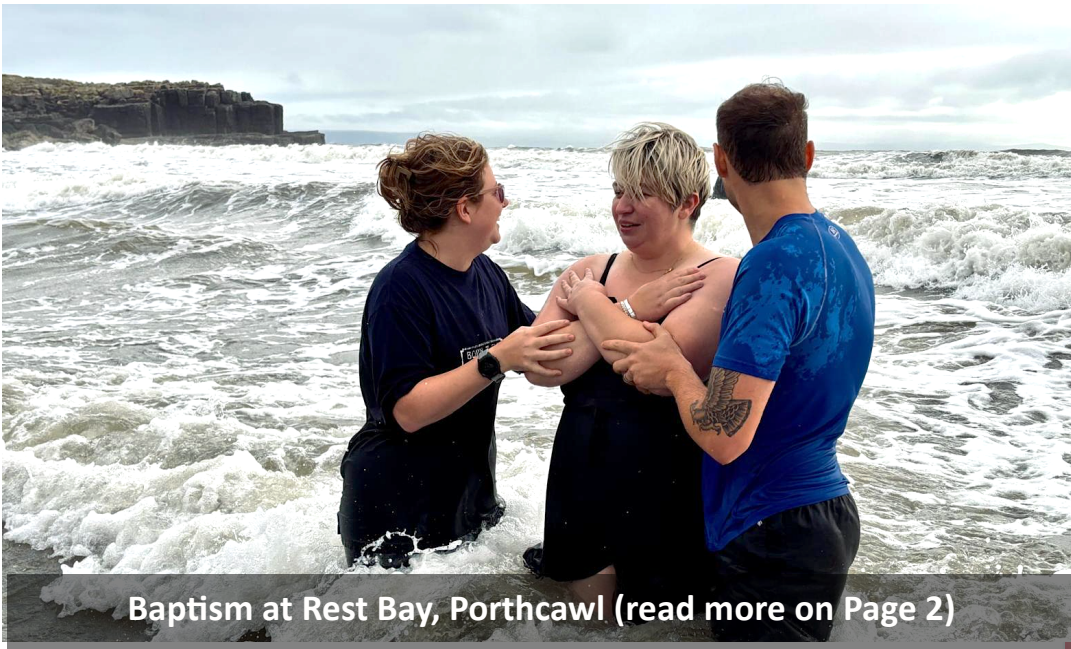




Baptism at Rest Bay, Porthcawl (read more on Page 2)

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SWBA NEWS!

South Wales
Baptist Association

Autumn/Winter 2025

A New Beginning for Hirwaun Community Church...

The old Zion Baptist Church in Hirwaun has a new name, a new leadership and new life!

In recent times, Bryn Sion in Aberdare have partnered with the Association to form a missional steering group at Zion Baptist Church in order to ensure a Baptist witness would continue in the village. A Commissioning Service was held on 11th May at Bryn Sion to send out a small team to begin a new work under the leadership of Nas and Alys Awad.

Nas says, *"Our heart is to reach those in our community who don't yet know Jesus and to build a welcoming space where people can explore faith and find hope, healing and freedom."*

It has been a busy and hugely encouraging time since then. Whilst extensive repairs are taking place at the Zion building, they have been meeting fortnightly on a Sunday afternoon at the local YMCA Coffee Shop – holding informal services, sharing food and exploring gospel truths around tables.

Midweek Bible Studies have regularly attracted more than ten people with up to seventeen joining to explore God's word together.

"Beyond our regular meetings, we've been actively involved in community life, taking part in local events, such as open mic nights, youth groups ...

(Continued on Page 2)



Nas and Alys lead Hirwaun Community Church - pictured here with their children,

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

Isaiah 43:19

Welcome!

One of the great privileges I have in my role as Regional Minister is the opportunity to travel around the churches, chaplaincies and missional communities of the Association and hear how God is at work.



