

Esgobaeth Tyddewi St Davids Diocese

**LMA of
Bro Gwendraeth**

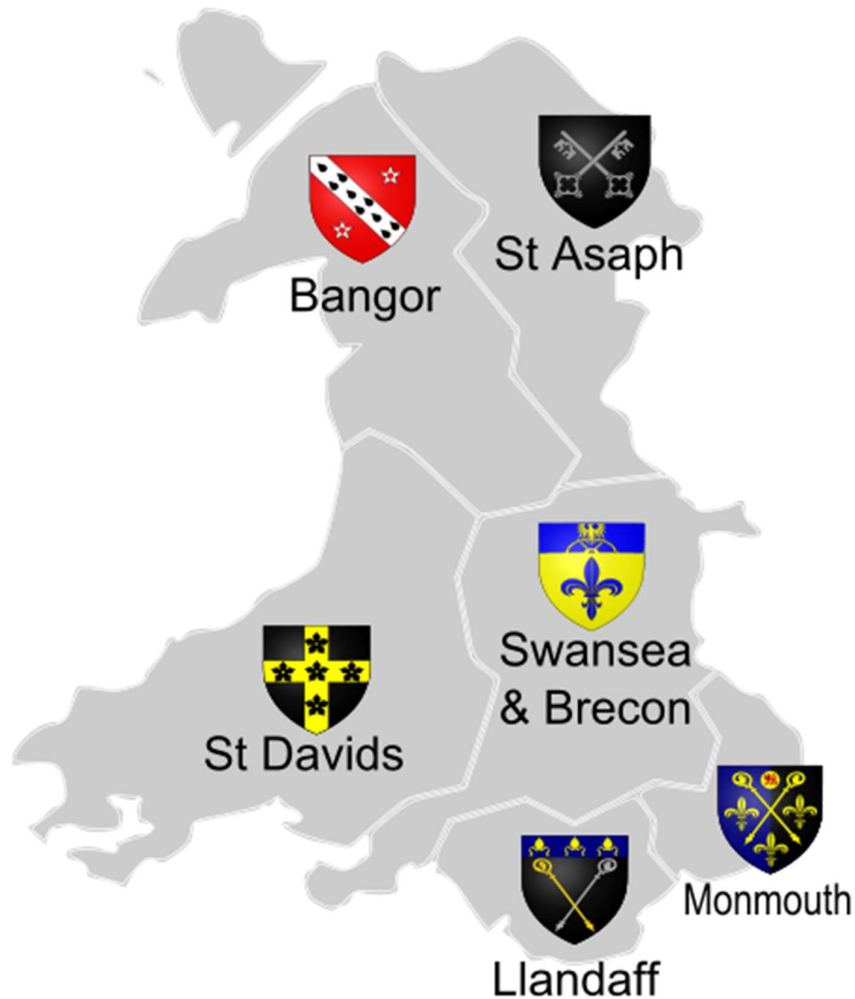
CHURCHES of:

**St Lleian's, Gorslas;
St David's, Saron;
St Ann's, Cross Hands;
St Edmund's, Tycroes
St Edith's, Llanedi**

Parish Profile

Date: September 2024

The Diocese of St Davids – An Overview



Geography

The Diocese of St Davids is the largest diocese by area in the Church in Wales. It includes the counties of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion and a small part of the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot. According to the 2021 Census the population of the 3 major counties was 384,455 and breaks down as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Pembrokeshire | 125,055 |
| Carmarthenshire | 187,900 |
| Ceredigion | 71,500 |

The largest town is Llanelli with a population of 42,175. Carmarthen is the second largest town with a population of 14,636. In Pembrokeshire, Milford Haven is the largest town with 14,249 and Haverfordwest with 11,995, Aberystwyth in Ceredigion is home to the National Library of Wales, and one of two Universities within the Diocese and has a population 12,250. The greatest concentration of population is in the southern part of the Diocese.

Although the greatest area by far is made up of rural communities and smaller market towns, there are sizeable and significant areas of industrial settlements particularly in Carmarthenshire. Towns like Ammanford reveal a previously thriving industrial base which is now largely in decline with all the attendant problems of unemployment and isolation, but there are still examples of industry that is thriving.

The Diocese is bounded to the west by Cardigan Bay and the south by Carmarthen Bay. To the northeast there is the Plynlimon massif and to the southeast the Black Mountains. There is a limited rail network in mid Wales which is better developed to the south, but public transport is not good generally and cars are essential for most of the population. East of Carmarthen the M4 link eases transport going east and to the west there are links with Ireland through the ports of Fishguard and Pembroke Dock.

The geography of the area plays a significant role in terms of communication. Despite advances in technology through the internet (broadband speeds vary greatly and are in some places almost non-existent and mobile coverage is in places sporadic), communication is not easy and this makes it difficult to develop a sense of identity for the Diocese as a whole. Loyalties are often local and there is diversity between the respective worlds of North Ceredigion, South Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

Average Sunday Attendance (based on 2022 figures)

| | |
|------------|--|
| St Davids | 863 (does not include the Cathedral attendance other than parish services) |
| Carmarthen | 873 |
| Cardigan | 786 |
| Total | <u>2522</u> |

The Economy

The Public Sector provides a much-needed source of employment in all three counties, but salaries are relatively low and many post-school age children struggle to return to the area due to lack of employment opportunities.

Tourism is very important to all 3 counties. Pembrokeshire in particular, benefits from its beautiful coastline and forms part of Britain's only coastal National Park. Holidaymakers in the summer months provide a major source of income for the area. Work relating to this industry is often seasonal and poorly paid. There are many second homes, with both the benefits and drawbacks that these bring.

