



St David's Uniting Church Monthly Magazine – October 2026

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Joining us online:

Link for Live Stream –

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1ftWuXHexnfFdo1FKwXBZA>

Link for Zoom Service -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89461145366?pwd=S3ExNTVjdGVGdXlGVlNQc2k3eldudz09>



Message from our minister, Clare

Annwyl ffrindiau/Dear friends

This harvest time as we give thanks for our food and God's provision in time-honoured tradition, it has felt slightly surreal to hear new advice coming from the UK Government about the importance of building up small reserves of food. The Government has advised families to have a small stock of food supplies that could tide them over in an emergency should they be impacted by extreme weather, so households can be 'a bit more resilient'.

It's striking because for so long, consumers have been urged not to panic buy (we all remember the messages against stockpiling at the start of the pandemic) and there has been confidence in the food supply chain in all scenarios. It's also striking for me because in my former work with Christian Aid's media team a lot of the messaging we produced was about helping families in other parts of the world 'develop resilience'. And here we are, in the autumn of 2026, hearing warnings about the El Niño weather pattern, and yes, not being told to stockpile or to panic, but to be aware of the fact that extreme weather could limit our ability to access food in our usual ways and that being prepared is wise.

Risks to our food supply chain such as climate change, weather patterns and cyber-attacks, all move us into a different era and as with any change we have a chance to reflect on our response. Do we look inwards, turn outwards, or do both? Harvest services and the Season of Creationtide remind us of our connections and interdependence with God, the earth and one another. My hope is that in hearing the word 'resilience' being associated with our own nations we have a new sense of understanding for, and solidarity with, those both here and overseas who struggle in a much more profound way to feed their families or to look to the future.

A BBC headline ran 'Stock up on food to prepare for extreme weather'. I wonder what alternative headline, churches, other faiths and communities might write as we develop a new consciousness of our own vulnerability and are prompted to act? This governmental advice might not be a call for us to simply look after our own store cupboards but be a moment that reminds us of what was always true, that together we are stronger.

Pob bendith/Blessings

Clare

Our Services in October:

All services start at 10.45am and are also available online to view live, or afterwards.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1ftWuXHexnfFdo1FKwXBZA>

4 October: We welcome our good friend Haydn Blackey to lead our worship today. We always enjoy Haydn's visits and we're looking forward to seeing him again.

11 October: This month our monthly zoom service will be led by our own Revd Ray Vincent. The Zoom link is
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89461145366?pwd=S3ExNTVjdGVGdXIGVINQc2k3eldudz09>

18 October is our Harvest Service and will be led by Iestyn Henson. See below for details of our Harvest Appeal.

25 October: Our monthly Communion service will be led by Revd Martin Spain. We look forward to seeing Martin again.

Harvest Appeal:

Our **Harvest Service** will take place on **Sunday 18 October** and will be led by Iestyn. The Harvest Appeal will be Pontypridd Foodbank again. Last year they trialled providing Christmas dinners for a few families in need and are hoping to do so again for more families, so our donations will be used towards this.

Forthcoming Church Events

Language classes are held on **Monday mornings at 10am** in the Hall.

Sunday 11 October – 6.30pm – Elders meeting at the church.

Advance Notice: Sunday 15 November - Church Meeting immediately after the service.



Just a reminder that the collection box for Food Bank donations and the Copper Pot for small change can be found on the unit by the organ. The Copper Pot funds are also donated to local charities.

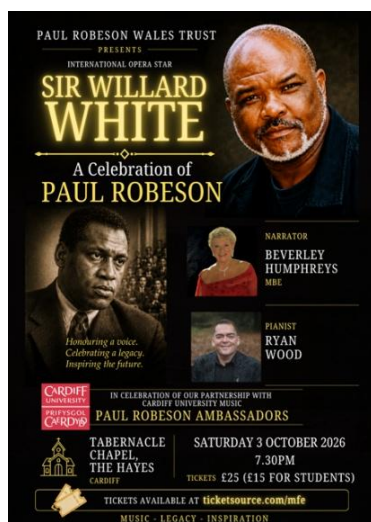


Park Ramblers



At 10.15am every Monday – including Bank Holidays - the Park Ramblers meet outside B&M to start the week off with a walk around the beautiful Parc Ynysangharad, followed by coffee at The Gatto Lounge. If any arrangements change, walkers will be notified by email of any changes. All are welcome to join at their own pace or just join for coffee around 11am. If the weather is very bad they may just go straight for coffee!!

