

# NEWSLINK

JUNE - JULY 2025

## CANTON UNITING CHURCH



First white strawberry

## **Canton Uniting Church Deacons in May, 2025**

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Dear Friends,

June 2025

You have probably all heard the saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' When we see grandparents and friends supporting parents to raise their children, we see this saying in action.

Author, Kate Bowler, adds to this saying by stating: 'No one gets through life alone. It's true that we all need a village, but there will be unique times when we get to BE the village for someone else.' We all need a community/a village. Much of Paul's writing in the New Testament is about how the newly formed churches need to find new ways to live together based on their developing faith in Jesus. These churches have to overcome culture and social preferences to create Christian community. In Philippians that means putting arguments aside and not take sides against each other. In Acts Jewish believers have to overcome dietary laws which limit what can be eaten and with whom they can eat. Putting those laws aside enables them to broaden their community. In Corinth, the wealthy have to wait until the servant-classes of Corinth finish their work to share meals together. Paul stated that it was inappropriate for the wealthy to eat and drink before the others to arrive. Inclusion meant waiting and eating together.

Paul also uses the body of Christ imagery to stress the importance of each part of the community. According to Paul those labelled the 'least' important are as significant as those labelled the 'most' important. The body does not function properly without every part. All of this reminds us of the importance of each person in our community-the church is a village where every person has a role and every role is essential.

This summer there will be times for our 'village' to be together. One of these times will be a joint service at Elfed Ave on 29 June. We will gather with our wider URC 'village'--sharing worship and friendship together with a lunch afterwards.

But being a village is not just these public events. Perhaps the most important part of being a village (the body of Christ) is those simple moments of sharing time together. It's finding space to share a meal or a drink. It's taking the time to offer someone a lift or sharing a laugh after church. It is showing up to offer a helping hand when someone is struggling with life. This is the privilege of 'being there' for people. When Bowler says we get 'to be a village for someone else' she is reflecting on these 'simple', informal actions which make such a difference for others.

When we look at the state of our world, we may despair and wonder what we can do. Perhaps the seemingly simple actions of creating a village/ being the Body of Christ are an act of resistance. They remind us that we are not alone. They focus us on God's presence, still, in this crazy world. And perhaps, most importantly, they offer hope to a broken world. As social forces seek to drive us apart, following Jesus, being part of the village/Body of Christ brings us together. The togetherness creates community where all are welcomed nurtured and valued.

No matter who are you or where you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome in our 'village.'

Your part in this 'body of Christ' is important. Thanks for being here.

Yours in Christ,

Martha and David

## **Canton Uniting Church Secretary Annual Report May 2025**

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

“Two people are better than one. They get more done by working together. If one person falls, the other can help him up. But it is bad for the person who is alone when he falls. No one is there to help him. If two lie down together, they will be warm. But a person alone will not be warm. An enemy might defeat one person, but two people together can defend themselves. A rope that has three parts wrapped together is hard to break.”

Not everyone realizes just how much goes on behind the scenes to prepare for Sunday worship—it doesn't all happen by magic (or divine intervention) when we show up. Think of it like a swan: gliding gracefully across the water on Sunday morning, but underneath, paddling furiously to keep everything moving!

### **\*\*A Peek Behind the Curtain\*\***

Throughout the week, our worship leader sends their music choices to Andrew, while Ken works his magic on PowerPoint slides, ensuring they comply with licensing rules and creating large-print handouts for those who need them. By Friday, Andrew and the music group have perfected their arrangements, ready to lead our musical worship. Meanwhile, Megan rounds up Bible readers and, when she's not doing that, is expertly 'volunteering' unsuspecting individuals to lead worship—so well, in fact, that we never have an unfilled Sunday!

### **\*\*The Heroes Who Keep Us Safe & Running\*\***

Our safeguarding officers, Alison and Ceri, are the silent guardians ensuring that everyone who works with children, vulnerable adults, and key responsibilities like finances is properly checked. Meanwhile, Audrey and Steve are the dynamic duo keeping our building in order—Audrey masterfully handles bookings and tirelessly oversees the church premises, always on hand to welcome builders, electricians, and meter readers. Steve, our go-to fixer, dives into repairs and works his technological wizardry when things (rarely, of course!) go awry in a service.