The Diocese is largely rural and dependent upon agriculture and associated trades for its income. Threats to farming have added to a sense of uncertainty for farmers and a traditional livelihood. It is probably true that this uncertainty has itself become a way of life for the farming community. Unemployment is currently 4% for Pembrokeshire, 3.5% for Ceredigion and 2.2% for Carmarthenshire.

History

The Diocese of St Davids is one of the ancient dioceses of Wales and was one of the four original dioceses of the newly created Province of Wales at Disestablishment. The Diocese of Swansea and Brecon was created from the eastern side of the Diocese of St Davids, which previously stretched to the English border.

The Diocese is exceptionally rich in its historical traditions both secular and sacred. The history of Welsh Christianity is bound up with sites from St Davids in the south, to Llandeilo in the central eastern part and to Llanbadarn and Llanddewi Brefi in the north. These places have an importance that is felt outside the Christian community to the wider nation but are particularly important to an area that is proud of its heritage and devoted to its own sense of location and identity. The Diocese is still a centre of pilgrimage for people, both to the ancient cathedral where St David founded his first community of disciples, but also to other important religious sites and several faith tourism initiatives have been designed to help this including *Saints and Stones* and *Peaceful Places*. Welsh Non-Conformity also has strong roots in the Diocese.

Language and Culture

Most of the Diocese is bilingual and the use of the Welsh language is widespread in schools, colleges and in wider society. Many of the older Welsh speaking communities have faced challenges of a socio-economic nature and from the rise of modernism, but there have also been signs of a new confidence in younger Welsh speaking communities. South Pembrokeshire has probably the fewest Welsh speakers; in North Pembrokeshire however it is still widely spoken. In Carmarthenshire and in Ceredigion in particular, Welsh is widespread and is the dominant language in many communities. Our communities also include people who have moved or retired to Wales and the Churches often act as a bridge between the two languages and cultures.

Within rural communities, the church functions not only as a religious centre, but also as a social hub. People look towards the church and the local priest for guidance and support even though they may not be regular attendees. Ministering in rural areas offers a number of opportunities ranging from celebrating seasons of the year to playing a role in organisations and societies. Rural people have a passion for their community and are happy to invest their time and energy, there is a sense of belonging and an opportunity to build life-long relationships.

Archdeaconry of St Davids

The Archdeaconry of St Davids comprises the majority of the county of Pembrokeshire and part of Carmarthenshire along the eastern border, it includes the Cathedral plus 6 other Local Ministry Areas.

The Archdeaconry population increases sixfold at the height of the tourist season, and tourism and agriculture are the Archdeaconry's largest industries. One of the greatest challenges for the area is the ability of young people to find both employment and housing with an increasing amount of second homes and an aging population. The County Town of Haverfordwest is a hub, being the centre of local government, and centrally placed for transport and healthcare (Withybush Hospital). Milford Haven is now the largest conurbation in Pembrokeshire, with Pembroke Dock and Fishguard also being major ports. The smallest city in the UK, St Davids is home to the Cathedral and is one of the top tourist destinations in Wales.

The Archdeaconry is the home to two large theme parks, Folly Farm and Oakwood, as well as Bluestone and many other secular tourist attractions. The Pembrokeshire National Park covers large areas of the Archdeaconry. It also boasts being the birthplace of Dewi Sant and Gerald of Wales.

Whilst the south of the Archdeaconry is sometimes called "*Little England beyond Wales*", there is a growth in the number of Welsh

Speakers and an increase in Welsh language provision education. The north of the Pembrokeshire and the eastern border (especially in the Preseli area) has a high concentration of fluent Welsh speakers.

Archdeaconry of Carmarthen

The Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, lies at the eastern end of the Diocese stretching from Carmarthen Bay to the Black Mountains, consisting of nine Local Ministry Areas. The Archdeaconry is both rural and post-industrial and is home to the administrative centre of Carmarthenshire County Council. It is steeped in history boasting as it does, the oldest town in Wales, namely Carmarthen dating back to Roman times. It is also home to many notable figures in history and modern culture, including Dylan Thomas, Siân Phillips, William Williams (Pantycelyn), Reverend Griffith Jones, Brinley



Jones and Lord Elwyn Jones. The population of Carmarthenshire is nearly 188,000. The most populated area extends from Llanelli, north up the Gwendraeth Valley leading to the Amman Valley and foothills of the Black Mountains beyond. The challenges of this area stem mainly for the need of renewal within the Church. It needs to address the very real issues of social outreach, recognition of the increasing substance abuse problem, caring and supporting for those blighted by unemployment, increasing pressures on the farming community and the general secularisation of society.

The Local Ministry Areas are developing at different rates of success and commitment; however, the majority are committed to ensuring that the transition to the new system of ministry and outreach is attainable and relevant to their circumstances and requirements.

The Welsh language and culture are at the heart of the Archdeaconry with the 2021 Census reporting that 72,838 people are fluent in and speak Welsh. This represents 39.9% of the County's total population.

Archdeaconry of Cardigan

The Archdeaconry of Cardigan extends from Eglwysfach in the northern part of Ceredigion, to Newport to Dinas Cross in north Pembrokeshire, incorporating part of Carmarthenshire as well. The Archdeaconry lies between the coast of Cardigan Bay to the northwest and to the east the Cambrian Mountains and the Vale of Teifi. The river Teifi rises at Teifi Pools and meanders through the Archdeaconry to the sea to the south of the town of Cardigan. In all, the archdeaconry comprises eight Local Ministry Areas.



Tourism on the coastal fringe plays an integral part in ensuring employment during the holiday season, with agriculture as the other main industry, sustaining the backbone of the rural county. Aberystwyth and Lampeter both have Universities, with students increasing the former's population sixfold during term time. Aberystwyth, the largest town in the county with a population exceeding 12,000, offers the

county's healthcare with a hospital based there.