Other Events



PAUL ROBESON WALES TRUST
Presents
SIR WILLARD WHITE
A Celebration of PAUL ROBESON
Pianist RYAN WOOD and
Narrator BEVERLY HUMPHRIES
at
TABERNACLE CHAPEL
THE HAYES, CARDIFF
on
Saturday 3 October 2026 at 7.30pm
Tickets available at ticketsource.com/mfe
£25 (£15 for students)

- South Sudan continues to experience **conflict, displacement, food insecurity and the impacts of the climate crisis**. Despite these immense challenges, Christian Aid's local partners continue to work alongside communities, **helping people build resilience, respond to emergencies and create sustainable change**.

Angelina Nyajima Simon Jial is the Founder and Director of Hope Restoration - a women-led **Christian Aid** partner organisation in South Sudan, where some regions have now been described as experiencing catastrophic malnutrition. She will be visiting **Swansea (19 October) and Cardiff (20 October)** and speaking with supporters to help them learn more about the situation in her country and about how we can help families in urgent need through our support for Christian Aid. Keep an eye on <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/meet-partners-south-sudan-wales> for more details. Further details will be communicated as they become available.

October Focus: Prison's Week 11 - 17 October

We are introducing a new feature to the newsletter where we will take a theme or national initiative and invite you to reflect and pray. This month's focus is 'Prisons Week'.

Prisons Week has featured in our worship for some time and for the past few years, we have had the privilege of hearing from Revd Dr Phil Wall, our former minister, about the experiences of the young people at Oakhill Secure Training Centre for young offenders. Phil has moved to a new job and won't be leading our worship this year, but Prisons Week remains an important annual focus in the Christian calendar.

This year's campaign is inspired by Matthew 22: 1 - 14, which says: 'the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests'

We are invited to join in prayer during Prisons Week, praying for all those who are part of the criminal justice system using the Prisons Week Prayer:

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and his Spirit, now and every day. Amen.

We are also invited to watch this year's campaign video:

<https://www.prisonsworld.org/watch-film/>

And use the Prisons Week prayer diary to guide our prayers through the week:

<https://www.prisonsworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/PrisonsWeek->

Source: <https://www.prisonsworld.org/> [accessed 20/09/2026]

News from around the Pastorate



Bethany URC was spectacularly decorated for a joint harvest service with Van Road URC in September and a large number of donations was gathered for Ystrad Mynach's Tin on a Wall. The display also included some salt, some coal and some water – but Clare forgot to ask the meaning of them, can anyone let her know the significance of the tradition?

Van Road URC held the fourth in a series of fundraising coffee mornings for RNLI in September – the final one will be Christmas themed on **Saturday 5 December** at 10.30am. All are welcome – the church is hoping its fundraising total will reach £1,000 by the end of the year. Van Road will also be holding a Ploughman's Harvest Tea on **Saturday 10 October** at 4pm, everyone is welcome to join them.

New things are happening at **Hope and Market Square United Church (URC/PCW)** - they are delighted to be ordaining a new elder in November, they are working towards launching a new website and in October they will trial a new midweek service – a Christian Mindfulness service led by Clare (**20 October** at 10.30am). Please hold church members and the local community in your prayers as the 60th anniversary of the Aberfan disaster approaches and the church reflects on how to mark the day.

Presbyterianism in Welsh History

This is a letter in *Reformed-Issue 5*, (the URC magazine) written by Rev Noel Davies of Swansea, who has been a guest preacher at St David's Uniting Church in the past. It was written in response to an article in issue 3.

"I was intrigued by the Revd Dr Michael Hopkins' article ('1876: when English Presbyterianism refused to Die' *Reformed-issue 3*). As a retired Minister of *Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg* (the Congregationally-ordered Union of Welsh Independants).

UWI), worshipping now in a URC/Methodist Uniting Church in Swansea, there was much that I found intriguing.

