

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit



**Magazine & Plan
June to August 2020**

Rainbow Times

As I walk past Little World Nursery and the local junior school the banners made by children and staff tell me to "Keep Smiling" overarched by a rainbow.

This sign has become the emblem of hope and solidarity as we face the threat to life. Not only as we face the pandemic but wherever danger lurks the rainbow is a sign for Life.

It is much more than singing "somewhere over the rainbow blue-birds fly". As a

message of Life it travels back in time to the early days when humankind began to tell stories of their beginnings. Right there, alongside stories of the creation, the story of a flood and recovery afterwards is part of the cultural heritage of primitive civilizations throughout the world.

For the Jewish faith it relates to Noah and the ark. It is interesting that this, more than any of the other stories in the Old Testament, has survived to this day with toy manufac-

turers still producing evidence of this promise of God for children everywhere.

It is easy to relate to Noah and his family stuck on a boat, with our recent experience of lockdown, though I am grateful not to be asked to keep a zoo at home! We know all about waiting for release to rejoin our family and friends and find a daily routine different again from life up to date. Although we

have not had a menagerie to care for we too have tasks to be undertaken to survive the trauma.



God gave a rainbow as a covenant of promise between all that he had created and Himself. The rainbow was and still is a constant reminder to God and His people of God's everlasting purpose of life, a covenant signed in the rain clouds.

In the hymn "O love that will not let me go" written by George Matheson in the late 19th Century he writes "I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be"

We are reminded by recent events that humans are an endangered species, that catastrophe is part of human experience, all part of life's rich tapestry. We look for a sign that leads to more settled times and with the rainbow comes the promise of God.

What conclusion can we come to about God in the promise he gives with a rainbow?

Firstly, think about God's generosity. The promise was not given in secret, it was there for all to see, revealed in the rain-clouds and sunlight. Also the promise was for everyone, not only for those who had obeyed him but for all people. Then, the rainbow was a sign for those with faith and also for those who would not see it as a promise from God.

I ask you how relevant a covenant is if both parties do not agree to it? I come to this every time I talk about faith, God holds to his promise yet it is only activated as we enter into that covenant. We can also say God's Grace is not for us to hug to

ourselves, it has to be shared in practical ways for James reminds us that "*faith without works is dead*".

With this in mind then we see the fulfilment of God's promise in the rainbow and furthermore in the empty cross reaching from the earth to the heavens, there for all to see, inviting and welcoming any who look for life, the joy and wonder of a relationship with God that sustains, enlivens and sets us free.

**...we know
God's promises
will hold true**

What greater safety is there therefore than in signing the covenant God has shown us by giving our lives to him in trust as we know God's promises will hold true. As you see the rainbows drawn by children, on tee shirts, outside homes and hospitals let it lead you to the depth of meaning behind the sign, of hope, of Life in Christ. I hope you will not be disappointed when I say there is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, there is a reminder of the Love of God freely given. Rejoice and be Glad.

Jenny Thomas

Some thoughts during the COVID-19 lockdown

These are uncertain times for us all. Society has had to learn to operate in a very different way from what was the "norm", with the vast majority of us never experiencing anything like this ever before.

Personally I have found this quite unsettling to say the least and have struggled a few times with the unfamiliar feelings and emotions the situation is presenting. However, a positive from this - and yes, there is always a positive - is that communities have come together to form volunteer groups and help each other through these challenging times.

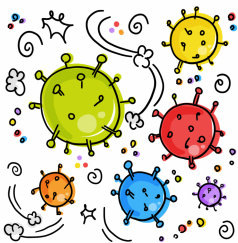
I have also pondered the question "Has the world decided to press it's reset button?" You know, like you

do to reset your phone or computer to return them to their factory settings and stabilise their systems. Could it be that this is the time to reset the parameters of life?

