



# Diocese of Llandaff Archdeaconry of Margam



## Parish Profile of the Rectorial Benefice of Neath Neath Area Deanery

# 1. INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to introduce you to our Benefice Profile, which sets out to describe our ministry in the Parish of Neath.

The purpose of this document is to convey an overall picture of our Benefice, its Church life, its people and heritage. It also gives some insight into the mechanisms of the Parish including its administration and finances.

By the very nature of this profile, it can only be a snapshot of the work and life of our benefice and we would encourage you to get in touch if there is anything further that you would like to know.

Our six Churches reflect a wide variety of worship and this is complimented to some extent in the character of the buildings themselves which range from the Medieval to the “Noughties”. We would like to think that you would find our worship welcoming and spiritually fulfilling whatever your own personal tradition.

There has been a great deal of change in the last 15 years and the role of the church in the Community of Neath has become more focused. This has resulted in the growth of initiatives such as “Messy Church” which plays a role in attracting younger members and their families to worship outside the traditional model of Sunday services.

The increased use of our churches as community venues has also grown so as to make the place of the church more relevant than ever in the community it serves.

In the following pages you will find more details about these and other aspects of our life as Christians in this locality.

We hope you will find the Profile both informative and interesting.

*Reverend Canon Lynda Newman—Rector*

*Reverend Emma Street - Curate*

*Reverend Stuart Ghezzi - Curate*



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LOVING GOD:  
CALLED TO  
WORSHIP

LOVING GOD'S  
WORLD:  
CALLED TO MISSION

LOVING ONE  
ANOTHER:  
CALLED TO COMMUNITY

## 2. OUR VISION STATEMENT

*'Sharing God's love within our community and beyond'*

The Rectorial Benefice of Neath comprises of 6 churches;

We believe we are called in our own distinctive ways to:

- ◆ Be Committed to our Lord's teaching of loving one another and rooted in the Gospel;
- ◆ Continually seek to do God's will and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our decision making;
- ◆ Enjoy our journey of faith through our shared experiences of worship, prayer, discussion and fellowship— "Having fun together";
- ◆ Listen to the needs of those inside our churches, on the fringe of church, and those disaffected by church;
- ◆ Love, serve, support, respect and encourage all those with whom we come into contact;
- ◆ Provide experience of church in new and creative ways;
- ◆ Work closely and creatively with our local schools;
- ◆ Work collaboratively with Christians from other denominations;
- ◆ Be adaptable and flexible in our approach, constantly seeking to improve and walk ever more closely with God;
- ◆ Be aware of the heritage and civic nature of our town and its needs
- ◆ Have the courage to step out into the unknown and take risks;
- ◆ See where there is need both in our churches, our communities and in the world;
- ◆ Embrace one another's God given gifts and abilities;
- ◆ Be a church that is welcoming, inclusive and diverse;

### 3. THE BENEFICE & ITS CONTEXT



Neath is situated at the western end of industrial South Wales, 40 miles west of Cardiff, and 8 miles east of Swansea. It has excellent communications, being at the junction of the A465 with the M4, and having a main-line railway station on the Fishguard to Paddington route.

There is a busy town centre with indoor market and multi-national and local shops (Including an “M&S”!). There is a strong sporting, musical and cultural tradition, and many leisure facilities. The civic electoral role is 18,900. 75% of housing is owner-occupied, with new housing development particularly in the Cimla area.

The Rectorial Benefice was created out of the former parish of Neath with Llantwit on 2nd September 2001. It includes the community of Tonmawr, to the east of Cimla, where a new church was built in 2003.

There is a great deal of built heritage in the town and the surrounding area comprises beautiful countryside to the north and is in close proximity to the Gower peninsula and the recently developed coastal area in Aberavon—being part of the County Borough.

The traditional industries of the area have given way to tourism and leisure both of which have a prominence in the locality. There has been a great deal of new business growth in the area which along with established businesses employ many from within the community.



## 4. OUR CHURCH LIFE

The Benefice year starts on Advent Sunday when the **Parish Advent Carol Service** is held in St David's Church which comprises readings, prayers and seasonal music sung and anointing for those who wish to receive it.

December is typically busy with all of the churches hosting many events : carol services, school concerts and other seasonal activities.