### **\*\*Connecting & Caring\*\***

Beyond Sundays, our outreach extends far and wide—Andrew and Katie maintain our website and social media, Hugh curates Newslink, and our fabulous hospitality team ensures everyone is warmly welcomed at the door, and with tea and coffee. Marieke does wonders maintaining the garden and rehoming forgotten treasures from the back hall, while Alan handles our collections and charity donations. Deacons and officers meet monthly to keep everything running, while many devote themselves to pastoral care to ensure that no one is forgotten. And behind the scenes of all this? Alison, our tireless church chair, who—rumour has it—never takes a day off.

### **\*\*A Community Hub\*\***

Our buildings are well-used, hosting regular groups, one-off events, and special celebrations. We're proud to continue our partnership with AA, with Audrey and Alison meeting regularly with their team.



We are blessed to have the leadership of our ministers, Martha and David, as part of the Cardiff and Penarth URC Pastorate, and Alison and I attend Pastorate Leadership Team meetings every few months to exchange ideas and support one another. Last June, we gathered for a pastorate day out at City URC, enjoying food, fun, and fellowship, concluding with a communion service. Bible studies remain a cornerstone of our spiritual journey, with Lenten studies led by our ministers and a monthly series hosted by Tom and Marieke.

### **\*\*Giving Back & Coming Together\*\***

Over the past year, we've supported charity events, hosting a Macmillan coffee morning, supporting our local foodbank through collections—especially during Advent—and donating proceeds from Andrew's Silent Film Night. Lent saw contributions to Chapter's community larder, helping those struggling to make ends meet. On Christmas morning, and more recently we have collected for Christian Aid, a cause close to many hearts, with thanks to Ceri George for representing CUC and the Synod.

But community is about more than just giving—it is about sharing life together! From our Bring and Share meals at Agape to intergenerational Sunday Fundays, Family Film nights (don't miss the next one next Sunday!), and incredible Sunday at 6 concerts, we've celebrated fellowship in countless ways. Most recently, we enjoyed a concert from Michael Munnik and friends, raising funds for our building project. And last summer, we had the joy of welcoming Oli into the church family with his dedication—a truly special moment.

Through all these moments—big and small—we continue to build a vibrant, caring, and faith-filled community, striving to share God's love in all we do and trusting in God's guidance as we journey together.

Fiona Harding  
Church Secretary

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## **Teens**

The Teens group has been up to a lot this past year, from activities, to journeys, to taking on new roles.

Around this time last year, we watched a film called 'I, Daniel Blake' while thinking about poverty and different situations around the world.

We also led a service in the summer with the theme of 'Every day miracles' and lots of different things happening. Mug cakes were being made in the kitchen, there was some music making over in the corner, Ore led an activity with newspapers and Leo led a Bible study.

Although we didn't get any starring roles in last year's nativity, most of us helped read Bible verses and prayers and learnt more about that time of the year through this. In the summer, Rev David Dean held a session every Sunday (accompanied by pizza from Domino's down the road) about thinking about church membership and what thoughts

came with it, and on the last one of those sessions, it turned out to be the last Sunday with Isla before Canada. So, we finished the run of sessions with ice cream from Calabrisella. In March we went back to Youth Assembly, some of us for the third time, and this time we had another member join us (Bence), and I think Leo had a great time not sharing a room with just strangers this time round. The theme for this Youth Assembly was All Are Welcome and we decided to bring that back with us.

Following Youth Assembly, Wales still had not appointed a Youth rep, so Leo will be taking on some part of that role when his exams are over.

Similar to Youth Assembly, the younger kids got an opportunity earlier this month to take part in a similar weekend (called 1T4) filled with activities and sleepless nights.

Lastly, as you remember we led the service a few weeks ago, where the theme was 'All are welcome'. This service included crafts, interviews and Bible readings. We also got to share with one another our experiences of being welcomed into the church, and also into our Teens group.