Being at home over the past week or so, I came across this reading (part of Romans ch12 v.2) "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be*

transformed by the renewing of your mind". A more modern translation reads "*Don't become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking*". It did make me wonder, that maybe, now is the time for me to reassess which direction my moral

compass is pointing. Do I honestly appreciate what I have around me - my family, friends, countryside, community? Or do I take these for granted. My worries over work and

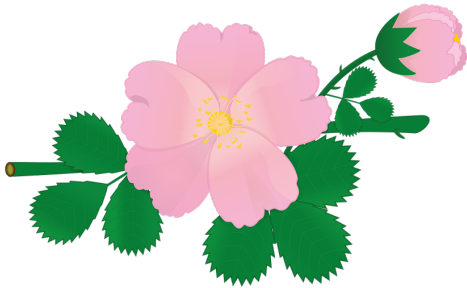


material things can, and sometimes do, smother the blessings that are right in front of my eyes. Whilst I would never ever wish this pandemic on anyone or any country maybe, just maybe, it is the world pressing it's "reset" button and making us all reassess what we value

most.

Take care all and here's looking forward to the resumption of collective worship and the massive get-togethers we will have when this crisis is over!!

Mandy Thomas
Pentre Llifior



Of all the flowers fit for posies
None are as fair as Briar Roses
Their heady perfume fills the breeze
That stirs the leaves of willow trees
They tumble over dry stone walls
With wild abandon that enthrals
They charm us till the evening closes
The petals of the Briar Roses.
Brian H Gent

Submitted by **Doreen Robinson**, Newtown



Rev Bob's Letter

Dear Friends,
Years ago, in a congregation far, far away, worshipped a retired sergeant-major of marines and his wife. He might have been old enough to have caught the tail-end of the war but would certainly have been called for National Service if he had missed it. Given the number of 'hot-spots' he would likely have been in, and the danger he had faced during his military career, it's not surprising that when making reference to any future plans he always finished '*d.v*' – *deo volente* – God willing.

In this current situation – I'm writing this towards the end of our third week of social distancing and self-isolation – as I plan the future, for ourselves and the Circuit – I'm adding the words 'Coronavirus permitting'. I don't think I'm doing God any disservice by subjecting myself to the disciplines asked of me at this time – whatever else we might have

learned recently it seems to me that we are more intimately bound to each other than we realised or than we are comfortable with. Like God it would appear that Coronavirus is no respecter of persons.

God willing and Coronavirus permitting this will be my last Super's letter for the Circuit magazine – whether we will be able to gather and say our goodbyes in July face to face

remains to be seen or will social distancing and self-isolation still be the order of the day?

Will the Methodist 'shuffle' that takes place every August happen at all ... be delayed ... be deferred until 2021? The Methodist Conference for June has been cancelled and the process of God in Love Uniting Us will now come to Conference next year. The 'big' things that more usually occupy our minds now take second place to the far more complicated arrangements required for the purchase of the week's groceries. It felt quite an achievement to return from a shopping expedition with everything on

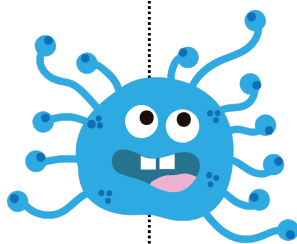
**Coronavirus
permitting**

the list!

For a people who like to take responsibility and make plans we have learned that our planning and activities involve a lot of people completely unknown to us and uninvolved with us – some of whom will not even cross our paths. For most of us Coronavirus will be remembered as a temporarily life-changing but relatively minor inconvenience – once it's all over. I'm hopeful that for some of us the experience will be far more momentous. Those who have survived the illness already speak of the re-evaluation process – one cricketer spoke of having been recalled to the wicket having previously been given out. It would be nice to think that at least some of the more blatant injustices we have grown comfortable with in the days of austerity and before will be allowed to continue their walk to the pavilion uninterrupted.

During the course of my studies in Lincoln I was

required to spend a month 'observing' ministry in a related aspect. I spent my time with the R.A.F. chaplaincy in Germany. To be honest I found it difficult to meaningfully engage with what ministry might be in such a rigidly hierarchical structure – in one sense the uniform denoted a shared purpose but in another it influenced and managed the relationship between those who gave and those who followed the orders. Most of



us in 'Civvy Street' were appreciative of the effect of Glasnost on 'the Cold War', the warming of the relationship between

East and West going on at the time, the increasing likelihood of our surviving to a ripe old age as the world put its nuclear arsenal 'beyond use'. The military were being extra careful in what was understood as a period of increased risk.

