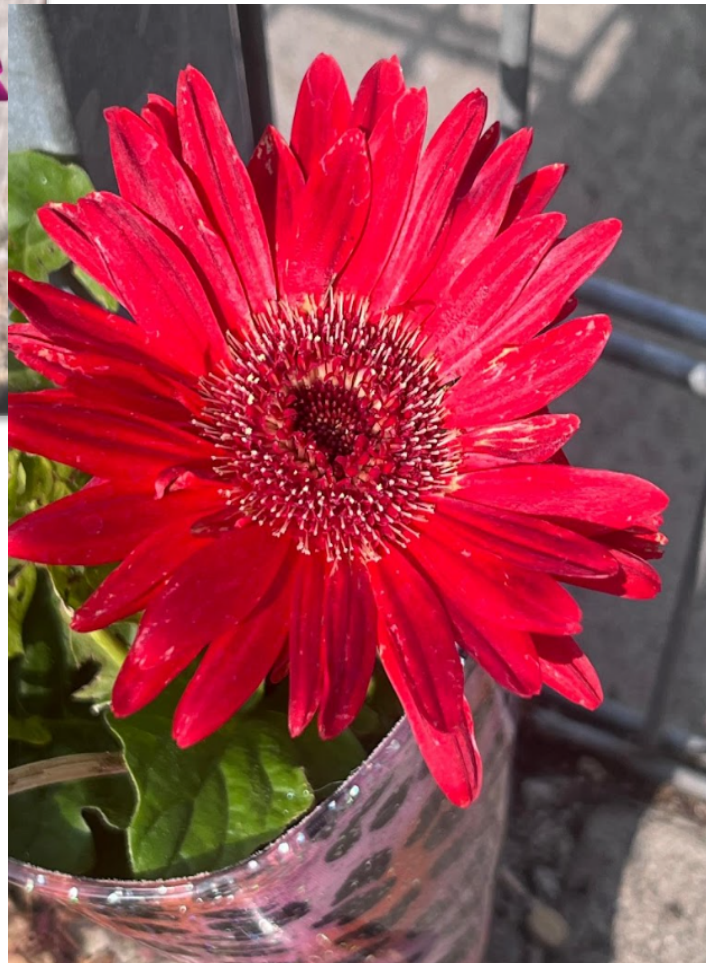


NEWSLINK

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER, 2026

CANTON UNITING CHURCH



Photographs of the church garden
taken by Megan Atherton

Pastorate Ministers

Revd. David Dean
Revd Martha McInnes

Canton Uniting Church Deacons in May, 2025

Alison Walker (Chair)	Chair@cantonuniting.org.uk
Audrey Takle	Bookings@cantonuniting.org.uk
Barbara Morgans (Minutes Secretary)	
Eva Elliott	Garden@cantonuniting.org.uk
Fiona Harding (Secretary)	Secretary@cantonuniting.org.uk
Megan Atherton	
Alan Farnham	
David Smith	
Ceri George	
Marieke Arthur	
Abi Powell	

Other contacts:

Andrew Wilson-Dickson	Music@cantonuniting.org.uk
Kenneth Woods (Treasurer)	Treasurer@cantonuniting.org.uk

Dear Friends,

July/August 2026

In two months Martha will be on sabbatical. David had a sabbatical three two years ago. What is the point of giving a minister three months off every 7 to 10 years? Just so they can have a holiday for three months? Sounds good—perhaps time for a three month cruise across the Atlantic?

A sabbatical, however, is not just a three month holiday. Over the years the URC has changed its requirements, but the denomination does expect a minister to have a plan and use the time wisely. Historically, we had to write a paper afterwards though that requirement is less rigid than it was 20 years ago. (Of course the origin of the word, 'holiday' is 'holy days' so we hope the sabbatical will connect each minister with the Holy One. It was also linked to festivals so there might be a bit of fun and celebration on any holiday!)

Sabbatical, as you may have guessed, comes from the same word as 'sabbath.' We remember that the sabbath was the seventh day in the Genesis story of creation. And on that day, after all the work of creation, God rested. Sundays may have been called the sabbath in some of our memories. Many folks have memories of Sundays in which they could do nothing—except go to church and eat—it was the sabbath. One of the worries about shops opening on Sundays was the fear that people would have no time to rest or be with family. (Do you remember the campaigns to stop shops opening on Sundays?)

So a sabbatical is a space for rest, reflection, and potential learning. Some ministers use it to study because they can't carve out that space in their regular schedules. Sabbatical, for ministers, is a time to clear out the cobwebs of our minds and let go of the every day worries of church for a few weeks.

