mark this event with an unveiling ceremony and an exhibition in the summer.



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Easter Services



March 20th (Palm Sunday) 9:30am	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
11 am	Holy Eucharist with Palm Ceremonies	St Cynog, Defynnog
2pm	Holy Eucharist	St Mary, Traeanglas
Monday of Holy Week (March 21st) 7pm	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
Tuesday of Holy Week (March 22nd) 12 noon	Chrism Mass	Brecon Cathedral
7pm	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
Wednesday of Holy Week (March 23rd) 7pm	Holy Eucharist	Capel Rhydybriw
Maundy Thursday (March 24th) 7pm	Holy Eucharist with Stripping of the Altar	St Ilid, Crai
Good Friday (March 25th) 2:30pm	Good Friday Service	Horeb Chapel, Crai
3pm	Good Friday Service	Brychgoed Chapel, Heol Senni
7pm	Reflections of the Passion	St Cynog, Defynnog
Holy Saturday (March 26th) 7pm	Easter Vigil with Blessing of the Easter Light	St Cynog, Defynnog
Easter Day (March 27th) 9:30 am	Holy Eucharist	St Ilid, Crai
10:30 am	Easter Communion	Horeb Chapel, Crai
11 am	Holy Eucharist	St David, Llywel
2pm	Easter Communion	Zoar Chapel, Pentrefelin
4:30pm	Evensong	St Cynog, Defynnog