

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 6

News and Updates

1. **Happy Birthday** to all of you who will be celebrating this week. Don't forget to let us know of those who reach significant milestones i.e. birthdays ending in 0 or 90+!
2. **Get Well Wishes** are sent to Lynn Jenkins following a fall which has resulted in the fracture of two vertebrae and much pain. (We are pleased to hear that Sandra Croft is improving following her recent fall).
3. **Church Outing** – you will not be surprised to learn that this year's church outing to Llandudno, planned for Saturday 27th June, has been cancelled because of the on-going situation. We hope to re-schedule this for summer 2021.
4. **Sunday Worship in our 'Church without Walls'** - Our Service Sheet for 7th June is being prepared by Mrs. Eleri Williams and for 14th June by Canon Julia Francis. We are grateful to all who continue to enable us to worship together, even if physically apart, each Sunday.
5. **MHA Sunday** – A message from Methodist Homes: “A Virtual MHA Sunday service will be broadcast on YouTube at 3pm on 14th June, and will be a memorial and remembrance to those lost within the MHA family, and the many thousands world-wide who have been affected by the coronavirus tragedy. The service will feature hymns, prayers and readings, and special guest speakers.”
6. **Stationing 2020** – The Methodist Conference (which is meeting virtually at the end of June) will be asked to adopt the changes to stations as usual and at present it is assumed that all moves will go ahead as planned. Rev Bob (and Jenny) will be moving to Northern Ireland in mid July, and Rev Jacquie (and Jon) will be moving to our circuit in mid August. It is doubtful that we will be able to hold the Farewell Service for Rev Bob at Newtown on 12th July as we have planned but if not we may find an alternative way of giving him a good send-off. Watch this space!
7. **Thanks** to Rev Marian, Andrew Mathieson and Sandra Croft who got in touch with information re: 'The Watchman' (issue 5). It was “the first Methodist newspaper, born in the aftermath of the Reform agitation and legislation of the early 1830s.”
8. In this **Volunteers Week** we send **thanks** to our Welshpool Angels and others going out of their way to help their neighbours as restrictions on our lives continue.
9. **Free, to a good home** – 2 audio tapes of David Kossoff (The Old Testament Stories), 2 tapes of The Goon Show, and 2 tapes of Joyce Grenfell (Autobiography). Contact Gordon: 01938 850514.
10. **Thanks from Tony Harvey:** “My thanks for your good wishes in the last issue of *In Touch* - it was a very different birthday from what had been planned but nonetheless every bit as enjoyable not least because of all the greetings from our Church community and the family. Of course, I now join the elite club (so I am told) and also have to tick the last box on all the questionnaires we receive!”

Tony continues:

I have been meaning to write something for *In Touch* ever since the first issue appeared because I feel both guilty and privileged. Guilty because I am not really doing anything to help (except make a few phone calls each day to a variety of people) and privileged because both Margaret and I sit here in almost regal splendour – the food arrives (courtesy of our daughter who is doing sterling work for a number of people), the papers arrive (thanks to Deborah), the mail comes through the letter-box, the on line orders turn up in a variety of white vans, &c. &c. And there are all those people out there risking their lives to ensure that our health and care systems work and the wheels of commerce keep turning. And in our own Church community so many are doing so much, the baking, the delivery, the on-line services, helping in the community, &c. &c. Local shops doing all they can to help people. And in all this there are so many suffering loss of jobs and wages or cooped up in small rooms with several children --- to say nothing of those who have lost loved ones or are ill with covid-19 or fearful to get treatment for life threatening conditions. And there are those with anxiety for as a friend recently wrote "I know I have nothing to worry about, but my anxieties don't know that".

And through all this, Margaret and I enjoy a lovely house and garden. The change that seems to be happening is that my hair is growing longer but at least, unlike Margaret, mine isn't changing colour. Trust a woman to go one better. We are truly blessed and I just hope that we will rush, once let out, to try to help those less fortunate.

More generally, in all this something stirs – is it a new way of living, less hurried and more concerned for people than things and in a much cleaner environment? There are many glimpses of this but, I ask, will it last? One day the news seems to indicate "yes there will be a change" other days it is dissipated again and we seem to be heading back to the rough and tumble of society where it is self, self, self. I hope, I suspect along with many others of a certain age that we will at least bury the doctrine of the Thatcher years that there is no such thing as society or community and lay to rest the ethos of all that matters is the self.