Rich in history and tradition, Cardigan castle was the setting for the first Eisteddfod hosted by the Lord Rhys. The remains of Strata Florida, home to the Cistercian Monks stand to this day, the legendary bard Dafydd ap Gwilym reportedly buried in the churchyard, with Eglwysfach the Parish where R. S. Thomas was a former Priest is also a part of the Archdeaconry.

The main challenges that face the area, include: the need for work to sustain young families; internet infrastructure; second homes and an aging population. Many of the smaller rural schools have amalgamated to create new Area Schools, with new facilities and technology. The Welsh language is integral to the County, as well as Welsh culture and traditions, being rooted and embedded in its people.



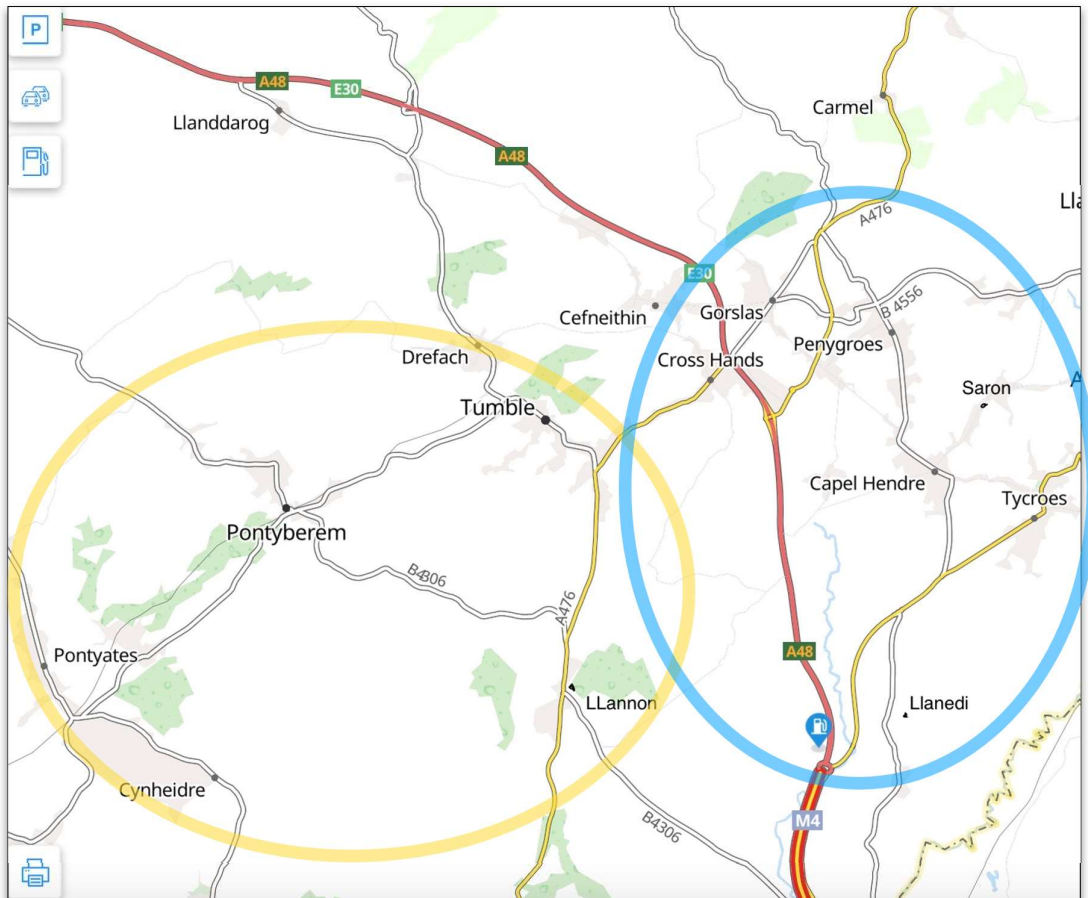
Archdeacon's Introduction

Section One:

Summary of the Profile

Bro Gwendraeth LMA is situated at the most Easterly point of the Diocese of St David's, nudging in places on the diocese of Swansea and Brecon.

The geographical centre point of the LMA is at Cross Hands with communities to the East and West of this point currently serviced by 9 Church in Wales worshipping communities, as highlighted on the map.



General information:

Bro Gwendraeth LMA

Details of LMA Ministry Team members:

Rev Lindy Morgan, LMA Dean and Priest in Charge

Rev Helen Nicholls, Associate Priest (Part time NSM)

Rev Dr Brian Jones, Assistant Priest (Retired with Licence to Officiate)

Rev Canon Sydney Thomas (Retired with Licence to officiate)

Mr Howard Thomas, Focal Minister for Tycroes and Worship Leader

Mrs Margaret Nock, Worship Leader, Gorslas

Mrs Lorna Jones, Worship Leader, Tycroes/Saron

Our Diocesan strategy is to have minimum two stipendiary clerics in each LMA.

Our hope in presenting this profile is that you will be the second stipendiary cleric whom God is calling to join our LMA and partner with us in the ministry of God here.

LMA ADMIN

- LMA Chair is Lorna Jones
- LMA treasurer, vacant.
- Secretary, Catrin Minshull (Saron church)

DESCRIPTION OF THE BRO GWENDRAETH EAST AREA

The group is comprised from 5 communities with 5 churches, Cross Hands, Gorslas, Saron Tycroes and Llanedi

In our LMA there is a new Welsh language primary school and in Cefneithin, a neighbouring village, a Welsh language secondary school, Ysgol Maes yr Yrfa. There are primary schools in Penygroes, Cross Hands, Tumble, Cefneithin, Saron, Tycroes and Drefach, all within 4 miles of the vicarage. There are English language secondary schools in Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli and a dual registered school in Llandeilo.