On the Sunday before Christmas we traditionally hold a very well attended Parish Carol Service in St David's Church which features the Briton Ferry Silver Band and The Parish Choir. It comprises traditional carols and readings.

Worship on Christmas Eve commences with a **Christingle Service** at 3pm in St David's which is always packed with children and their families and has featured many themes recently such as Dr Who, Frozen and Star Wars.

Later that evening five of our churches hold a Eucharistic service between 5pm - 11.30pm. On Christmas Day there is one service in The Parish Church of St Thomas.

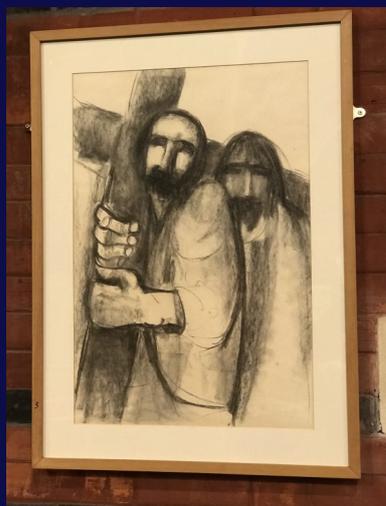
January is a quiet month in the Benefice save for the Feast of the Epiphany; while February begins with **Candlemas Ceremonies** before we enter Lent.

Ash Wednesday is suitably marked by a morning 10am Eucharist in St David and an evening Eucharist in the Parish Church of St Thomas .

During Lent, Neath 'Churches Together' hold a Lent Course at which some members attend and in some years the Bishop has come to Neath to conduct a series of Lenten reflections. **Stations of the Cross** services are held twice during Lent in St David's using the fine set of charcoal drawings given to the church by the local Welsh artist, Will Roberts.

During **Holy Week** the Benefice worships from Monday to Wednesday with Churches Together in various venues. From Maundy Thursday to Easter Day we follow a pattern of services in our own churches. On Maundy Thursday we have the celebration of the Last Supper and Stripping of the altar at The Parish Church of St Thomas and also at Saint Peter's & Saint Paul's church , where an Agape Meal is shared and there is the Ceremony of Washing of the Feet and the Altar of Repose.

**Good Friday devotions** commence with Ante communion and Liturgy at SSPP and the Three Hour 12-3pm service in St David's church, divided into three separate parts comprising a devotional hour, a meditative hour and culminating, in the final hour, with the Parish Choir singing appropriate sacred music and congregational hymns with readings & prayers. The Parish **Easter Vigil** is held at St Illtyd; On Easter Day there are services in all churches.





## 4. OUR CHURCH LIFE (CONTINUED)

We have **three Benefice Sundays** each year held on “Low” Sunday, Christ The King Sunday and the last Sunday in July. These present an opportunity to come together as a Benefice to share in worship and fellowship.

The **Easter Vestry Meeting** (AGM) is held on the last Sunday in April.

We hold a **Confirmation Service** each year, which includes candidates from Alderman Davies Church in Wales School. This service has recently moved to the early part of the calendar year to give opportunity for the School confirmees to take communion for the majority of their final academic year.

Churches Together in Neath and Unity Sunday School use St David’s Church as a base to start their **March of Witness**, which takes place on the Saturday before Whitsunday.

The Benefice is affiliated to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and from time to time devotional services take place in the Benefice. A number of our parishioners support the annual **Llandaff Diocesan Pilgrimage** each July.

Worship and Liturgy is typically broad Anglican in the Benefice but predominantly “middle” in its style. Incense is used on high days in St Illtyd’s and SSPP only.

Four of our churches have choirs and there is a particularly strong choral tradition in St. David’s church. All of the churches have organs, although occasionally it is necessary to use CDs in some services.

The **Great September Fair** (Dating back 700 years) takes place during the second week of the month and sees St David’s church open for prayer and community outreach with stalls and activities in the building. It is seen as a major opportunity for mission in the town and an additional source of income not only for the Benefice but also other churches in the deanery that also take part.

The autumn season sees the Harvest celebrations on first Sunday on October. The annual **RAFA Battle of Britain Commemoration Service** occurs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in September in St David’s as well as the **Remembrance Day Service** in November. Both are civic services.



