

BRECON BEACONS PASTORATE

MINISTER - REVEREND JULIE KIRBY

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APRIL - MAY 2026



ABERGAVENNY CWM CALAIS & LIBANUS

EBENEZER, UPPER CHAPEL GILWERN

MAESYRONNEN PENNORTH

THE PLOUGH SARDIS (TOP CHAPEL) LLANGYNIDR



Dear friends,

I wanted to write to you across the pastorate during this time while I am away from ministry for a short period, as my GP has advised me to step back while some health investigations take place.

Please be assured that this time of illness is not caused by anything within the life of the pastorate. It is simply something in my own health that now needs attention and care.

One of the most difficult parts of this time has not simply been the physical symptoms, but the experience of stepping back from ministry, even temporarily. Serving this pastorate is something I value deeply, and not being able to fulfil that role at present feels unsettling. It was reassuring to be advised by my GP that I haven't chosen to be unwell.

Recently I came across words by Richard Rohr that helped me reflect on why this feels so difficult. He writes that in honour-and-shame cultures a person's worth can become tied to how others see them. That resonated with me. Much of the discomfort of being unwell comes from the fear of not being the minister others expect or need.

However, the gospel invites us to begin somewhere different — not with how we appear to others, but with who we are before God. I am trying to accept that being honest about illness and allowing space for treatment and recovery is part of living truthfully in that grace.

As the United Reformed Church reminds us, ministry does not belong to one person alone but to the whole people of God. We each have a part to play in the life of Christ's church. As Paul writes, "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." (Romans 12:5)

I share this not to invite sympathy, but to offer some understanding of why this time away is not easy for me. I remain deeply committed to the life and ministry of the pastorate, and I trust that with rest and treatment I will be able to return in due course.

During this time I will be following medical advice to rest and focus on recovery, so I will not always be available in the usual ways. Thank you for your understanding.

As we enter the season of Easter, I hold close the reminder that the church celebrates not just one day of resurrection, but fifty days of Easter joy. Like the morning light over the hills, the hope of Easter continues to rise among us. And as the disciples discovered on the road to Emmaus, the risen Christ often walks beside us even when the road feels unfamiliar or slower than we expected.

My hope is that, even while I step back for a time, the life of our chapels will continue to reflect that Easter hope in the ways you care for one another and share in the ministry God has given to us all.

I also know that the life of our chapels does not depend on one person alone, but on the faithfulness, prayer and care that you offer to one another week by week.

In the meantime, please continue to care for one another and for the life of the chapels through prayer, kindness and the shared ministry that has always been at the heart of this pastorate. You remain very much in my prayers.

With gratitude and hope

Julie

Tabernacle United Reformed Church Pennorth

Flowers 12 Apr Kate 26 Apr Ann

10 May Barbara 24 May Jen

I write this on a beautiful Wednesday morning which promises to be the hottest day of the year so far. After weeks of wind, rain and biting cold temperatures, perhaps Spring has really arrived. Doesn't it lift the spirits!?!

It is so lovely to hear news of friends who no longer live in the area, and in a recent card, Trevor and Molly Philips asked to be remembered to all their friends in the Pastorate. Long-term supporters of our chapel, they moved away to live nearer their children. They do enjoy receiving their Link newsletters. It's good to know that Michael Hodgson is now settled in Bideford, enjoying furnishing his new home, making plans for the garden, and relaxing with walks by the sea. It sounds like he truly means it when he concludes "Retirement life is good".

Our dear Ted Gascoyne has also been in contact, sending greetings to us all. It was good to hear that he and Rosa are happy in their little bungalow and that good transport links help them to get around without too much difficulty now that he no longer drives. The electric organ that still resides in our chapel belonged to Ted's mother, and members here are happy that it should be returned to Ted. Kate is going to check that this elderly instrument is in working order, before arrangements are made for transportation.

Our local pub (The Black Cock Inn) runs regular - and very popular - quizzes, and last month held a second fund-raising event in aid of the Dementia Café in Brecon. Quiz fans filled the pub, and a fun time was had by all. A raffle and Chinese Auction contributed to the final total of £418. Thanks go to the quiz setters, helpers and the folk who supported this very worthy cause. #

The fellowship here at Pennorth rarely turns down the chance of a celebration, and this St David's Day, we joined members from Sardis at the Red Lion in Llangynidr. Around 30 of us (many wearing daffodils) sat down for a delicious Sunday Lunch. Thank you, Margery and Margaret, for organizing this. Looking forward to the next outing!