One of the facilities I was shown round was the 'hospital' where the victims of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical warfare would be cared for until their death –

as an R.A.F. Chaplain this would be where I would be working should such an event come about. Personal protective equipment was such as to prevent the slightest human contact, masks and respirators rendered communication difficult if not impossible. In a protected room with a cross blazoned on the window was the chaplain – to be honest it felt like we had escaped one hell only to find ourselves in another. What ministry would look like, sound like, feel like in this context I could not begin to imagine.

At our last service in Newtown we celebrated the Eucharist without any body contact – no handshake as we arrived or left or during the peace, bread and wine was consumed on 'help-yourself' basis, all of which I found quite dislocating. We might think ourselves fortunate to have been able to continue in our worship in the time-honoured and traditional fashion, it is just possible that our enjoyment of our comfort has blinded us to the discomfort felt by those who for whatever reason feel no

obligation or desire to join us. As we consider the future – hopefully post-Covid19 – but still unknown and uncomfortable let me remind you of those familiar words of Minnie Louise Haskins in her poem **The Desert**.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown!"

And he replied:
"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So, I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night

And He led me toward the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East."

Much will change as a result of what we have witnessed these last few months, the hand of God will continue better than light and safer than a known way.

God bless you all,
Bob

Ministers

Chair of the Synod:	Rev Dr Stephen Wigley
Superintendent:	Rev Bob Thomas B Th  01686 625690
Supernumerary:	Rev J Michael Taylor BD, BA
Supernumerary:	Rev Penny Burkill
Supernumerary:	Rev John W Newbury BA

Local Preachers

Mr Terry M Jobling OBE
Mrs Eileen Jobling
Mr Graham Smith
Mrs Eleri Williams
Mrs Doris McNulty
Mrs Maureen Douglas
Mrs Jenny Thomas
Mr John Harbron
Mrs Kat Bond (on trial)
Mrs Andrea Davies (on trial)

Worship Leaders

Mr Alan Bradburn and Mrs Anthea Bradburn
Mr Derek Painter (in training)

Visiting Preachers

Mr Nigel Evans
Rev Marian Jones
Rev Bill Rowell

Church & Hymn Books	Times	07-Jun	14-Jun	21-Jun	28-Jun
		Trinity Sun	Methodist Homes Sun	Sanctuary Sun	Conference Sun
		Matt 28:16-20	Matt 9:35-10:8	Matt 10:24-39	Matt 10:40-42
Welshpool	9.00			Taylor HC	
H ON	10.45	T Jobling	Jones HC	J Thomas	B Thomas HC
StF WB	6.00		WCT		4pm Rowell ATS
Cefn	10.00	E Jobling BC		T Jobling	
H ON	6.00		B Thomas HC		Evans
P Llifor	2.30	J Thomas	AACG	B Thomas	AACG
H StF WB					
Newtown	10.30	Burkill	Smith	B Thomas HC	T Jobling
H StF WB	6.00	B Thomas HC	Evans	E Jobling	Williams
Caersws	10.30	UB	B Thomas HC	Davies	Smith
H WB					
Trefglwys	10.00	B Thomas HC	@ Llawryglyn	Bond	@ Llawryglyn
H M					
Llawr Y Glyn	2.30	@ Trefglwys	T Jobling	@ Trefglwys	B Thomas HC
H WB					

