

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“**IN TOUCH**” **issue 2** – staying in touch during this time of social distancing for us all, and enforced self-isolation for some.

News and Updates

1. **Congratulations** - to David Penrose who celebrated his 80th Birthday on 2nd April, and to Joan Corbett, who will be 95 on 22nd April. Good wishes go to David and Joan, and to all of you whose birthdays fall in April.
2. **Condolences** – we extend our sympathy to Vio Adams following the loss of her son David, to Kath Smith, following the loss of her cousin, and to the family and friends of Eve Barnes, who died on 3rd April.
3. **Thanks** – to those of you who are Welshpool “angels”, responding to need and running errands for some of our church family in isolation. Your help is invaluable.
4. **Cake orders** – For Bara Briths, Flapjacks and Victoria Sponges (various sizes) contact Gwen on 01938 555988. (Please arrange to collect from Gwen). For Coffee or Chocolate Sponges, Lemon Drizzle, Fruit Cakes, Diabetic Loaves, small Almond Tarts and Chocolate Fudge tray bakes, contact Janice on 01938 850514, placing orders by Mondays for delivery on Wednesdays. Thank you.
5. **A reminder** - a Service Sheet is prepared for each Sunday, with hymns, readings and prayers, and a reflection. This may be sent to you direct or it can be downloaded from our church website: www.welshpoolmethodist.org. The Service Sheet for Easter Day has been written by Revd Marian.

More advice from the experts on how to get through this crisis –

Dr Max Pemberton, the Mail’s ‘Mind Doctor’ writes: “Many people, including members of my own family, are hugely fearful of Covid-19. And of course, they are right to be, but not if anxiety is crippling them. This is what I tell my loved ones: just remember that a virus is a few strands of genetic material surrounded by a blob of lipid - fat - with a few proteins stuck on it. That’s it. It’s a blob of fat. Good old soap and hot water will vanquish it on your hands **IF** you wash them properly. So don’t allow your mental health to suffer because of a microbe that a squirt of Fairy Liquid can kill!”

(Dr Pemberton also emphasises the importance of keeping to a routine, sticking to mealtimes and bedtimes, reading about the lives of others who have faced challenges and overcome them, setting ourselves a goal, and learning a new skill).

- and some of your responses to date to the advice to have ‘5 Portions of Fun a Day’

You are: Gardening, exercising, walking round the block, practising singing (one in the style of Dolly Parton!), trying new crafts (e.g. cross stitch), being creative in writing (examples follow later) and art work (see John’s poster outside the church) and of course, making phone calls, keeping in touch especially with those on their own. If you can add to this list, let us know.

Thanks to all who have been in touch by email, phone and letter with news, comments, and other items for this issue.

Clive writes:

After we watched the service from Wesley's Chapel this morning (29th March), I was searching for things to do with Stillness ... and I found this piece:

What Does Being Still in The Lord Mean?

As I began to meditate on that verse throughout the day, the Lord revealed three things to me about being still:

1. **Being still** doesn't mean to physically BE STILL, and stop doing what you know you need to do.
2. **Being still means** to still our mind, be at peace in our heart and spirit, regardless of what's going on around us.
3. **Being still means** don't be anxious, worried, uptight, or frantic about things.

BEING STILL means to stop fighting the battles you know you can't win in your own strength. Things are going to happen in your life that you can't control. And when that happens, it's going to require us to BE STILL AND KNOW THAT GOD IS GOD.

Simply stated, He is God, we are not. God knows what is best for us. God knows everything we ask for isn't what we need. The moment we try to step in and play God is the moment our circumstances go from bad to worse.

(From 'Living our Priorities')

Revd Marian writes:

A friend of mine lives on a kibbutz in the north of Galilee, his surname is Hesed (pronounces chesedd – 'ch' and 'dd' as in Welsh!). Hesed is a wonderful Hebrew word meaning 'loving kindness' and it occurs often in the Old Testament. It speaks of compassion and we're living in times when 'hesed', or the lack of it, is noticeable. As I write, I've just read of a customer in Sainsbury's supermarket using his contactless card to pay for the shopping of two paramedics; we are thankful for the loving care given by those working for the NHS; grateful for the person who picks up a prescription and the one who takes time to pick up a telephone to have a chat and break the monotony of the day. If you're feeling useless in isolation and wondering what you can do, remember the telephones work both ways! Is there, perhaps, someone who would appreciate hearing from you?

E.M. Forster in 'A Passage to India' wrote: "Kindness, more kindness and even after that, more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope".

