

# CYNON UCHAF MINISTRY AREA

## ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING CHURCHES REPORT

St Fagan, St Luke & St James Annual Report

The beginning of 2022 was momentous not only for our three churches but for the whole diocese. On 1 January the 29 Ministry Areas in our diocese finally came into existence. This meant that the old Parish of Aberdare St Fagan was dissolved after nearly 170 years. We became part of the new Cynon Uchaf Ministry Area, along with the former parishes of Hirwaun and Aberdare. Our churches contributed many of the officers for the new MA. Martyn Silezin from St James had already been chosen as Lay Chair. At the inaugural vestry meeting in February Marian Godsall from St Fagan's was elected People's Warden for the MA. Rhian Grundy from St James volunteered to become the treasurer while Janice Vardon of St Fagan's was appointed secretary. In March St Fagan's played host to the inauguration service for the MA in the presence of Bishop June. Each church elected a representative to the MA Council and soon we got down to work.

The year 2022 also represented a continuation of getting back to normal after the Covid pandemic. At the beginning of the year, we had our first in-person Messy Church and Youth Service since early 2020. Holy Week could be observed in full once again; the Palm Sunday procession and Maundy Thursday foot washing made a comeback. This would be a good point to thank all those who worked so hard during the pandemic with cleaning churches, ensuring social distancing, and booking people in for worship. The week before Holy Week we ran "Easter Experience" in conjunction with the Young Faith Matters team in the diocese, and groups of schoolchildren visited St Fagan's during the week to learn about the Holy Week and Easter story. In May I was delighted to get back to doing school assemblies.

In the summer Fr Norman Hadfield decided to step back from taking services regularly in our churches. For many years since his retirement Fr Norman had been taking Sunday services once or twice a month which has been such a great help to me and a great boon for our churches. We had a mass on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul to say thank you to him and Elaine, and we presented them with a case of wine.

Our outreach projects continued, which include weekly food deliveries, the school holiday lunch club, and the school uniform exchange which we ran over the summer. This latter project attracted a fair bit of media attention and some of our amazing volunteers were interviewed on national radio about it. Many thanks to all those who work so hard not only on these projects but also our social activities such as our weekly Tea & Toast, Caffi Cinio (weekly lunch club) and youth club.

Another aspect of church life which returned after Covid was confirmation classes. Once again, we had a bumper cohort with over 50 adults and children being prepared – thanks to all the leaders. The classes culminated in two wonderful confirmation services in October (where we were joined by candidates from Hirwaun and Penywaun), led by Bishop Rowan Williams.

As the year ended, we were delighted to be able to hold Company at Christmas, our annual Christmas day lunch for the community, in-person again for the first time since 2019. This year we

held it in a new venue – St John's School – and we are so grateful to the school for their co-operation. We also offer our thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who make the event possible.

During the year Jan Williams decided to stand down as churches treasurer after a several years. I'm grateful to her for all she has done, and to Rhian Grundy for agreeing to take over. As I end this report, I would like to put on record my thanks to all our wardens, organists, church cleaners, linen washers, money counters, churchyard mowers, visitors, readers, intercessors, Sunday school teachers, youth club leaders, outreach project volunteers, and all others who work so hard to maintain the witness of our churches in this community that we love so much.

Fr Richard Green

## **St Winifred Penywaun**

This year saw St Winifred's Church recovering from Corvid with regular services, numbers returning by the end of the year to pre corvid levels and various social activities happening.

### **Services**

Regular Holy Communion services take place on a Sunday morning at 11.00am, and Tuesday at 1.00pm. On the first of the month, we have a café Church, which starts with a light breakfast and continues with a Holy Communion service. This more informal service usually attracts greater numbers and especially children. The Church is re-configured with the altar placed on the south side of the building and the tables and chairs placed around in a semi-circular fashion. Only at Easter and Christmas is the high altar used, whilst most services use a portable nave altar. As the year progressed, the Church resumed the practice of distributing the consecrated wine.

There was only one non-Eucharistic service throughout the year on Good Friday.

St Winifred were fortunate once a month for the ministry of Lay Reader, Robert Jones, who preached monthly at the Sunday service.

The Church had 10 Baptisms, though there were no weddings. Some funerals used the Church before proceeding to the Cemetery. Confirmation class took place with 6 people confirmed.

The hall is available for hire, which provides a small income mainly from the local jazz band.

The grounds were cleaned up during the year by local volunteers. Long term a decision must be made on how to maintain it. We were fortunate to have some community volunteers from a construction project who painted the kitchen and foyer and provided a new carpet for the foyer as well. Although not relevant for this year, one of the boilers needs to be replaced having failed in early 2023.

The Church is active in the community, by being a centre for the distribution of free feminine hygiene products, as well as food and toiletry parcels for the needy at Christmas and Easter.

Socially, refreshments are served after our Tuesday service and we have a number of fundraising events such as afternoon teas, harvest suppers and celebrated the Queen's platinum anniversary.

Financially the Church was able to pay its share of the parish fairer share through careful management and although no reserves, has managed to be financially stable.

## **St Lleurwg Hirwaun**

As the Church recovers from Corvid, regular services have resumed but there has been a noticeable drop in both adults and children attending Church and children's club.

Regular Holy Communion services take place on a Sunday morning at 9.30am, and Wednesday at 10.30pm. On the first of the month, we have a café Church, which starts with a light breakfast and continues with a Holy Communion service. This more informal service usually attracts greater numbers and especially children. The Church is re-configured with the altar placed on the south side of the building and the tables and chairs placed around in a semi-circular fashion. For 2023, the café Church will be held in the Church Hall due to the logistics of moving tables etc. As the year progressed, the Church resumed the practice of distributing the consecrated wine.

