



WELSHPOOL METHODIST CHURCH

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"Celebrating and Sharing God's Love"

FEBRUARY 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).

A letter from Celia's daughter

I would personally like to thank you for being such a big part of Mum's life in Welshpool over the last 15 years. Celebrating mum's life with you at the Thanksgiving Service on Friday 29th December made it so much easier to deal with her loss for me and the family.

I would like to thank all those that were at the service, all those who were unable to attend, all those who donated flowers, all those who donated so generously to the Stroke Association (we raised £375) and all those who helped towards the refreshments after the service.

Many thanks to you all.

Debbie Pardey

Thought for the Month

A religion small enough for our understanding would not be big enough for our needs. (Anon)

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
- Wednes. 31st 1pm at the Baptist Church - meeting for those interested in taking part in this year's Women's World Day of Prayer Service on 2nd March.
- Thursday 1st Prayer Meeting, "Listening for God in the Silence", 12-12.30pm, led by Rev Marian; picnic lunch
- Thursday 1st Church Council at 7pm
- Saturday 3rd Coffee Morning and Friendship Lunch, 11am to 2pm

Sunday 4th February

Lectionary

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Cor. 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

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

Bring and Share Lunch

Compline at 6pm led by Rev Bob Thomas

This week:

- Monday 5th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup at 1pm; WCT at Baptist, 7.30pm
- Tuesday 6th Bible Fellowship, 7.30pm - details from Terry Jobling
- Thursday 8th Reading the Bible Together, 12-12.30pm; picnic lunch
- Saturday 10th "Masters of the King's Musick 1500-1700", a musical history of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, with The Scholars & Gentlemen, directed by Mike Donkin. Starts at 7pm, tickets £10 at the door. (See board).

Sunday 11th February: Sunday before Lent

Lectionary

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Gareth Evans

Evening Worship at 6pm at New Street Church (Churches Together)

This week:

- Monday 12th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup at 1pm
- Wednes. 14th 1pm at the Baptist Church - rehearsal for those taking part in the Women's World Day of Prayer Service
- Wednes. 14th Service for Ash Wednesday, 7pm, led by Rev Marian
- Thursday 15th Prayer Meeting, "Listening for God in the Silence", 12-12.30pm, led by Rev Marian; picnic lunch
- Thursday 15th Music Club Concert, 7.30pm - Albany Piano Trio
- Friday 18th Fellowship at 2.30pm with speaker Rev Bill Rowell Friday 18th Gallery Group at 7pm
- Saturday 19th Coffee Morning and Friendship Lunch, 11am to 2pm

Sunday 18th February: Lent 1

Lectionary

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25: 1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

Early Communion at 9am with Rev Marian, followed by breakfast

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Rev Marian

This week:

- Monday 19th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup at 1pm
- Tuesday 20th Bible Fellowship, 7.30pm - details from Terry J
- Wednes. 21st WCT Lent Study Group 1, 7 for 7.30pm, New Street
- Thursday 23rd Reading the Bible Together, 12-12.30pm; picnic lunch
- Friday 24th "A Palestinian Evening" with Rev Marian Jones, 7pm
- Friday 24th CAP course, session 1, in the Gallery at 7pm
- Saturday 25th Walking with Friends - contact Derek for details

Sunday 25th February: Lent 2

Lectionary

Genesis 17:1-7,15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Jubilate

Afternoon Tea Service at 4pm led by Rev Dr Stephen Wigley

This week

Monday 26th Coffee Morning 9.30am to 12; Jubilate at 10am; Playgroup at 1pm

Wednes. 28th WCT Lent Study Group 2, 7 for 7.30pm, New Street

Thursday 1st Prayer Meeting, "Listening for God in the Silence", 12-12.30pm, led by Rev Marian; picnic lunch (tbc)

Thursday 1st A Celebration for St David's Day (tbc)

Friday 2nd Women's World Day of Prayer Service, 2pm at Baptist

Saturday 3rd Coffee Morning and Friendship Lunch, 11am to 2pm

Sunday 4th March: Lent 3

Lectionary

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

Early Communion at 9am with Rev Marian, followed by breakfast

Morning Worship at 10.45am led by Rev Marian

The General Church Meeting will take place in the Meeting Room after the service, when Church Stewards and representatives to Church Council will be elected for the 12 months beginning 1st May. It will be followed by a Bring and Share Lunch.