## 4. OUR CHURCH LIFE (CONTINUED)



**Alderman Davies Church School** is situated in the centre of town and next to St David's Church. The clergy work very closely with the school and there is great mutual support. A weekly Eucharist with different classes is held every Wednesday morning during term time, to which parents and the wider congregation are invited and attend.

The Current Roll for Alderman Davies' School is 431

We are fortunate in having established excellent relationships with all the primary schools in our parish and regularly deliver assemblies and pastoral support. Schools are keen to use our church buildings for services and concerts; and in order to support the work of the curriculum in looking at the features of church and what makes it a distinct place of Christian worship. Our churches are used to develop an understanding of life events- Baptism, Marriage; and to gain an understanding of the life and work of the priest and the role of the church within society.

We often get asked to do **Godly Play** sessions within our primary schools; and have worked with Alderman Davies School to create a dedicated Godly Play Room and equip it with all the resources needed. The clergy have been involved in delivering Godly Play training to staff in the school, and **The South Wales Godly Play Network Meetings** have been held there.

Over the last few years we have been working with Churches Together in Neath to put on an annual '**Experience**' event for the local school children. To date we have



had Harvest, Easter and Pentecost Experiences. This has proven to be extremely popular and helps to support and supplement the work being carried out in schools. It is always positively received and we have regularly have **500 +children** to each event.

The parish gives the Scripture union "**It's Your Move**" book out to Year 6 children when they leave school to go to the comprehensive schools.



A new and successful project '**The Lounge**' has been started in Cefn Saeson comprehensive school and is being run in conjunction with The Church Army. A group of volunteers goes into school once a week on a lunch time and hands out hot chocolate in a demountable classroom. We have upwards of 60 children coming in each week and it has become a popular venue for them to just meet with friends and do homework together.

A new youth group **#Tidy** is held in Saints Peter and Paul's Church hall.

The Parish has been involved with Messy Church for many years and we have a band of loyal and creative helpers.

**Messy Church** usually takes place every two months in Saint Peter and Paul's Church Cimla; and we have held it in other venues- outside Messy Church in Pelenna Outdoor Centre and Mini Messy Church in St Teilo's Church Tonmawr.

Messy Christmas is held in St David's Church.



## 4. OUR CHURCH LIFE (CONTINUED)

St Thomas hosts the inauguration service for the **Neath Town Mayor** each September.

We hold Sunday Schools every Sunday in St David, St Catherine & St Teilo

We hold our parish fund raiser –The **Benefice Winter Fayre** the day before Christ the King Sunday.

Throughout the year both clergy & laity visit the sick, and take home communion, visit hospitals and visit the house bound. A newly formed **pastoral visiting team** has strengthened this area of work.

The recently formed **Men's Group** meets monthly for social engagement and arranges visits and talks for its members.

Each year, during Christian Aid Week, the Benefice participates in the events that are organised.

Each year there is an opportunity to spend time on a short **residential retreat** or at a "**Quiet Day**" which is held outside of the Benefice

The Benefice takes an active role in **Area Deanery** activities.

All of the churches are used throughout year by **community groups** and **organisations**.

The Benefice has a website presence on the internet as well as separate Facebook and Twitter accounts.