Leisure Facilities:

Llyn Llech Owain and Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park are nearby. Llyn Llech Owain hosts a weekly Parkrun. There are leisure centres with swimming pools in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford. There are 2 gyms in Cross Hands.

Cross Hands is on the A48, 3 miles from the end of the M4. There is a well established trading estate with farm supplies, building supplies, furniture and a newer shopping centre, hosting Lidl, Aldi, Home Bargains, B&M, Pets at Home, Food Warehouse. Jenkins bakery, a drive through Costa, KFC, Subway, McDonalds, Burger King.

In the original part of Cross Hands is a Health Centre with 2 GP practices based there, each with a peripheral centre (Tumble, and Penygroes). Plans are in the making for a new combined Health Centre, with further health facilities. There are two community pharmacies in Cross Hands. The nearest A&E department is in Glangwili hospital in Carmarthen, and there is a Minor Injuries Unit in Prince Philip Hospital in Llanelli.

Also in the older part of the village are hairdressers, Barbers, an Indian restaurant, and Indian and Chinese takeaways. There is a cinema run by volunteers, with three showings a week. There are regular buses to Carmarthen, Ammanford and Llanelli. There is also a daily National Express service to London and more destinations from Swansea. The nearest railway station is Llandybie, 5 miles away, for the Heart of Wales line north to Llandridnod Well and Shrewsbury, and south to Llanelli. Llanelli station, 11 miles away will take you west to Carmarthen and Haverfordwest, and east to Swansea, Cardiff, Bristol and London. The M4 starts about 3 miles away.

Cytun, the Welsh section of Churches Together in England and Wales, hosts the World Day of Prayer around the different churches, in our church in Gorslas in 2023.

There is no Ministers Fraternal in the area at present

The Vicarage at 14 Ffordd Werdd, is about 0.4 miles from St Lleian's, Gorslas and about 1.3 miles from the nearest Lidl store.



Description of Vicarage

- 4 bedroom modern house built about 13 years ago, set in a cul de sac of approximately 30 houses and bungalows. No garage but hard standing for 2 cars.
- Double glazing throughout.
- Previous garage converted into a large, separate office with its own loo. Electric heating in the office.
- Calor gas central heating in the house, communal gas tank for the whole cul de sac.
- Laminate flooring downstairs, tiled floor in the kitchen and small utility room. Electric cooker.
- Carpeted upstairs.
- Family bathroom.
- Ensuite to the main bedroom. Downstairs cloakroom.
- Downstairs has a large open plan kitchen/ living/ dining room, small utility room and a separate sitting room.
- Garden is grass, decking and concrete.

Other homes occupied by retired, professional or young families. No social housing.

Next door to the vicarage is a plot of land approximately 10 x 40 yards, separate from the vicarage but owned by the diocese. The resident doesn't have responsibility for this area.

There are two distinct pastoral areas as identified by the two coloured rings on the above map. The blue comprises the churches and communities of St Lleian's, Gorslas; St David's, Saron; St Ann's, Cross Hands; St Edmund's, Tycroes and St Edith's, Llanedi to which this appointment will be made

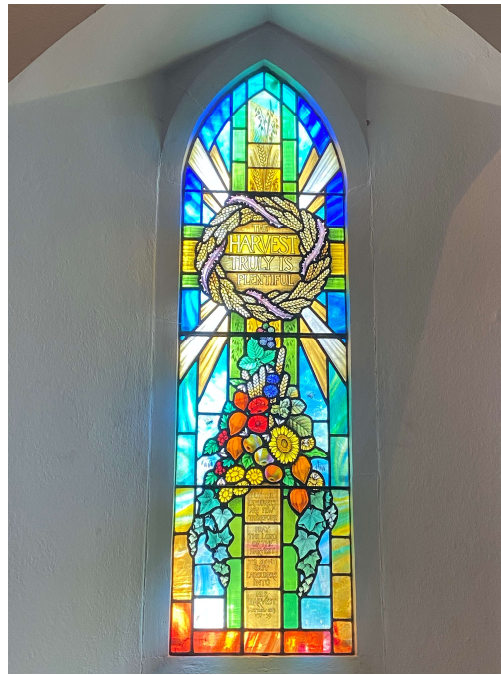
The yellow comprises the churches and communities of St Mary's, Pontyates (Pont-iets); St John's, Pontyberem; Dewi Sant, Tumble and St Non's, Llannon.

The two groups of churches offer a variety of worship styles, from Café church with a contemporary and informal worship style, right through to the more formal Morning Prayer and Eucharistic services.

Coming through the extensive periods of lockdown during the Covid pandemic the churches were catered for through on-line services of different types. Some using 'Facebook live' and others on YouTube. The number of congregants who were able to utilise these services was limited due to the age demographic, many of whom do not use computers. However, there were a good number who did and who benefitted greatly from being part of an on-line community even without the physical interaction with other followers of Jesus. The sheep were being fed and on returning to the church buildings some who were not regular attenders have become so due to their online experience, though others have not returned due to their frailty and vulnerability. Because of this pastoral visiting is a predominant part of the ministry of the churches, lay and ordained members thereof being a part of the ministry of the church. Ministry teams have developed within each church community to facilitate this mission to those who are no longer able to come to worship either on a Sunday or midweek.

The life of the church is not only about recovering from the upheaval of the pandemic. Even with ageing and dwindling congregations there is hope for the future and a desire to change and reach those who have fallen away from faith, and those who have no interest in 'institutionalised religion'.

In one pastorate the way that the church is reaching out to the community with the love and grace of our Lord Jesus has been, during the expensive winter fuel crisis, the offering of 'Warm Spaces' for people to come together, not only for warmth but for friendship also. In the other a partnership has been set up with the Trussel Trust Food Bank of Myrtle House, Llanelli, and alongside a weekly 'Community Hub,' from which food parcels are distributed, runs a Craft Club which has developed into a friendship group for many across the separate geographic communities within the pastorate. Engagement with the community outside of the church walls is important as we pray and seek to work for God's Kingdom .



