



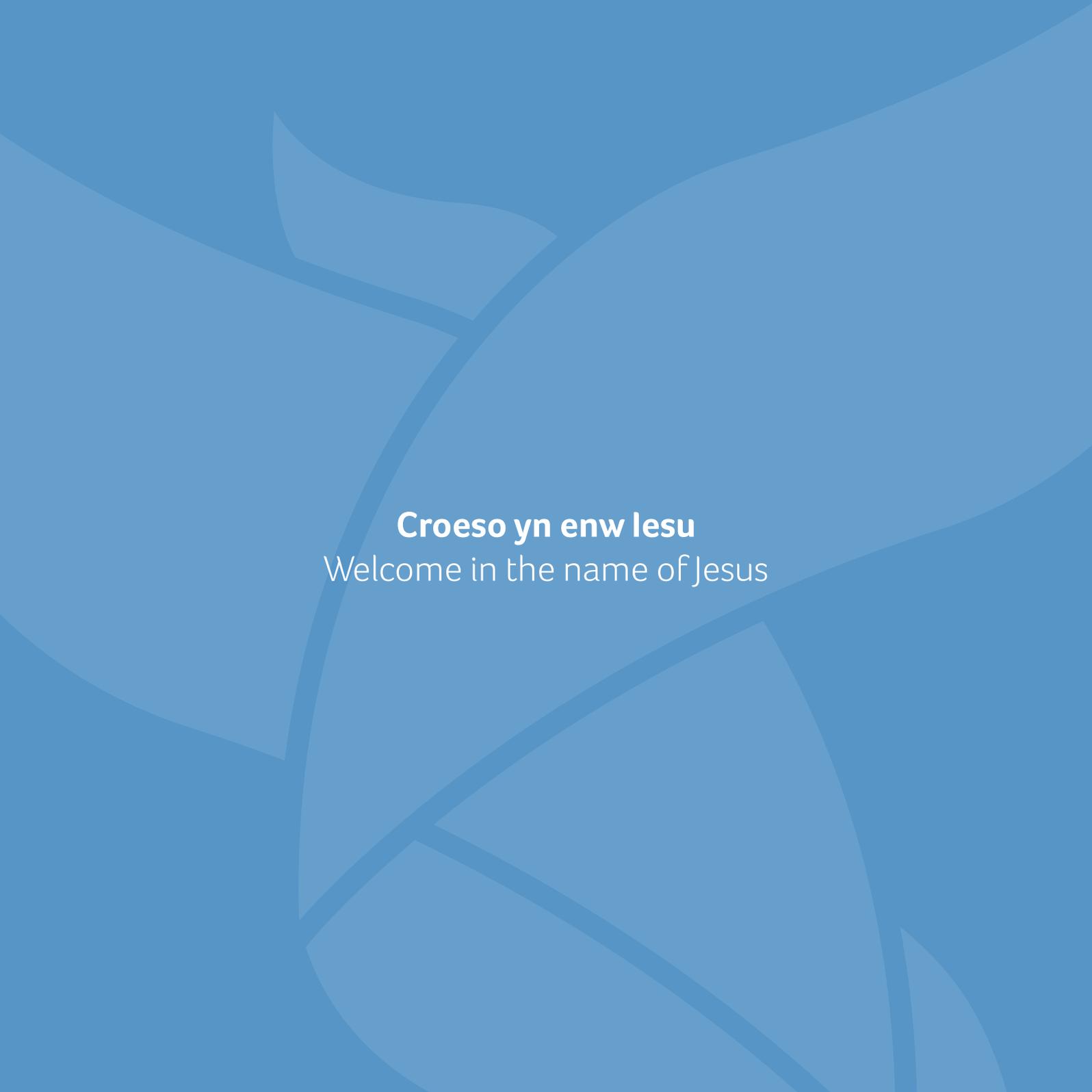
**Esgobaeth Llandaf**  
**Diocese of Llandaff**

Lle Mae Ffydd Yn Cyfrif | Where Faith Matters

**Recruitment Pack** | Spring 2025

# **Merthyr Tydfil** Ministry Area





**Croeso yn enw Iesu**  
Welcome in the name of Jesus



## Croeso! Welcome!

**Thank you for exploring the opportunity to minister in Merthyr Tydfil, one of the great towns of Wales. I am praying for all who are embarking on this process of discernment as well as for this Ministry Area as they wait for a new Ministry Area Leader.**

As a diocese we are encouraging one another to tell the joyful story of our faith, to grow the Kingdom of God and to build our capacity for good. Our ministry is rooted in prayer, we are committed to learning more about our faith, and our aim is that all our lives are marked by joyful service after the manner of Christ whom we serve.

