

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“**IN TOUCH**” **issue 3** – continuing to stay in touch during this time of social distancing for us all, and enforced self-isolation for some.

News and Updates

1. **Congratulations** - to Vio Adams who will celebrate her 90th Birthday on 30th April. Our good wishes go to Vio, and to all of you whose birthdays fall in the coming days. We look forward to having Vio back on the organ once worship resumes.

2. **Condolences** – we extend our sympathy to Shane Squibb and family, following the loss of Tony, who died in the Rhallt on 13th April, and we continue to remember all those known to us who have been bereaved in recent weeks. (Eve’s funeral took place on 21st and her family have requested that donations in her memory are invited for church funds. Please put yours aside to hand in when we next meet).

3. **Get Well Wishes** – to Richard Ballard, who has had a spell in hospital in Shrewsbury (not Covid-19 related). The good news is he is now back at home and improving.

4. **Thanks** – to Anne for creating our beautiful Easter Cross, decorated with flowers from her and Leah’s garden, and displayed in the church foyer, illuminated for all to see. Thanks also to John Gordon for creating for us a series of posters which are relevant to the current situation for our external notice boards. Although our doors may be locked we are still very much alive. (There are photos of the Cross and of the posters on the church website: www.welshpoolmethodist.org).

5. **A Message from Vio:** “My grateful thanks to everyone in the church for their thoughts, messages and prayers over the last six months – I cannot fully express the support I received from the knowledge that I was in your thoughts and prayers, and I was truly blessed with the strength to continue caring to the end.”

6. **A reminder** - our Service Sheets prepared for each Sunday, with hymns, readings, prayers and a reflection, may be sent to you direct or can be downloaded from the church website. If you don’t receive these, but would like to do so, please let us know – 01938 850514. The Service for 26th April is being prepared by Gareth Evans and for 3rd May by Andrea Davies – our thanks to them, and to all who continue to ensure we can still worship together, in our ‘Church without Walls’.

Over to you! Your contributions:

Terry J writes:

“We are all aware of the great changes which have occurred in recent weeks. I am reminded of the service I led in Welshpool on the first Sunday in Lent. I referred to an article by the late Kate McIlhagga in which she spoke of Lent as a time of spiritual growth. She said that at the end of Lent we should expect to find ourselves somewhere different from where we started. At the time of the service I never expected those words to be fulfilled as they have been. We are reminded of how unpredictable life is. Yet we are finding new ways of witness and of service. In these changes we find that our living God is a God of surprises”.

Julia writes:

“There was a tradition where I grew up that weddings were viewed by neighbours watching as the bride set off for church, and then at the church, as the bridal party left after the ceremony. Funerals too were viewed by all the neighbours watching as the hearse left the house. It was traditional to keep your curtains closed, and shops would put down their blinds as the hearse passed by. When my father died, I recall leaving the house, struggling to support my mother and younger siblings, and then looking up to see crowds of neighbours who had come out to pay their respects. In the suddenness of his death we were grateful for all their compassion. As so few mourners are allowed to attend funerals at present, it can be a comfort to see signs of respect and compassion – today it may be from a distance at the door; curtains can be closed, or perhaps an appropriate symbol can be placed on the window ledge or a poster with a lily displayed in the window.

If you are inclined to pray, remember the bereaved today. Remember, too, the funeral directors and mortuary attendants whose emotions are being fully stretched by the increased numbers and unusual circumstances surrounding the work they are doing”.

‘Lord, you walk with us all our lives. You watch us make our way toward you. You long to catch us when we fall. Help us at our end to rest in you. Amen’.

Allan E writes:

“During my short time in the Royal Navy, I had the privilege of serving under Admiral Vian. At a low ebb, as captain of the destroyer HMS Cossack, he lifted the nation’s spirits by sailing into a German occupied Norwegian harbour to rescue a group of British Merchant Navy officers from a ship accompanying the Graf Spee as it ran free in the South Atlantic.

