Esgobaeth Llandaf
Diocese of Llandaff
Lle Mae Ffydd Yn Cyfrif | Where Faith Matters

Recruitment Pack | Autumn 2026

Cynon Uchaf Ministry Area Leader

Croeso yn enw Iesu

Welcome in the name of Jesus

Croeso! Welcome!

I am so glad you are exploring the role of Ministry Area Leader in the Cynon Uchaf Ministry Area. I am praying for you as you embark on this process of discernment.

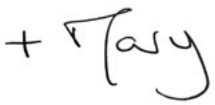
In the Diocese of Llandaff, our vision is for our churches to be centres of prayer, learning, loving service and outreach to their communities. We want our clergy to flourish in ministry, which is why we prioritise pastoral care and careful oversight through the work of our archdeacons and area deans. We seek to encourage collaborative ministry at every level and to empower our congregations to live out their calling as Christian disciples and tell the joyful story of the good news of God's love.

The Cynon Uchaf Ministry Area has been through a period of significant change and development and has had a Transition Minister in place since September 2025 to help them adjust to a new way of working as a Ministry Area. They are now looking forward to welcoming a Ministry Area Leader who will provide oversight of a strong team of clergy and lay ministers, inspiring them in their worship and helping them to develop their vision for serving their local communities. The Transition Minister will work alongside the new Ministry Area Leader initially, before moving on to another Ministry Area in the second half of 2027.

I am looking for a prayerful, faith-filled and imaginative priest who will help these churches to build on the work that is already being done, shape their future priorities and lead them through the next phase of their life together. There is so much potential for growth and development in these churches, while the partnership with the St Elvan's Community Heritage Trust opens up new possibilities for engagement with the arts and heritage events. This truly is an exciting time to join the people of Cynon Uchaf on their journey of faith.

I hope you will find this profile helpful in discerning whether you feel called to apply for this significant leadership role within our diocesan family of churches.

Rt Rev'd M. K. R. Stallard
Bishop of Llandaff



Welcome to the
Cynon Uchaf Ministry Area!

Situated at the upper end of the Cynon Valley, we are a group of eight churches centred on Aberdare, all within a 10 minute drive of one another. Aberdare is the largest town in the valley, home to over 30,000 people. We believe that this is a stunning area in which to live and work. We have history and heritage, and close links to Wales' beautiful countryside as well as three of its biggest cities.

There is a diversity in the size and facilities of each church building. This diversity is echoed in the style of worship practised within each church. Each is sacramentally focused, but the formality and style of worship is distinct for each setting. This ranges from St Elvan's, known as the Cathedral of the Valleys, with a Sung Mass with incense to St Winifred's Penywaun, a 1950s multiuse estate church, worshipping in an informal café church style.

Our churches have excellent facilities with St Luke's, St Lleurwg's, St Fagan's and St Winifred's having church halls with many community groups using these weekly. St Elvan's underwent a £2 million redevelopment project in 2021. St Elvan's Community Heritage Trust works in close partnership with Cynon Uchaf MA to provide a community and heritage venue in the heart of Aberdare, welcoming over 85,000 people into the church for worship, community and heritage events in 2024.

We have two Church in Wales Schools in the MA, Town Church Primary and St John the Baptist Secondary. The clergy conduct assemblies in these schools on a regular basis and both are keen for closer links to the church. The opportunities for mission with young people are immense with over 60 people confirmed in 2025.

Cynon Uchaf became a Ministry Area in 2022, this was a difficult process for the MA and it would be true to say that some of the churches are in need of healing. Our Transitional Minister, Fr Hywel Snook, was appointed in September 2025 and good progress has been made since then. A new governance structure was agreed in October 2025 and a worship team was established to plan worship and discipleship across the MA. A finance policy was agreed in January 2026 and we are moving quickly towards integrating the finances of the whole MA.

In January 2026 we agreed a sustainable worship plan where a priest will take no more than three services each Sunday. Seven lay people stepped forward to be trained as lay worship leaders and are currently being trained with a view to being commissioned in November 2026. This enables us to work together as priests and laity providing weekly worship across the MA.