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear sighs and sorrows of others. That is what love looks like". That's what St. Augustine wrote.

At this time, we're limited in what we can do, yet **hesed** can colour all our actions.... and we can show loving kindness to ourselves!

Our Superintendent Minister, Revd Bob writes:

I was fourteen when television came to share the Thomas family home. The evenings we spent watching were punctuated by frequent trips to the loo – when the suspense got too much or the danger too frightening I would leave the room.

Now I can watch people being killed horribly and watch the most suspenseful of thrillers without turning a hair. There is however one thing I cannot bring myself to watch – the graphic portrayal of the crucifixion of Jesus. I can appreciate the accounts of his life but I have to turn away after Jesus is handed over to the soldiers by Pilate. It seems that the disciples also turned away from Jesus at this point. Maybe they were afraid for themselves; maybe they were unable to watch as the one they loved so much died as horribly as he did.

I won't watch a graphic portrayal but I'll be there, having my feet washed, watching at the Cross, and waiting at the tomb for the gloriously good news that "He is not here, He is Risen"; I'll still be lost in the wonder of the love that held him there. I'll still be willing to bear my own cross to my own place of crucifixion to which Jesus' footsteps lead, and beyond, I'll walk with him as I walked with him before. To wish you all a happy and joyous Easter sounds a bit twee – especially for Easter in a time of Coronavirus – for Easter reminds us all of the price tag as well as the reward of loving".

Revd Bob is writing regular blogs: 'Coronavirus Times', which can be found on the Circuit website: www.wbhmethodists.org.uk.

An Easter Message from our Synod Chair, Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, can be found on the Synod website, www.methodistwales.org.uk.

From Andrea, one of her hymns for Easter: "One More Gift" (Tune: 'Come Together' 617 StF)

A rough-hewn cross, a broken tree
Where Jesus hung, bled out for me;
For me, for you, for everyone,
The precious death of God's own Son.

And those that wept beneath the cross
Were numb with grief so great their loss;
But he had one more gift to give,
Through agony he breathed, "Forgive".

A rough-hewn cross, a broken tree
Where Jesus hung to set us free;
Our Saviour hears our every call,
His love spills down to save us all.

Those times we fail to do what's right,
He's there to raise us to the light,
The light that his salvation gives –
Accept his gift, for Jesus lives!

From Pat P: "Have a Beautiful Easter"

Oh, I pray you have a splendid Easter, full of hope and joy and love,
Thanking Jesus, blessed Saviour, for all that He has done.
May you feel the great excitement of this very precious day,
When Jesus gave His very life to wash our sin away.

May you have a memorable time with family and friends,
Filled with sweet delight, in all his love extends.

(This year by phone!)

May you rise on Easter morn excited e'er to rise,
In the resurrection life of Jesus, where all the love abides.

Allan Everard writes from Borth: "Keep Walking"

We always walked. From being eight I walked 4 miles each day to and fro to Junior School. We lived near the Derbyshire Peak District, reachable by steam train on the Sheffield line from Manchester – Edale, Hope and Castleton becoming familiar in our teens. At twelve I went up Plynlimon regarding this as the second highest mountain in Wales, recently demoted to third. Whenever we went on holiday we walked. And at home in agricultural Cheshire, a Sunday stroll was a regular event, where meadows ploughed in the spring had rights of way re-established before the wheat seeds had time to grow. Helen and I took a holiday in Madeira. We found no local maps except a tourist guide with elementary routes. Walking from town along the indicated road, some miles on, we were amongst the discarded fridges and washing machines. Then the path gave out completely where a near vertical hillside appeared. There were trees and bushes, so we climbed the thirty or so feet and beheld a perfectly formed road leading to the beauty spot.

Like our friend Jesus, we keep walking.

On the other side of death, He knew where He was going.

(It was lovely to receive this contribution from Allan – he and Helen continue to take a keen interest in what is happening in Welshpool, and we wish them well in self-isolation in Borth).

From Graham:

"These Are the Hands" written by Michael Rosen for the 60th Anniversary of the NHS, and still very appropriate for the current situation, when so many NHS workers are putting their own lives at risk in the service of us all.

These are the hands that touch us first,
Feel your head, find the pulse, and make your bed.

These are the hands that tap your back, test the skin, hold your arm, wheel the bin,
Change the bulb, fix the drip, pour the jug, replace your hip.

These are the hands that fill the bath, mop the floor, flick the switch,
Soothe the sore, burn the swabs, give us a jab, throw out sharps, design the lab.