I also met Gunner Wrigley. He was a bastard in the true sense of the word. From a Borstal like institution he enlisted at a shore establishment HMS Ganges, in his early teens. Training in the 1930s was based on days of sail, where ratings ran purposefully up the rigging to secure sails in whatever the weather. Every naval station has a quarterdeck, a space dominated by a flagpole where the white ensign is unfurled everyday with ceremony. The pole at Ganges was all of 40ft high. One of the routines required of the boy entrants was to aim to reach the top of the pole. The winner was awarded the right to stand on the tiny platform.

One day, you may be required to do something unimaginable”. *(Is this the time?)*

In Conversation with Leah:

As we are only too well aware, the one topic of conversation in these days of lockdown and social distancing is the Covid-19 epidemic, and the restrictions placed on us. I learnt from Leah that Welshpool once had an Isolation Hospital which was situated at the top of Red Bank, built to treat cholera patients during the epidemics of the mid 1800s. (Leah thinks that one of the nurses at the hospital was a Nurse Gilmour, after whom the block of flats in Severn Street is named). The building has long since been demolished to make way for housing, but during Leah’s childhood, she remembers it was the private home of a Mr Eugene Sterne, a musician and piano teacher.

Leah's son-in-law, a retired archivist, has provided more information about cholera in Wales and how it affected Welshpool, particularly in 1848/49:-

"A vestry notice from a Montgomeryshire parish, dated about 1840, warns of the dangers of "cholera morbus" and issues guidelines of how to avoid becoming a victim, recommending 'extreme cleanliness of the person, fresh air, whitewashed walls and clean drains'. Sadly, in August 1849, Welshpool experienced a severe epidemic - the Lledan Brook, which runs through the centre of Welshpool, was used as an open sewer and was thought to be the main cause of this serious outbreak, which claimed 34 lives, most of the fatalities occurring in the crowded slums of Powell's Row and Back Road. The public and private sanitary arrangements of the town were immediately overhauled, and the Lledan Brook was eventually enclosed in a culvert.

In addition to promoting corporate cleanliness, cholera was also a major force in a resurgence of godliness, and the fear engendered by its mystery and mortality filled chapels and churches and gave added impetus to revivalism".

We may wonder if the current pandemic of Covid-19 will have a similar affect on chapels and churches in the 21st century.

From Graham:

Some words of Indian writer Haroon Rashid, which have gone around the world. He wrote the first 8 lines on 31st December 2019 and added the rest on 25th March.

We fell asleep in one world and woke up in another.

Suddenly Disney is out of magic; Paris is no longer romantic;
New York doesn't stand up any more; the Chinese wall is no longer a fortress;
And Mecca is empty.

Hugs and kisses suddenly become weapons,
And not visiting parents and friends becomes an act of love.

Suddenly you realise that power, beauty and money are worthless,
And can't get you the oxygen you are fighting for.

The world continues its life and it is beautiful. It only puts humans in cages.

I think it is sending us a message:

"You are not necessary. The air, earth, water and sky without you are fine.
When you come back, remember that you are my guests – not my masters".

Echoes of Fred Pratt Green's hymn StF 727: "God in his love for us lent us this planet"

From Andrea: "Thoughts..."

Thought for a sunny day.... Open a window, open a door or even go outside. Turn your face to the sun and know the warmth of God's love

and for a rainy day.... Open a window, open a door or even go outside. Hold out your hands to the rain and know the calm of God's blessings

and when you'd rather be cosy indoors, with a nice cup of tea, fold your hands round the cup and know how much we have to thank him for.

From Rev Marian:

"Today was a Difficult Day," said Pooh.

There was a pause.

"Do you want to talk about it?" asked Piglet.

"No," said Pooh after a bit. "No, I don't think I do."

"That's okay," said Piglet, and he came and sat beside his friend.

"What are you doing?" asked Pooh.

"Nothing, really," said Piglet. "Only, I know what Difficult Days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my Difficult Days either.

"But goodness," continues Piglet, "Difficult Days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you. And I'll always be here for you, Pooh."

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head his Difficult Day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little leg ... he thought that his best friend had never been more right." A.A. Milne

Sending thoughts to those having a Difficult Day today and hoping you have your own Piglet to sit beside you or at the end of a telephone. Marian.