We are both very grateful to all the support you give to enable us to take our sabbaticals. But it is clear that sabbath—rest—is something that is good for all people. The Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann, sought to reclaim the idea of sabbath. He suggested that sabbath is an act of resistance to a culture that has made all aspects of life commodities—things to be used, to be bought or sold. He suggests sabbath is also a sign of resistance to a call to instant gratification. It is a commitment to slow down and recognise the presence of God in our midst.

Perhaps, we need to think about what sabbath looks like for us. We have known churches which have paused their busyness in order to create a resting and reflection space, especially churches in a transition of leadership or programming. We guess that most people recognise a need for a period of rest to clear the clutter from their minds and refocus. That could be a day at the beach or a week on holiday in the Highlands. We remember that even God rested after all the work of creation.

As we enter the holidaying season, we hope all of us can all find a bit of sabbath. May the blessing of sabbath—holidays, rest, vacation, time off—give you the energy to return to the work to which God has called you.

Peace,

Martha and David

Church Secretary Annual Report, AGM, May 2026

Friends, it has been another full, lively, and occasionally surprising year in the life of our church — the kind of year that reminds us that the Holy Spirit is indeed at work, even if She sometimes works in mysterious ways, for example through bring-and-share lunches and lost pound coins. This year has been active, collaborative, and occasionally unpredictable — which is to say, entirely normal for church life.

Worship and Pastorate Activities

We were pleased to welcome Penrhys Church in September 2025. We shared a service together followed by a bring-and-share lunch, that proved once again that our congregation often expresses love through food.

The Pastorate leadership teams continue to meet regularly. These meetings have led to the creation of the Pastorate Newsletter, which has helped us share news more effectively across the pastorate, and we have continued to share pastorate services at Elfed Avenue and City URC where we welcomed Rev. Jenny Dobers from the World Council of Reformed Churches Europe. We look forward to these services becoming a regular part of the church calendar and are planning for a service coming up on 28th June at Beulah, and later in the year we will be hosting a service here at Canton.

Fundraising and Charity Support

We have had a great year of fundraising through a series of events that have been both financially and socially fruitful!

The Building Fund has been supported by Numerous concerts, A Silent Film Night in December and the recent introduction of events being run by newly-formed birthday groups – events including a Quiz Night, a Barn Dance, and an upcoming Games Afternoon.

We have supported several different charities this year. For Christian Aid, as well as envelope donations, we have held events including Rowena and Jan's party, John Morgans' talk, a coffee morning, Christmas day collection – and a rogue £1 found by the cleaners – possibly the widow's mite?

We held a Macmillan coffee morning in September and continue to support Cardiff food bank and Chapter larder at key festivals and periods in the church calendar.

Other charities have been supported through tea and coffee donations; Bronwen's wish and – more recently – Pedal Power.

A huge thank you to all who gave, came, joined in, danced, played instruments, baked, poured tea, or dropped coins accidentally.

Events: Films, Fun, and Fellowship

Our Film Nights have been thriving, with screenings in October, at Christmas — featuring The Polar Express, which raised both festive cheer and questions about the uncanny animation, February half term and on Easter Monday, when we combined a crafternoon with a showing of King of Kings — glue sticks and Gospel in perfect harmony.

Worship, Study, and Prayer

We continued our shared spiritual life through a Lenten Study, Tom and Marieke's Grace Bible Study and Prayers for Peace, and welcomed the talks held responding to political issues and the far right, reflecting the ongoing need for thoughtful Christian engagement with the world around us.

Church Workers and Deacons

We recognise the hard work so many people put into the life of the church week-in, week-out, including our deacons, the music group, the building development group, the worship committee, Junior Church teachers, gardeners and Eco warriors, everyone who welcomes on the door, makes tea and coffee, prepares communion, Katie and Isobel on the social media, Audrey looking after church bookings, Steve fixing anything that goes wrong, Ken and Alan looking after the money, Hugh on the Newslink, Megan as pulpit supply, Alison as Chair and Safeguarding lead, along with Ceri, and of course Martha and David for their support in all we do.

In addition, our deacons and church workers completed safeguarding training in September, ensuring that we remain safe, welcoming, and well-informed place - compliant, responsible, and fully up-to-date with the ever-expanding world of safeguarding requirements.

Life Events

We give thanks for the life and witness of those we lost this year: Elinor Kapp, Barbara Jones, and Doreen Cassam, and think too of Audrey's sister Desri. We remember them with love and gratitude.