The Llyn Syfaddan History Group also celebrated, the day after, at Llangors, where Garnet Davies presented a slide show of some of his vast collection of old photographs of Llangors Lake and surrounding area. This was followed by Supper: Cawl, Welsh cheeses and homemade Welsh cakes. At the next Llangors meeting, on 16 April, Dr Adrian Humpage will be talking about Brecon Railway Station.

Our County Councillor Sian Cox will be holding a drop-in session in the School Room at Pennorth on Saturday 04 April.

We look forward to meeting Pastorate friends at Maesyronnen. Hope the Marathon training is going well, Ceri!. The May Pastorate Service will be held at Upper Chapel

We wish all our friends a joyful Easter celebration, whilst continuing to pray for the safety of our world, God's precious creation. We hold Revd Julie in our prayers and wish her a rapid return to full health.

Teresa

The Plough

Christian Aid Week.

May sees Christian Aid Week. The dates for your diary are as follows: Friday 8th Street Collection, Sunday 10th Service in The Watton 11 am and Friday 15th Coffee Morning 10-12. There will be more details later on but please book these dates.

Would like to thank all of you who sent greetings to Eric and I on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding Anniversary. We are so grateful for all the wonderful thoughts

Sadly we are still unable to use the schoolroom for meetings as the floor needs work doing on it. We hope it will be back in use soon.

Coffee Morning.

Thanks to everyone who turned up to support this. The turnout was rather disappointing especially for all those who had worked so hard.

News of the fellowship.

We hope Julie is improving and we wish her all the best.

We remember our friends who are no longer able to be with us at our services namely, Ann and Ieuan Bowen, Ann Jenkins, Helen Brooker, Mary Withers, Maggie Maisson, Jill Willison, Anne Jenkins and Eileen Leonard. We also remember our friends who are not very well at the moment. We also remember those who are mourning loved ones. We remember those who are enjoying a well earned rest. Please remember them in your prayers.

Just A Thought.

I found this in one of my books. I wonder if you can think why I chose to use it?

History is littered with examples of men who would like to become gods, but only one example of God becoming a man.





CMORTH CRISTNOGOL/CHRISTIAN AID, BRECON

Advance notice of events during Christian Aid Week - May 2026

Friday, 8th May - Street collection in Brecon

Sunday, 10th May at 11 am - United service at the Presbyterian Church,

The Watton, Brecon

(Please note there won't be a Welsh service in the afternoon at The Plough on this Sunday).

Friday, 15th May 10 am - 12 noon - Coffee morning at The Guildhall, Brecon. Sale of house, garden and vegetable plants, cakes and raffle. Admission £1 coffee, tea and biscuits.

Please make a note in your diary and come along and support.

Collectors needed please to hold a collection bucket outside the Guildhall on Friday, 8th May. If you can help by holding a collection bucket for an hour, or even half an hour, it would be so greatly appreciated. If you haven't been able to help before why not give it a go? Venue of issue and return of buckets to be confirmed.

Donations for the plant, cake and raffle stalls at The Guildhall on Friday, 15th May would be wonderful.

Any offers of help please to alison.eagle@btinternet.com or telephone 01874658614 (answer machine). I'm happy to collect or bring them along on the day if you haven't managed to give to Alison, Barbara or Jeff at the Plough.