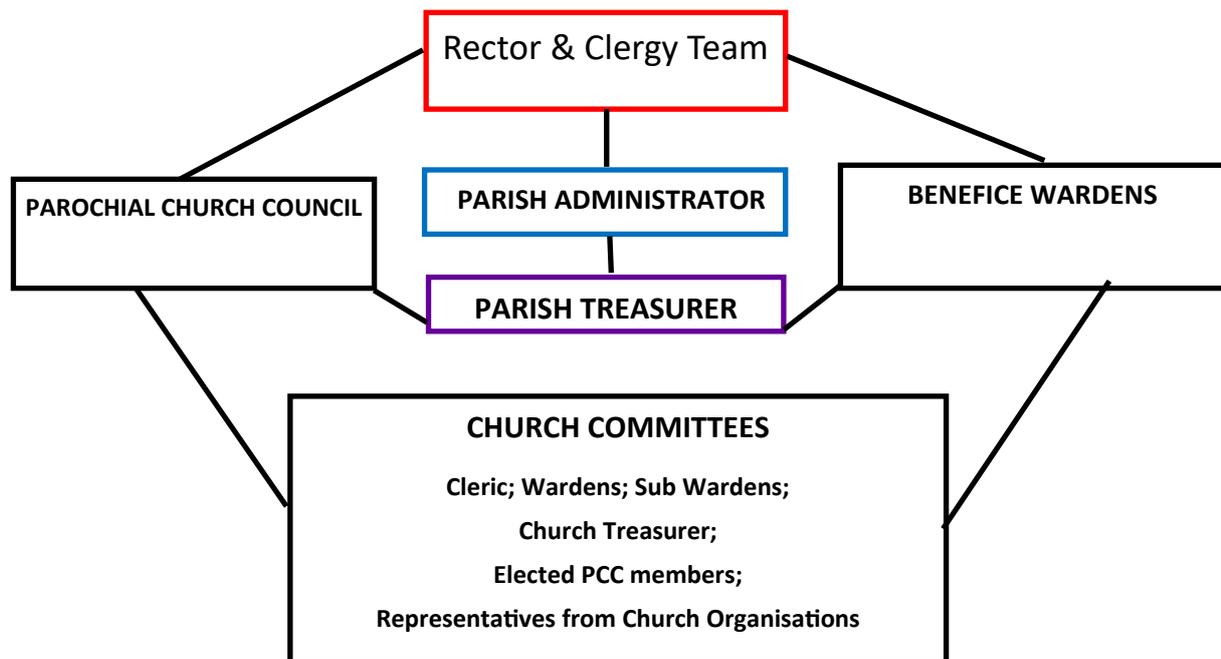
Some of the individual churches also have separate Twitter accounts.



All told—we have a busy Benefice!



## 5. ORGANISATION & SUPPORT



The Benefice runs on a daily basis through the office which is situated in self contained accommodation in the Rectory and is staffed by a Part Time **Parish Administrator** during the week.

It has appropriate equipment (PC and a Colour Printer/Copier/Scanner) together with Broadband internet and a telephone line with answerphone facility for out of office hours contact.

A monthly **Parish Magazine** is edited and produced from the office which is produced by lay people and is self funding and has a circulation of some 308 copies.

The weekly newsletter (bulletin) which includes the Sunday readings is published from the office

The Benefice Treasurer is an experienced accountant in local practice, however each Church has been self funding for over twenty years with each individual church having its own treasurer. [More details on this are contained in **Section 9** of this profile].

Meetings of the PCC are bi-monthly and the individual churches hold 3 committee meetings a year using a common agenda.

## 6. OUR CHURCHES



### SAINT ILLTYD

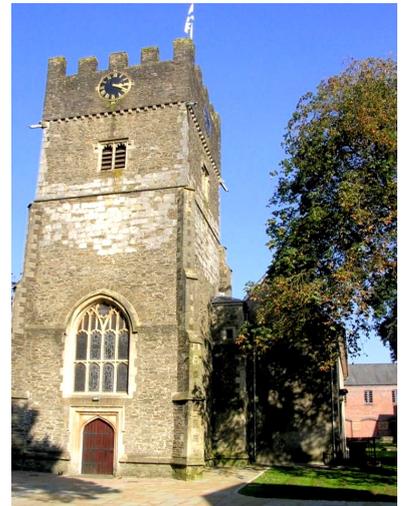
Believed to be near the site of the Hermitage of Saint Illtyd himself, the little church now sitting on the bank of the Neath canal, was understood to be the place where Saint Illtyd would spend the period of Lent.

A small church was believed to be present there from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and certainly by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century parish records indicate that the church stood at the site presently occupied by the building that we see today, but it was substantially rebuilt and added to in the early 1900s. It has a large churchyard, which although seldom used or visited, remains the responsibility of the parish in terms of its upkeep.

The present building was extensively restored in 2001 and has recently undergone a further redecoration internally and features as part of the Benefice's plan to provide for a Celtic Centre of Worship for the Area Deanery of Neath.

### SAINT THOMAS

Originally the garrison church for the castle, it has existed from probably the late 12th century and is documented from 1298. At first dedicated to Thomas à Becket, it was rededicated after the Reformation to Thomas the Apostle. Between 1685 and 1731 the church was radically altered. In 1691 the height of the tower, built in c.1340, was raised using stone taken from Neath Abbey. The Mackworth and the Miers families are commemorated in windows, hatchments and stone memorials in the church. Alderman Davies's will is displayed on a will board on the north wall. There are several beautiful stained glass windows in the church. One is dedicated to Donald Coleman M.P., another to the Showmen's Guild who hold Neath's Annual Fair. One of the largest Royal Arms seen anywhere outside London is located on the choir vestry wall which has been recently restored. It is the Parish Church and the venue for the celebration of the monthly Welsh Communion (Y Cymun Bendigaid)



### SAINT DAVID

Celebrated its 150th Anniversary in 2016 and is Grade 2 \* Its tower is a prominent land-mark.