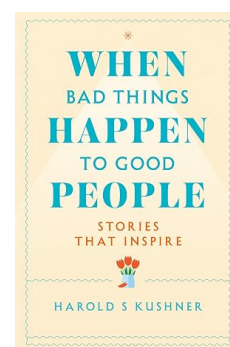
We also celebrated the wedding of Geoff and Brenda, a welcome moment of joy, and only last Sunday formally accepting them into membership of Canton Uniting Church.

It has been a year of steady work, shared effort, and the usual mixture of planned events and things that simply happened to us. Thank you to everyone who contributed time, energy, thought, or food. Your commitment keeps this community running — sometimes smoothly, sometimes creatively, but always faithfully.

Fiona Harding, Church Secretary

Inaugural Theology Book Club

Have you asked why God lets suffering happen? (Of course, we all have.) Well, on 27 July at 7.30 p.m. we have going to host a discussion at the manse on the book, 'Why Bad Things Happen to Good People' by Harold Kushner. Come along if you are interested to be part of the discussion and reflect on how the author holds the tensions of the love, power, and knowledge of God alongside his personal experience of suffering.



Iona Pilgrimage



There are places in all of our lives which we call 'thin places.' These are those places where God seems closer to us--the boundary between heaven and earth seems close. For some people the island of Iona, off the coast of western Scotland, is one of those places. Two years ago a number of us

from Cardiff travelled there for a week in May. Following that experience we were asked to plan another pilgrimage.

So there will be a trip to Iona again from 15 to 21 May 2027. The trip usually also includes a day of travel before and after the six nights on Iona. The cost for the week at Iona is £960 which includes all meals. In addition, there are transport costs and accommodation costs on the way there and back. There are a few spaces left on the trip. If you are interested or have questions, speak to Martha or David.



Are we descendants of Erbery?

In July 2026, John Morgans presented and asked church members this question. My answer is a resounding, proud yes. We are not biological descendants of William Erbery, but we are direct inheritors of his spiritual bravery. By establishing Cardiff's first Independent congregation on Womanby Street in 1640, Erbery blazed a radical path of faith that flows straight through our modern United Reformed Church identity.

Faith and the Foundations of British Democracy

During the English Civil War, Erbery's radical theology as an Army chaplain intersected with political firebrands like Colonel Thomas Rainsborough. At the Putney Debates of 1647, Rainsborough delivered history's most famous defence of universal suffrage:

"I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he."

While Rainsborough fought for democratic rights on the battlefield, Erbery provided the spiritual dimension. He argued passionately against state-controlled religion and oppressive hierarchies that disempowered ordinary people, championing the same democratic ideals that were captured at Putney.

Chartism and the Newport Rising

These pioneering ideas directly inspired the 19th-century Chartist movement. Chartists fought for universal male suffrage and secret ballots—a struggle that erupted locally in the Newport Rising of 1839. In Cardiff, prominent dissenters like the industrialist John Batchelor, of the Charles Street Congregational Church, championed these Chartist ideals of political equality.

A Living Tradition

This intersection of faith, social justice, and equality remains a living tradition in our community. It was deeply celebrated at a memorial service held at our Church in May 2023, where the Rev. Marc Dummer spoke on this legacy while honouring Hilda Smith, a social worker and lifelong feminist and socialist, fighting for gender equality and the minimum wage. For years while working near Putney, Hilda kept Rainsborough's famous quotation on her desk. She lived out the belief that the "poorest he" and the ordinary woman deserved an equal voice.



So, are we descendants of Erbery?

Yes. Every time we stand up for the vulnerable, support Amnesty International and Christian Aid, and in our partnership work, we assert that all people are equal before God, we carry their torch. We are a church born from dissent, shaped by Chartism's democratic fire, and called to continue the fight for equity and equality today.

