



WELSHPOOL METHODIST CHURCH

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"Celebrating and Sharing God's Love"

JANUARY 2018 CHURCH BULLETIN

We extend warm welcome to any visitors, or to anyone worshipping with us for the first time. Please make yourselves known to us and stay after the service for a cup of tea. (We have a loop system).

ANOTHER YEAR

Just one small daisy on the bank
Suggests that winter's hold is less;
That sweet and fragile face insists
We look ahead for happiness.

No good to dwell on what's not done
Or grieve about things left behind;
The New Year waits, another chance
To live life better, be more kind.

Grey winter days are harsh and cold,
But life contains both sun and shower;
Leave dark behind to seek the light
And make the most of every hour.

Andrea Davies

Wishing you all a Happy and Peaceful New Year!

Sunday 31st December

Lectionary

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Rev Marian is our annual **Covenant Service**, to which we welcome our friends from St Mary's.

Please note:

There will be no COFFEE MORNING on MONDAY 1st or LUNCHES on SATURDAY 6th or BRING AND SHARE LUNCH on SUNDAY 7th. Our usual programme of activities will resume on Monday 8th.

Sunday 7th January

Lectionary

Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Rev Marian (Holy Communion)

Compline at 6pm led by Rev Bill Rowell

This week:

Monday 8th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup at 1pm
Thursday 11th Reading the Bible Together at 12 (Genesis); picnic lunch

Sunday 14th January

Lectionary

1 Sam 3:1-10 (11-20); Ps 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Andrea Davies/Jenny Thomas

Evening Worship (WCT) at 6pm led by Rev Bob Thomas

This week:

Monday 15th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup at 1pm
Tuesday 16th Property and Finance Committee at 7.15pm

Thursday 18th Prayer Meeting, 12-12.30pm led by Rev Marian
Thursday 18th Music Club Concert, 7.30pm - tenor and piano
Friday 19th Fellowship at 2.30pm: Fun Beetle Drive
Gallery Group at 7pm
Saturday 20th Coffee Morning and Friendship Lunch, 11am to 2pm

Sunday 21st January

Lectionary

Jonah 3:1-5; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

Early Communion at 9am with Rev Marian

Morning Worship with Baptism at 10.45am led by Re Marian

Evening Worship at 6pm - Welshpool Churches Together Service
for the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity, led by Rev Marian

This week:

Monday 22nd Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup
at 1pm
Wednes. 24th WCT Prayer Meeting at Baptist, 7pm (Week of Prayer)
Thursday 25th Reading the Bible Together at 12 (Genesis); picnic lunch
Burns Night Celebration with Supper at 7pm (tbc)
Saturday 27th Walking with Friends: Glandwr Way, Golfa to church
Choral Workshop: Mozart "Requiem", 10 for 10.30am

Sunday 28th January

Lectionary

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Rev Bob Thomas

Afternoon Tea Service at 4pm Prayer and Praise led by Stewards

This week:

Monday 29th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup
at 1pm
Thursday 1st Church Council at 7pm

"Flying Free"

We have all been saddened by the untimely passing of our friend Celia Hoare, whose poems and prayers have featured regularly in our Bulletin. This month we include the words of her favourite song, a recording of which, sung by Jubilate, was played at her Memorial Service. The words, written by Don Berg, seem very apt.

There is a place I call my own
where I can stand by the sea,
And look beyond the things I've known,
and dream that I might be free.
Like the birds above the trees
gliding gently on the breeze,
I wish that all my life I'd be
without a care, and flying free.

But life is not a distant sky
without a cloud, without rain.
And I can never hope that I
can travel on without pain.
Time goes swiftly on its way;
all too soon we've lost today.
I cannot wait for skies of blue
or dream so long that life is through.

So life's a song that I must sing,
A gift of love I must share.
And when I see the joy it brings
my spirits soar through the air.
Like that bird up in the sky,
life has taught me how to fly.
For now I know what I can be,
and now my heart is flying free.

January 2018

Dear Friends

Those of you who were in church for the Midnight Service on Christmas Eve will have heard me read part of a letter from people whom I met over twenty years ago, who have become friends. The Nassar family live on a hillside outside Bethlehem; at a time when the Christian population of the City of David is diminishing by the day, with families moving out of the country, Daoud and his family are determined to stay in their home and their homeland.

Question: When is a home not a house?

Answer: When it is a cave!

Together, the cave dwellings of Daher's Vineyard have all the functions of a house except they're not built above ground level; they're natural underground chambers in the Judean hillside.

This has been the home of the Nassar family for the last 100 years and is next to the village of Nahalin, 7 miles southwest of Bethlehem. As a rural farm owned by Palestinian Christians on a hill top in Israeli occupied Palestine, it is now surrounded by the Etzion Bloc of 22 Jewish settlements and 70,000 people. The international community considers settlements in the West Bank to be illegal under national law. As Israeli demolition orders, forbidding all building, are part of the pressure on the family to move, the extended Nassar family home is a number of disconnected caves each with its own purpose.

The approach to the 'house' is somewhat disconcerting. Some distance away visitors leave the security of the coach or local bus and scramble over two walls of boulders and broken rocks, some moved there by the Israeli army and others left by settler-neighbours to block access. Then follows a ten minute walk through what appears to be a typical rubbish dump of rubble, old clothes, children's schoolbooks and discarded household items. These are the remains of houses pulled down by Israeli soldiers. Approaching the metal entrance gate a painted stone carries the slogan by which the family lives, in 3 languages: "We refuse to be enemies".

A warm welcome is offered visitors – Amal, Daoud's sister, is a physiotherapist who is often there to welcome, to talk about their peace-making project and to offer water.

The 100 acre site has caves for worship, caves for sleeping and a large cave for hospitality. The drabness of the farm is relieved by brightly coloured pictures painted by visitors, often children. Moving towards a vividly decorated double door covered in hands (a reminder of nursery handprints!) inside is a brightly painted cave, cool and pleasant after the heat outside. Furnishings are sparse – basic table and chairs, a wall fan and a tea urn to one side.

Best of all is the brightly painted frieze, a blue background and lots of joyful, orange, dancing figures. It carries the motto 'Peace and Justice for all people'.

Having been refused essential services, caves are lit by a restored diesel engine and heated through solar panels. There are also rain water collecting cisterns (planning permission to dig a larger cistern was refused) and composting toilets. The Nassars are great environmentalists – all that can be recycled is recycled. Plastic bottles create a greenhouse, plastic waste is woven into baskets, and broken building slabs form cave paving.

Conservation is a big part of their educational message. Hundreds of trees, olive, almond, and some fruit trees have been planted both to prevent soil erosion and to provide an income.

As 'Tent of Nations', the family house is a welcome refuge for visitors from far and near. The Nassars run an international peace project aimed at building bridges between people of different backgrounds and, in their situation especially, between Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

Why is Daher's Vineyard one of my favourite places? Quite simply, it forces me to acknowledge the relative security and comfort of my life. It inspires me as a living example of faith in action. Living so close to where the Prince of Peace was born, they are committed to doing all they can to promote peaceful co-existence in the face of blatant opposition. The Nassars have achieved what so many have failed to do – in spite of all the difficulties they face, they have created an oasis of hope with peace for all, and a welcome for everyone irrespective of race, religion or nationality. Their work, particularly with traumatised children and young widows, is inspiring.

The World Methodist Peace Prize awarded to them last year (2017) is well deserved.

Peace to you as a new year begins.

Marian