A window in St John's Church, Pontyberem based on Jesus' words in John 4:35-36

The fields are ripe for harvest and we, the workers, though few, are seeking to bring in the harvest, whatever crop it is and however heavy the toil.

East Bro Gwendraeth group information:

There is a combined Mother's Union for the whole group which meets monthly and has a communion service roughly twice a year.

Each of the communities has a primary school and there is a Welsh medium Comprehensive School in Gorslas.

Occasional services

Number of Baptisms, weddings and funerals in the past 3 years:

Last figures for 13 baptisms, 2 weddings and one blessing of marriage.

12 funerals in the churches and 16 internment of ashes. 50 services at the Crematorium in Llanelli, 10 miles away.

The local funeral director is an attending member at St Anne's church in Cross Hands.

Other duties:

Visiting the sick; Schools involvement - i.e. assemblies, RE.

PERSON PROFILE

We are looking for person who is prayerful, for themselves and the area of ministry; always learning about God and the faith, and open to implementing strategies and changes for the furtherance of the Gospel within the church, and mission in outreach to those outside of the church family.

As the person will have pastoral leadership of a group of churches, we are looking for a leader with the right skills to take us forward as part of the LMA Team. The person will be a wise and visionary

leader able to identify with the traditions of the individual churches in the group and lead the churches to fulfil their vision and aspirations; be a good teacher able to enthuse people; will enable, motivate and empower congregations; have excellent people management and communication skills; be someone who is compassionate and interested in their parishioners, approachable and sympathetic to the different approaches to worship and church life; will be able to engage with the communities at large and be one who will connect with us as a member of our Christian family.

It is desirous that the person will enable the development of children and young people's ministry. Make association with the schools in each school.

A Welsh speaking priest is desirous, and if not already a speaker someone who would be very happy to learn.

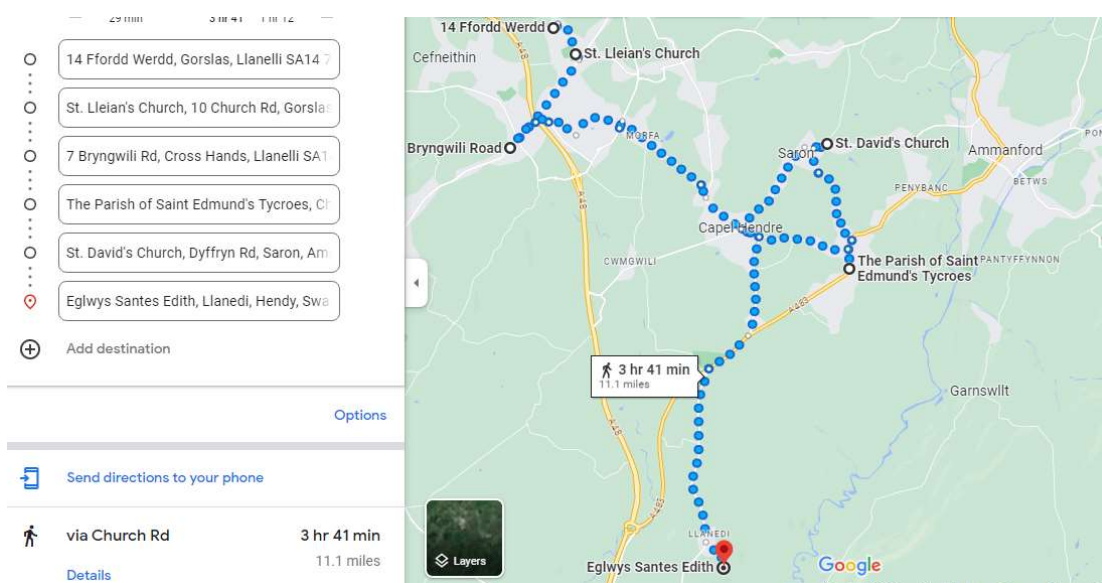
What we have to offer: Generally there's greater support from the community for church and social based activities than there is to attending church. However, there are loyal and committed families within the communities and individuals who are loyal to the church.

The engagement with church on social and support activities from the community at large is still strong and healthy.

We are offering opportunity for teams to be developed for schools work, to serve the schools, and give opportunity for the schools to come into the churches for education with potential involvement of the families in church activities.

We have supportive willing congregations who engage in looking after services. There is a willingness to engage with the governance of the church and the LMA. Other descriptions of areas in Eastern LMA

Map of Gorslas including locations of church, and vicarage.



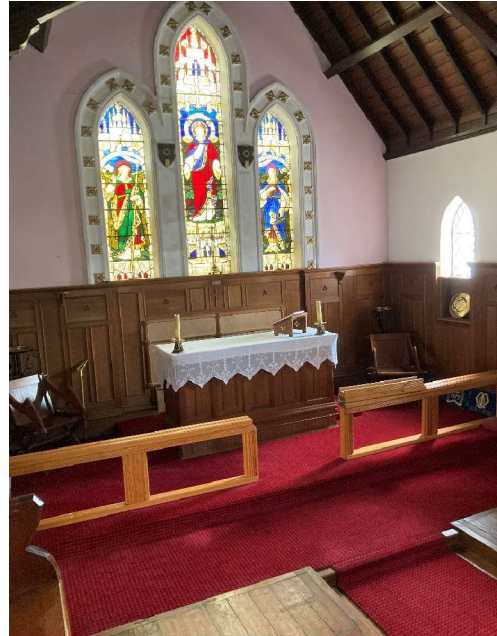
GWENDRAETH WEST

Comprises four churches of which Revd Lindy Morgan, who is the Bro Gwendraeth Area Dean, is Priest in Charge:

St Mary's Pontyates; St John's, Pontyberem; Demi Sant, Tumble and St Non's, Llannon.