Isobel Harding

## **Music Group**

Recently the congregation may have noticed a change in the make-up - and the sound - of the music group. We have been joined by Geoff Eales, an outstanding jazz pianist with a remarkable track record of performances as soloist and leader of bands he has created (Electric Eales - nice!). There's far too much to say about him here - just type in Geoff Eales. He is already teaming up with Hiroko, another major talent in the Music Group, for musical exploration.

Then, also recently, we've had a further revelation of the talents of the Munniks, where Mike recently supported the building fund with an amazingly creative concert of his own songs, with backing from some music group members. Leo, too, has recently taken his ABRSM Grade 3 exam (recorded in CUC), where he gained a distinction!

In addition, the younger generation are supporting us with their developing musical skills: Leo (see above), either playing the violin or sitting on the Cajón or playing timpani; Emily and Gloria, attending when they can, amongst a blizzard of GCSE and A-level exams.

It's wonderful to be able to draw on these resources and we are lucky to have a core of regulars of those already mentioned, with other busy people - Lucy, Alison and Eva - making key contributions. We must be the only church music group in the country blessed with the therapeutic sound of the Japanese koto - thanks to Hiroko.

Some of us have suffered with the battering of family and illness problems, but people have fulfilled a vital role when they can. Singers are what we lack, unfortunately. With one or two more we could raise our worship music to another level. Surely you are not too busy for an hour early on Friday evening?!

AGW-D May 2025

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## **Penrhys: A Village on a Hill by John and Norah Morgans**

On May 18th, John Morgans came to Canton Uniting Church where he spoke about his experiences at Llanfair Uniting Church in Penrhys, Rhondda.

It was a most informative event, during which he talked about the development of the church community on Penrhys, and the role of the church in community development.



Following the event, tea and cakes were shared, and a retiring collection for Christian Aid raised £235.

Many thanks should go to John and to Peter Noble, who facilitated the accompanying slide show, and also to Eva, who organised and chaired the event so efficiently.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### Response to February 2025 review of income and expenditure

Members may recollect that in February I reported that the trend of income and expenditure was a £2,200 deficit per annum, excluding extraordinary items. I'm pleased to report that around 30% of church members who pay by bank transfer have responded. The average increase is 30%, which more than covers Gift Day that we decided to discontinue as a regular event. So, a huge thank you to those church members who have made generous increases in their giving. There is still a significant way to go to cover the whole of the trend deficit. So, if any of the 70% have not got around to reviewing their giving yet ...

### 2024 Accounts

In the general fund, the excess of expenditure over income of £3,391 in 2024 followed a surplus of income over expenditure in 2023 of £24,104. Reasons for the £27,495 swing

include (1) an unusually high backlog of billings at the end of 2022 - about £10,000 – that inflated 2023 room hirings income and (2) a one-off Synod grant of £5,000 in 2023 for increased energy costs. The building fund income in 2024 was £27,358 in 2024, compared with £1,929 in 2023. At the end of 2024, the balance in general fund was £43,961, and in the building fund £95,481. The accounts, which had been independently examined, were adopted by the church meeting.

The independently examined accounts had been circulated by email and were adopted by the meeting.

#### The value of voluntary work and gifts in kind

I read some years ago that the Charity Commission were encouraging charities to estimate and report the monetary value of unpaid services and gifts received, to get their financial transactions in perspective. I don't intend to do that but it does occur to me that financial transactions do not by any means reflect the full range of our church economy – unpaid services are a substantial part that are missing. I'm thinking here of those who lead our worship with preaching and music, those who work with our young people, those who provide refreshments on Sundays and other times, those who do jobs around the church, and much else including the hidden work of Audrey, who does a lot more than sit by her phone waiting for hall bookings – we should acknowledge that the unpaid work of Audrey for room hirings and Alan for Gift Aid together support around 40% of our recorded revenue. If we were to calculate the value of all unpaid services and gifts it would be a big number, a contribution to the church economy without which we couldn't survive. So thank you to those who freely give services and gifts in kind.