In February 2026 we began our reformatted Shine Youth Mass with over 70 people attending; these will happen twice a month along with our Faith Factory provision for younger children.

Our Transitional Minister expects to leave in 2027 and is looking forward to working with the new Ministry Area Leader to build up the new team. The Transitional Minister will depart after about 18 months, by which time we hope to have appointed a Vicar to the MA.

The opportunities for mission and discipleship are immense in Cynon Uchaf. We are looking for a MAL to join us on this adventure of transformational mission.

The context

Our ministry area is made up of a number of distinct communities. The town of Aberdare was once known as "The Queen of the Valleys" because of its importance in the coal industry. Today the town and its surrounding areas have become very popular with commuters, because of its good transport links to Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. Aberdare has two comprehensive schools. St John Baptist Church in Wales High School is one of only three church secondary schools in South Wales. Aberdare Community School opened in 2014 in a new building following the amalgamation of three former secondaries. In Penywaun there is a Welsh-medium secondary school, Ysgol Rhydywaun. The ministry area also has 9 primary schools, including one church school and one Welsh-medium school, as well as two special schools. Adjacent to the Community School is the Sobell Leisure Centre, redeveloped in 2017. Also in the town is Aberdare College, with a new building, also opened in 2017 following the demolition of the old site. In the centre of Aberdare is Aberdare Park, a beautiful area of 50 acres which is home the annual motorcycle races, which brings competitors from all over Wales and beyond.

To the north and west of Aberdare town lie the communities of Trecynon, Cwmdare and Llwydcoed, all former mining or industrial areas. Each community has its own identity, while being part of the greater Aberdare area, and each has its own facilities such as shops, pubs and cafés. There is much modern housing, complementing the original miners' terraces. In Cwmdare there is the

Dare Valley Country Park, a beautiful area of 500 acres, consisting of woodlands, lakes and mountainsides. This was created in 1973, using land reclaimed from former collieries. Moving further up the valley, Penywaun is a community of post-war housing, much of it housing association. Hirwaun sits at the top end of the valley. As well as the central village, there is an industrial estate which is home to several businesses, and a small power station is currently being built there near to existing wind farms. Hirwaun was also home to Tower Colliery, the last deep mine in Wales, which was famously bought and then run by its workers until it closed in 2008. Further on towards the Neath Valley is the small community of Rhigos.

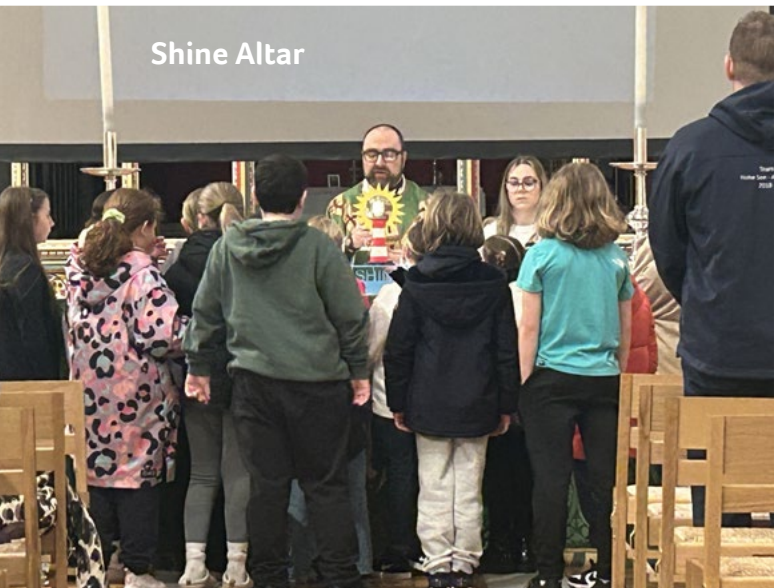
The ministry area is well served by transport links. There are half-hourly trains from Aberdare to Cardiff, and the track and station is currently being upgraded as part of the South Wales Metro scheme. By road the ministry area is connected to Cardiff and the M4 via the A470. This road also goes north towards Brecon and the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. The A465 road (recently upgraded around our area) connects us to Swansea to the south-west and Merthyr Tydfil, Abergavenny and the Midlands of England to the east.