And the good news is, God is most definitely moving! Recent years have brought many challenges to churches, perhaps most typified by financial pressures and fewer volunteers to support the many good works going on in the church. However, amidst this background, we are seeing God at work; He is on the move!

Again and again we are hearing reports of baptisms. There are people turning up at services who have had no previous connection with the church. And this move of God includes the younger generation who are exploring a new interest in faith. Add to this, we are seeing new churches being planted – some through individuals with a heart for planting and some through churches with a vision for reaching out into a new area. God is on the move.

As I reflect on this my mind is drawn to this verse from Isaiah, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). Life has been difficult for the people of Israel. The powerful Babylonians have invaded and defeated them. People have been forcibly moved from their homes and relocated to other parts of the Empire. And in this difficult situation they asked questions: Had God abandoned them because of their sin? Was he really all powerful? Are they actually special to him? Is there hope in the future? Will God move again?

And Isaiah gives them hope: God has not abandoned them; God has not been defeated; God is all powerful and His people are special to Him. Behold, He is going to do a new thing! God is on the move!

Whether church life and our personal lives are encouraging or difficult right now, we can hold out hope in the midst of all that is happening. God is with us! God is on the move. God is doing a new thing. Perhaps the pertinent question is, 'Can we perceive what He is doing'? As we look around us, can we see God on the move? What is He doing in our church and community? What is he doing in our own lives? God is on the move!

Mark

Hirwaun Community Church

(story continued from Page 1)



Meeting at the YMCA

... and other community gatherings, serving where we can and sharing the gospel naturally through relationships and conversation."

It is exciting to report the impact that is already being seen. There are already people from the village who have made a decision to follow Jesus. Two of them came from the local spiritualist church and had a powerful encounter with Jesus as the gospel was being shared. This led to three women being baptised as the church travelled to Rest Bay in Porthcawl (see picture on page 1 and below).

We believe this is just the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Baptist family in Hirwaun. As Zion Baptist Church has become Hirwaun Community Church, we look forward to hearing more testimonies of what God is doing and how Christ's church is growing.



Gathering at Rest Bay for the first three baptisms of the new church

We would love to hear from you if you have a story to share about baptisms or testimony of how God is at work in your church or missional community.

OUR VALUES

- Passionate for Mission
- Innovative and Visionary

- Generous and Relational
- Committed to Justice

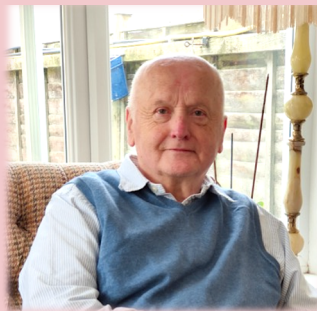
Welcoming Jordan to Sketty...



Jordan, centre, alongside Monty (left) and Mark (right)

A new chapter in the life of Sketty Community Church has begun as Paul Mort (known to many as 'Monty') retired as Pastor at the end of August. Jordan Manley, formerly Assistant Pastor, was inducted on Sunday 5th October. This was a joyous occasion as family and friends of Jordan joined with him as he shared how he had felt led by God into this new role and new season. We celebrate what God has done and that He is doing a new thing.

Saying goodbye to Phylip...



The last Sunday in September saw Phylip Rees retire from ministry at Duckpool Road Baptist Church in Newport. He began his ministry there in 2019 and prior to that

served at Tredegarville BC in Cardiff for sixteen years. Phylip's ministry always prioritised teaching the Word of God. He led churches to reach out into the community and during his time in Cardiff saw numerous conversions, especially amongst the asylum-seeking community. We give thanks to God for his faithful service and pray many blessings for him in his retirement.

Hello to Shuchan and Tyler... SWBA Interns for 2025-2026



Shuchan Yang



Tyler Phillips



Sign Post – a ministry based at York Place



Football ministry

Each year SWBA offers an internship which gives the chance to explore, experience and understand more about leadership in the Baptist context. This year we are delighted to welcome not one, but two interns – Shuchan Yang and Tyler Phillips.