From Marilyn: a favourite poem: **"The Life that I Have"** by Leo Marks, written in memory of his fiancée who died in a plane crash in 1943. It was given to the SOE agent Violette Szabo as her code poem before she was dropped into Occupied France in 1944, made famous in the film of her life, "Carve her Name with Pride".

The life that I have is all that I have,
And the life that I have is yours.

The love that I have of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours.

A sleep I shall have, a rest I shall have,
Yet death will be but a pause.

For the peace of my years in the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours.

From Derek: "The Flowing Spirit", a poem by his dad Arthur Painter, circa 1988

Let the spirit flow, oh, let the spirit flow.

In the morning, noon and eve, let the spirit flow.

Even on the darkest night, let the spirit flow.

In your troubles day by day, oh, let the spirit flow.

On your knees, and in prayer, just let the spirit flow,

There is joy, just knowing You, oh, let the spirit flow.

We seek you Lord, so glorious, now let the spirit flow.

When you know the Saviour's near, oh, let the spirit flow.

Now we've found Jerusalem, just let the spirit flow.

Come, Holy Spirit, we welcome you and let the spirit flow. Let the spirit now.

“Saturday Morning” by Andrea

And then, it rained,
Great, grey drops of good rain
That burst into the dust,
Exploding
Their unheard thunder
To slake the thirsty soil;
Every blade of grass
Tilted upwards
Guttering life-giving water
Down to parched roots.
After the rain, the air was cooler,
Colours cleaner;
A new greenness stretched
To the sombre sky;
And in the freshness
The birds began to sing.

And now, 2 puzzles to just to keep the little grey cells active:

(1) Find the drinks from the clues (all are non-alcoholic!)

Oswestry Methodist Church stewards are devising a weekly puzzle for their members to ponder over in isolation. This was sent to us by Margaret Hogg.

1. Warm, friendly (7)
2. Sounds like someone who scoffs or ridicules (5)
3. Fruit giving, or needing help? (8)
4. Might make you sneeze, money-maker and golf ball peg (10, 3)
5. Overdue, with extra afternoon meal (5)
6. Confess for payment? (6)
7. Sounds like a clown (5)
8. Look into athletes press on to finish (8)
9. Cereal H₂O (6, 5)
10. Erica moan (9)
11. A hat for Giacomo? Well, nearly! La Boheme may help? (10)
12. Sort out raging Lee? (6, 3)
13. Is home to a slick talker (8)
14. It's a squeeze (6)
15. Cool chat Theo (3, 9)

(2) A Really Puzzling Puzzle!

You may have seen this puzzle before – it was submitted by Sheila Pollard (Newtown Methodist Church) in a 2010 Circuit Magazine. Can you find 25 books of the Bible hidden in this paragraph?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. Someone found it in the seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping himself occupied for hours. One man from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his John boat. Roy Clark studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Levi once mentioned it in a book. One woman judges the job to be so involving that she brews a cup of tea to help calm her nerves. There are some names that are really easy to spot – but it's a fact, some people will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalised. The truth is, from the answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them, at the worst. Something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have. Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation will help. Books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers, and punctuation or spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete. Remember, there are 25 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph!

Answers to these two puzzles will appear in Issue 4!

Finally, to make you smile....

From Ruthie (she and Pam send you their best wishes from Ellesmere)

Did you hear about the guy who heard that a ghost appeared regularly in a certain church and he wanted to photograph it? He set up his camera and waited. At midnight the phantom appeared, saw him, smiled for the photo and disappeared. This was in the days before digital photography so the man sent his film away to be developed. When it came back, there was a picture of the church interior but no ghost. He decided that although the spirit was willing, the flash was weak!

From Edith: (cuttings from the newspaper)

Just seen a burglar smashing in his own front door....

I said: "What are you doing?"

He said: "I am working from home!"

Life is too short, so smile whilst you still have teeth!

Thanks to all of you who have been 'in touch' with contributions for this issue. Please send your news, messages, thoughts, poems, prayers etc. for issue 4, which will be out on 6th May, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, or by phone 01938 850514, or by post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 3rd May. All contributions welcome. (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514 – see issue 2 for details).