Caffi Cinio

Hirwaun church

Easter Bonnets
Penywaun

Christmas
the Story


Shine Altar

Food bank

The Ministry Area Leader will:

- Work initially with the Transitional Minister to provide strategic leadership during a period of discernment and oversee the transition to new team ministry, playing a key role in the appointment of a new Vicar.
- Leverage the existing opportunities for mission, outreach and ministry, ensuring people of all ages can encounter the love of God in Jesus Christ and grow as disciples.
- Lead regular team meetings, conduct ministerial development reviews, and oversee the ministry team in a way that fosters mutual respect, collaboration, and the flourishing of individual gifts and callings.
- Work closely with the Transitional Minister, Lay Chair and other licensed and commissioned ministers, empowering members of each congregation to engage in church life in sustainable and supported ways.
- Ensure the Ministry Area Council operates in accordance with the constitution of the Church in Wales and the requirements of the Charity Commission, in collaboration with the Transitional Minister and Lay Chair.
- Actively participate in the Deanery by attending chapter meetings and conferences.
- Work alongside the Archdeacons and contribute to the Archdeacons' Visitation process.

We seek a priest who:

- Is passionate about making the good news of Jesus Christ known in the churches, local communities, and across the ministry area.
- Has a vibrant personal faith, rooted in a strong commitment to private prayer.
- Is comfortable engaging across a range of worship traditions, from Anglo-Catholic expressions to more informal café worship styles.
- Possesses discernment and effective change management skills to navigate transitions with wisdom and sensitivity.
- Has strong leadership abilities, capable of managing conflict, building consensus, and making sound decisions.
- Demonstrates excellent administrative and managerial skills, providing the oversight and organisation the ministry area needs.
- Has a deep heart for the Cynon Valley and its people, committed to serving the local communities with love and integrity.
- Embraces the Welsh culture and has some ability to speak Welsh or a willingness to learn.

This role offers a unique opportunity to shape and lead the future of ministry in Cynon Uchaf, maximising the incredible potential of the existing opportunities for mission and ministry. This is a challenging but exciting role bringing out of the people the wonder that God has placed within them.

The Churches and Services

Shine at 6

This is a new youth offering across St Elvan's and St Fagan's. Shine at 6 is a Contemporary Mass held in St Elvan's once a month where the young people are involved in the service and we hold an interactive reflection and intercessions. Over 70 people attended the first service. Shine at 6 Explore is an Informal Mass held in St Fagan's where, in place of a sermon, the family explore the theme of the mass through crafts, activities and reflection. This is done in a round robin style similar to messy church.

St Lleurwg, Hirwaun

St. Lleurwg is centrally located within Hirwaun, a growing village with a good community spirit. We are a welcoming fellowship made up of:

- Sunday congregation (first Sunday of the month - Café Church), attendance 25-30
- Wednesday congregation: predominantly retired, attendance 15 - 22

There is a committed leadership team which includes 3 Lay Readers. Our style of worship is mid/low Anglican.

We have an active Mothers' Union branch with excellent congregational support, providing monthly support for three projects. Refreshments are served in the hall after Wednesday services. We run a "Come and Chat" café in the church hall on Monday mornings, attended by a mixture of church members and other local residents. We support the village food bank operated by a local chapel.

Our social activities include fêtes, a regular quiz in the local pub, Christmas Around the Clock, and the Remembrance Day parade.

St Winifred, Penywaun

A dual-purpose building built in 1958, St Winifred's is in the large housing estate of Penywaun, which comprises both housing association and privately owned properties.

A small congregation meet on Sunday at 11am (Café Church on the 3rd Sunday of the month) and Tuesday 2pm for Holy Eucharist, followed by chat, tea and coffee.