There were interesting echoes of aspects of the Nonconformist story of Wales, as well as some contrasts. The UWI held its first Assemble in 1872. Before that date local Welsh congregational churches gathered together in county unions rather than in a national federation. There were motivations of national identity and mission behind the decisions in 1872 and 1876.

But predating that first UWI Assembly by 61 years was the first gathering for ordinations, in 1811, of what became the Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW) Assembly, that had hitherto met in associations. These Presbyterian churches in Wales were the product of the Welsh Evangelical Revival led by Daniel Rowland and Howell Harries in the latter years of the 18th century, that ran in parallel with, but was distinct from, the Evangelical Revival that led to Methodism. The one was Calvinistic (hence, in Welsh, *Y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*), the other Arminian. It's worth noting that there were three Presbyterian Church of England local churches in Wales, existing independently of the PCW and becoming part of the URC in 1972 – and in Swansea one of these churches was located more or less opposite and English-Language PCW church.

My father and one of his brothers were trained for UWI ministry in an institution founded in Carmarthen in 1840 called the Presbyterian College, where the term 'Presbyterian' did not refer to Presbyterian polity in the sense used above, but to Unitarianism, and offered training also for Congregational ministry. The 'Presby', as everyone knew it, dated back to the first dissenting academy in Wales, established in 1689.

This intertwining of historical roots and developments is intriguing certainly. But what do all these interconnections, past and present, say about our shared identities and our search for deeper unity today? Answers for another day!

Where's Clare?

From the Elders: It is likely to take a little time but we are gradually getting used to 'sharing' our minister with three other churches as part of the Valleys Pastorate and also with her wider responsibilities as URC Regional Minister for the Valleys and Vale region (incorporating three further churches - Llanfair, Penrhys, Edwardsville URC, Treharris and Bethesda'r Fro URC, Saint Athan).

We enjoyed having her with us for a longer time than is usual this summer as it was interrupted by holidays, a house move, a ministers' summer school and a training weekend for new ministers!

We'll have to wait a few weeks before Clare leads worship with us again, but we thought it would be good to share with you where she is in the interim. During October, November and Advent, Clare's Sundays will be as follows:

04/10/2026 - Bethany URC, Ystrad Mynach

11/10/2026 - Bethany URC

18/10/2026 - Bethany URC

25/10/2026 - Van Rd URC, Caerphilly

01/11/2026 - Holiday

08/11/2026 - Pew Sunday¹

15/11/2026 - St David's Uniting, Trefforest

22/11/2026 - Hope and Market Square, Merthyr

29/11/2026 - Van Rd
06/12/2026 - Bethany URC
13/12/2026 - Hope and Market Square
20/12/2026 - Bethany URC
24/12/2026 - St David's Uniting (Christmas Eve Service)
27/12/2026 - St David's Uniting (Pastorate Service)

Please do remember her and the other churches in your prayers. But also remember that even when she is focused elsewhere, it doesn't mean we can't contact her. She is always our minister wherever she is and likes any opportunity to catch up and hear how things are.

¹ The Pastorate group decided earlier this year that Clare should have four Sundays a year participating in worship (as opposed to leading it) either in the Pastorate or elsewhere, these are called 'pew' Sundays

October Eco Tips

Greening your home this Autumn. Tackle climate change and reduce your heating bills by finding and reducing the draughts in your home. Find the gaps that let cold air in and warm air out (keyholes, letterboxes and gaps around windows, doors, loft hatches and floorboards for example). Do what you can to fix these gaps - there are lots of tutorials on how to do this online. It's also a good time to prepare for winter by putting radiator reflector foil or baking foil behind the radiator. This will reflect heat back into your room.

Reflection on Fairtrade – Kath Rickards

Fairtrade Fortnight runs from **21 September to 3 October 2026**. As members and officers in the RCT Fairtrade since it was formed many years ago, we have always appreciated the support and help that local Churches have provide over the years.