Diolch yn fawr

WORSHIP APRIL

5TH

SUNRISE - THE BEGWINS

09.30 LLANGYNIDR - REV'D PETER NOBLE

10.30 MAESYRONNEN - REV'D LEIGH SPENCER

11.00 THE PLOUGH - REV'D JEFF WILLIAMS. COMMUNION

11.00 ABERGAVENNY - JUDITH AND MARGOT

11.00 GILWERN - WORSHIP GROUP

2.30PM CWM CAMLAIS

12TH

9.30 LLANGYNIDR - TBC

10.30 PENNORTH- TBA

10.30 MAESYRONNEN

11.00 ABERGAVENNY MARGOT AND JUDITH

11.00 GILWERN - MRS C GRIFFITHS

3.00PM EBENEZER UPPER CHAPEL - TBA

3.00 THE PLOUGH - WELSH SERVICE

19TH

9.30 LLANGYNIDR - REV'D JULIE KIRBY

10.30 MAESYRONNEN

11.00 ABERGAVENNY JUDITH AND MARGOT

11.00 GILWERN - MR W LEWIS

11.15 THE PLOUGH - REV'D JULIE

3.00PM ABERGAVENNY - WELSH SERVICE

26TH

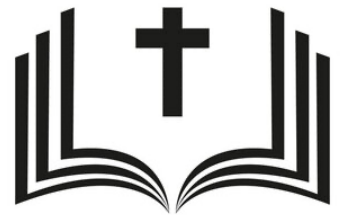
9.30 LLANGYNIDR - REV'D JEFF WILLIAMS

10.30 MAESYRONNEN

10.30 PENNORTH

11.00 ABERGAVENNY WITH GILWERN - AT ABERGAVENNY REV'D J KIRBY

3.00 EBENEZER UPPER CHAPEL -TBA



WORSHIP - MAY

3RD

9.30 LLANGYNIDR - TBC
10.30 MAESYRONNEN - REV'D JULIE. COMMUNION
11.00 THE PLOUGH
11.00 ABERGAVENNY JUDITH AND MARGOT
11.00 GILWERN - WORSHIP GROUP
2.30PM CWM CAMLAIS

10TH

9.30 LLANGYNIDR - MRS C GRIFFITHS
10.30 PENNORTH
10.30 MAESYRONNEN - MRS LIZ TADD
11.00 THE PLOUGH - CHRISTIAN AID SERVICE AT THE WATTON
11.00 ABERGAVENNY MARGOT AND JUDITH
11.00 GILWERN - MRS C GRIFFITHS
3.00PM EBENEZER UPPER CHAPEL

17TH

9.30 LLANGYNIDR - MRS C GRIFFITHS
10.30 MAESYRONNEN MR RUSSELL DAVIES
11.00 ABERGAVENNY JUDITH AND MARGOT
11.00 GILWERN -
11.15 THE PLOUGH - REV'D JULIE. COMMUNION
3.00PM ABERGAVENNY - WELSH SERVICE

24TH

9.30 LLANGYNIDR
10.30 MAESYRONNEN - REV'D JANET RUSSELL
10.30 PENNORTH
11.00 ABERGAVENNY WITH GILWERN - AT GILWERN REV'D J KIRBY
3.00 EBENEZER UPPER CHAPEL - TBA

31ST 11.00 PASTORATE SERVICE AT EBENEZER UPPER CHAPEL - REV'D MARTIN SPAIN



Gilwern United Reformed Church

On February 25th our Wonderful Wednesday Club enjoyed a talk which was given by Ellie Ablet MBE. Ellie told us about her twenty eight and a half year service in the Royal Navy before her retiring in the rank of Commodore. It was very informative and entertaining. Tea and coffee were enjoyed afterwards.

On March 6th we held a Service for the World Day of Prayer. There was a good turnout as we were joined by friends from St Elli's Church, Gilwern and also from Llanwenarth, Govilon. A total of £145.00 was collected for World Day of Prayer.

At our Service on 15th March Christine told the Congregation that Julie was not well enough to conduct Services at present. She asked the Congregation to pray for Julie's swift return to good health.



Abergavenny

We send our love and best wishes to Julie. Get well soon and look after yourself. Take all the time you need. We can cope, but we miss you for your leadership, love and friendship - and you are better at it than we are.

Congratulations to Bethan Barlow for her excellent article in Abergavenny Chronicle about our Symphony Orchestra..

At the end of January we held our annual meeting, followed by lunch at the King's Arms. On St David's Day there was a superb concert at the Methodist Church in aid of Abergavenny Eisteddfod. And on Mothering Sunday we had a café church with activities, readings and discussion about mothers and those who have helped us develop in our Christian lives. This week there is a passion play at the RC church and we look forward to our Good Friday walk of witness and Churches Together service at St Mary's, followed by Stations of the Cross at the RC church, for those who wish to attend.

We look forward to March's pastorate service at Maesyronnen and May's at Upper Chapel. Happy Easter to all. Margot

Maesyronnen

Flowers

April 5th/12th - Ceri:

May 3rd/10th - Ann

May 31/June 7 - Jane

April 19th/26th - Vika:

May 17th/24th - Kath

NEWS

Our thoughts and prayers are with our Minister Julie: we hope you will be feeling much better very soon, Julie.

On 1st March our Minister Julie ordained Darren, Ceri and Bethan as Elders of our chapel. We give thanks for our new elders and pray that the Holy Spirit will lead them as they fulfil their new roles.

