

February 15th 2021

Dear friends,

As you will know, Penedeyrn Mission Area has been going through a process of Mission Area Review. I am writing now to give you an update on how the Review is progressing. In September the diocese published a report on our churches and ministry and Archdeacon Barry sent a letter with a series of recommendations. Many of you sent him your comments and the recommendations were then discussed by the Mission Area Conference (ie. the committee who are the trustees for the Mission Area).

In January the Bishop wrote to the MAC and Church Councils to clarify the way forward. On 31st January it was announced that Reverend Sandra Roberts will be moving to Caereinion Mission Area in the summer. This is very sad news for us and Revd. Sandra will be missed greatly. I am sure we all wish her every blessing on her ministry in Caereinion.

The Bishop confirms in his letter that since Penedeyrn can only afford one stipendiary cleric, we should now explore merging with Valle Crucis (the Mission Area including Corwen and Llangollen) to ensure that all areas of the Mission Area have the ministry they need. The MAC met last week and have set up a working group to discuss the proposed merger with representatives from Valle Crucis The Bishop also confirms that St Catherine's, Maerdy will close and that the cottages at Maerdy will be sold. He asks us to take forward the remainder of the recommendations in the Review.

The next steps for the Mission Area as set out in the Review are now as follows.

- In Bala, there is an urgent need to address the financial situation of Christ Church as the church no longer has reserves to draw upon.
- In Cerrigydrudion, there will be a process of community consultation to discuss the possible reordering of the church.
- In Cynwyd, the community will be consulted as to the closure of the church building.
- In Llandrillo, plans will proceed to facilitate additional activities and outreach by installing a WC in the grounds.
- St Michael's, Llanfihangel will continue to be a Pilgrim Church with a series of special services each year.
- St Derfel's, Llandderfel have requested to be considered for Pilgrim status also but are unlikely to hear more until September as the Pilgrim scheme is under review.
- Fresh Expressions of worship and Online Worship are both demonstrating a real opportunity for growth and should be continued and extended wherever possible.
- The majority of financial giving in the whole Mission Area should be moved online.

Clearly, the ongoing situation with Covid-19 makes it difficult to implement some of these plans in the short term. As with all charities, Covid has also severely impacted the financial situation of the church. The Gift Direct scheme makes it possible to donate regularly to

individual churches safely by Direct Debit. Please consider this option if you can; details are given at the end of this letter. We all need to work together to ensure the future sustainability of our church and donations are greatly appreciated.

The process of Review has been difficult and some of the decisions made are painful to those concerned. Bishop Gregory concludes his letter by saying that as we emerge from the pandemic our churches will need to find a new way of being. He hopes that together we will find a sustainable, creative and effective way of doing this that will both honour the past and provide new opportunities for the future. That is also my prayer.

Please continue to pray for our Mission Area. I know it is hard that we continue to be unable to worship in our churches. I look forward very much to being able to meet in person again.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cass".

Dr Cass Meurig Thomas
Mission Area Leader

Details of the Gift Direct scheme can be found at this web address:
<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/gift-direct/>
or by emailing giftdirect@churchinwales.org.uk or phoning 029 2034 8216.