

The Grapevine

Issue 1 – January 2023

**“I am the vine; you are the branches”
(John 15:5)**

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*Faith
Hope
&
Love*

Shining a light on the Church in the 21st Century



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Welcome



Welcome to the first issue of The Grapevine!
This is produced by the 3 Churches in North Cardiff with contributions from the wider community – both near and far.

The content reflects 'faith, hope and love', in the 21st Century. Spiritual reflection that is real and relevant to people, inside or outside the Church, and to all ages and backgrounds.

We hope you find this enjoyable and thought-provoking! Contact us with feedback, news or articles; grapevinepublication@gmail.com, or reach out to your local representative (see p.3)

*Where is Gareth the Dragon, what is he made from and why is this relevant? **READ ON...!***





Helping the people of the Mountain Kingdom

In 2009 my husband and I visited Lesotho, in Southern Africa, to see our daughter, Sian, who was on a six month teaching placement. Lesotho, twinned with Wales, is a beautiful, mountainous country, often called 'the Kingdom in the Sky'. **It is one of the poorest countries in the world with one of the highest HIV rates & average life expectancy is 48 years.**

During our visit we learnt of local efforts, in the village of Ramabanta, to support struggling households. This led to us setting up **Seeds for the Future (Lesotho)** as a charity to fund food parcels for vulnerable families, and support young people (orphans or whose families have no income), to attend high school.

In 2022, we are supporting 18 young people and 8 food parcel households, at a cost of £19,000

I have returned, five times, and seen that we've helped students into employment or vocational or higher education.

The photo is of Motlatsi Manka, who recently received his engineering degree from the University of Lesotho. With him is Lerato Nkesi, our lead partner in Ramabanta.



In October, some of our supporters ran the Cardiff Half Marathon and raised £1,400!



Please can you help, too? e.g. setting up a Direct Debit or giving a **Christmas 'gift of education'** – a card for the gift recipient in exchange for a donation to the charity. See our website <https://bit.ly/3WAb2gN> or email seedsfff@gmail.com to find out more.

Elizabeth Taylor (Christ the King Parish, Cardiff & Seeds for the Future Administrator)

Ukrainian Sunflowers

For many of us our knowledge of Ukraine is limited to shocking and brave images and headlines, linked to the Russian invasion.

The country, however, is 2.5 times the size of the UK and has a population of 43 million people compared with 3.2 million, in Wales.

You may not even be aware what the Ukrainian flag represents? In fact, the flag reflects the clear blue skies, over their extensive wheatfields, and the country's role - as the breadbasket of Europe.



A country's identity is shaped by its culture and people, as well as its geography. All these aspects have been dramatically affected by the Russian occupation...

At the heart of the headlines are real people with **real lives**. This article is an attempt to briefly convey the stories of two Ukrainian women: Yuliia (23) & Daria (22), who fled their homeland and are living in Cardiff.



Fellow Ukrainian, Edita Agha, a member of staff from St. David's College, and the Editor, met up with Yuliia and Daria, at Christ The King (CTK) Church Hall...

CTK is providing English lessons (for up to 40 Ukrainian families), alongside college courses. Yuliia and Daria speak English very well and kindly shared their traumatic experience of the breakout of war, getting to Cardiff and their hopes for the future.



Yuliia is from Kharkiv and Daria was born in nearby Poltava, but has been studying and working, in Kharkiv, for four years. On Feb 24 their lives were turned upside down...

Ukrainian Sunflowers

Yuliia, an Engineer at a toothpaste factory, said that it felt like fireworks going off, on the day of the invasion. When the President said to stay at home, she added: “we only thought it would be for a few days.”

Everyone rushed to the supermarkets: shelves were emptied and soon you couldn't access money from the cashpoint.

“Live your life today, because tomorrow it might not be there.”

(Daria Pavliuk, 22)

Yuliia and her mother bravely stayed in their 14th floor flat and Daria and her parents stayed beneath their house. From June to August, Kharkiv was bombed, every night, 11pm – 1am. **Imagine that.**

One minute Daria, a Project Manager, in a decorative company, was studying for her second Masters (Economics), after her first (ironically, in Immigration Control), and planning to rent. The next minute, like Yuliia, she needed to get away. Calling a taxi, however, would cost 50 times more.

Yuliia and Daria recounted their fraught journeys by foot and train, from Ukraine, and by bus, across Europe. Sometimes, standing for 20 hours; cold, hungry, lacking water and with few possessions.

Both friends headed for Cardiff, as a good friend is here and knew of the Sponsor Scheme. Yuliia and Daria are being supported by the same family and speak warmly about their welcome and Cardiff. They have 3-year visas with both looking for work and studying English. Daria is finishing her Masters, remotely. Buses and trains might be free but they are rebuilding their lives: from bank accounts to dentists.



St, Brigid's and CTK Churches recently hosted prayer services, for Ukraine. The sunflower, Ukraine's national flower, stands tall and searches for the light. Like Yuliia & Daria, we hope & pray for peace.

Food for Thought...