It has undergone extensive renovation and re-ordering in the last 10 years and has become the embodiment of the church in the community, reaching out to both individuals and organisations as a venue for regular activities and events as well as being a place of regular worship. It has close links with Alderman Davies' Church in Wales Primary School, which is immediately alongside the church.

It is the venue for civic services and larger Benefice events.





### **SAINT CATHERINE**

Built in 1890 and dedicated in 1891, Saint Catherine's church sits at the eastern end of the Benefice.

It was built at a time when there was a growing need for a church presence in the Melyncryddan area of the parish. The building was designed by local architects and is built in a style not dissimilar to the "Arts and Crafts" movement, an example of which can be seen at Caldey Abbey.

The congregation is currently facing the challenge of meeting some substantial recommendations arising out of the most recent Quinquennial inspection.

### **SAINT PETER & SAINT PAUL**

Consecrated for worship in 1970, the building replaced the old church (which is now the adjoining hall) which was erected in 1964, It serves the Cimla area of Neath which is substantially residential.

It has good links with the primary School at Crynallt and the comprehensive school, at Cefn Saeson. It currently serves as the base for the Benefice's "Messy Church" and the new venue for the re-launched #Tidy Youth Club.

It is in good structural condition.

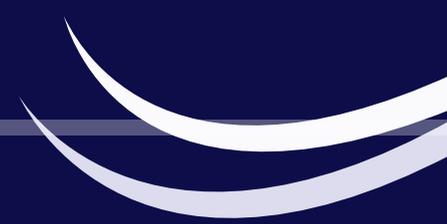


### **SAINT TEILO**

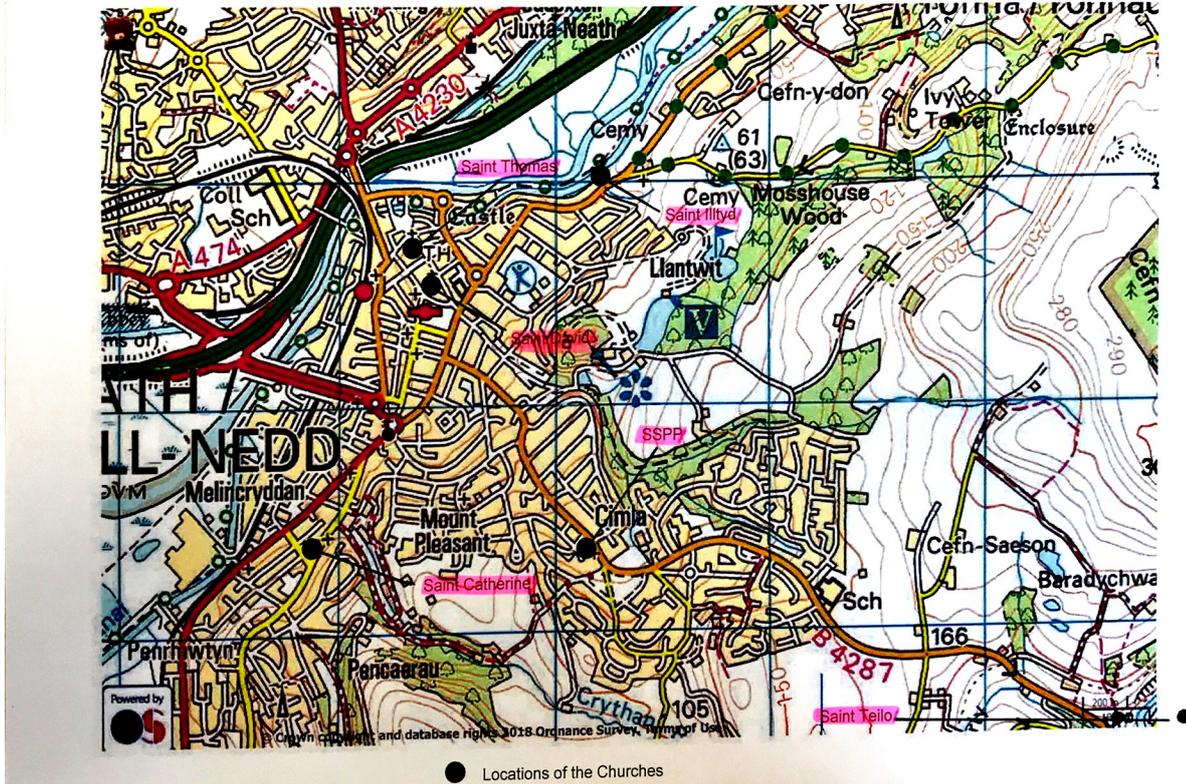


Situated in the village of Tonmawr to the north east of the Cimla, the building replaced the old church that was demolished and which was consecrated in 2003.

It is in excellent structural condition and serves as both a place of worship and a community venue for the village.



## 6. OUR CHURCHES - GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



Coloured plan showing locations of the Churches of Saint Illtyd, Saint Thomas, Saint David, Saint Catherine, and Saint Peter & Saint Paul. The Scaling of the plan does not show the location of Saint Teilo which is reached by continuing along the B4287 and then turning right on to Tonmawr Road.

## 7 BENEFICE DATA

### Average number of baptisms, wedding funerals and confirmations over the last 5 years

YEAR	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals	Confirmations
2017	45	9	82	32
2016	50	22	72	24
2015	62	20	88	28
2014	69	16	74	23
2013	70	17	55	37

### Average attendees on a Sunday for the last 5 years :-

2018 — 204; 2017 — 208; 2016 — 212; 2015 — 216; 2014 — 216; 2013 — 216

### Christmas & Easter Communicants:

YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Christmas	407	405	415	368	N/A
Easter	323	325	314	333	328