(Your current reps to Church Council are Gwen Jones and Jean Pacey who are completing their 6 year term this year, and Andrea Davies, Pam Clayton, Margaret Owen and Tony Harvey. If you would like to nominate suitable persons to fill the 2 vacancies, please ensure they give you permission to put their names forward. All members of Council must be church members. Nominations to Secretary please.

Compline at 6pm led by Rev Bill Rowell

From Rev Marian

February 2018

Dear Friends,

On February 14th, there will be those celebrating the Feast of St Valentine and others keeping an Ash Wednesday fast. I miss Lionel Blue and his humour on Radio 4's 'Thought for the Day' – in one of his books (To Heaven with Scribes and Pharisees), he wrote:

'The changes in the liturgical year are marked out for the Jews by smell and taste, by the aromas of the kitchen. Through the most basic sense, he feels the changing mood of the spirit . . . The delightful litany only halts to mark the destruction of the past, or days which commemorate the sins of the present. On these tragic and sad days, there is a total fast, and the kitchen, the heart and soul of the Jewish home, misses a beat and darkness covers this little world'.

Broadly speaking, in Judaism, there have been three motives for fasting – repentance and atonement, a special request or plea, either by an individual or a community, and mourning for loss and sadness in an individual's life or the life of the people.

From scripture, it seems that Jesus himself fasted. After his baptism he went off to a place by himself – without company, without food, he faced truth; the temptations of being human as well as the particular temptations relating to the work he was called to do. And he taught his disciples to fast, secretly. It was to be between themselves and God with no long faces or outward show.

The Wesley brothers led the Methodist Societies in observing the Church of England fast days. To John Crook in 1776, John wrote: 'I advise you to keep with a few serious people a day of fasting and prayer. God has the hearts of all (men) in his hands'. There's a suggestion that John Wesley fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays through Lent, eating and drinking nothing from sunrise to sunset.

Occasionally, the Methodist Church has called its people to a day of prayer and fasting. Never on a Sunday! Sundays, even in Lent, are feast days, celebrating the resurrection. Generally, though, fasting isn't part of our practice or discipline. Still, there are times when we end up asking the question: 'What are you giving up for Lent?' Is that all we have left now of the Christian tradition of fasting?

Instead of fasting, why not take something up for Lent? Daily Bible reading, perhaps, if you don't do that already, or reading one of the many books published for Lent (for those of you who use the internet, have a look to see what Amazon or Aslan have to offer under 'Lent Books'); if you have time on your hands, perhaps offer it to help with one of the church activities or in a charity shop . . .

Lent is recognised as a season of penitence and preparation and, in the church, the colour of the season is purple and violet – the same colour as Advent, when we are preparing for Christmas. A number of you have asked about my stoles, worn around my neck, and the significance of the colours.

The major feasts of Jesus, Christmas and Easter, have white or gold as their seasonal colour; white is worn for baptism as well. From Palm Sunday to the Wednesday of Holy Week, the colour is red, the colour of martyrs, and that same colour is used for Pentecost. The rest of the year, called 'Ordinary Time' uses the colour green.

You'll notice that I have a number of 'sets' of stoles: cross stitch embroidered ones made by Palestinian women; a quite plain set that I don't use very often; a number of 'odd' ones that don't belong to a set, like the one I use for baptisms with a cross rising from the water, and my favourite set – made in the USA they belonged to an American minister who came to work with me for a year and they were left to me when she died. Members of her church in Texas wrote messages on the reverse before she came over here.

On Ash Wednesday, a violet stole will appear again as we journey to the red of Holy Week and the white/gold of Easter Day.

Peace!

Marian

'Taking up Something for Lent' 2018

Rev Marian will be leading a **service on Ash Wednesday**, at 7pm. We hope that this will be the first of the activities you will 'take up for Lent'.

Another activity you could consider is attending the weekly **Lent Study Groups** organised by Welshpool Churches Together. These take place each Wednesday in Lent, beginning on 21st February, and are held in the Meeting Room at New Street church. Tea and biscuits are served from 7pm prior to the meeting at 7.30pm. Each meeting is prepared and led by a different church, the first by Terry Jobling on behalf of our church. Please give him your support.