St Ann's, Cross Hands

Photographs of the Church building



Cross Hands lies at the intersection of two main roads in Carmarthenshire – the A48, which is the main route between Cardiff / Swansea and Carmarthen / West Wales and the A473 linking Llanelli and Llandeilo / North Wales.

Cross Hands is identified in the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan as the third growth area in the county. This means that there has been a significant allocation of both new housing, shops and employment in the area. Consequently, there is a considerable population growth. There are excellent schools – primary and secondary providing Welsh medium education – in the area. Coleg Sir Gar with campuses in Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford provide alternative tertiary education facilities. Higher / University education is provided nearby at Swansea, Cardiff and Carmarthen. St Ann's Church in Cross Hands is one of five churches in the group. The 'building' is located on Bryngwili road (Cross Hands – Llanelli road).

The original church, consecrated on November 6th 1909 was replaced by a new church in 1939. It's a small church with altar, chancel, font and stained-glass windows, but it has a striking pulpit which draws attention. The pulpit was created by a local craftsman and built from stones from Mombasa and Johannesburg.

Church Hall



All Services at 9.30am

- 1st Sunday Morning Prayer
- 2nd Sunday Holy Communion
- 3rd Sunday Morning Prayer
- 4th Sunday Holy Communion
- 5th Sunday Combined 'Parish' Service – Rotating venue – 10.00am.

Mission and Outreach:

Our aim is - to make all our Sunday services as welcoming and accessible as possible; create a communicate of God's people centred on the word of God and worship; to seek to be a loving, caring, welcoming and forgiving community.

Outreach activities include: Coffee mornings; Embroidery club;
Senior Citizens; Facilitating other groups activities by using our hall and facilities.

Festival and Celebrations:

All major feasts celebrated - Harvest; Remembrance Service – Cenotaph and Church.

Details of current Ministry Share: Ministry Share for 2024 is £11,380.81 - no arrears.
For further details please see finance appendix.

Church and Hall deemed to be in a satisfactory condition according to recent Quinquennial Inspection (2021)

The main charities supported are: Ty Hafan; Air Ambulance; Farm Africa and Plant Dewi.
The activities put on to provide, not only funds, but also to get the church family and other members of the community together include –
Christmas Tree Festival; Bingo nights; Harvest Suppers; Monthly Lottery.

The Local Area and Community

General overview

Cross Hands – reputed to get its name as the place where prisoners intended for jail in Swansea and Carmarthen were exchanged – 'the crossing of hands'.

The village grew around the former Cross Hands Colliery which opened in 1869. It has now become a growing residential and employment area with Food Parks and Business Parks. Cross Hands with the villages of Gorslas, Cefnethin and Penygroes has a population of ca 7000.

St Lleian's, Gorslas,



St Lleian's Church



Church Hall

Gorslas

Gorslas population is bilingual and in the 2021 census it was approximately 5085, an increase of 25% over the past 10 years, with many new homes being built in the area, it being in a building development zone of Carmarthenshire council.

Current Monthly Pattern of Services

At present, in the interregnum, at 9.30am

- 1st Sunday Holy Communion (Assistant Priest)
- 2nd Sunday Morning Prayer (Worship Leader)
- 3rd Sunday Holy Communion (Assistant Curate)
- 4th Sunday Morning Prayer (Worship Leader)
- 5 Sunday, Holy Communion, rotating around the Cross Hands end of the LMA

No regular weekday services or activities at present, however, in the past 2 years we've had 4 Bible study courses running about 6-8 weeks long.

Festival services:

- One or two services in Easter week (including Good Friday)
- Harvest, Advent and Lent include collections of food for either Ammanford Food Bank (Trussel Trust)
- Remembrance Day: Police, first responders, school children, local councillors, Brownies invited and attend.

Finance:

- Ministry Share for 2024 is £19,191.17 - there are no arrears.
- Clergy expenses. Each congregation pays £65 per month into a fund for the Cross Hands half of the LMA for clergy expenses. Malcom Gallanders of Tycroes is the treasurer of that fund.
- Gorslas operates with open plate, weekly envelopes, standing orders and Gift Aid is reclaimed on these offerings. We also run a monthly lottery with a token drawn at the end of a service.

Fabric - Church

- The church was built in 1879. It is not a listed building. It can seat about 200 people if full, has fixed pews. Date of last Quinquennial Inspection May 2017. Next inspection date not known.
- Date of last Electrical Inspection 2022, in preparation for the as yet unknown date of Quinquennial Inspection.
- Electric heating.
- Roof Damaged by Storm Eunice in 2022, now repaired. Main roof replaced in 1985.
- Organ damaged in the same storm, although not discovered until Feb 2023. Organ undergoing restoration at the moment, services taking place in the church hall.
- Bell certified as safe in 2022/3
- Every window contains stained glass. The principal windows at the Altar end have been restored in the past 12 months.
- One end painted 202
- Vestry renovated, re-mortared, dried out, re-plastered in 2022/3

Opposite the church is the original vicarage, a large and much extended building which now houses Teen Challenge, a Christian drug rehabilitation centre.

Church Hall



This building is at the top of the original graveyard and was the original church before the present building was built. It then became the village school before one was built at the bottom of the hill, which in turn has been replaced by a brand new school just behind the graveyard and at the top of the village park.

- Solar electricity panels on the roof, installed in 2013, bringing in an income of approximately £1200 per year
- Solar hot water panels. CCTV with views of the graveyard and church.
- Oil and electric heating.
- One large room, stage plus curtains, drop down projector screen, small back room with a pool table, kitchen, outdoor toilets, one with reasonable disabled access.
- Alarm system for entry.
- CCTV to view the church and graveyard. One episode of vandalism in 2021 in the graveyard.