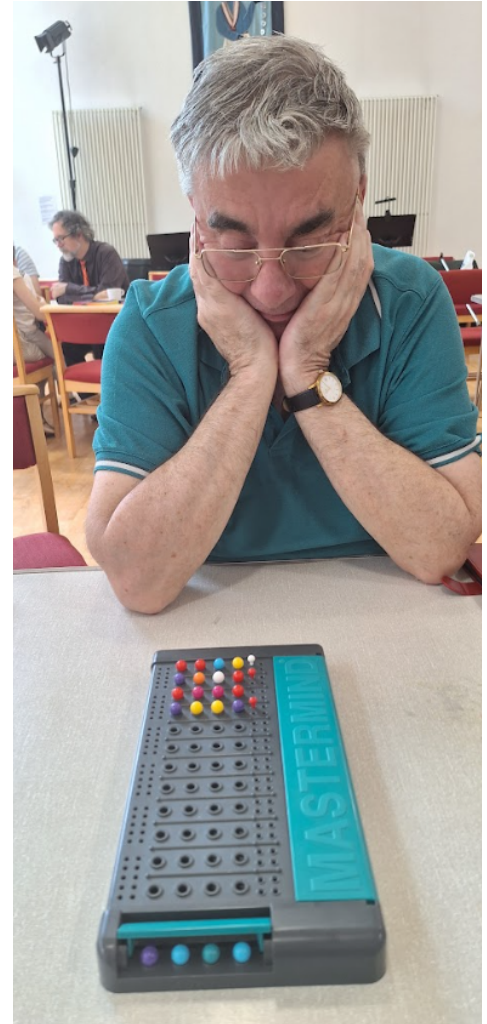
Is this consistently so?

I am reminded how we began attending CUC in 2010. Before then, Hilda attended a URC near our home in Newport. Over several years, Hilda found she had very different views from the Minister. His views on the role of women and equalities became so much she firmly and politely chastised him after a service and promised to never attend again. True to her word, after contacting the Rev. Marc Dummer about a Fair-Trade event, we arrived home at CUC.

David Smith

Teens Table Top Games

On the 14th of June, the Teen Group organized a Table Top Games afternoon, following the morning service. We all enjoyed the bring and share lunch, before playing various games in the main hall.





Canton Uniting Church – Crafting for Greenbelt!

What is Greenbelt? Greenbelt is a Christian festival set within the grounds of Boughton House near Kettering in Northamptonshire. It's a superb place to explore, grow and celebrate belief, artistry and activism. It's a place of beautiful encounter, full of music, talks, worship, workshops, drama and arts, activities for all ages, green spaces and stillness. It's a rare moment to come together as Christians from near and far to dream up a better world, to dance and debate, to pray and to party! Each year, the URC shares its programming and venue with Trussell, the anti-poverty charity, and invites all URC folk to send in a simple craft item that helps inspire the festivalgoers who enter this tent.



What songs keep you going when things get tough?

A team anthem? A hit from your youth? A workout track? A favourite hymn?

At Greenbelt Festival this year, we want to inspire the thousands of people who come into our venue, The Table, by hanging up lots of cut-out musical notes that have the titles or key lyrics of your 'songs that keep you going' written on them. We'll also make a playlist from these songs for everyone to hear.

These are the musical notes that we created at a recent service when we were looking at inspiration.

Getting through the stages---A USER'S GUIDE, Tom Arthur

Most of us are too young to remember the days when children suffered corporal punishment for misbehaviour. When my brothers and I were young and misbehaved, Dad would take off his belt and give us a severe hiding on the buttocks. The pain was horrific.

Then one day everything changed. No more whippings. I remember once when my younger brother was doing something, I said to Dad, "Aren't you going to stop him?" And Dad said, "He's just going through a stage."

I learned the wisdom of that when I screwed up royally as a teenager, more than once. And Dad stood by me, supporting me. That taught me how to be a parent, particularly with our three adopted children. A friend of mine called it, "redemptive parenting".

I suspect they had read Dr Benjamin Spock's popular 1948, 'The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care', the parenting handbook of their generation. Spock broke down growing up into several stages, birth to three, pre-school (3-6), middle years (6-11), and adolescence. In each stage life is complete in itself but has certain unique tasks to master. Negotiating the challenges of these stages can look like "misbehaviour". Did the British world of parenting go through a similar revolution?

These developmental stages continue throughout life. In the 20th century thinking about human development was dominated by this idea of going through "stages". In the post-graduate "seminaries" where American candidates for the ministry study, one of the requirements is a year of what they call "clinical pastoral education", a year of experience on a hospital ward, group reflection and personal psychotherapy, which Dr Carl Rogers broke down into seven stages.

Stage 1: Resistance and Defensiveness;
Stage 2: Talking About Others, not Oneself;
Stage 3: Seeing Oneself from the Outside;
Stage 4: Unblocking One's Feelings;
Stage 5: Trusting Oneself;
Stage 6: Growth and understanding;
Stage 7: Autonomy and Self-acceptance.

What we went through in therapy mirrored what we tried to do in pastoral care on the ward: learning to listen actively, resisting the temptation to talk about ourselves when our responsibility was to listen closely to what the other was saying, a relationship that helped them find their own way through these stages.