### Current Average Sunday Attendance (Based on first Four Months of 2018) - 201

### Number on the Benefice Electoral Roll as at 30th April 2018:

St David 106                      St Peter and St Paul 69                      St Illtyd 13  
 St. Thomas 62                      St Catherine 40                      St Teilo 26

**TOTAL 316**

### Sunday Schools and attendances per week:

St Teilo                      St David                      St Catherine  
 3 to 5                      3 to 6                      5 to 8

## 8. Church Groups & Activities - Mission & Outreach

Recently the parishes of **Llansawel Briton Ferry, the Rectorial Benefice of Neath and the parish of Skewen** became united in the newly formed **Afan Nedd Ministry Area**. Clergy and lay readers were cross licensed to enable them to preach across the ministry area. Each parish remains financially independent and aims to maintain its own distinctive style, while at the same time enjoying the opportunity of sharing ministry, supporting one another and beginning new projects.



The **Diocesan Transformation Fund** has helped create a **Centre of Mission** in the Neath Deanery. It is managed by **Church Army** Officers Cpt Andy Settle and Pioneer Evangelist Hannah Seal who work throughout the deanery supporting various projects, and preaching in its churches. As a parish, we were very much mindful that our engagement with our secondary school was limited to one off events throughout the year and we were eager to become more involved with the local comprehensive.

The Church Army were supportive in helping us establish ' **Lounge**' **project** which takes place on a lunch time each week and is run by volunteers from the parish.

The Benefice has three active "**Friends**" **Groups** - in Saint Thomas, Saint David & Saint Teilo's churches. They have attracted the wider community who while not necessarily being members of the worshipping communities in those churches wish to be associated with them. The Friends organise **social events**, trips and activities which enable the churches to fund particular projects associated with the buildings.

A **Craft Club** was set up on a Benefice basis which has developed across the individual churches and has stimulated new relationships and strengthened existing friendships between the church members and new-comers. To some extent this compliments the **Flower Guilds** in the various churches as it seeks to develop the artistic talents of individuals both within and without the churches.



The Benefice has a very active branch of the **Mother's Union** and a **Ladies' Guild** which meets regularly at Saint Peter & Saint Paul's church.

The Parish church of Saint Thomas is fortunate to still have a set of bells that are regularly rung by an enthusiastic group of **bell-ringers**.

There is an interdenominational **Foodbank** in the Benefice which is supported both financially, by practical donation and with people support from the churches.



