

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“**IN TOUCH**” – a fortnightly communication replacing the monthly **Bulletin** for awhile, to stay in touch, not only with our church family but also with those in our wider community who regularly cross our threshold, during this time of social distancing for us all, and enforced self-isolation for some. We invite contributions – news, views, messages, musings, prayers and other snippets. Send to rhodes4144@gmail.com or by post to “Brynteg”, Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS (by 6th April for Easter edition).

News

1. As most of you will know, our Sunday services and all other gatherings which take place during the week have been suspended until further notice, and the Methodist Church has directed that all premises should remain closed.

2. To enable those who wish to worship at home, a Service Sheet is being prepared for each Sunday, with hymns, readings and prayers, and a reflection by one of our ministers or preachers. This may be sent to you direct or it can be downloaded from our church website: www.welshpoolmethodist.org. The reflection for next Sunday 29th March has been written by John Harbron. Julia Francis will provide a reflection for Palm Sunday and Revd Marian for Easter Day. We are grateful for their input. For those of you with internet access, the Methodist Church is streaming live services from Wesley’s Chapel, and you can listen to “Celebration” each Sunday on Radio Wales at 7.30am and Morning Worship on Radio 4 after the 8o’clock news. A series of televised morning services is on BBC 1, next Sunday’s is from Bangor Cathedral, starting at 11.30am. “Songs of Praise” follows later.

3. “Phone Chat Circle” - during this time of “lockdown”, would you like to chat with others in the area in the same situation as yourself, perhaps isolated at home, with no-one to talk to? If so, phone 01938 850514 to register your interest, leaving your name, telephone number and address, and we’ll put you in touch. Banish loneliness! Make new friends! Make a call, and make somebody’s day! There are National Help Lines in place if you would prefer to call one of them – The Silver Line (for older people, set up by Esther Rantzen) on 0800 470 8090, Independent Age on 0800 319 6789, or Age UK on 0800 055 6112. All calls are free of charge.

4. Sadly, we have all witnessed the selfishness of those who have emptied supermarket shelves, stockpiling items, instead of shopping responsibly. If you find yourself in real need of a particular item or can’t get out to the shops, give us a call and we’ll do our best to help you. (Phone Eric on 580067, Terry on 552349 or Janice on 850514. Others prepared to help in this way, please let us know).

5. Are you missing our home-made cakes? Our bakers, Gwen, Chris R and Janice are happy to supply Bara Briths, Flapjacks, Sponges (Victoria, Coffee, Chocolate,) Lemon Drizzle, Fruit Cakes, Diabetic Loaves, small Almond Tarts and Chocolate Fudge tray bakes. Phone Janice to order (or if you can help with delivery).

Some Advice from the Experts on how to get through this crisis

(Courtesy of the Daily Mail!)

From Dr Phil Hammond, doctor and comedian:

“Try to have Five Portions of Fun a day!”

Some suggestions:

1. Relish the little things in life – the snout of a dog against your thigh; the purr of the cat in your lap; a dewy cobweb; the spring flowers.
2. Potter around the garden and marvel at nature – new growth; daffodils just coming into bloom; hints of green on trees and hedgerows.
3. Listen to the birdsong – perhaps find a book and try to identify the calls.
4. Learn a new skill – knit, paint, or cook - and aim to FINISH the crossword!
5. Stay in touch with others if you can, and have a laugh – love and laughter are the greatest cure for fear.

From Dr Meg Arroll, Harley Street Psychologist:

“Expert Tips to Stay Calm”

1. Limit the number of times you search for virus-related news. Anxiety will be driven by constant information checking.
2. Consider a complete break from social media.
3. Try to be objective – although this is a serious illness, the majority only suffer a mild form of Covid-19.
4. Take deep breaths. Close your eyes and inhale deeply then let the air drift slowly out of your nose. Repeat at intervals through the day to slow heart rate and reduce blood pressure.
5. Exercise is important but difficult if self-isolating. Go for a solitary walk if you can; if not, walk around the garden (or, younger readers, jog on the spot!)