Ken Woods

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## **Development Project and Garden**

### Looking back

In May last year we were awaiting the results of our pre-planning submission, which had gone to the council planners in November 2023. In May 2024, Councillor Susan Elsmore obtained a promise from the Head of Planning to give priority to our submission. We eventually received the response in October last year! There was nothing in the response to make our project unacceptable but in our full application we are required to address 17 sections within the Cardiff Local Development Plan. I'm a bit reminded of the scene from Disney's Cinderella, when the stepmother gives conditional permission for Cinderella to go to the ball. When her daughters object, she reminds them that she said: "IF" - IF all the housework's done. We don't have the fairy godmother who helped Cinderella to go to the ball. But we have spent much time and effort these last few months giving it our best shot to address the 17 items. Also, with help from the architects, we have obtained a bat survey, a green infrastructure statement by an ecology expert, and a demolition management plan from a demolition expert.



On 11th May I received a draft package from the architects which puts together our input with their revised drawings and their input. There are some tidying up issues but hopefully we're nearing the time when we can make our full planning application.

Other things have been going on. For instance, Synod gave us a £10,000 development grant. And with the grant we also get an accompanier – Meg Price the Synod Clerk – who will work with us on applications for further Synod money.

Another thing we've started to explore is how we will go about fundraising and the prerequisites for that. Another action has been to obtain letters of support from Alcoholics Anonymous and people who are eager to partner us, notably for social prescribing and food workshops.

And we've had meetings with our local Senedd member Mark Drakeford and Councillor Stephen Cunnah; both expressed great enthusiasm for the project. Our two other Councillors – Susan Elsmore and Jasmin Chowdhury – were not available recently but when we met them in 2023 they also were very enthusiastic.

In all this, the Garden Group has been very supportive, and especially in the review of biodiversity aspects of the Cardiff Plan requirements. And, of course, the Group has continued to cultivate our present garden and attract positive comments from our neighbours. One neighbour wanted to have a barbeque in our garden, unfortunately we felt we had to refuse it on fire safety grounds. Leo's work in the garden was part of his Duke of Edinburgh assignments.

#### Looking to the future

It seems to me we should be thinking now about what model of mission we envisage for our church on an ongoing basis, even though there are plenty of things to think about in the coming months to get the community garden delivered.

What I mean is - **is our vision to invest considerable effort indefinitely in continual fund-raising? Or would it be better to find a strong partner, and sooner rather than later?**

I'm thinking of a large local church, to work with us in promoting the garden in its day to day running. This might be in parallel with seeking funding in our own name for the first few years. Of course, a strong partner almost certainly means giving up some autonomy. But I have seen a relatively small URC church have a disproportionately large impact for mission working in partnership for Schools Ministry and Street Pastors. We here in Canton are seeking and finding partners to support the technical aspects of our garden project. Is the community's benefit better assured in the long term if we have a partner to stand with us in providing the wherewithal for day-to-day operations?

Ken Woods

## Eco Church Report

It has been just over a year since Eco Church was set up, and while we haven't quite saved the planet yet, we've made a solid start. Progress has been a little tricky—turns out, rebuilding a church doesn't exactly lend itself to an easy eco-friendly transition! But we've done what we can with the resources available.

One of our main focuses has been sorting out the back of the church and ensuring that unwanted items are rehomed responsibly. Charity donations and recycling runs have been prioritised, and we're proud to say that very little has ended up in landfill. It hasn't been a case of mindlessly tossing things out—it's been a carefully considered effort.

An updated eco survey is on the horizon, and once it's available, we'll be diving in to see where we stand.

Here's a quick rundown of our eco efforts so far:

- We've installed a notice board in reception for anything eco-related—feel free to add to it. The more ideas, the better!
- We've been in touch with Eileen, the Green Advocate for URC Wales, to stay informed on eco news and projects.
- In February, Marieke, Ken, and I attended an Eco meeting at City Church, where we gained valuable insight into our current ecological standing. We received great support for our rebuild and were inspired by stories from other churches—particularly Barry, which has faced similar eco-challenges with its new building.
- Our garden has been a point of interest for other churches, with full support from our fellow congregations and plenty of advice available whenever needed.

