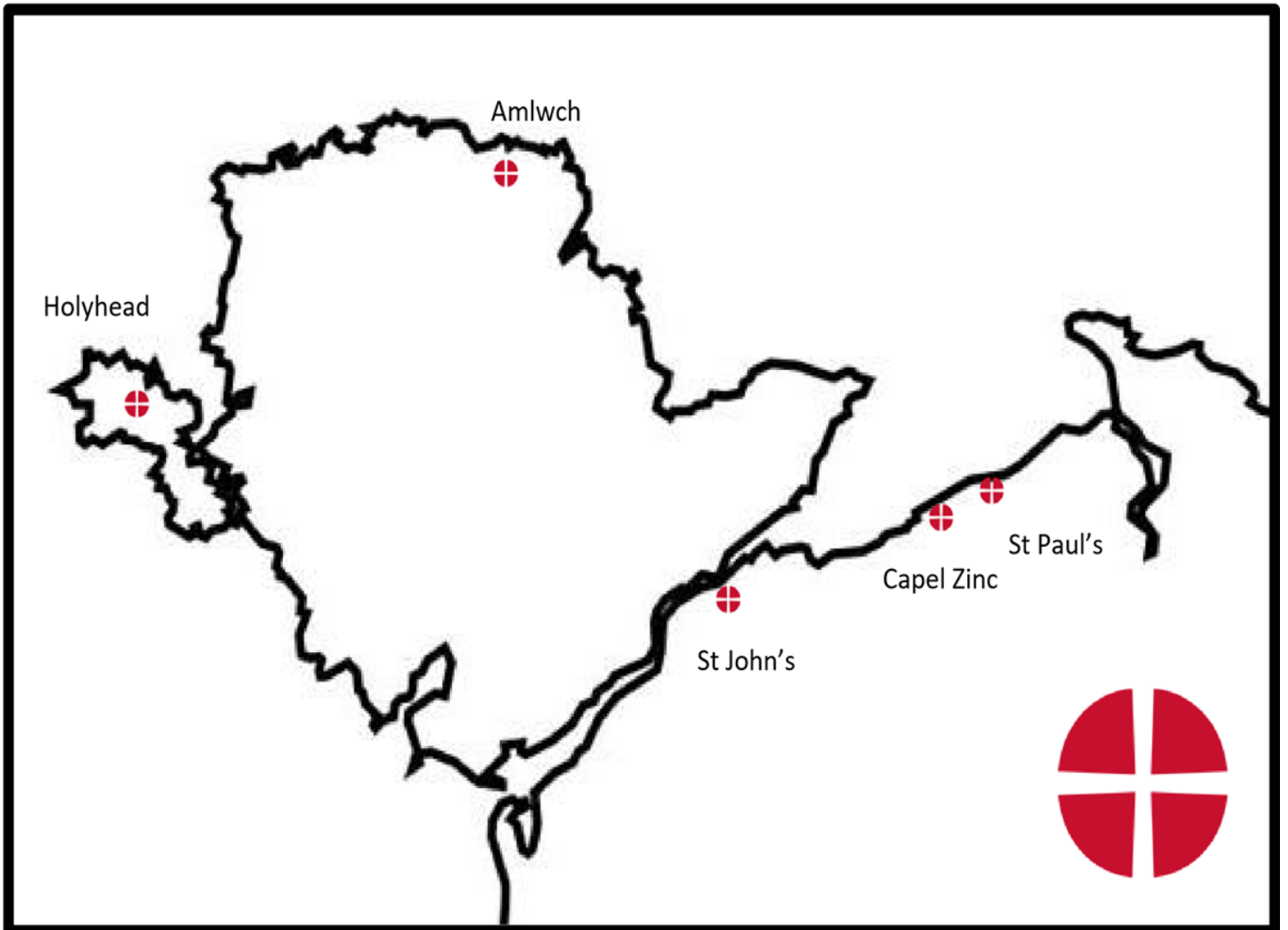


# Lent 2024

# CIRCUIT LIFE



## In the Methodist Churches

## In the Bangor area

Dear friends,

it's been a busy few months in our Circuit so this edition of the magazine is coming out later than in previous years and you'll see it has a few more photos than usual and a little less text. We may all be grateful for that.

By its nature the magazine is a celebration of what is happening in our churches, so I hope that you will enjoy seeing here events that you may have helped organize or that you may have attended, or learning about them if you weren't able to be there yourself.

A huge debt of gratitude goes to everyone, who continues to commit time and effort to ensure that our churches remain vibrant communities, expressing God's love in practical ways in our neighbourhoods and arranging events that can get us thinking about our faith and enjoying the goodness of life. We know that we are few in number, but we also know that the God of the loaves and the fishes will take whatever it is we have to offer and use it to further the work of the kingdom.