Many will probably remember that Fairtrade Fortnight was originally held in March and with the help of volunteers the group would attend local supermarkets to give out leaflets and speak to customers about Fairtrade and products that could be purchased. Initially the concept was new to many people and there were only limited local shops that stocked Fairtrade goods. We were fortunate in Pontypridd to have the Harvest Book Shop which sold a number of Fairtrade Goods and some of the local supermarkets like Tesco, Co-op and Marks & Spencer that had a limited selection of goods such as Tea, Coffee, Bananas, Chocolate sugar etc. followed in a few years by Sainsbury's and Lidl's. Nowadays more local Café's serve Fairtrade Coffee.

Each year the RCT Fairtrade group had a Fairtrade Stall in the Big Bite when we were grateful for help from volunteers from local churches and the Harvest Book Shop for providing Fairtrade goods to sell. Fairtrade Goods were sold at the Lent Lunches with supplies provided by the Harvest Book shop on sale or return basis. Over time other events such as coffee mornings, Phil as Banana Man during Fairtrade Fortnight and school visits took place. Many local schools are now Fairtrade Schools.

After Lockdown many activities were no longer possible and the RCT group became less effective. However in 2025 a Pontypridd Fairtrade Group was formed by local volunteers and the group is now doing some amazing work publicising the wide range of Fairtrade

products which are available from the original items such as tea, coffee, sugar, bananas etc to other products such as toys, wine, flowers, clothes and many more.

They have a Fairtrade Pontypridd Facebook page which gives news of all events and various products that are available both locally and further afield.

Pontypridd Fairtrade Group have arranged many events during Fairtrade fortnight in venues around the town. For those not familiar with Facebook, there is a display in the Pontypridd Library which will give more information.

The great Welsh Toy Design Workshop

for **Lanka Kade** fair trade toys & gifts

with **Sugar & Spice** & **Fairtrade Pontypridd**

Help us on our mission to start a new Welsh range of wooden figures for Lanka Kade's fair trade toys.

Our design competition is open to local children from age 8-18. Come along to the free workshop at our toy shop on Saturday 3rd October to find out how to enter. Pop in between 11am and 2pm

There are around 2 million Fairtrade farmers and workers across 70 countries, with over 37k Fairtrade products being sold in over 140 countries. This Fairtrade Fortnight, we're asking the public to:

- Buy Fair Trade products from their local Fairtrade businesses and grocery shops.
- Attend a Fairtrade Fortnight event hosted by your local community
- Share with others the importance of Fairtrade and why everyone deserves Fair Pay.
- Ask their local MSs to show their commitment to Fair Trade.

Further information about Fairtrade can be found on the Fairtrade Wales website <https://fairtrade.wales/campaign/fairtrade-fortnight-2026/> but briefly Fairtrade guarantees:

- Minimum price
- Additional premium
- Environmental protection
- Safe and fair working conditions
- Democratic decision making

Fairtrade Fortnight in Pontypridd 21st Sept - 4th Oct 26

Fairtrade Fortnight is an annual campaign to raise awareness about the differences we can make every day to make buying goods fairer for people and for the planet.

This Fairtrade fortnight;

- Make a small change, switch your usual cuppa or snack to a Fairtrade product.
- Attend one of our fun and informative events.
- Research Fairtrade and find out about the great work of Fair Trade Wales.
- Sign a petition and lend your voice to the campaign for fairness.

Find out more about Fairtrade Fortnight 26 and events on Fairtrade Pontypridd's social media pages

TIDY ARTS



Birthdays in October:

3rd Oct - John Henson
6th Oct - Bethan Walkling
7th Oct - Alan Hills
16th Oct - Maralyn Tomlinson
18th Oct - George Tustin
30th Oct - Joyce Mordecai

Colleen's personalised cards are still only £3.00. **Final reminder** that if anyone would like personalised Christmas cards please get your orders to Colleen by the end of October to ensure that she has plenty of time to complete them. It's Colleen's busiest time of the year.

Colleen also asks if you can please save the bags that she provides to display the cards in and return them to her once you have used the cards. Some people already do this and it's much appreciated. This will in turn cut down on costs as she can recycle them and it's much more environmentally friendly than throwing them away.

Guild Diary for October

We're back!!! Marilyn has been very busy behind the scenes arranging an exciting Autumn/Winter programme for our weekly 2pm sessions every Wednesday afternoon in Ponty museum. We currently have around 15 regular members but we would very much welcome some more members. There is a lovely, community spirit and joy in these afternoons. For just £2 you can enjoy the talk/ musical performance or event AND refreshments.