A number of short study courses have been run in recent years and the latest of these entitled "**Ladies Who Lunch**" meets monthly in the Rectory to discuss particular topics and to share fellowship and food.



## 9. OUR FINANCES

### PARISH SHARE

The Benefice has an excellent track record of not only paying its Parish Share but does so by standing order so as to secure the discounted figure. Share is allocated on an equitable basis with each church paying by standing order into the Benefice Stewardship Account.

The current Parish Share is £97,000 and is going to rise significantly in 2020..

### FUNDING

Each church is **self funding** with each church having control of its own finances, with a **central account** covering whole-benefice costs.

### OTHER PARISH COSTS & INCOME

The income for the Benefice for the last financial year (2018) was £248,868. The major sources of this were represented by planned giving (£98,328) and other income (£52,020).

Expenditure amounted to £247,182 which included the above items.

Parish reserves currently stand at £110,000 (November 2019)

### POLICY ON FEES AND EXPENSES

The Benefice adopts the Provincial policy on clergy expenses as published in 2009.

Fees for the occasional offices (weddings and funerals) are shared amongst the clergy. These amounts are included on the payroll which is operated and administered by the Parish Administrator.

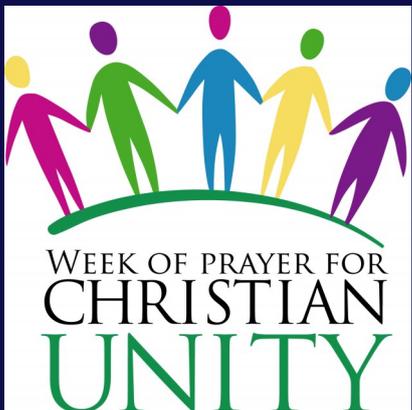
### Mission and External Giving

During 2018, the Benefice donated £7,397 to charities and causes either in its own right or through the individual churches.

In addition the PCC continued to make an annual donation to Alderman Davies' School Fund as part of its ongoing commitment to the education of children in the Benefice. The current balance of that fund amounts to £9,250.

Some of the individual churches have also invested funds with the local Credit Union.





## 10. The Role & The Person

### TEAM VICAR

This is an exciting opportunity for the successful candidate, as the Benefice begins a new chapter in its life as the Church in Wales celebrates its centenary and the Year of Pilgrimage.

We are looking for someone to become part of a new Team comprising the Rector, Team Vicar and two curates, where our vision is to be a family of churches reaching out into the community, sharing Christ's love and making disciples.

We seek a priest with a proven record of working collaboratively with others, who exercises creativity and initiative and who is also flexible and adaptable.

The Team Vicar will be expected to particularly develop the Benefice's ministry to children and young people and to explore new ways of involving young families in the life of the church community and to assist in the development and execution of the benefice's plan to grow the Church across all age groups.

The Benefice is seeking to develop engagement with the "unchurched" and to build on the solid foundations that are already established, as we share in the Diocesan vision to tell a joyful story, grow God's kingdom and to build our capacity for good.

The Team Vicar will be someone who relates well to people of all ages and social backgrounds, has a warm personality and who is able to work effectively alongside clergy and laity

In return the Team Vicar will be supported and encouraged by the Benefice, who will provide the opportunity for him or her to develop their own particular skills and interests as they embark upon this stage in their ministry.



The position has appropriate accommodation (pictured) and other support will be provided in line with Diocesan and Provincial Policy.

[Further information can be obtained from the enclosed job specification]



....AND DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT!  
(WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT US)

"As a child with special needs, my son doesn't always find it easy to socialise in big groups or unfamiliar settings. At Messy Church he is always made to feel at ease and accepted. It's very friendly and hands-on."

Sara

"A huge thank you for what has been a superb retreat.... We've worshipped, we've laughed, we've cried, we've laughed some more."

Emma

'We really appreciate all you do for the school, it's lovely to see you regularly in assemblies, the children love your stories.'

Deputy Head teacher (Melyncryddan Primary School)

*"It was an absolute pleasure to worship together as we celebrate the power of the word 'yes' when God calls us and to remember that we are beautifully and wonderfully made"*

*Mother's Union member - Lady Day Service*



Profile 2019 © Rectorial Benefice of Neath

## Rectorial Benefice Of Neath

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