St Winifred's is a friendly church where everyone is welcomed, loved, respected and valued. We outreach into the community through various projects, such as providing period dignity products, and baby and family toiletries to those who need them. In the winter months, we operate as a warm space on a Tuesday afternoon. We donate Christmas hampers to the primary school, who ensure they go to the neediest families. A youth club (provided by the YMCA) and the local jazz band use the hall. We need a ''Shepherd'' with a vision to build on existing relationships, helping us show God's love to the unchurched and lost within this community, whilst further developing contact with the primary school and Welsh-medium comprehensive which are situated on the estate. We have recently begun working with Reskill, a local alternative education provider where the young people do basic maintenance work on the church.

St Luke, Cwmdare

St Luke's, a warm welcoming church, nestled just off the square in the quaint village of Cwmdare, has stood proudly on this site since 1887. Before its current structure, the congregation gathered in homes to share their faith and raise funds for a new church on land gifted by the Holford estate.

In the 1950s, a church hall was built, becoming a cherished asset for fellowship and the community.

Despite its modest size, St Luke's attracts a welcoming congregation for twice-weekly Eucharists.

Sundays feature an 11am service attended by all ages, while a 10am Thursday service draws a faithful crowd.

The congregation is deeply involved in the church's work. They tend to the church's interior and garden, participate in services, serve on the Ministry Area Council and enjoy monthly refreshments after the Thursday service. Members also join friends at St Fagan's for Mothers' Union, Pantri Cariad and Caffi Cinio.

St James, Llwydcoed

St. James' Church in Llwydcoed, is often referred to as "the Red Church" as it was built using red brick with purple tiled roof. A Grade II listed building, consecrated in 1895, the church is located on a prominent site and features early gothic and arts and crafts influences. There is a timber framed porch at the entrance standing on a brick base and a beautiful and distinctive bellcote.

There is a small but dedicated congregation who participate fully in the life of the church. St James' has strong links to the local primary school who participate in concerts at the church and hold seasonal services here also.

A popular monthly quiz night is organized from St James' and held locally at the Red Cow. This raises funds for the Ministry Area but is also a vehicle for outreach into the community and is always well attended.

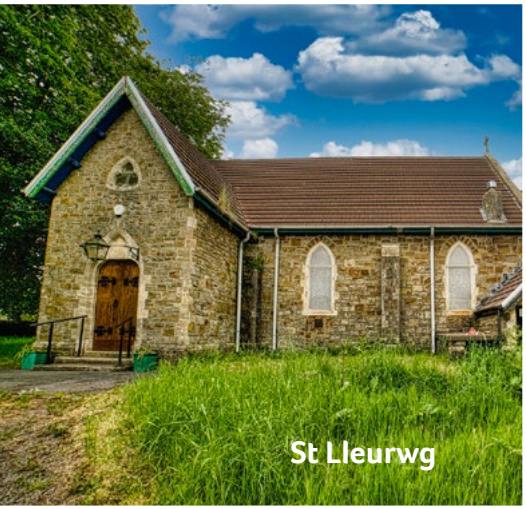
St James' is very much a family-orientated church, actively encouraging children to participate in services as readers or servers. There is a warm, welcoming and relaxed environment in church which allows for the nurturing of the faith of all who attend. The congregation welcomes a variety of service styles and are particularly supportive of and encourage lay-led worship.