7 October - Mr Ian Meakin was a senior driving examiner in the Pontypridd area. His role was to manage test centres, handle quality control and perform audits. On occasions he would sit in the back of a car when a learner and his driving instructor were actually doing the testand thereby hang many stories.

14 October - Changing lives in Uganda - Judith Richards is a teacher, fundraiser and long term supporter of Pont's work in Mbale, Uganda. With years of visiting Uganda and working with local communities, Judith offers real life stories and insights into how partnership and grass roots action, like VSLAS (Village Savings and Loan Associations).

21 October - Clara Thomas - the richest woman in Wales: Huw Thomas Davies has done an enormous amount of research into the fascinating life of Clara Thomas. Mr Davies graduated in History and Welsh at Aberystwyth University. He has worked in education and public affairs, including roles with BBC's educational department, Heartbeat Wales and later with Menter Iaith RCT. He gained an MA in History of Family at the University of Limerick and researched at Cardiff University- on A People's History of Llanybydder 1841-1911. He is an Ovate member of Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain with the pseudonym Thomas Llandyfan.

Clara Thomas - Dyngarol ac un o'r menywod cyfoethocaf yng Nghymru: Graddiodd Huw Thomas Davies mewn Hanes a Hanes Cymru ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth. Mae wedi gweithio ym Maes Addysg y BBC a materion Adran cyhoeddus, gan gynnwys rolau gyda'r Adran Addysg y BBC, Curiad Calon Cymru ac yn ddiweddar gyda Menter Iaith RhCT. Enillodd MA mewn Hanes Teulu ym Mhrifysgol Limerick ac

ymchwiliodd ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd ar Hanes Pobl Llanybydder 1841-1911.
Mae'n aelod Ovate o Orsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain, gyda'r ffugenw Thomas Llandyfan.

28 October - An afternoon with poet and author Janet Laugharne: Janet Laugharne grew up with her sister Rebecca Hughes by the Mawddach Estuary in Gwynedd where their mother was an artist and her father, the author Cledwyn Hughes (not to be confused with Cledwyn Hughes the politician). A Welsh speaker - fascination with words, their sounds and meaning is a constant thread running through her varied writing life - as an academic, teacher, poet and fiction writer. She is a Emeritus Professor of Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Pastoral Thanks, News and Prayers

- This item was circulated by email on 5 September. It seems that many did not receive it. Sometimes emails from office1.sdud@gmail.com go onto Junk or Spam. Please add the address to your contacts.

It is still not too late to donate! SUPPORTING CRWBAN: One of the owners of the Pinc shop, Jaz, ran three half marathons in three days at the beginning of September around Treforest/Church Village. This was to raise money towards the costs of a trip to Morocco next month for the young people from Crwban so they have a chance to travel and see other parts of the world and make memories.

Crwban are part of POBL – the local charity who we support at Christmas.

They offer a safe and supportive environment for people who are working through their own personal challenges. Most residents stay for around 6 to 12 months, depending on their individual needs. They receive tailored support to help them build the skills and confidence needed for independent living. Over time, as residents grow more self-reliant, the level of support gently decreases.

The link is below if anyone at church might want to support it? No pressure, obviously!

She was interviewed by Wales Online recently so people might come across the story elsewhere. The link to her fundraising page is -

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/madks-trip-of-a-](https://www.gofundme.com/f/madks-trip-of-a-lifetime?lid=4tm7sxkz0j6q&utm_source=ig&utm_medium=social&utm_content=link_in_bio&fbclid=PAb21jcAUGdrhwZG9mAmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyGMGYXBwX2lkDzU2NzA2NzM0MzM1MjQyNwABp6OHiOzl_sEWBdPhOx9wBPJUdexaj-r28UBIVhiCGKSVjoVevwrPlPzOJaTO_aem_qMFEe20xS7-G4urDfXQF8A&)