This sequence of experiences is closely related to what Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross called the Five Stages of Dying.

Stage 1: denial,
Stage 2: anger,
Stage 3: bargaining,
Stage 4: depression
Stage 5: acceptance.

I will never forget one of my fellow seminarians coming into lunch after having spent the morning on his CPE hospital ward. An elderly lady with whom he had developed a close

relationship was coming to terms with her own death, and said to him, "I think I am going to die." Too nervous to spend the energy and attention it took to listen to her, he said in a cheerful voice, "Oh, you aren't going to die!" How often do our attempts to cheer someone up simply reflect our own anxiety over hearing what our friend might desperately need someone to hear?

STAGES OF FAITH. Dr James Fowler has talked about stages of faith. Faith is trust, and the first experience of faith is the "pre-Stage" trust in being held, and the confidence that milk is there to feed one's hunger. Fowler describes six stages of faith development. See if you can recognize them in your own experience. Where are you now?

Stage 1: pre-school children. Faith is not a set of thought-out ideas, but a set of impressions largely gained from parents and other significant adults--faith as intuitions gained by participating in the rituals that bind the faith community. This faith experience relates to the child's need for security in the caring continuity of family relationships. If broken or abusive here, the very basic sense of faith as trust and security can remain damaged throughout life.

Stage 2: Ages 6 to 11 generally. Magical-Literal. Children at this age find it difficult to work out the difference between verified facts and things that might be more magical. They think in concrete and literal ways. Participation in ritual remains an important learning experience. The literal but fanciful nature of the Bible stories is learned uncritically from story-telling and play, while the children begin to understand the significance of the stories for the way they live and the choices they make as they grow more independent. Their world of trusted others expands to include teachers and friends.

Stage 3: Conventional Faith, ages from about 13 to 18 or so. Many people and many faith communities!) get stuck in this developmental stage their entire lives! We can begin to think more abstractly. The various stories and rituals now seem more unified, about a set of values and morals that bind the community and guide choices. With abstract thinking comes the ability to see layers of meaning in the stories, rituals and symbols of their faith.

At this stage we can claim our faith as our own in the church's provision of baptism or confirmation, instead of just following what our family does. However, the faith that is claimed is usually still the faith of their family.

Issues of religious authority extend at this stage. Whom shall we follow? In our older adolescents and as adults still in this conventional stage, authority is found in our peer group (friends) and in significant voices of a wider religious community.

Stage 4: Older adolescent, 18-22. Individual-Reflective Faith. In this stage we start to question our own assumptions around our faith tradition and the authority structure of our faith community. This is often the time that we leave our religious community if the answers to our questions are not to our liking. Greater maturity is gained by rejecting some parts of our faith while affirming other parts. In the end, we start to take greater ownership of our own faith journey. Recommended reading: Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World*, and *Leaving Church: A Memoir*.

Stage 5: Connected Faith. Our early thirties or so. The struggles and questioning of stage 4 give way to some answers and feeling comfortable with knowing that all the answers might not be easily found. Our need for individual self-reflection gives way to the

importance of community in faith development. There is a respect for the different ideas and opinions of others as sources for our own growth. The community becomes an important location for reflection and acting together in carrying out the responsibilities of faith. Father Christmas is us.

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith. It is a rare person who reaches this stage of faith. At this stage we are secure enough in our identity that we find the deepest meaning and experience of our faith in our connection with many different others both within our own faith community and outside it, knowing that we are all managing the same project of living compassionately, however awkwardly our own faith stories are at describing that life project.

QUESTION: WHERE AM I? Reflect on your own journey to discover where you find your sense of wholeness right now. What are you trying to negotiate at this stage of life? Where can I find the resources I need--in church, in friends, in activities, in reading and reflecting--to move through this stage with deeper and deeper wholeness in my Christian life?

QUESTION. WHERE IS CANTON UNITING? Church communities as a whole can be characterized by these stages. Where do I think we are in our communal journey? What is our community project right now, and how can it be a resource for my (and our) journey of faith? What responsibility do I have in helping us negotiate the stages of faith together (all will not be at the same stage at the same time!)? How can we "build up" the church (Ephesians 4:11-16:)?

For your musical diary!

Sunday, 9th August at 3pm

China meets Wales - a programme of music by Chinese music students from the RWCMD:

- **Kaidi Shen**, bass-baritone
- **Yingzi Song**, soprano
- **Meredith Bi**, pianist and collaborative artist

The programme brings together a selection of Welsh and Chinese songs, celebrating the cultural connection between China and Wales. Through this concert, we hope to share our appreciation for Welsh music and culture while also introducing audiences to the beauty and diversity of Chinese vocal repertoire.