There is much work to be done and the Church In Wales is committed to church growth; there are significant resources that can be used for mission in the diocese as we work together with colleagues from across Wales to develop new ways to introduce others to the Christian faith.

The Merthyr Tydfil Ministry Area is on a journey. Not content to manage decline, the congregations and clergy are actively considering how the church in Merthyr may not just survive but thrive in the years ahead.

As the local churches consider the wisest way ahead, the Ministry Area Leader will need to be a person of prayer who can lead the people and local congregations in the work of discernment and collaboration. This work will continue to be supported by the committed and talented local clergy and by the staff of the wider diocese with the Archdeacon, Area Dean and diocesan staff offering expertise and support too. One of the joyful things about the Church in Wales is that its scale makes good support more possible for those who are keen to work with others.

This role will require considerable energy, a determination to help people find the right vision for their context and an ability to make sure that all feel heard in the process of decision-making. The Ministry Area Leader needs to be a pastor who can appreciate the history, heritage, and culture of each place and who will stand with the people as they face the challenges of our age.

I hope that you will find this profile helpful and discerning whether God may be calling you to Merthyr Tydfil.

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

Cyfarthfa Castle



## Welcome to Merthyr

Welcome to the Merthyr Tydfil Ministry Area. We are a group of seven churches at the top of the South Wales Valleys. Originally four independent parishes, each with their own identity and proud history, we have recently formed a single Ministry Area. Together we are forging a new way of working that respects the distinctiveness of the communities we serve, ensuring we retain strong connections between each cleric and the churches they serve, whilst at the same time, building a new, shared identity in which we can bring our own strengths to bear across the entire Ministry Area.

Early last year we decided to further invest in our collective life. To that end we began a project to reinvent the worshipping landscape in Merthyr from a place with many churches, each struggling to survive, with increasingly unrealistic demands placed on the clergy, into something where both

the church and its clergy could thrive and flourish, whatever form that might take. The Ministry Area Council commissioned a discernment group to oversee a series of congregational workshops tasked with reimagining the ministry area. We are currently working hard to draft these initial proposals before working through a process of deep listening and consultation in the first half of 2025. The aim is to relaunch the re-organised ministry area in the second half of 2025 in the hope that it ensures an Anglican presence in Merthyr for generations to come.

As the new ministry area leader, you will be coming in at a historic moment for the churches in Merthyr, as we transition from an old way of being to a new one that looks very different.



## The Role

**We are looking for someone to help us to grow sustainable, healthy, inter-generational churches in Merthyr Tydfil by demonstrating the love of Christ in practical ways, making connections in our community, and creating accessible pathways into church life.**

### New role: Ministry Area Leader

#### The Ministry Area Leader would be expected to:

- Provide leadership during the period of discernment and oversee the transition to a more sustainable form of ministry and mission across the town.
- Develop local opportunities for ministry, outreach, and evangelism, creating pathways for people of every age to discover the love of God in Jesus Christ and become followers of Christ.
- Lead regular team meetings and carry out ministerial development reviews with clerical colleagues, providing oversight and management of the ministry team in a way that encourages mutual respect, close collaboration, and the flourishing of each other's ministry.
- Work closely with the Lay Chair and other licensed and commissioned ministers in the ministry area, encouraging and enabling members of each congregation to get involved in the life of the church in ways that are sustainable and supported.
- Work closely with the Lay Chair to ensure the Ministry Area Council operates in accordance with the requirements of the constitution of the Church in Wales and the charity commission.
- Play an active part in Eglwysilan Deanery, regularly attending both chapter and conference.
- Work with the Archdeacons and participate in the Archdeacons Visitation process.



## We are therefore looking for a priest who:

- Is passionate about making the good news of Jesus Christ known in the churches, the local community, and across the ministry area.
- Has a vibrant, personal faith which finds expression in a strong commitment to private prayer.
- Is comfortable across a range of traditions that include more charismatic expressions of worship alongside more liturgical and sacramental ministry.
- Has the gift of discernment and good change management skills
- Has strong leadership skills, is able to manage conflict build consensus and make decisions.
- Is a gifted administrator and manager, able to offer the oversight and organisation the ministry area needs.
- Has a heart for Merthyr and the people who live there.