The hall is made available for community use and is available for hire:

Brownies meet there weekly; OAP group meet monthly; Mother Union every one to two months; Used as a polling station for general and local elections;

Also for church use: Used for fundraising activities; Used for our Bible studies; Craft exhibition held there for a week in 2022.

Graveyard: The original graveyard, directly beside the church and between the church and the hall is full (apart from family members awaiting to join their loved ones) but there is space for internment of ashes.

Across the road is a second graveyard, approximately one third full.

The original graveyard had an episode of vandalism in 2021 when 4 headstones were knocked down. £600 was raised from the community via a GoFundMe appeal within a week and the damage was made good within the month.

Mission and Outreach: Severely restricted by Covid. The previous vicar took advantage of every opportunity to say yes to invitations, saying prayers at the lighting of the community Christmas tree in Gorslas, being seen out and about walking her dog, talking to anyone and everyone.

Social and Fundraising Activities:

- Tea and Coffee after services while we are in the hall, and these have been a great success.
- Pre-Covid, Fayre including books, raffle, cakes and biscuits, second hand goods
- Monthly lottery as described above
- Christian Aid envelopes
- Craft Exhibitions in 2022, entry by donation

St Edith's, Llanedi



St. Edith's is situated in the pretty rural hamlet of Llanedi. The landscape and views may soon change slightly with 10% more trees and the pace of life to reduce to 20mph through the village. The congregation remains loyal and numerically constant (10 -15) though a little older than the last profile and also content with the Sunday services being reduced to fortnightly. St. Edith's is proud of our organist and is now the solitary place of worship in the Llanedi. Likewise, Tafarn-y-Deri is the solitary pub. The Primary School continues to hold strong links with the Church as does the annual Llanedi Agricultural Show. Overall, apart from the above nuances, the previous Parish Profile should still give an accurate reflection of life in Llanedi.

Current Monthly Pattern of Services

There are Eucharistic services at 9.30am on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Social and Fund Raising Activities: St Edith's Hall has been a valuable resource and well used by the community bringing in revenue. It is currently undergoing repairs following severe water ingress and will return to full use by the community and for social and fundraising events for the church.

Festival Services:

- One or two services in Easter week (including Good Friday)
- Community Council Remembrance Service.

Ministry Share: our quota for 2024 is £9818.74 and parochial expenses for clerics is £780. We are not in arrears for these payments.



St David's Church, Saron



Christmas service December 2023
Showing the interior of the church

Description: the present red brick building was built around 1912 though there was an earlier tin church on the site. This structure still exists enclosed within the Victorian building which was built around it. The building is entered through a small porch and consists of a nave and chancel, a small vestry, a meeting room with kitchen area, and a toilet. There are large lawned grounds, a car park and a Memorial garden for interment of cremation ashes.

Monthly pattern of services: services are held every Sunday at 11.0am, two services of Holy Eucharist and two of Morning Prayer. The joint service on the 5th Sunday rotates around the churches in our group.

Weekday services and Activities: services are held very occasionally on weekdays such as at Easter. There are occasional Bible study groups and these are held jointly with other churches in the group.

Festival Services: Church Carol Service with refreshments at which the local community as well as members of other places of worship attend to support us. Easter services are held on Good Friday and Easter day. There is a Harvest Thanksgiving service and this year we held a joint service with refreshments to commemorate St David's Day.

Ministry Share: our quota for 2024 is £6917.75 and parochial expenses for clerics is £780. We are not in arrears for these payments.

Fabric Matters: there was work carried out on the church's electrics last year which accounts for the deficit in these two figures. At present, we are awaiting replacement of the church's electricity meter. The next quinquennial inspection will be in 2024.

Mission and Outreach: The Jac Lewis Foundation is a local charity providing support for mental health and well being in the community. Jac was a well known and much loved young man who played football for Ammanford Football Club. Tragically Jac took his own life and the Foundation set up in his name provides easy access to professional counselling for people of all ages. Though they have their own centre in Ammanford, they have open access to the meeting room at the church in Saron for discreet counselling sessions so it is used frequently. Church members support the Foundation's events.

Current church members do visit former members who can no longer attend services and it is hoped that the clergy can offer communion to those who are now housebound.

Social and Fund Raising Activities: A fund raising events including a barbecue, concerts, quiz nights are held always with refreshments and a raffle.

Local Area and Community: This area was the prime anthracite coalfield of South Wales but once mining via collieries and opencast ceased, extensive restoration of the land has been carried out including removal of the spoil tips resulting in the semi rural area we see today. In recent years, because of the proximity of the M4 and relatively low house prices, many people have moved in to the area either commuting to work along the M4 corridor or at various business parks that have been set up. Like so much of South Wales and especially as this is a former mining area, the district has a friendly and supportive community and is very welcoming to people moving in to the area. This parish covers the villages of Saron, Capel Hendre and part of Penybanc. Within the parish are three local stores, two with post offices, two community halls, one public house, three care homes and an infant and junior school which is in Saron itself. There are various nature reserves locally on reclaimed land and pleasant walks. The junior school has playing fields and there is an equestrian centre.

St Edmund's, Tycroes

Tycroes lies a short distance from the end of the M4 motorway at junction 49, where it joins the A48. Tycroes is a village which has had a great deal of new housing built in recent years, leading to a growth in population. There is a primary school in the village, with secondary provision in Ammanford, some 3 miles away. Coleg Sir Gar with campuses in Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford provide alternative tertiary education facilities. Higher / University education is provided nearby at Swansea, Cardiff and Carmarthen.