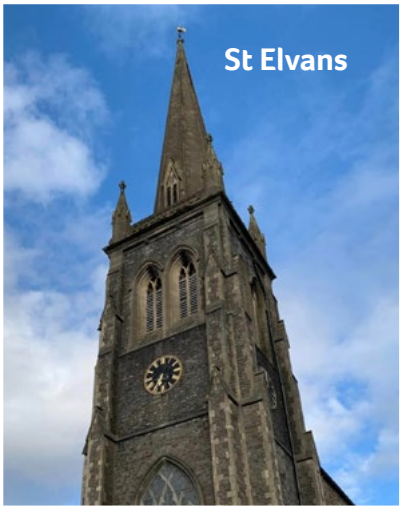
St Fagan, Trecynon

Built in 1854 by Baroness Windsor-Clive, we are the only church in the world dedicated to St Fagan. We are a busy church with Sunday and mid-week services including a Welsh language provision with an annual Plygain. We are blessed with a high number of baptism and confirmation requests per year. Our programme includes children and families work, a contemporary youth church and nurture and study. We are heavily involved with social outreach including a social pantry, school holiday events, community Christmas Day programme, and a Scout Group with three divisions, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. We have a well-appointed hall which is used by a variety of community groups as well as Church activities. The hall also includes a church office. The Church is often used throughout the year for performances by theatre groups and bands.

St Winifred

St John


St Lleurwg


St Elvans

St Matthew

St Lukes
St Luke's Church, Cwmdare
Eglwys Sant Luc, Cwmdâr
Sunday Service
10.45am
Midweek Service
Thursdays 9.30am
followed by refreshments
For more information
01685 877903
www.stfagansaberdare.co.uk

St Fagan

What goes on in St Fagan's

Sunday – Faith Factory every 2 weeks

Monday 9. 30 – 11.30 – weekly free Tea and Toast , a warm space and a place to chat and drop in

Tuesday – Mothers' Union programme

Wednesday – mid-week Eucharist with a cuppa and fellowship afterwards

Thursday Caffi Cinio - a lunch time gathering over a light lunch for company, discussion and sometimes a quiz

Saturday – Pantri Cariad 2.30 – 3.00 pm Social Pantry

Other events have been Youth Church, Company at Christmas, School uniform exchange, Messy Church, Bible Study/Café Church , Bible course, Pilgrim, confirmation classes , Saturday coffee mornings, Church fetes and Fayres.

St Matthew, Abernant

St Matthew's (the Tin Church), bought as a flat pack in 1888, to last for 10 years, is a well-attended church with a welcoming atmosphere. It serves the community of Abernant. Our Sunday services are at 10am, and are a part sung Low Mass. The congregation is regular and a mixed age group.

St Elvan, Aberdare

Dominating the town centre, St Elvan's has been described as "the Cathedral of the Valleys". Built in 1852 it is steeped in the Anglo-Catholic tradition with a Sung Mass at 11am on Sundays and mid-week mass on Tuesdays. The Shine at Six Contemporary Youth Mass is held once per month.

The St Elvan's project was undertaken in 2020. It was a £2.5million investment made by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Pen-Y-Cymoedd Wind Farm Trust and a number of other funders to completely refurbish and reorder the church. The newly reordered church offers a welcoming atmosphere, with the creation of a new Community Hub space, Coffee shop, Heritage Interpretation aisle, meeting spaces, and exhibition space which has increased access and enriched community participation.

To protect and manage this investment, and to continue to preserve and maintain the Grade 2 listed building while promoting its additional use for the advancement of heritage, culture and arts, a new independent registered charity (St Elvan's Community Heritage Trust) was set up in 2024 with its own board of trustees chaired by the Transitional Minister with other MA members on the board.

The Project at the time was seen as unique and a first of its kind for a church, acting as a pilot for what other churches that are at risk can do. It has adapted to the changing needs of the community and preserved the building for the people of Aberdare.

Today the church has evolved into a multifunctional space supporting cultural, social and community life. It is now an important anchor of the local community; what makes it unique is that it offers a space for worship, artistic performance, social support, cultural expression and more. The venue is now regarded as a place that brings artistic and musical talent to Aberdare.

St Elvan's Community Heritage Trust now builds on the success of the project with many weekly group sessions and several monthly group sessions with over 900 attending monthly. Since 2024 there have been 229 events and activities reaching an

St Elvan's Children's Activities

Mezzanine St Elvans

audience of at least 12,957 people from all over South Wales The heritage programme is overseen by a Heritage and Engagement Officer and saw 6,620 attending Heritage based events in 2025. The Trust is operationally managed by a Marketing and Business Development manager and supported by over 30 volunteers. The earned income from the coffee shop, activities and events ensure that the building is fully maintained and preserved. The trust have recently employed a catering manger to market and run the Spires Coffee Shop in the church.