And three concert bookings for Autumn/Winter 2026/7 in the **Sundays at Six** series:

- **20th September**
- **10th January**

Music and artists to be announced soon...

Canton Uniting Church Services Rota August/September, 2026

If you cannot do duties, please find someone to replace you. Thank you.

Sunday 2nd August

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 32.22-31; Psalm 17:1-7,15; Romans 9.1-5; Matthew 14.13-21

Worship Leader: Revd Dr Marc Dummer and Revd Alison Dummer

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Abi

Deacon on Notices: Fiona

Readers: Taiwo and Ken

Refreshments: Fiona & Rob

Sunday, 9th August, 2026

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 37:1-4,12-28; Psalm 105:1-6,16-22,45b; Romans 10.5-15; Matthew 14.22-33

Worship Leader: Mike

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Ken

Deacon on Notices: Eva

Readers: Sian & Alan

Refreshments: Ann

Sunday, 16th August 2026, Communion

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 133; Romans 11.1-2a,29-32; Matthew 15. (10-20),21-28

Worship Leader: Bethan Trott Chris Atherton

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Jan

Deacon on Notices: Ceri

Readers: Ceri & Eva

Refreshments: Megan

Sunday, 23rd August, 2026

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 1:8–2:10; Psalm 124; Romans 12.1-8; Matthew 16.13-20

Worship Leader: TBA

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Fiona & Rob

Deacon on Notices: Fiona

Readers: Becky and Megan

Refreshments: Abi

Sunday, 30th August, 2026

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 3:1-15; Psalm 105:1-6,16-22,45b; Romans 12.9-21; Matthew 16.21-28

Worship Leader: Abi and Becky

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Alan

Deacon on Notices: Megan

Readers: Jan & Hugh

Refreshments: Sian and Josh

Sunday, 6th September, 2026

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149; Romans 13.8-14; Matthew 18.15-20

Worship Leader: Revd Dr Tom Arthur

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Abi

Deacon on Notices: Alison

Readers: Fiona & David

Refreshments: Alison

Sunday, 13th September, 2026

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114; Romans 14.1-12; Matthew 18.21-35

Worship Leader: Julia Edwards

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Megan

Deacon on Notices: Ken

Readers: Alison & Steve

Refreshments: Hugh & Bence

Sunday, 20th September, 2026, Communion

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45;

Philippians 1.21-30; Matthew 20.1-16

Worship Leader: Revd David Dean

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Ken

Deacon on Notices: Eva

Readers: Ceri & Hugh

Communion Duties: Prep: Hugh & Bence

Serve: Ceri and David

Refreshments: The Munnik
family

Sunday, 27th September 2026

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 17.1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2.1-13; Matthew 21.23-32

Worship Leader: Katie

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Sian

Deacon on Notices: Megan

Readers: Taiwo & Ken

Refreshments: Ann

Sunday, 4th October, 2026

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19; Philippians 3.4b-14; Matthew 21.33-46

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Megan

Deacon on Notices: Ceri

Readers: David & Megan

Refreshments: Megan

CANTON UNITING CHURCH was established in 1995 when New Trinity United Reformed Church joined with Llandaff Road Baptist Church and in 2013 joined with Grand Avenue United Reformed Church Ely which in 2005 had united with Saintwell URC. We are committed to ecumenism through our links with Cytûn, the Covenanted Churches and Churches Together in Canton. Our previous minister was the Chair of the Committee of the Covenanted Baptists which, with the Church in Wales, the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Reformed Churches seeks to bring about the goal of uniting together.

CONTACTS

Ministers: Revd. Martha McInnes - Tel.: 07519 831405
Revd. David Dean - Tel.: 07772 714388

Secretary: Mrs Fiona Harding Email: Secretary@Cantonuniting.org.uk

Treasurer: Kenneth Woods Email: Treasurer@Cantonuniting.org.uk

Chair: Mrs Alison Walker Email: Chair@Cantonuniting.org.uk

Website: www.cantonuniting.org.uk

USUAL WEEKLY DIARY & MONTHLY EVENTS -

The Wednesday evening prayers on Zoom have finished.

AND FINALLY ... Please hand in material for the next Newslink to Hugh Morgans by the end of the Morning service on **Sunday, September 20th, 2026.**

Email address: hughmorgans@hotmail.com