## Our Communities

In the 19th century, the town of Merthyr Tydfil was by far the largest town in Wales. The population of Merthyr was 46,000 in 1851, when the population of Cardiff was 18,351. This was because the upper Taff valley contained all the necessary ingredients for a successful iron industry – iron ore, limestone for lining furnaces, mountain streams to provide waterpower and forests to supply timber for the manufacture of charcoal.

This led to the development of four huge ironworks in Merthyr - in Dowlais, at the time the largest ironworks in the world, and others in Penydarren, Cyfarthfa and Plymouth. They drew workers from other parts of Wales, and from all over Europe, and Irish, Spanish and Italian surnames are still common.

Later, coal was discovered in the valley and used instead of charcoal for smelting, and the coal industry developed.

Merthyr Tydfil was poorly placed for the transport of products to the ports - pig iron was initially carried to the coast by packhorses. In time, roads and canals were built, and as the ironmasters competed to find quick and efficient means of transport, Richard Trevithick was brought to Merthyr, and built the first working railway steam locomotive. The world's first locomotive-hauled railway journey took place on 21 February 1804, when Trevithick's unnamed steam locomotive hauled a train along the tramway of the Penydarren Ironworks.

In the 20th century both the iron and coal industries went into decline, as work moved to the coast. Factories were built for armaments during the war, and later major companies such as Hoover,

Thorns, Kayser Bonder and OP chocolates, provided employment: in time these were moved abroad.

Today, the population of Merthyr is 59,000, many residents travelling down the valley and to Cardiff on excellent road, bus or train routes to work. 3.8% of the population are unemployed – which is also the national average unemployment rate. Most businesses in the town now are micro businesses.

The town, which is in the 'foothills of the Brecon Beacons' - 12 miles from Pen-y-Fan, the highest mountain in South Wales - is working to build on the past and develop its tourist potential as a heritage centre in a beautiful landscape, based around buildings such as Cyfarthfa Castle, formerly home of the Crawshay ironmasters, Dowlais Stables and Engine house, the Guest Memorial Library, the cottage which was home of the composer Joseph Parry and the sweeping viaducts left by the railways companies which had established themselves in the town – Dowlais alone had five stations! In our Ministry Area, the Brecon Mountain Railway, originally a section of the Brecon and Merthyr Railway, begins its journey into the mountains. Former train and tram tracks provide popular walking trails, and BikePark Wales has the country's most diverse selection of all-weather mountain bike trails. In a town where property is cheap, many entrepreneurs are renovating houses to provide accommodation for walkers and mountain bikers. As we learn to lift up our eyes to our lovely hills, our town has much to offer.







# Our Churches

## Christ Church, Cyfarthfa

Located just outside the town centre serving the communities of Cyfarthfa, Georgetown, Heolgerrig, Gellideg, and the Swansea Road Estate. The church had been two separate congregations which were brought together about 6 years ago. With one being very traditional and slightly more theologically liberal, the other being more charismatic with a strong emphasis on the bible. The congregation now is very welcoming, very open to change, and ready for more. In the last year we have started to see growth with more younger families now starting to make their home here. We have been fortunate to have had two adult baptisms in the last year.



## Christchurch Pant

Built in 1896, this is a traditional Victorian building in Pant, in the far North of Merthyr. We hold services of Holy Communion on Sunday and Wednesday mornings. There is a family service and an evening service once a month. Christchurch is home to the Ministry Area's Mothers Union. The carved wood and lovely stained glass and the surrounding wooded green area make the church popular for traditional baptisms, funerals and weddings. Wedding parties can even stroll up the street for a trip on the Brecon Mountain Railway, with wine and canapes!



## All Saints Church, Dowlais.

This is a light, bright, and modern building in Dowlais, a suburb of Merthyr. The church has a service of Holy Communion on Sunday mornings. Once a month there is a Family Service and an evening service. Originally the church hall, it has been remodelled to give us a purpose -built church we can use for a wide variety of services, such as the Ministry Area Agape Supper, children's activities, training events such as Lent courses and the Bible Society Bible Course - and social events too, mainly organised by our Ladies Group.