The Trust continues to work closely with all schools in the Cynon Valley with more than 2,000 children attending events during December 2025 and providing activities during the school holidays. The Trust also prides itself in providing opportunities and placements for those with learning disabilities and those young people not in employment. Worship is also a key focus for the Trust supporting all festivals including the highly successful Christmas the Story and the People's Passion Play.

The worship of St Elvan's closely complements the activities of the Trust with a series of Christian talks, special services and the use of exhibitions within worship. The heritage programme for the year is planned alongside the worship programme enabling both to work together.

The Trust is using its experience to pursue further investment opportunities to make accessible the medieval church of St John the Baptist for Heritage and the Parish Community Hall for Health and wellbeing activities and future food bank within the town centre.

St John the Baptist, Aberdare

St John's is the ancient Parish church of Aberdare. It is believed that the first church on this site was built in 1189. Both the stone arch in the vestry and the font have been dated to 1200.

The building is regarded as the oldest and largest stone built church in the Valleys and is Grade 2*listed. Originally in the Parish of Llantrisant, with the growth in population that came with Industrialisation the Parish of Aberdare was created. With further growth in population new parishes were created and new churches, including St Elvan's in 1852.

St John's still stands as a landmark of faith and community reflecting Aberdare's social, cultural and spiritual development. Many of the plaques on the walls are memorials to generations of families. St John's has been a place of worship, pastoral care and civic gathering for hundreds of years, adapting over time to meet changing needs while retaining a strong sense of continuity and purpose. Throughout its history the church has engaged with local schools, charities and community organisations. With a small but faithful congregation St John the Baptist continues this tradition, combining respect for heritage and the intention to maximise this precious resource with a commitment to mission, welcome and service in contemporary Aberdare.

One weekly service takes place at present: a 11.00 a.m. said Low mass on Thursday with a regular congregation of around 20. Weddings and funerals take place in the church and cremated remains are interred in the area immediately surrounding the church. There are well attended Heritage talks and Open days arranged by the St Elvan Trust.

Sustainable worship pattern:

In January 2026 the Ministry Area Council approved a sustainable worship plan. This is to ensure that worship is offered at all our churches weekly. Each priest will only take up to three services per Sunday with annual leave and sickness being covered from within the Ministry Area. This gives the people continuity of worship and pastoral care. This plan is enabled by the training of new Lay Worship Leaders. It also enables both priests to have regular ministry in each of the churches. The Fifth Sunday is covered by a Ministry Area Service.

Ministry and leadership team

Readers

We have three active and two retired Readers within the Ministry Area.

Peta Maidman mainly takes services and preaches in St Fagan's, St Luke's and St James'.

Cerys Hartley preaches on Sundays in St Lleurwg's.

Cledwyn Morgan preaches on Wednesdays in St Lleurwg's.

Robert Jones and Delia Powell are retired readers at St Lleurwg's.

Lay Worship Leaders in Training: We currently have 7 Lay Ministers in training who will be commissioned in November but are already taking services as part of their training.

Retired clergy

Fr Norman Hadfield lives in Cwmdare and takes services mainly in St Luke's.

Rev Peter Godsall lives in Landare and takes services across the MA and takes occasional offices as required.

Fr Hywel Davies lives in our neighbouring ministry area of Cynon Valley South but often takes services in our ministry area. A native Welsh speaker, he is very involved in the monthly Welsh Eucharist in St Fagan's, taking a turn at preaching and presiding.

Transitional Minister: Fr Hywel Snook

Originally from Cwmdare, Fr Hywel left the Valley in the 90s to pursue a career in genetic research. Fr Hywel trained in the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield and was ordained in Blackburn in 2005. Fr Hywel has worked as priest in Blackpool and Chorley and as a Parish Development Advisor in the Diocese of Lichfield alongside parish work in Market Drayton. Before coming back to Aberdare after 30 years absence, he worked as a Mission Priest on estates in Bristol Diocese.