[lifetime?lid=4tm7sxkz0j6q&utm_source=ig&utm_medium=social&utm_content=link_in_bio&fbclid=PAb21jcAUGdrhwZG9mAmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyGMGYXBwX2lkDzU2NzA2NzM0MzM1MjQyNwABp6OHiOzl_sEWBdPhOx9wBPJUdexaj-r28UBIVhiCGKSVjoVevwrPlPzOJaTO_aem_qMFEe20xS7-G4urDfXQF8A&](https://www.gofundme.com/f/madks-trip-of-a-lifetime?lid=4tm7sxkz0j6q&utm_source=ig&utm_medium=social&utm_content=link_in_bio&fbclid=PAb21jcAUGdrhwZG9mAmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyGMGYXBwX2lkDzU2NzA2NzM0MzM1MjQyNwABp6OHiOzl_sEWBdPhOx9wBPJUdexaj-r28UBIVhiCGKSVjoVevwrPlPzOJaTO_aem_qMFEe20xS7-G4urDfXQF8A&)

- Message from Viviane “I would like to thank all my friends in the congregation who have thought of me, prayed for me and my sister Huguette, sent me cards and given me gifts and flowers in the event of my sister’s passing. We got ever closer as we got older and Huguette certainly is one of the main people who have shaped the person that I am. Merci and thank you all. “Viviane
- Message from Gwyneth: “Thank you to everyone who wished me well on my recent visit to Guys Hospital. My results have shown that the cancer has gone down to ‘stable’ which is what it was 2 years ago. It really gave me a boost knowing that people were thinking about me. Thank you”
- We especially remember Lesley at this time on the passing of her Dad, Graham, so soon after the loss of her mother, our loved member and friend, Anne. We pray for her and all the family, that they will be comforted and strengthened in the difficult days which lie ahead. Graham was a good friend of the church and he will

be remembered by many for his willingness in giving lifts to church and hospital appointments, as well as many other ways in which he helped the church.

Graham's funeral will be held on Thursday 1st October at Glyntaff Crematorium at 3pm. The Committal service will be followed by a reception at Pontypridd Rugby Club from 4pm onwards. Lesley is hoping to set up a video link for those unable to attend. Link to follow.

- We are aware that many of our friends and members of the church are currently finding life difficult. Many have chronic pain and other illnesses. Let us be mindful of this and keep them in our prayers.
- We think of our members and friends who have family in hospital, and we recognise the worry and upset this must be causing them. We think of them in the responsibility which they must feel and we offer them the prayers and support of the church.
- We remember those who are no longer able, through age and illness, to attend services. We are grateful to our Elders and Visitors who visit and keep in touch with them, letting them know that they are still part of our family and that they are loved and valued by us as a church.
- There are some who are starting college or university for the first time; also those who are seeking employment. We pray that they will be supported in finding a place in life where they can feel valued.
- There are a number of our friends waiting for results of tests at the moment and we think of them as they wait.
- In his recent service Iestyn reminded us that for some people, Autumn and Winter can be a difficult and depressing time due to the lack of sunlight. Let us be aware and understanding of this, both for others and ourselves.
- And as Stephen reminded us all in his service: "Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always." (Robin Williams)

November Newsletter

We've had another lovely end to the month but it has certainly cooled down somewhat. The mornings are starting later and the evenings are starting earlier! We all know this happens every October when autumn finally takes hold and we put the clocks back, but strangely enough it always comes as a surprise to us – as if we're not expecting it! Maybe that's just wishful thinking.

Can you believe that our monthly newsletter has now been in production for a whole year. Where does the time go? If you have any suggestions for how we can improve the newsletter please do not hesitate to let me or your elders know. Also if anyone would like to send me a "thought for the month" I will be happy to include that too.

As always it's so lovely to have personal stories, interests and achievements as well as pastoral updates and a variety of interesting articles and news. Please don't be shy about any achievements you or your family have made, or any interesting activities or

events in which you have been involved. Please continue to send items directly to me either by email to news.sduc@gmail.com or by phone. My phone number is in the church directory.

**** As always, personal news can only be included with the permission of the person who it concerns so please make sure you check with them that they are happy for their details to be published before you submit it ****

The November edition of the Newsletter will be sent on Saturday 31 October so please ensure any items reach me at the latest by **Monday 26 October**.

Best Wishes

Alison

Thought for October

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.” –
Henry David Thoreau