The study to be followed this year is "**The Lord's Prayer - Praying it, Meaning it, Living it**", and it will be divided into five sessions: Our Father; Thy Will be Done; Our Daily Bread; As we Forgive; Heaven.

On Thursdays at midday throughout Lent we shall be continuing our **Bible Reading Sessions** alternating with our **Prayer Meeting**. Perhaps one or other of these is another activity you could try? Each session lasts for 30 minutes, with the option of bringing a picnic to eat afterwards as we continue fellowship together. (Drinks are provided).

In our **Bible Reading**, we are currently focussing on *Genesis*, the first of the Five Books of the Law. We read a chapter each (but no compulsion to read), and, although this is not a Bible Study, if we have any thoughts on what we have read, or any questions to raise, we share them together at the end of the half hour.

Our **Prayer Meeting** is a new venture which Rev Marian has introduced, and we have had two sessions so far. This is not spoken prayer, rather "**Listening for God in the Silence**". We sit in a relaxed manner, and listen to a passage of scripture which Marian reads to us, and then re-reads, before we spend the rest of the session in silence, identifying ourselves with one or more of the characters, and seeing where that leads our thoughts. (In our first

meeting, the reading was the Call of the First Disciples, and in our second, The Prodigal Son). At the close of the session, we are invited, if we so wish, to share our experience of where the reading has taken us - the responses being very varied and interesting! Why not give it a go?

Attending the last Prayer Meeting has prompted Lynn Wilson to make her first contribution to the Bulletin. She came across the following on the theme of prayer when she was looking at some Christian web-sites, and thought it was very meaningful in relation to our meetings.

"Prayer has subdued the strength of fire. It has bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, burst the chains of death, expanded the fates of heaven, assuaged diseases, dispelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, staid the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. In this communion with God, there is an all-sufficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine that is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings!"

And a contribution submitted by Vio Adams (also a member of the Prayer Group):

*Lord, my heart is not large enough;
My memory is not good enough;
My will is not strong enough.*

*Take my heart and enlarge it;
Take my memory and give it quicker recall;
Take my will and make it strong,
and make me conscious of thee, ever present, ever accompanying.*

Two poems on the same theme - The First Signs of Spring

THE HELLEBORE

Like waxy butterflies the hellebore
Are blooming now, despite their sodden bed;
These dauntless flowers, purple, pink and white,
Nod hints of spring from every modest head.

For all Nature knows that time means change,
With dark and tempest, warmth and quiet peace,
And always there will be those better days
Which bring the sunshine when the rain-storms cease.

Oh let me be a hellebore, unfurl
Neat petals, spread those lush and palm-like leaves;
Oh let me triumph over wintry days,
Reflect the blessings all my life receives.

Andrea Davies 2018

THE SNOWDROP

Sweet little trembling thing,
Each year you come to herald spring,
You brave the last of winter's chill,
Ahead of nodding daffodil.

Down the lane and in the wood,
Your pure white stately flowers flood.
Our hearts, I'm sure, would poorer be,
Without your magic tracery.

Brian Gent, from The Friendship Book 2014

And finally, to make you smile

A class of six-year-olds was preparing a scene for the nativity play one Christmas. To get them thinking, their teacher asked them to draw some ideas of what the scene should represent.

One enterprising lad drew Joseph as a carpenter surrounded by lots of tools, including an electric drill. His teacher, on examining the picture, exclaimed: "It's a good picture, Michael, but there was no electricity in those days!"

Michael promptly explained, "But this is a cordless one!"

A Sunday School teacher was telling a group of five-year-olds the story of that first Christmas morning and was explaining that Jesus was born in a stable because there really was no room at the inn.

A worldly-wise little lad at the back of the class was heard to mutter to his neighbour: "I blame Joseph. He should have booked."

A woman had a job at a school as a Junior School counsellor. One day she noticed a little lad standing all alone in a field while all the other children were at the other end playing football. She went over to him and asked him if he was alright and would he like her to be his friend?

"If you want to", said the boy. "So tell me", she asked, "why aren't you up the other end playing football with all the other children?"

"Because," he sighed, "I'm the goalie".

When a teacher asked the class to write a sentence about a Public Servant at work, Billy wrote: "The fireman came down the ladder from a burning house pregnant".

The worried teacher said: "You know what 'pregnant' means don't you?"

"Yes", he replied, "carrying a child".