One thought to share with you as we enter into this season of Lent. At the January

'Songs of Praise' service I invited, an old friend of mine, who was a student at Southampton University in the 1990s when I was the chaplain there, to share a song that meant a lot to her. Kristy chose a song that comes from the churches of North Carolina written in 2019 by David La Motte and called 'God of the movements and martyrs.' If you want to listen to the song you can find it here:

[God of the Movements and Martyrs - David LaMotte](#)

The song is a celebration of those who have followed Christ into the face of the storm, taking God's message of forgiveness and mercy into the corridors of power and onto the streets where the hopeless and helpless dwell. It's a great song to reflect on during Lent. In particular Kirsty wanted to pick out these lyrics of hope to highlight for us:

*No matter the places you're broken, no matter the things you have done,  
Lay down that weight on the altar, a new day's begun. You are a child of the Maker, you are beloved and  
known,*

*Join us in the work of the kin-dom, we welcome you home.*

I'd never come across this alternative version of the word 'kingdom' but I really like it – for a start it gets away from the gendered and hierarchical language which many find unhelpful and it also reminds us that the vision we pursue is to discover that we are all God's children, we are all kin and family, and to build a world that reflects that truth.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and that you have a blessed Lent.

Nick

# Christmas 2023 in the Bangor and Holyhead Circuit

In the run up to Christmas our Churches have all been very busy preparing to celebrate the Birth of Jesus. Here are some of the things we were involved in.

Holyhead Church has a joint event with the St David's Congregation. There was music, a Christmas sale. And Cakes!! Well it wouldn't be Holyhead without cakes would it?



## Being creative and working together

A group of people got together to make banners for our churches. We are planning



Amlwch spent time making Christmas Cards to give to the people living close by their church.

## The Brass Band played and the people sang.

The Beulah Brass played at the Carols under the stars in Llanfairfechan. The church was filled to capacity and we had a wonderful time worshiping God Together.



Way back in 2016 at an Arts Festival In Penmaenmawr the St Paul's Brass Group was an idea. Roll on to 2023 and we have an established group who led the community Carol singing in Penmaenmawr and spent time playing for the residents at the Gables care home.

## Celebrating Jesus Birthday together

After the business of the run up to Christmas the Churches across the circuit welcomed friends from their local communities into their churches for services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It was wonderful to be able to come together and celebrate the birth of our saviour.

### Christingle in Bangor

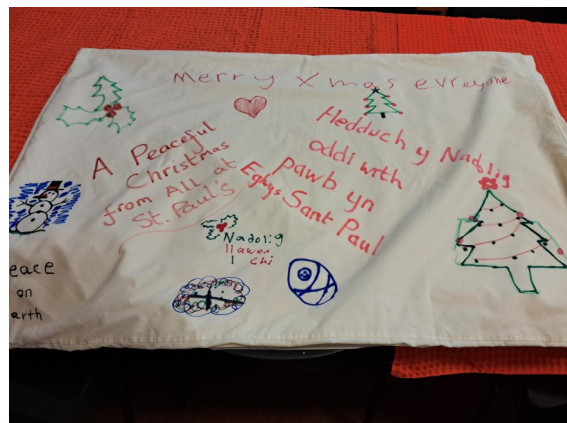




Llanfairfechan Church welcomed people from their community into their Building over the weekend of their Christmas Tree Festival. They raised money for a number of local charities.



The Knitted Nativity figures visited a number of places during Christmas. Here they are at Messy Church in Penmaenmawr. The young people made this graffiti poster during messy Church. For tea we had Santa cakes.



## Remembering the reality of the world in 2023/2024

During November St Johns Church hosted a harp recital by Veronika Lemishenko a renowned Ukrainian harpist. She has now performed twice in gratitude for all that local people have done to support Ukrainian refugees. She will perform again at St John's in the spring. There are a number of people living in this area from the Ukraine, and some of us have got to know them well – people like Victoria and Nastya, who were hosted by Geoff and Barbara Tottle for well over a year at the start of the Russian invasion. In November Victoria's parents, Alexander and Tatiana, who live in rural Ukraine, where the winters can be very harsh, came over to Penmaenmawr to spend the winter with their family here. It was a delightful moment to welcome them to Carols under the Stars in Llanfairfechan.



At the beginning of December we also welcomed Rev'd David Hardman, the Methodist Liaison Officer based in Jerusalem. David was back in the UK because of the conflict in Israel / Palestine and he took the opportunity to travel around churches and share his experiences and insights. The event was entitled: 'We refuse to be enemies – Voices of Peace in the Holy Land.' It was well attended by our own folk and others from outside our Circuit and David talked us through the origins of the conflict and shared some stories of hope where people from either side of the many divisions in that land were coming together to build relationships instead of breaking them apart.