The cost of living crisis has brought into sharper focus the difficult choices less well off people are faced with e.g. to eat or heat.



Photo by: P. Burkhard

Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the World, food banks are now common, in the UK. We even hear that those in work, in some areas, are having to use them.

Food banks come in all shapes and sizes. Some provide emergency rations. Others, enable guests to choose products, up to a given value, for a small fee.

For many, it is an act of great courage to cross the threshold and enter these places. What is key, is the need to encourage self-respect: with both humanity and humour helping! To reach out is a hand-up and not a hand-out...

Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)

The 3 Churches in North Cardiff started a Food Market in May 2021. This was inspired by talks with Food4All and Llanishen Evangelical Church, who started 8 months earlier.

The Food Market is local, has no employees and all the money raised supports those in need.



Photo by: St. Brigid's

The 3 Churches Market is held every third Saturday of the month, in St. Brigid's Hall. Food is given to all comers (an average of 40 people), free of charge, and no questions are asked.

It costs £400+ to stock each Market. Food is bought via generous donations and some perishable food, collected by volunteers, is donated by supermarkets. People are provided for and food waste is reduced.



Photo by: St. Brigid's

We have shared food, clothes, newsletters and optional candles (when HM the Queen died). The candles were also for thoughts or prayers for loved ones or themselves. Thank you to parishioners, volunteers (plus 2 students) and Canon Matthew.



3 Churches Food Market

every 3rd Saturday of the month

10.30 - 11.30am

St Brigid's Hall

- ✓ Supports needy families living in our local communities
 - ✓ Helps to combat supermarket food waste
 - ✓ All donations received used to purchase food
(each Market costs over £400)
- ✓ Run by young and older volunteers from the 3 Churches
 - ✓ Christianity in action!

Like to be involved?

- * PRAY - for those families who come to the Food Market
- * DONATE - at any time via the labelled envelopes
always available at the back of each church
(cheques made payable to St Brigid's Parish please)
- * HELP - at the Food Markets or with food collections from
local supermarkets

*If you would like to help or know more about the 3 Churches Food Markets
please contact:*

Terry Jermyn - terryjermyn@gmail.com - 2075 7489
Simon Brockway - simonsylvia@uwclub.net - 07394 931097
or Anne Burns - anneburns2021@gmail.com - 2076 6318

Spiritual Reflection



Spiritual Reflection is the title given to the Religious Education Programme, at St. David's Catholic 6th Form College.

The course begins with the starting question, for each student: 'What kind of person would I like to become?' and is a weekly 50 minute lesson.

What kind of person would I like to become?

Throughout the course, students can reflect on a range of virtues and values, and case studies of virtues in practice, as well as role models, to emulate. This encourages spiritual & personal growth.

This individual journey is framed by the challenges, in the wider world, and a respect for all faiths and traditions.

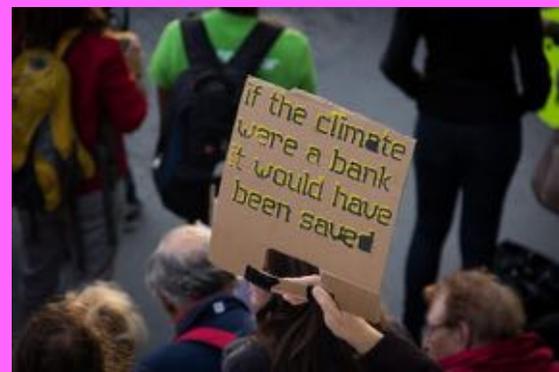
The ethos of the course and College is put into practice in a variety of ways, including global outreach. For example:

Many students, over the years, have volunteered to join other young people, from the UK, to work on classroom building projects in Africa or Asia.

This involves working with locals on classroom construction and teaching basic English. These Lasallian Projects are in Kenya, Ghana and Uganda.

The College has also helped to fund and build a health clinic, in Tanzania, with the Rosminian Fathers, and raises funds for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and Aid to the Church in Need.

Faith, Hope & Love, in practice...



Spotlight on the wider Church: The Cathedral of the Valleys

Located in the heart of the town of Aberdare, St. Elvan's Church has recently undergone a £2 million restoration & reimagining...

This amazing church was built by the 2nd Marquis of Bute, in 1852, when landowners and industrialists wanted the Church to be a more positive moral influence. This was in response, cynically you may say, to uprisings like the 'Merthyr Riots' of 1831.

In more recent times, the Church has, again, become the heart of the community e.g. there is Spires café, where some pews used to exist, which is staffed by barista-trained volunteers - from the congregation and wider community.

Above the cafe is a mezzanine, where a variety of regular events are held.



Photos by: St. Elvan's

These events range from: film festivals and piano concerts to plays and exhibitions. Business events are also hosted. There is currently even a life size sculpture of the Welsh Dragon, made from recycled satellite dishes!

The 'Cathedral of the Valleys' is a leading example of how the Church can adapt to modern life and needs, and place itself at the heart of both the life of the faithful and the wider community.