Fr Hywel describes himself as a bit of nerd with interests in science and sci-fi. He is also a devoted heavy metal fan and is trying to stay loyal to the Welsh rugby team in these trying times.

The Transitional Minister role is to bring the MA together and to set the foundations of governance and ministry. Perhaps our lay minister describes it

best as a bit like Mary Poppins, "He's with us until the wind changes". Fr Hywel is keen to talk to potential applicants to describe his role and how this will work for the first year of ministry for the new MAL.

Licensed Lay Reader Peta Maidman

Peta was licensed as a Lay Reader in 2021, following her training at St Padarn's Institute. Her journey towards formal ministry began after years of active involvement in church life, and was notably inspired during her portrayal of Geraldine Grainger in a production of "The Vicar of Dibley". Through the discernment process, Peta felt drawn to the Reader role, believing it best reflected the nature of her calling, rather than seeking ordination as a Priest.

With the support of both congregations and clergy, Peta now leads two Lay services each month at St Luke's and St James', typically on the first and third Sundays, often designing her own liturgy centred on Morning Prayer. Though she is still learning Welsh, Peta regularly assists with the monthly Welsh Eucharist, frequently leading the intercessions and occasionally preaching in Welsh. She has also led Remembrance Sunday commemorations in Llwydcoed and Cwmdare for the past two years, and has helped with morning assemblies in some local schools to support the Vicar. Her ministry includes organising and participating in services such as the family-focused Good Friday liturgy, which features interactive elements for all ages.

In her teaching role, Peta has helped prepare candidates for Confirmation and is actively involved in rejuvenating Youth worship within the Ministry Area.

During the Covid lockdown in 2020, Peta established the online prayer group "Space for Prayer", which continues to meet fortnightly, offering a welcoming space for reflection and spiritual support.

Peta is also involved in community outreach, helping to organise the "Pantri Cariad" food pantry, which provides food, personal and household essentials every fortnight. She is a dedicated member of the "Company at Christmas" team, which for the past decade has brought joy to many by offering a two-course meal and entertainment to people on Christmas Day.

The next phase of life in Cynon Uchaf Ministry Area is exciting and Peta is looking forward to working with and supporting the new Ministry Area Leader. She is very glad that she's retired as she's not quite sure how she ever found time to work!

Our Diocese

Irish monks first established the Christian faith in Morgannwg during the 5th and 6th centuries. St Cadoc established the monastery at Llancarfan and ruled the area as Abbott-King. St Illtud established a school of world renown at Llantwit Major where he trained St David and St Patrick. St Dyfrig became the first bishop of the area, followed by the great St Teilo. However, it was St Euddogwy, the third bishop who finally settled at Llandaff in the sixth century.

Today we are the most populous of six dioceses in the Church of Wales, with over one million inhabitants, covering much of South Wales, including the urban centres of Cardiff and Barry in the Southeast, the Heritage Coast to the South, the South Wales Valleys in the North and the post-industrial regions of Neath and Port Talbot in the West. The diocese is a family of over 6,000 regular worshippers with over one hundred clerics and more than two hundred churches spread across 29 Ministry Areas.

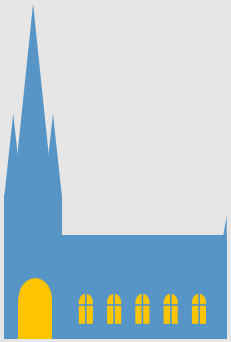
1 Theological Institute

29 Ministry Areas

130 serving clergy

33 Licensed Lay Ministers

207 Churches



1 Cathedral

6 Deaneries

1 Eco-Diocese

More than 6000 regular Church in Wales worshippers

3 Church in Wales High Schools

22 Church in Wales Primary Schools

1 Resource Church

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Diocese of Llandaff

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