Of course, we welcome any and all suggestions on how we can improve our environmental impact—it's a team effort, and everyone's ideas are valued. Together, we might not save the planet overnight, but we can at least make a meaningful difference in our corner of it.

Rob Harding





On the May bank holiday weekend, 5 of our young people attended a URC youth weekend called 1T4 (based on the verses in 1 Timothy 4), in Whitemoor Lakes activity centre in Staffordshire. Along with other 11-14 year olds from URC churches, they shared worship, had discussions about what it means to be a young person in a church fellowship, took part in crafts and different outdoor activities including giant paddleboarding and archery. They had fun together playing football, watching a film, eating 's'mores' over a campfire and making new friends. Everyone agreed they would love to go again (even Fiona and David who took them!!)



## **Canton Uniting Church Services Rotas, June - July 2025**

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

### **Sunday 1st June 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Acts 16.16-34; Psalm 97; Revelation 22.12-14,16-17,20-21; John 17.20-26

Worship Leader: Music and Garden Groups Service

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Megan

Deacon on notices: Alison

Readers: Ceri and Roland

Refreshments: The Munnik Family

### **Sunday 8th June 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Acts 2.1-21; Genesis 11.1-9; Psalm 104.24-34,35b; John 14.8-17,(25-27)

Worship Leader: Church Walk Service

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Audrey

Refreshments: Fiona and Rob

### **Sunday 15th June 2025 (Communion)**

Lectionary Readings: Proverbs 8.1-4,22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5.1-5; John 16.12-15

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Welcome Deacon/Steward: David

Deacon on Notices: Megan

Readers: Becky and Sian

Preparation of communion: Hugh and Bence

Serving at table: David and Fiona

Refreshments: Marieke

### **Sunday 22nd June 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 65.1-9; Psalm 22.19-28; Galatians 3.23-29; Luke 8.26-39

Worship Leader: Maggie Kirkbride URC Synod's Lay Preaching Advocate

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Ceri

Deacon on notices: Fiona

Readers: Eva and Abi

Refreshments: Sian and Josh

### **Sunday 29th June 2025**

Shared Pastoral Service and lunch in Elfed Avenue, Penarth

### **Sunday 6th July 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 66.10-14; Psalm 66.1-9; Galatians 6.(1-6),7-16; Luke 10.1-11,16-20

Worship Leader: Revd David Dean

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Eva

Deacon on notices: Ceri

Readers: Ken and Alan

Refreshments: Hugh and Bence



**Sunday 13th July 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Deuteronomy 30.9-14; Psalm 25.1-10; Colossians 1.1-14; Luke 10.25-37

Worship Leader: TBA

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Rob

Deacon on notices: Eva

Readers: Jan and Hugh

Refreshments: Abi

**Sunday 20th July 2025 (Communion)**

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 18.1-10a; Psalm 15; Colossians 1.15-28; Luke 10.38-42

Worship Leader: Revd Martha Mc Innes or Revd David Dean

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Jan

Deacon on notices: Megan

Readers: Fiona and Roland

Communion preparation: Audrey

Serving at Communion Table: Eva and Marieke

Refreshments: Megan

**Sunday 27th July 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 18.20-32; Psalm 138; Colossians 2.6-15,(16-19); Luke 11.1-13

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Fiona

Deacon on notices: Fiona

Readers: Megan and Ceri

Refreshments: Hiroko

**Sunday 3rd August 2025**

Lectionary Readings: Ecclesiastes 1.2,12-14; 2.18-23; Psalm 49.1-12; Colossians 3.1-11; Luke 12.13-21

Worship Leader: TBA

Welcome Deacon/Steward: Alan

Deacon on notices: Ceri

Readers: Marieke and Alan

Refreshments: Ann

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**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  
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## USUAL WEEKLY DIARY & MONTHLY EVENTS -

The Wednesday evening prayers on Zoom have finished.

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**AND FINALLY ...** Please hand in material for the next Newslink to Hugh Morgans by the end of the Morning service on **Sunday, 18th of May, 2025.**

Email address: [hughmorgans@hotmail.com](mailto:hughmorgans@hotmail.com)