And these are the hands that stop the leaks, empty the pan, wipe the pipes,
Carry the can, clamp the veins, make the cast, log the dose,
And touch us last.

Also from Graham, words used by John to create the poster now outside church:

"And the world came together as the people stayed apart".

From Margaret Griffith, Newtown:

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a KNOWN God".

From Clive:

A little saying from Buddhism Today:

"When you can't control what's happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond to what's happening. That's where your power is".

Spring is in the air!

Julia writes:

Thursday 26th March – I was out walking along the lane. It's a quiet lane generally, but this week the distant A470 wasn't intruding in any way. There was a sudden startled pheasant and a flurry in the hedge. As I walked back numerous birds sang in the hedgerow. On both sides of the lane are sheep. The loudest sounds I heard were the high pitched bleating of very young lambs - newborns too small for the slightly deeper 'baa' sound that will develop.

I'm used to stopping often as I walk somewhere if I meet a farmer or a scattered neighbour, just as I do on the bus or around town. It's very strange not to do so – to wave and keep on walking, human contact being tightly restricted. But these birds and lambs were getting along quite untouched and untroubled; the signs of the burgeoning hedgerows and the new life of a British springtime - blessings to be counted at the end of the day.

If you are inclined to pray, remember the signs of spring that can cheer, even from the window. Remember those housebound by age or disability. Learn from them the patience of waiting and trusting that shopping will be delivered and other needs met. My best wishes, Canon Julia Francis.

'Spring' by Andrea

Sweet celandines beam sunshine smiles
From grassy verges to the sky;
Above, half-hidden in the hedge,
A sparrow casts a knowing eye
To lamb's wool caught on spiky thorn,
A trophy for its twiggy nest,
Soft bed for eggs of mottled blue,
Which lie beneath a downy breast.

Bright, thrusting buds have russet tips,
Excited birds chirp frenzied song,
A feast awaits their probing beaks
For now the days grow warm and long.
Plump clouds drift high on wafting air
To shade, then clear the greening hill,
While everywhere new life abounds,
God's rainbow promise greets us still.

'Time to Spring Clean' from Pat P

"Those useless objects, thoughts and deeds,
that are stored away, for a brand new day, never to be used,
but keep tagging along"
Well! It's Time to Spring Clean!

Start with old baggage inside YOU,
That you are carrying around, from day to day,
weighing heavy on your shoulders:
CLEAN OUT!

All the negativity, the jealousy, gossiping, the lies, the deceit,
The sadness, hurts, fears, reproaches,
failures and disappointments:
CLEAN OUT!

Laughter is the Best Medicine – we hope the following will make you smile!

From Gwenno: “Other People’s Transport Problems”

A chiropody clinic sent out a circular to patients asking why they felt they required transport to the clinic. Here are some of the replies they received:

1. I must have your man as I don't have a bus
2. I am a pensioner, and also an old person
3. My mother must have transport, as if she goes out alone, she gets into trouble
4. I must have transport, as I have funny feet
5. I am unable to walk now, as my dog is dead
6. I hope I will have a driver as my husband is quite useless
7. My husband is dead, and will not bring me
8. My mother is 96, and must have a car as she has long fingernails
9. I live miles from the clinic, and the postman says I should have it
10. I am under the doctor, and have been for some time, and cannot breathe
11. I cannot walk uphill unless it is down, and the hill to your clinic is up

(From a Devon Ambulance Newsletter, date unknown)

From Leah: “You gotta love Grandmas!”

The doctor who had been seeing an 80 year old woman for most of her life finally retired. At her next check-up the new doctor told her to bring a list of all the medicines that had been prescribed for her.

As the young doctor was looking through these, his eyes grew wide as he realised Grandma had a prescription for birth control pills.

“Mrs. Smith, do you realise these are BIRTH CONTROL pills?”

“Yes, they help me sleep at night.”

“Mrs. Smith, I assure you there is absolutely NOTHING in these that could possibly help you sleep!”

She reached out and patted the young doctor’s knee.... “Yes, dear, I know that. But every morning, I grind one up and mix it in the glass of orange juice that my 16 year old Granddaughter drinks. And, believe me - it definitely helps me sleep at night!”

And finally:

What language do small oranges speak?

MANDARIN

How did Thomas Edison invent the light bulb?

HE HAD A BRIGHT IDEA

What’s a dog’s favourite button on a television remote? PAWS

Please send your news, messages, thoughts, poems, prayers etc. for the next issue, out 22nd April, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, or post to “Brynteg”, Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 19th. All contributions welcome. Thank you.