Visit www.wbhmethodists.org.uk for any changes to the Plan

05-Jul	12-Jul	19-Jul	26-Jul
14th Sun in Ord	Action for Children Sun	16th Sun in Ord	17th Sun in Ord
Matt 11:16-19,25-30	Matt 13:1-9,18-23	Matt 13:24-30,36-43	Matt 13:31-33,44-52
		Taylor HC	
Songs of Praise P & P	Jones HC	Jubilate P & P	Jones HC
	@ Newtown 6pm		4pm P & P ATS
10.45am @ Welshpool		P & P	
	@ Newtown 6pm		Taylor HC
Harbron HC	AACG	Evans	AACG
	@ Newtown 6pm		
J Thomas	P & P	Harbron HC	E Jobling
B Thomas HC	Farewell Service	Burkill	Evans
Harbron UM	B Thomas HC	P & P	T Jobling
	@ Newtown 6pm		
B Thomas HC	@ Llawryglyn	Evans	@ Llawryglyn
	@ Newtown 6pm		
@ Trefeglwys	Burkill	@ Trefeglwys	Smith
	@ Newtown 6pm		

Church & Hymn Books	Times	02-Aug	09-Aug	16-Aug	23-Aug	30-Aug
		18th Sun in Ord	19th Sun in Ord	20th Sun in Ord	21st Sun in Ord	22nd Sun in Ord
		Matt 14:13-21	Matt 14:22-33	Matt 15:(10-20) 21-28	Matt 16:13-20	Matt 16:21-28
Welshpool	9.00			Taylor HC		
H ON	10.45	Smith	Jones HC	Taylor (final service)	Jones HC	UA
StF WB	6.00		WCT		4pm Rowell ATS	
Cefn	10.00	E Jobling BC		@ Welshpool		E Jobling
H ON	6.00		T Jobling		Harbron HC	
P Lliffor	2.30	T Jobling	AACG	Harbron HC	AACG	E Jobling
H StF WB						
Newtown	10.30	Bond	Smith	Harbron HC	T Jobling	Davies
H StF WB	6.00	Rowell HC	P & P	E Jobling	Evans	Smith
Caersws	10.30	UP	Harbron HC	Evans	E Jobling	Bond
H WB						
Trefeglwys	10.00	Harbron HC	@ Llawryglyn	Davies	@ Llawryglyn	P & P
H M						
Llawr Y Glyn	2.30	@ Trefeglwys	P & P	@ Trefeglwys	Harbron HC	@ Trefeglwys
H WB						

Visit www.wbhmethodists.org.uk for any changes to the Plan

REFERENCES USED IN THE PLAN

BOOKS

H Hymns and Psalms
M Methodist Hymn Book
ON Methodist Hymns Old & New
S The Source
StF Singing the Faith
WB Methodist Worship Book

SERVICES

AA All Age Worship
AACG All Age Cell Group
ATS Afternoon Tea Service
BAP Baptism
BC Breakfast Church
BTCS Back to Church Sunday
CA Chapel Anniversary
CAP Christians Against Poverty
C&C Carols and Christingle
CHS Community Hymn Singing
CMM Christian Music Ministries
Cov Covenant
CS Carol Service
EO Easter Offering Dedication
FF Flower Festival
HC Holy Communion
HF Harvest Festival
Jub Jubilate
LA Local Arrangement
LS Lambing Service
P&P Prayer and Praise
SKS Sankey Service
SoP Songs of Praise
SS Sectional Service
TF Welshpool Transport Festival
WCT Welshpool Churches Together
UnS Circuit United Service

UNITED SERVICES

UA at Anglican
UB at Baptist
UM at Methodist
UP at Presbyterian
URC at URC
UW at Welsh Chapel

OTHER

T Transport Required
TS Trial Service

Young People's Page

A wedding band is a very special kind of ring. It is a very simple ring. It has no diamonds or any other precious stones. It is just a plain, simple band of gold, but it is very special because it is a reminder of a promise that is made when a couple get married. On their wedding day, a husband and wife make a promise that they will love and stand faithfully beside one another *"for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as they live."* The wedding band is a reminder of the promise that they made. The ring also tells everyone who sees it about the promise that the couple made.

We all make promises from time to time. You might promise your mother that you will clean your room and do your chores before you go out to play. Or you may promise to keep a secret told to you by your best friend. Has anyone ever broken a promise they made to you? How did that make you feel?

