

Monthly Notices - January 2025

Our Minister - Rev Bethany Willers

To contact us please email: caldicotmc@gmail.com and your query will be directed to the relevant person. Or if you need to contact our minister, Rev. Bethany Willers, email revbwillers@gmail.com (preferred) or call 01291 625015.

Pastoral Letter

Happy New Year!

On Monday, January 6th at 7:00 we are going to have the first meeting of an ecumenical prayer group here in Caldicot. This is being put together by several area churches, as a way for us to gather and pray for needs both local and around the world. The plan is to start at our church, as we are the most central to the town, and then eventually meet at other churches as well. The hope is to meet every other month, for a total of 6 times a year. We will start with some refreshments, then move to the sanctuary to spend time in prayer, interspersed with some reflective music. This is a bit of an experiment, so I hope you will come along to try it out!

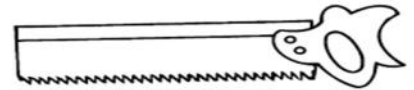
On Sunday, January 12th, we will have our annual Covenant Service. This is a very special worship service in which we share in communion and pray the covenant prayer - a renewal of our commitment to live our lives dedicated to God. This has been a Methodist tradition since the time of John Wesley, and I look forward to leading this service every year.

Immediately following our covenant service I will be going to Heathrow Airport for an afternoon flight to the USA. I will spend my first few days there on the East coast, meeting in person with the board of the international non-profit organisation I serve on. After that, I will head to Iowa to spend time visiting family and friends. I will return to the UK on January 28th.

I'm looking forward to all that 2025 will bring!



If you would like to donate any unwanted DIY tools to the TFSR cause, please see Margaret during Tuesday or Friday Coffee Mornings.



Coffee Morning

COFFEE MORNINGS

Every Tuesday & Friday 9.30am

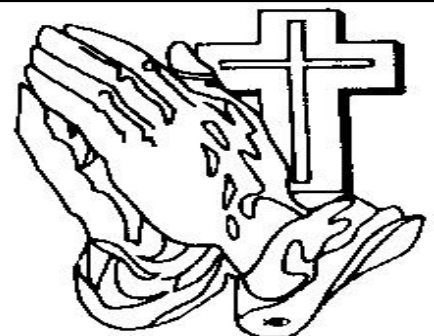


CHURCH CATERING

Thank you to everyone who helps with teas & coffees Sundays & mid-week. Your help is so appreciated & hopefully you'll be able to continue through 2025. We wish you all a peaceful & healthy New Year.

Maureen & The Catering Team.

*Life is fragile
— Handle
with prayer*



RECHARGE - CAFÉ CHURCH

We are meeting at the Portskewett Church hall on

Thursday 9th January @ 7pm

Paul Burke

We welcome all who worship with us

MORNING WORSHIP IN OUR CHURCH BUILDING

Every Sunday at 10.00am

Preachers for JANUARY

5th Worship Leader

12th Rev B. Willers (Holy Communion & Covenant)

19th Mr P. Burke 26th Rev L. Healey

Zoom Service - Every Sunday at 10.00am

United with the service in the church

To join the service or for further details or to request the Zoom link be emailed to you please contact Jack Healey or Gareth Edwards (caldicotmc@gmail.com)

Canon Paul Hardingham considers 2025

AT THE START OF THE NEW YEAR

2025 is a year of Jubilee in the Roman Catholic Church, a year which takes place every 25 years. It's a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. This acts as a challenge for all of us:

How can we spend more time talking and listening to God through reading the Bible and prayer?

How can we grow our love for our family and friends?

How can we make more impact at work, by demonstrating an attractive faith to colleagues?

When Joshua led God's people to the banks of the Jordan, ready to cross over into the Promised Land, he said: '*you have never been this way before*' (Joshua 3:4). At the beginning of a New Year, when we don't know what the future holds, how can we grow in our relationship with God?

Keep our focus on God: The people were told to follow the Ark, symbolising God's presence, as they crossed the river. Let's keep our focus on God and His Word throughout this year and keep in step with where He is leading us.

Consecrate ourselves: Joshua said, '*Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.*' (3:5). God has exciting opportunities ahead for us in this coming year! Let us dedicate our lives afresh to Him, as we let go of known sin and keep our eyes open on seeing God at work in all of our lives.

Will 2025 be a good year for us? '*In the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years.*' Abraham Lincoln

PRAYING WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

Praying about the Unknown Future: “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” Genesis 15:2-3.

This is the Bible’s first prayer. That doesn’t mean that no one before Abraham had prayed, but this is the first time we have a record of someone praying to God.

We learn as early as Genesis 4 that “men began to call on the name of the Lord” (v.26) but it does not explicitly say that they prayed. We can hardly believe that godly men like Enoch and Noah never prayed. Enoch ‘walked with God’ and in his long pilgrimage of three hundred years of fellowship with God (Gen. 5:22) he must have prayed many times.

Even before Abraham’s first prayer is mentioned we are told that God appeared to him, that he built an altar for sacrifice and worship and that he called on the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:7; 13:18). But now he faces a real crisis in his life.

When God first appeared to him, he had been promised that from his family a great nation would emerge (Gen. 12:1-3). Now many years later he still has no children and custom dictates that his chief servant, Eliezer, will inherit everything. Has God forgotten him? Were all those promises of being a father just make believe or self-delusion?

So he cried to God, “What will you give me?” It was a desperate prayer from a desperate heart. What was God doing? Why had He not kept His promises? Had He forgotten? Was He not able to do what He had promised? We have all been where Abraham was when he prayed that prayer. We want to believe but *why is nothing happening?*

Then God answered! “Your *own son* shall be your heir” (v.4). This wonderful answer was sealed with a dramatic illustration. God directed Abraham to look up into the night sky. “Number the stars if you can,” God said. “So shall your descendants be.” Abraham would one day have as many offspring as the stars in the sky! Impossible? Incredible? Far-fetched?

But it happened! The next chapter records the birth of his son Ishmael, and two chapters

later we read of the birth of Isaac, the son of promise. And history, both biblical and secular, confirms that the illustration from the stars was no exaggeration!

So, the Bible’s first prayer helps us in several ways. First, when our hearts ache because of fear or doubt or uncertainty, take it to God in prayer. Second, God’s delays are not denials. Third, with Abraham who ‘believed the Lord’ (v.6), let us trust quietly in our sovereign and gracious God.

By Lester Amann

NEXT MONTHLY NOTICES

If you have an item, please contact Roger Simms by Saturday **26th January**