From Sarah Vine, Journalist:

“Ways to stay sane stuck at home – it is vital to stay busy and purposeful”

1. Prepare your own Desert Island Disc choices. Decide on your records, thinking about why you would choose them, and then while away the afternoon listening to them and day dreaming of your desert island, or times past you have been reminded of. (Could be the basis for a talk to Friday Fellowship when we resume!)
2. Sort out your old photographs – and awake some special memories.
3. Go through drawers and wardrobes, sort, and put to one side what you no longer need ready for the charity shop or recycle depot – or you could even try selling on ebay!
4. If you're fit and able, get the garden ready for summer, or give your house/flat a spring clean.
5. Set yourself a challenge – try not to throw away anything you have in your fridge or store-cupboard, and, if you cook, be inventive with your cooking and make new, exciting dishes.

Pause for Thought – some snippets passed on by friends in recent days:

“Yes there is fear. Yes there is isolation. Yes, there is panic buying. Yes, there is even death.

But they say in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.....

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting, looking at their neighbours in a new way, waking up to a new reality to how big we really are, to how little control we really have, to what really matters, **TO LOVE.**

So we pray and remember that yes, there is fear but there does not have to be hate.

Yes, there is isolation, but there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes, there is panic buying, but there does not have to be meanness.

Yes, there is sickness but there does not have to be disease of the soul.

Yes, there is even death, but there can always be rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen - behind the factory noises of your panic the birds are singing again,

The sky is clearing. Spring is coming, and we are encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul and though you may not be able to touch across the empty square, SING”.

Fr. Richard Hendrick 13th March 2020)

“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still - and listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed”.

(Source unknown)

“When this is over, may we never again take for granted a handshake with a stranger; full shelves at the supermarket; conversations with the neighbours; a crowded theatre; a Friday night out; the taste of Communion; a routine check-up; the school rush each morning; coffee with a friend; the stadium roaring; each deep breath; a boring Tuesday; life itself.

When this ends, may we find that we have become more like the people we were called to be, we hoped to be - and may we stay that way, better for each other because of the worst”.

(Laura Kelly Fanucci)

From Julia Francis:

Each week when we visit Oswestry to take care of our two very young granddaughters it is Dustbin Day. (Well, or course, the operators are called Waste or Refuse Collectors, I expect).

We watch and listen for the lorry just about midday then the girls wait for their bin to be tipped up and the recycling boxes to be emptied. For over a year now they have been waving to the men who walk by the lorries. The driver toots his horn for them and the men smile broadly and wave back - simple pleasures of childhood.

Every week such teams will continue to be your regular visitors outside your door, walking along your street – a very necessary service to our communities. Why not look out for them and give them a cheery smile and a wave? The postman will be coming too. Shout a word of thanks from your side of the door. The bonus is that you will be cheering up not only their day but also your own. It takes about 45 seconds, but the kindness lasts much longer, and grows as the weeks pass.

If you are inclined to pray, then remember all who work along our streets and pray, too, for the safety of our road users.

From Andrea Davies: “Only Little Lambs”

It was Mothering Sunday, and what a glorious morning. The grass was crisp with silvery frost; celandines and daisies lifted their heads to the morning sun and there were lambs - many, many lambs.

I was carrying buckets of feed to the ewes that had been turned out with their twins. As soon as they saw me the ewes started bleating with a feeding frenzy and rushing towards the buckets and the troughs up ahead. Because the ewes were shouting the lambs felt obliged to join in as they capered and bounced along beside their demented mothers. It was a bit like being buffeted by very noisy sale-crazy shoppers, only they were all about knee height so balance was often in jeopardy.

Pausing to adjust the buckets, which had to be carried nearly level with my waist to avoid mugging, I noticed one ewe bawling like the others but not looking at me or the troughs. She was staring back down the field but her cries were just as insistent. I followed her gaze and then I saw them. Her two lambs were still curled around each other, blissfully asleep in the early morning sunshine. All at once they heard her voice. Their heads came up as they fought through the mists of baby slumber and then they were on their feet; a quick cat-stretch, all four legs rigid, back arched and they were off. They galloped like race horses, guided by her voice, to rejoin their mother.

They were only little lambs but amongst the noise, the panic and the chaos, they were able to hear the one voice that really mattered!

“Hear the word of the Lord, proclaim it in distant lands: he who scattered Israel will gather them and watch over his flock like a shepherd”.
(Jeremiah 31:10)

Thanks to all who have contributed to this first edition of “In Touch”. Please do send in your comments, news and items for the Easter edition by 6th April, out 9th April.