## St. John the Baptist Church, Troedyrhiw

St. John the Baptist is a Victorian church, dating from 1851, largely the gift of Anthony Hill, a local ironmaster, who supported the construction of the building as a chapel of ease for the tenants of the Plymouth estate. Alongside a regular Sunday service, a summer fete and Christmas Bazaar are held each year. St. John's also supports the work of the Merthyr-Cynon Foodbank. The church started a Knit and Natter Group in 2023, which has proved popular. There are occasional visits from the local primary school.





## St. Mary & the Holy Innocents Church, Merthyr Vale

St. Mary & the Holy Innocents is a modern church, built in 1970. St. Mary's serves the villages of Aberfan on the west bank of the river Taff, and Merthyr Vale on the east side of the river. It was reordered around the turn of the millennium to include a meeting room. The church has a small Sunday School. There are good links with Ynysowen primary school, where there are opportunities to act out Bible stories, and groups of children visit the church. Church members are reaching out and encouraging members of the community.



## St Tydfil's Church

The church, known locally as the Old Parish Church, was rebuilt in 1894, and stands where St Tydfil, one of the many descendants of Brychan Brycheiniog who became saints, was martyred in the 5th century for her Christian belief. It is thought that some form of church has been here for over 1,500 years. The original village of Merthyr Tydfil grew around this church before the coming of the iron industry. The church is at the bottom end of High Street in Merthyr Tydfil and is popular for weddings and funerals. As well as regular Sunday services it holds many events throughout the year such as Summer and Autumn Fayres, Bake Offs and the Blessing of Animals Service.



## St David's Church

St David's has been at the heart of Merthyr Tydfil since 1847. It was built in the Victorian Gothic style and is situated in the middle of the town centre, taking its place among architecturally impressive public buildings such as the Library, the Old Town Hall (the Red House) and Lloyds Bank. The church has its own choir and organist and is used for many special events such as concerts, festivals, and civic services, as well as regular midweek and Sunday worship. It is home to the church group Knit and Natter, and the community initiative St David's Baby Bank, which supports young families in the heart of our community.





## Our Ministry Team

### Vicar:

#### **The Reverend Stephen Barnes**



Stephen has served in the Llandaff Diocese since his ordination and has spent the greater part of his ministry in the Merthyr Valley where he serves as Vicar with pastoral responsibility for St John the Baptist and St Mary's. He enjoys walking, reading and days out.

### Vicar:

#### **The Reverend Caroline Owen**



Caroline is vicar with pastoral responsibility for All Saints Church in Dowlais and Christchurch Pant.

Caroline was ordained in Bangor in 2005. She is originally from Merthyr Tydfil and returned to the area in 2016. Caroline has a degree in English Literature, and a PGCE in Education from the University College of Wales Aberystwyth, and a Diploma in Theology from the University of Wales, Cardiff. She worked formerly as an English teacher, managed a Women's refuge, then became Community Development Team Leader for The Children's Society. At present she chairs the Llandaff WODS, is chaplain to the local branch of the Royal Welsh Association, is a trustee for Merthyr Tydfil Credit Union, and Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society, and volunteers with Merthyr Homeless Outreach.

### Vicar:

#### **The Reverend Marc-Ashton Walford**



Marc is the Vicar with pastoral responsibility for Christ Church Cyfarthfa. Marc has been ordained since 2016 and joined this parish at the start of 2021. Marc has a degree in Space Science and Robotics from Aberystwyth University and a degree in Theology from the University of Oxford. Marc is married to Patrycja and he has a special interest in macro photography, fencing, and aviation: he is currently in the process of building himself a home simulator.

## 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 South East, 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 5,000 regular worshippers with over one hundred clerics and more than two hundred churches spread across 29 new Ministry Areas.



**1** Theological Institute



**29** Ministry Areas



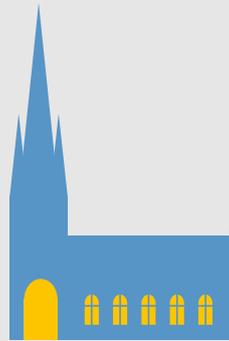
**130** serving clergy



**33** Licensed Lay Ministers



**207** Churches



**1** Cathedral



**1** Eco-Diocese



**6** Deaneries



More than **6000** regular Church in Wales worshippers



**22** Church in Wales Primary Schools



**1** Resource Church



**3** Church in Wales High Schools



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