Both are placed at Swansea churches, Shuchan at York Place, and Tyler at Mumbles BC. As well as serving in their church placement they will be joining in with the Pathways Course, run by Cardiff Baptist College, that is designed to enable people to deepen their understanding of faith and practice in order to develop skills in ministry and mission.

And this is important because both interns are exploring what call God has on their lives and in particular, whether

God is calling them into church-based ministry.

Tyler joined Mumbles BC a little over a year ago after attending a friend's baptismal service. He felt God was speaking to him, and minister, John Evans, has been instrumental in encouraging Tyler to follow his walk with Jesus. As well as several church activities, Tyler is also leading a church football ministry.

Shuchan has graduated from university with a degree in Urban Planning. Last year he did an internship at a Korean Church in London and is now in Swansea continuing to discern God's call on his life. Amongst other things, Shuchan is leading a worship evening for young adults, attended by 20-30 people from across the city.



If you would like to support Home Mission, please scan the QR code or go to:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/631022/Making_a_donation.aspx

Albany Road Baptist Church – New Wine in a New Wine Skin!



The official opening of the new building

Prayer Diary...

Each week we pray for an Association Church, asking for God's blessing on them and fruitfulness for the sake of the Kingdom. Any more specific prayers requests for their week, will be shared through the E-news.

12 th October	Ainon BC, Bryncoch
19 th October	Albany Road BC, Cardiff
26 th October	Albert Tilly Memorial BC, Cardiff
2 nd November	Ammanford BC
9 th November	Ararat BC, Cardiff
16 th November	Belmont BC, Cardiff
23 rd November	Bethany BC, Rhiwbina
30 th November	Bethany BC, West Cross
7 th December	Bethany BC, Risca
14 th December	Bethany Baptist Fellowship, Caldicot
21 st December	Bethel BC, Church Village

On Saturday 4th October, people gathered at Albany Road Baptist Church for the opening ceremony and thanksgiving service for their new community facility. The old building, riddled with damp, has been transformed into a hall on the ground floor which can be divided into three sections, and two floors above which provide twelve flats of affordable housing.

This project has been a great example of partnership and vision. Unable to afford redevelopment of the building on their own, Albany Road Baptist Church were creative in their approach, partnering with 'Cadwyn Housing Association' and 'Faith in Affordable Housing'. Cadwyn bought the building and have redeveloped the flats. The church pays a peppercorn rent for the ground floor and were also responsible for the cost of redeveloping this space. The result is a new suite of facilities – in addition to the hall, there is a modern kitchen, welcoming café space and even shower and clothes washing facilities.

Jeremy Ray, Church Treasurer, was able to give thanks for God's provision as he shared how the project was paid for both through selling the original building and various grants received. It meant the church had to raise little themselves, enabling them to concentrate on the vision. Peter Littlechild, Community Coordinator, was able to explain the visionary thinking behind the project – in particular the aim of providing a community



Inside the new hall

facility that is warm, safe and accessible for all people. This includes making it a disability friendly space and offering essential facilities for the homeless. Additionally, the hope is to create greater financial security for the church as they rent out space.

Richard Hardy, minister of the church, brought three wine bottles that looked identical to illustrate their hope for the future as he read from Matthew 9:16-17 about putting new wine into new wine skins. The first bottle looked good on the outside but had nothing in it, explaining that they didn't want the buildings to just look good on the outside – what happens inside is important. The second bottle contained a cheap juice, which suggests the church could fill the building with any activities. However, their aim is to do something more than that – to ensure that much of what goes on in the building is a blessing to the community. This is the third bottle – one that not only looks good but has a good taste as well!

For more stories across South Wales Baptist Association, please do see our website and follow us on Facebook and YouTube.

www.swba.org.uk