We are fortunate that we have three lay readers Robert Jones, Cerys Hartley and Cled Morgan, who preached on a regular basis throughout the year.

The Church carried out 16 baptisms and the Church is occasionally used for funerals. Confirmation class took place with 16 people confirmed.

The hall is available for hire but it is not well used by the community, as there are a number of halls in the Hirwaun area.

The Church is not in a good state of repair, with some work required on the roof. Painting and cleaning of walls took place in the year, which helped to brighten the Church up. About half the grounds are mowed with the rest having been invaded by blackberry bushes. The quinquennial inspection is due in 2023 and decisions will need to be made on future repair works.

The Church Hall needs some work to be done on it as the render is cracked and needs to be replaced.

Socially a social committee has been formed and a number of events to encourage fellowship have been arranged and raise much needed money. A regular coffee morning open to the village is now open on a Monday morning, which brings in additional funds.

Financially the Church is run very frugally but unfortunately, the Church was unable to fulfil its obligation to pay the Fairer share by just over £3000.00.

### St Matthews

The Church has been in place for over 150 years despite the building having an initial short time span, as it is a prefabricated building. It has a congregation of approximately 12 who predominately live in the area and attend the service on a Sunday morning. The finances for all three Churches are managed from the same Parish accounts.

### St John the Baptist Church

Our Parish Church, built in 1189. It has three services a week, although the Monday service is dependent on numbers attending. It has a service on a Thursday morning attended by Parishioners who prefer a traditional service, have been attending for a number of years and have formed a strong friendship, usually followed by a coffee and catch up. The service on a Sunday morning is mainly made up of a different set of parishioners. The Church became our focus of worship during the closure of St Elvans for refurbishment, which included the restrictions and closure due to the Pandemic. As the Church is such an old building, it has had ongoing maintenance issues. In its grounds, is our burial plot for ashes covering the three Churches. It has been used for the occasional wedding for those who want a smaller service and has been used for funerals during the year.

### St Elvans

St Elvans opened up again last year, having been shut since 2019 for refurbishment. When we re-located to St Johns, many of the Parishioners did not attend and have not come back since. During the Pandemic, we could only have 14 families in the service, which had to be booked in advance so was very limiting for people wishing to attend. If St Elvans had been open, we would have had much more scope in enabling people to attend. We have had a limited number of funerals this year. Although we now have opportunities to have the funeral tea afterwards in the Church. We have had quite a number of funerals that Fr Robert has officiated directly at Llwydcoed crematorium and have had about 40 in total last year. We had one wedding last year and have one booked in for this year so far. We had Christmas the Story back for the first time since the Pandemic and it was a great success. We hold our annual Remembrance service in conjunction with the Royal British Legion. We have our first confirmation since Covid on 30<sup>th</sup> April including children and adults. The St Elvans Community Heritage Project continues to grow with exhibitions, concerts and events on a weekly basis throughout the year. These events are really well attended and is encouraging those who attend them, as well as the coffee shop, which is run by volunteers, to see the beauty of the Church and hopefully worship with us. We still have many unresolved snagging issues

from the build including the main gates and water ingress. Phase 2 of the Project is for the Tower refurbishment where grant funding will be looked into. We have three subgroups of the main Steering Committee covering Finance, Property management and Heritage.

ST FAGAN, ST LUKE & ST JAMES INCOME AND EXPENDITURE  
YEAR END 31 DEC 2022

INCOME	2022	2021
Planned giving	45,091.97	35,571.46
Loose collections	618.80	1,994.84
Wedding/baptism collections	750.95	1,341.54
Donations	268.91	1,678.62
Wedding/Funeral fees	2,354.50	2,071.00
Gift Aid	2,309.46	5,329.91
Parish share rebate	2,978.97	2,908.47
Gift days	90.00	805.00
Hall income St Luke's	112.00	0.00
Hall income St Fagan's	1,785.00	1,462.48
Magazine sales & adverts	1,310.00	1,567.00
Fundraising	2,271.34	2,876.86
Missions	1,822.97	9,077.11
Vicar's contribution to elec	1,200.00	1,200.00
Sundries	0.00	3,953.00
Grants	0.00	47,748.00
Interest received	112.04	0.00
Transfer from deposit acc.	0.00	18,200.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63,076.91</b>	<b>137,785.29</b>


EXPENDITURE	2022	2021
Capital works	35,689.36	30,729.97
Electricity - churches	909.22	1,717.97
Gas - churches	2,151.77	1,903.65
Gifts	130.00	565.00
Insurance	3,464.52	4,632.37
Magazine expenses	47.99	45.99
Maintenance	763.98	1,354.75
Parish office/photocopier	2,603.78	2,933.02
Parish share	37,866.76	56,579.28
Cost of services	996.21	378.54
Sundries	754.66	4,093.78
Clergy expenses	2,226.92	701.05
Vicarage costs	3,134.68	2,834.80
Visiting clergy	785.00	1,050.00
Water charges	317.27	714.20
Community hall	3,760.98	3,042.73
Mission & outreach	2,355.49	3,174.12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97,958.52.43</b>	<b>119,450.92</b>

SURPLUS/DEFICIT                      -34,881.61                      18,334.37

CYNON UCHAF MINISTRY AREA

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED  
31 DECEMBER 2022

I have examined the accounts for the above period and have found  
them to be correct.

Signed  \_\_\_\_\_

MR MICHAEL REES

29/10/23