What did you say? You were probably very disappointed and said something like, "But you promised!" Sometimes we are not very good at keeping our promises.

God made a promise to a man named Noah. I'm sure you know the story of how God sent a great flood to destroy the earth because the people had become so wicked and evil. He destroyed everything he had created except for two of every kind of bird and animal and Noah and his family. He spared them, because Noah was a good and righteous man, who walked with God.

After the flood waters went down and Noah's family and all the animals could leave the ark, God made a promise to Noah. He promised that he would never again destroy the whole earth with a flood. Then he did something to remind Noah of that promise. He placed a rainbow in the sky and he said to Noah, *"I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of*

the promise between me and all life on the earth." God said every time he saw the rainbow, he would remember the promise that he made.

God has kept that promise, because God keeps all of his promises. In fact, the Bible says that, "No matter how

many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:20)

The next time you see a rainbow, remember the promise God made to Noah, and remember that just as he has kept that promise, he keeps all of his promises.

Adapted from Sermons4kids

The Rainbow of Promise

"Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth." Genesis 9:16

The puzzle is based on Genesis 9:8-17



J	L	G	M	T	A	F	Y	J	F	G	H	T	E	K
L	S	I	G	A	L	V	F	C	C	L	I	J	X	C
H	K	P	V	W	N	P	E	M	Z	C	O	J	S	O
O	Z	D	U	E	L	I	F	E	P	L	W	O	M	V
R	C	A	E	E	S	V	M	F	O	O	T	V	D	E
E	R	P	C	S	I	T	W	A	L	U	W	Q	Y	N
M	E	P	D	N	T	X	O	A	L	D	V	W	O	A
E	A	E	J	B	R	R	W	C	T	S	A	S	D	N
M	T	A	I	N	V	O	O	X	K	E	Q	X	E	T
B	U	R	V	Q	B	Z	A	Y	H	K	R	Q	P	K
E	R	S	V	N	D	E	U	Z	X	U	O	S	R	S
R	E	X	I	R	L	A	S	M	E	U	I	L	D	B
J	S	A	I	M	W	R	I	J	H	U	K	R	L	D
F	R	P	Y	R	V	T	G	J	F	Q	I	B	R	G
V	W	D	K	X	D	H	N	K	S	B	U	I	H	W

REMEMBER	COVENANT	WATERS	BIRDS	DESTROY
APPEARS	CREATURES	EARTH	FLOOD	ANIMALS
SIGN	CLOUDS	LIFE	RAINBOW	LIVESTOCK

Rolling Report Pentre Llifior

Written before virus lockdown



Every chapel and church wishing to progress must consider how momentum might be maintained, not just in the short term but well into the future. Sadly, for Pentre Llifior, the past year has not been good - visitor numbers were down and little or no progress has been made in improving our engagement with the local community. 2019 has proved to be a "wake-up" call year!

The monthly "Bacon Buddies" Saturdays have continued but numbers attending have remained the same. Thoughts must now be directed towards increasing opening days and seeking ideas that might increase the numbers. This is important, as the revenue supports our policy of giving 10% towards the various other charities we support, i.e. WaterAid, the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, Methodist

World Mission, and other specific appeals. The annual figure has exceeded £1,000 for some years. Several members continue to help out on Wednesdays at Newtown Methodist chapel and regular donations are made to the Newtown Food Bank.

We have discussed the setting up of a Men's Shed and the running of computer courses in the stable meeting room but there are many hurdles to cross before these can come to fruition - discussions with interested parties are continuing. A major mission to the local community is planned for the coming months supported by the issue of a half-yearly chapel Newsletter, a first Spring edition providing support for a first "door-stepping" foray in late April.

One initiative last year was the attendance at 3GENERATE (the annual Methodist Children & Youth Assembly) by Alan Bradburn and Mandy Thomas. Both wish to build on that experience and Mandy's report in the March - May edition of the Circuit Magazine should provide impetus for working in

an area which is a "must do" for the future health and viability of our chapels.