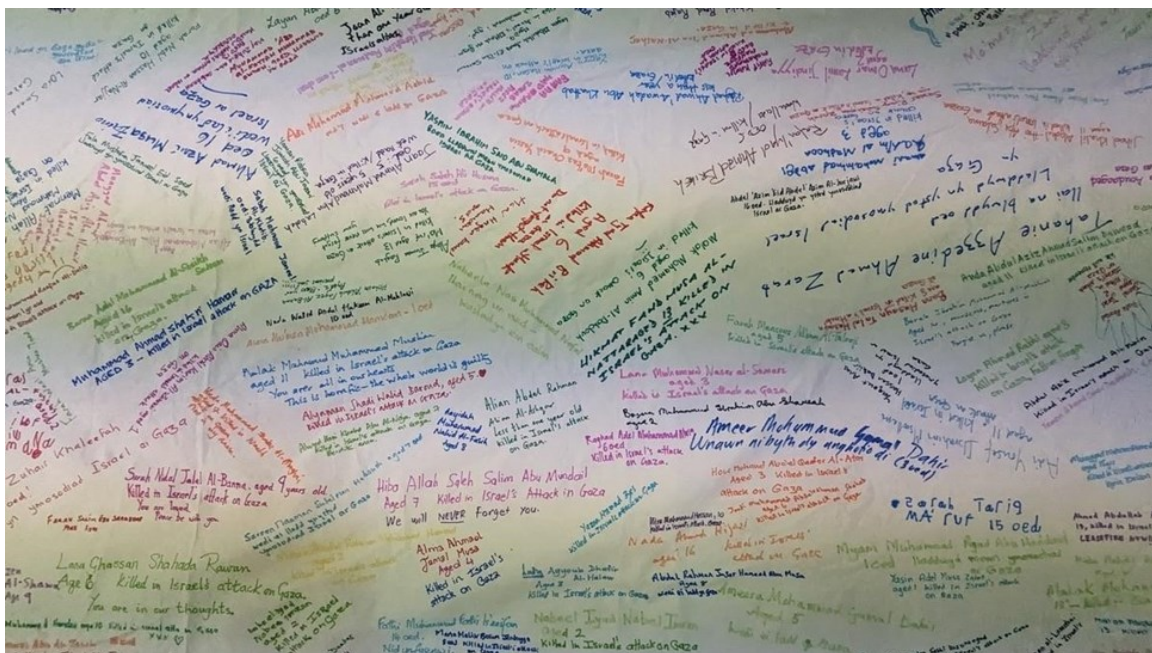




During Advent many of our churches left the second advent candle unlit to show support for people suffering in the Holy Land.



In Penmaenmawr, Anna Jane Evans, a Welsh minister and the Chair of the local CYTUN and a former Christian Aid regional organiser, carried a large roll of cloth around with her all winter from meeting to meeting on which she invited people to write the name of one of the thousands of children who have been killed in the Israel/Gaza conflict. This cloth took on the sense of a sacred object and kept all our Christmas services in their proper perspective. Those who wrote on the cloth took away a small slip of paper with the name of a child on. Many of us have these slips at home as a reminder of the terrible things that go on in this world and as a spur to become peacemakers in our own communities.



The churches of Burkina Faso, who wrote this year's Christian Unity material also brought to our attention the awful suffering of people in other parts of the world. Their choice of the Good Samaritan as the key bible passage reminded us of our duty as Christians to help all in need and to stand beside each other when forces of violence try to pull us apart. The photo shows the brave souls who came out despite the wintry weather to meet at St John's in Bangor for their main Christian Unity service this year. (Photos overleaf).



## An Introduction to Jan Isbell the new Anna Chaplain

We were delighted in January to appoint an Anna Chaplain to work part-time in our Circuit in Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan. A Commissioning Service for Jan will be held at Capel Zinc in Llanfairfechan on Friday March 8<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm. Please do come if you are able and give your support to Jan and to this wonderful project that has been taxiing along the runway for some time now and is finally getting off the ground.

Hello. A few lines to introduce myself as the newly appointed Anna Chaplain within your Circuit. I am Jan, and have lived in Deganwy since retiring to North Wales in 2016. I worship at St. John's, Conwy and am currently a church steward, pastoral visitor and a Toddler group volunteer. I often describe myself as a bit of a 'Martha and Mary' as I love the busyness which life offers but also the quiet times away from the bustle.

I am excited about the Anna Chaplaincy and all it may be able to offer for those living within local residential settings. It is all very new for me, so much to learn but I really look forward to meeting you, getting to know you, joining you in worship and, 'from the old things to the new, keep us travelling along with you'.

... the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children Mark 10 : 14





## Wild Worship - Winter

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> we completed our round of four seasonal walks with reflection and worship. These have been really well supported with an average of around 15 people joining in each time. The first was held last spring along the banks of the Menai Straits on the Faenol estate; then in the summer we walked around the green and hidden spaces of Penmaenmawr. In the autumn we found ourselves near Cemaes on the north coats of Anglesey pondering rivers and tides. Our final jaunt was around Church Island on the Menai Straits. John and Nick led reflections at various points and some of us also shared readings on winter, light and darkness. It's been good to get out of doors and reflect on faith and the environment and to discover new places within our Circuit area. Wild worship will definitely continue so please watch this space – and if you have any other ideas of how we could take worship out of church and interact with the creation around us then please do let John or Nick know.