When the Queen sadly passed the church opened its doors and the BBC also turned up. One parishioner, on holiday in Canada and Alaska, had the shock of his life, when the item & church featured on the local news!

Discover more about us on: www.stelvans.com. Better still, drop in for a coffee.

Living Faith 2022 - 2023

Faith, Hope and Love in the 21st Century, is more than just the relevance of the Church, today. It is also concerns how God is touching peoples' lives, now, and not only in records of how Jesus did, 2000 years ago.

In early 2022, the 3 Churches in North Cardiff began a 'Living Faith' series of talks before the Mass. These reached out to people of any faith, or none, or one that is fragile.

Real people shared real stories of God at work in their lives

Stories told ranged from: a 17 year old student, describing her spirit-filled experience, whilst performing in the production of Godspell - to a tri-athlete, sharing what happened when he had a life changing operation.

Illness, bereavement and criminality all sound depressing topics but every story brought to life; faith, hope and love...

The stories were accompanied by engaging props (e.g. dramatic artwork from St. David's College) and contemporary music (e.g. Louis Armstrong and Bob Marley), that you wouldn't normally expect to see or hear in church – plus Hillsong music from growing churches.



Photo by: P. Burkhard

A UK award winning painting, called 'Unseen', provoked many thoughts, including how do we reach out to God? You can watch the videos on: [3 Churches in Cardiff YouTube channel](#) or use them for discussion. They have been viewed over 1000 times to date.



Living Faith 2023 will run on the last Sunday, of each month (Jan – June). Our volunteer contributors, so far, are: Elizabeth – a lady who started a charity for the needy and Christalla – who will share her journey from ME/CFS (Long Covid has similarities) to her Ministries. **Join us or find out more!**

Calling people of all ages and backgrounds and those of any faith, or none, or a faith that is fragile...

- Are you curious about, or seeking a relationship with, God?
- Do you have a connection with God, but want it to be deeper?
- Did you previously go to any Church, but have stopped going?
- Do you want to engage with something different, real & current?

If YOU answered "yes" to any question, then this is YOUR invitation to:



Living Faith

Moving life stories from NOW (and not only 2000 years ago), contemporary music / drama & inspiring paintings & props!



6 sessions were held in 2022. The videos are on the [3 Churches in Cardiff YouTube channel](#):

- Intro – What is the Living Faith initiative?
- LF 1 – A healing, joy amidst grieving and an award-winning painting...
- LF 2 – Two life changing stories and Hillsong...
- LF 3 – Brittle bones, Phil Collins and a bike...
- LF 4 – Two messages of hope, One Love (Bob Marley) & stunning student artwork...
- LF 5 – Three young women and a School & College: 'lights, camera, action' and Broadway...
- LF 6 – Denzel Washington & Anthony Hopkins

Bring an OPEN heart & mind, your questions & reflections.

Do you have a story of how your life, or that of someone you know, has been touched by God? To find out more contact: philburkhard@hotmail.co.uk / 07816 756 509

Love Letter from Our Father

My child...

You may not know me, but I know everything about you ...PSALM 139:1

I know when you sit down and when you rise up ...PSALM 139:2

I am familiar with all your ways ...PSALM 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered ...MATTHEW 10:29-31 For you were made in my image ...GENESIS 1:27 For you are my offspring ...ACTS 17:28 I chose you when I planned creation ...EPHESIANS 1:11-12 You were not a mistake ...PSALM 139:15-16

You are fearfully and wonderfully made ...PSALM 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb ...PSALM 139:13 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me ...JOHN 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love ...1 JOHN 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you ...1 JOHN 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father ...1 JOHN 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could ...MATTHEW 7:11 For I am the perfect Father ...MATTHEW 5:48 Every good gift you that you receive comes from my hand ...JAMES 1:17

My plan for your future has always been filled with hope ...JEREMIAH 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love ...JEREMIAH 31:3 I will never stop doing good to you ...JEREMIAH 32:40 For you are my treasured possession ...EXODUS 19:5

If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me ...DEUTERONOMY 4:29 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine ...EPHESIANS 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager ...2 THESSALONIANS 2:16-17

I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles ...2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you ...PSALM 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart ...ISAIAH 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes ...REVELATION 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth ...REVELATION 21:4

Love Letter from Our Father

I am your Father and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus ...[JOHN 17:23](#) His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you ...[1JOHN 4:10](#) I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love ...[ROMANS 8:32](#)

If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me ...[1JOHN 2:23](#) And nothing will ever separate you from my love again ...[ROMANS 8:38-39](#) Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen ...[LUKE 15:7](#) I have always been Father and will always be Father ...[EPHESIANS 3:14-15](#)

My question is... Will you be my child? ...[JOHN 1:12-13](#) I am waiting for you ...[LUKE 15:11-32](#)

...Love, Your Father
Almighty God

LISTEN TO ME: CLICK BELOW



SONG: No one ever cared for me like Jesus, by Steffany Gretzinger

Search for me on YouTube or Spotify



**For enquiries:
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