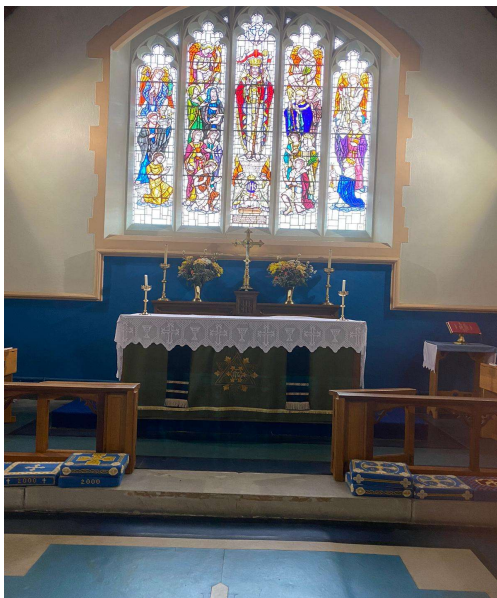
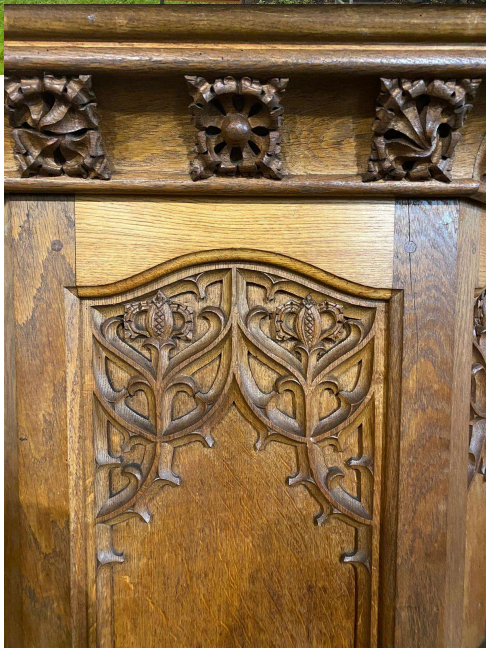
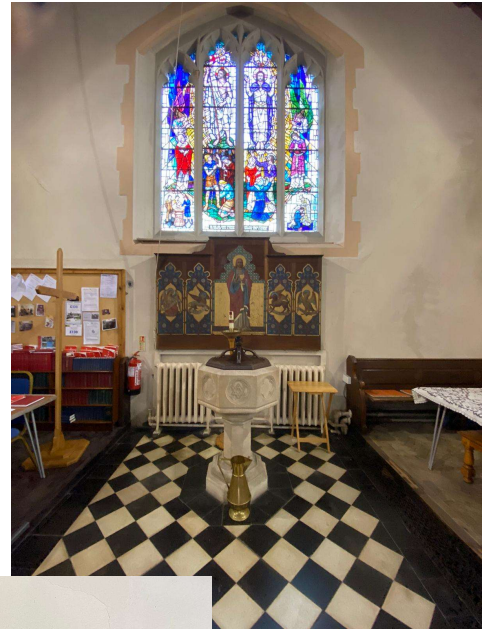
St Edmund's in Tycroes is one of five churches in the group. The 'building' is located on Ammanford Road, with the church hall located directly opposite (this was formerly the village primary school).

The church was built in 1914, and consecrated in 1915. It is a striking building on the village square which has an altar, chancel, choir, font and stained glass windows. It also has a raised wooden pulpit. To the rear of the church there is a graveyard for the burial of bodies and ashes.

Current pattern of services:

All Services at 11.00 am

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1 st Sunday | Holy Communion |
| 2 nd Sunday | Morning Prayer |
| 3 rd Sunday | Holy Communion |
| 4 th Sunday | Morning Prayer |
| 5 th Sunday | Combined 'Parish' Service – Rotating venue – 10.00am. |



Weekday Services and Activities:

“Coffee and a chat” – monthly on a Wednesday morning.

We support other groups in our community by allowing them to use our hall for their activities.

Festival and Celebrations

All major feasts celebrated; Harvest; Remembrance Service.

Finance

Ministry Share = £11,603 pa. £21,037.82 + of arrears

Fabric Matters

Church Hall in good condition as grants recently obtained for a recent renovation (within last 5 years).

The Church has had recent guttering work and roof repairs completed (2023), which were matters identified as requiring urgent attention at the last quinquennial inspection (2018 - 9). This work has been funded solely by donations from a local business owner through fundraising in memory of family members, as the church had insufficient funds to carry out the work. However, the interior is showing its age (plasterwork and décor).

Our aim is -

to make all our Sunday services as welcoming and accessible as possible; create a community of God's people centred on the word of God and worship; to seek to be a loving, caring, welcoming and forgiving community.

Social and Fundraising Activities

The main charities supported are:

Jac Lewis Foundation; Ammanford Food Bank; “Coffee Sunday” to buy coffee for the homeless in Swansea (in conjunction with St Mary's, Swansea); Plant Dewi/AFIA

The activities put on to provide not only funds but also to get the church family and other members of the community together included – “Warm Hub” in conjunction with Carmarthenshire County Council (Winter 2022-23)

General overview of the area: Tycroes is a commuter village for the M4 corridor. It is mainly post-industrial (open cast coal mining), with some agriculture and employment in two business parks in nearby Capel Hendre.

The population is approx. 3000

The local shops and facilities: In the village there are numerous independent shops, a supermarket/Post Office and garden centre.

There is a GP Surgery and independent pharmacy in the village.

Education in the area: There is a primary school in the village, with secondary education in Ammanford, approx. 3 miles away.

Recreation: There are children's playgrounds in various parts of the village. There is also a woodland park which links to a local network of footpaths.

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APPENDICES

Please include:

Copies of the Last Set of Examined or Audited accounts