We are looking forward to our sun-rise service on the Begwns on Easter Sunday morning. It is a special time for meditating on the risen Christ and all that happened afterwards. This service is open to anyone who would like to join us.

Inspite of a knee injury which knocked her training back a little, Ceri is still determined to run in the London Marathon on Sunday, 26th April this year. Her chosen charity is Sue Ryder which supplies hospice care. This is because her older sister, who took part in the London Marathon last year, is suffering from two Stage 4 cancers, and she and her family are receiving tremendous help and support from this charity. It costs Sue Ryder around £3,893.00 for someone to be cared for at home in their final days by Sue Ryder Nurses, so, to raise funds for this charity, Ceri organized a very successful Bingo at the Old Railway Garden Centre in Three Cocks; a Curry and Quiz night; a table-top sale; and, by the time this Link is out, she will have completed her first run - a Half Marathon in Gloucester. Ceri's next big fund-raiser will be a Prize Bingo night on Friday, 10th April, in Glasbury Village Hall. something - just click on to "Just Giving", type in "Ceri Ricketts", and you're there.

All the information, and the reason why Ceri is doing this, is all on the Just Giving page.

We send our warmest congratulations to Liz and Eric Tadd as they celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary (60 years) on 2nd April. What a wonderful achievement. We hope that you, Liz and Eric, enjoy a warm, sunny, lovely day, sharing food, drinks and special memories with family and friends.

2nd April will also be a special day for Kath (with Clive sharing it). She has been nominated to attend the Royal Maundy Service at St. Asaph Cathedral on that morning. The Royal Maundy Gifts of specially minted coins will be distributed to the Maundy Recipients. The precise number of Recipients is equal to our monarch's age and, as King Charles is 77, on this occasion 77 men and 77 women have been chosen to receive these Maundy Gifts. It is a real privilege and honour to participate in this very special service.

Future Events: Maesyronnen organized a Community Coffee Morning in Glasbury Village Hall in January. and, as this went well, we are arranging another one for Saturday, 28th March: 10.00 - 12.00. It should be an enjoyable event with board games and good conversation besides tea/coffee and cakes.

Bingo: Ceri's special Prize Bingo will be on Friday, 10th April, and the next usual Bingo session will be on Friday, 1st May. Both will be held at Glasbury Village Hall: 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Filling Station: These Christian events will be held on Friday, 24th April and Friday, 29th May - again, both at Glasbury Village Hall: 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Prayers: We think of friends and loved ones who are ill or undergoing treatment, and those who are going through difficult times - may the Lord be with you. And as the world seems to be getting more and more chaotic, may we look to the Lord Jesus for true peace and stability.

Finally: Resurrection.

A man goes on vacation to the Holy Land with his wife and mother-in-law. The mother-in-law dies.

They go to an undertaker, who explains that they can ship the body home but that'll cost over \$5,000, whereas they can bury her in the Holy Land for only \$150.

The man says, "We'll ship her home".

The undertaker asks, "Are you sure? That's an awfully big expense and we can do a very nice burial here".

The man says, "Look, 2000 years ago they buried a guy here and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance".

(From "A Bundle of Laughs" - J. John & Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books)

Wishing you all every blessing for a joyful and happy Easter.

Kath

Sardis Top Chapel Llangynidr

It has been a busy couple of months as we have shared worship with our Christian friends in the village. At the beginning of March the three congregations met in Sardis Baptist Chapel to share worship prepared for the World Day of Prayer by women of Nigeria. Then on Mothering Sunday we gathered again for worship in the Church. Now we look forward to sharing again during Holy Week, we are hosting Monday evenings service.

Its good to have had some dry days with beautiful sunshine - always good to cheer the spirit.

We wish Margery and Stephen speedy recovery following recent surgery, and think of David as he continues his treatment.

We look forward to the Pastorate Service in May at Ebenezer Upper Chapel.

we wish all in the Pastorate and beyond a happy and joyful Easter.

Margery

Cwm Camlais and Libanus

We are continuing to meet each month, it is good that the two congregations are worshipping together and now feeling very much like one congregation.

we are thankful to everyone who looks after the Chapel in so many ways, the bulding, maintenance, cleaning and gardening, placing flowers to enhance worship and being there to enable worship to happen.

there are many amongst us who are experiencing difficulties with health, themselves or family members. Be assured that you are held in prayer.

We miss Gwyneth who is living with her daughter Susan, and we send our love and look forward to seeing her when she feels able to come.

We also wish our friends beyond the Valley a happy and blessed Easter.