Aware that visitor numbers were down in 2018 and likely to be so in 2019 - and they were, packages (containing an invitation letter, our chapel leaflet plus some postcards) were sent out to 250+ Methodist chapels in Wales and over the border in England. So far the response has been muted so a serious effort is now being made to ensure we are properly featured on a number of websites and, in particular, that of the National Churches Trust. The latter ran a competition to find the best chapel or church in Wales and Pentre Llifior came 38th but our chapel's website entry was a poor one (not submitted by us) and the NCT admitted it was a bit "thin" on detail! However, this will shortly be corrected by a substantial entry as part of the Trust's "Experiencing Sacred Wales" a new project showcasing 500 historic places in Wales featured on Explore Churches (www.explorechurches.org) the National Churches Trust's tourism hub.

There was good news in February when we were advised by the NCT that Pentre Llifior had been one of the ten chapels and churches in Wales selected to receive a digital motion counter to record the number of visitors to our building over a two year period - part of a trial to more accurately record numbers visiting ecclesiastical buildings.

Finally, the chapel will be celebrating two 250th anniversary events later in the year. The first is the 250th anniversary of Pentre Llifior coming under the jurisdiction of the first Brecon Wesleyan Methodist Circuit from 1st September, 1770 and the second, the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Rev. James Buckley (better known as the face on S.A. Brains' "Rev. James" premium ale) born near Oldham on 20th December, 1770. Two booklets, one telling the fascinating history of the chapel and another detailing the story of James Buckley are to be produced and should be available by the time of the anniversary dates.

Andrew Mathieson



Time

There's a time when we're young
And a time when we're old,
A time to be warm
And a time to be cold,
There's a time for summer
And winter, too;
A time for me
And a time for you.

There's a time when you're happy
And a time when you're sad,
A time when you're good
And a time when you're bad,
There's a time to sleep
And a time to wake;
A time to cook
And a time to bake.

There's a time to walk
A time to run,
A time to laugh,
And a time to have fun.
There's a time to **hope**
And a time to wait;
A time to be early
And a time to be late.

There's a time to dance
And a time to sing;
A time to take,
And a time to bring
There's a time for buying
And a time to sell;
There's a time to be silent,
And a time to tell.

There's a time when nothing seems to go right,
A time when you wish you could see the light;
There's the time when you need the help of a friend
A time to borrow and a time to lend.

There's a time when you feel you could walk on the air
And the day seems to pass without thought or care;
There's a time when sadness comes your way
But as time passes by, it fades away.

And so, the present is really the past,
And what was first has now become last;
Nothing is really here to stay
So make the most of every day.

J.H.Forrester

Receiving or Refusing

There is no middle course,
Nothing between.
No such place is there today,
Never has been;
You must either believe God's love,
Claim His free Grace,
Or spurn His great Salvation now,
And never see His face.



Submitted by **Phil-Eve. Senior**, Newtown

Preaching

The minister had just had all his remaining teeth pulled out and new dentures were being made.

The first Sunday he only preached for ten minutes. The second Sunday he preached for twenty minutes. On the third Sunday he preached for an hour and twenty minutes.

When asked about this by some of the congregation, he responded "The first Sunday my gums were so sore it hurt to talk. The second Sunday my dentures were hurting a lot. The third Sunday I accidentally grabbed my wife's dentures and I could not stop talking"!



Submitted by **Phil-Eve. Senior**, Newtown

Editorial

As we are sure you can imagine, this issue has been a difficult one and we would like to thank sincerely those who have written articles; we think they have done a wonderful job. The preaching Plan has been compiled and we hope services will be resumed, however, at the time of going to print we are still in lockdown.

The next issue covers the autumn and harvest; please send items for inclusion by **mid July 2020**, though we are happy to receive articles at any time by post:

Foxglove, Beech Close, Newtown SY16 2QP

by email: editors.marlow@btinternet.com

or you can pass to the minister or stewards.



This magazine is available in glorious technicolour on the Circuit website:

www.wbhmethodists.org.uk

Those of you with smart phones or tablets can scan this QR code to go straight to the website. **Bill and Andrea Marlow**