As the incoming Archbishop of York wrote despite all the suffering "This might be a possibility for us [...] many of us are already beginning to reflect upon the crazy ways we live our lives, the unnecessary journeys we make, the meetings we don't actually need, the pressure we put ourselves under". At least we now seem to realise that hundreds of thousands of low-paid workers are the back-bone of the country and vital to the well-being of us all. Perhaps there will be some tangible recognition of their services. Let us make sure that it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

The Celtic Christians knew turbulent times and the difficulties and challenges of life and they also knew how to turn these concerns and their hopes into prayers:

"Relieve Thou, O God, each one
In suffering on land and sea,
In grief or wounded or weeping,
And lead them to the house of Thy peace this night".

Singing through lockdown, and beyond (from *Singing the Faith Plus* website)

As we begin the tricky process of looking forward to how we may re-gather for services in our shared places of worship, one of the conversations being had is whether we should refrain from the singing of hymns for the time being. (There is some scientific evidence that the deeper breathing associated with singing can project water droplets, and thus coronavirus, far beyond the two metres required for social distancing). When we are allowed to reopen our buildings for public worship, we will have to follow the guidelines as to best practice and what should be avoided, but for the moment, it is interesting to discover how hymns are being used during this period of lockdown and isolation.

Members of Great Billing chapel in the Northampton Methodist Circuit have their own copies of *Singing the Faith* with them at home so are able to choose their favourite hymns each week. On a Sunday morning, the chapel's worship leaders, husband and wife Roy and Margaret Littlecott, phone two members at a time and play and sing their chosen hymn with them.

The arrangement has been in place since the very beginning of the UK's period of lockdown, and for a congregation of mainly older folk, not all of whom have access to a computer, this has proved to be a simple but effective way of keeping in touch every Sunday and during the week as well, maintaining the bond of love and friendship in that small village chapel.

Jubilate family's Monday morning Hymn Sing Along!

Jubilate sessions, held on a Monday morning, always start with a "Thought for the Week" led by various members, but since we have been unable to meet, Julia has been suggesting a "Hymn for the Week" which we are invited to sing at home, at roughly the same time as each other, while we enjoy our Monday morning coffee, as one way of keeping connected. We thought you might like to join us too, if you have a hymn book at home. Hymns chosen for the next two Mondays are:
8th "Fair waved the golden corn" (Anglican Hymns Old and New 155) and
15th "Be Still and Know that I am God" (*Singing the Faith* 18)

In addition, or as an alternative, join us in our 'theme song': "Jubilate"

*Jubilate, everybody, serve the Lord in all your ways,
And come before his presence singing, enter now his courts with praise.
For the Lord our God is gracious, and his mercy everlasting.
Jubilate, Jubilate, Jubilate Deo!*

'Daily Hope' (free dial-in worship)

I have recently discovered a free dial-in worship phone line launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury which is available 24 hours a day and is aimed at those many people (especially us older ones!) who don't have access to the internet or don't want to use it for streamed services. Callers hear a special greeting from Archbishop Justin Welby and can then choose from a range of options, including prayers, hymns and reflections. The number to phone is **0800 804 8044** and after the Archbishop's opening message, choose your option - for hymns it's 2. Sung by a soprano accompanied by piano, all are well-known favourites. Why not join in?

Bible Month

This month is Bible month, and those of you who have requested study materials to accompany your reading of the Book of Ruth should have received them by now – if not, please get in touch.

Ruth is one of the shorter books in the Bible. Can you name the shortest book in the Old Testament, and the shortest in the New Testament (two books vie for this position) Answers in issue 7.

From Hedydd A poem she wrote for Pentecost, 1985

Three in One

We must go on and on and on
What use is here in looking back
Unless to sing loves old sweet song
So many lament their long lost youth
Instead of seeking the ultimate truth
There are no stumbling blocks you see
Life is a journey, a deity
Each step a milestone along the way
Each step a stronger reality
So let us look up and on and see
The beauty of life – the Trinity

(Next Sunday, 7th June, is Trinity Sunday)

From Pat P

“This version of the 23rd Psalm has a message of peace, serenity and hope”

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush.
He makes me stop for quiet intervals of rest.
He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity.
He leads me in ways of efficiency through calmness of mind, and
His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day
I will not fret, for His presence is here;
His timelessness, His all-important will, keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity.
By anointing my mind with oils of tranquillity,
my cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours;
for I will walk in the peace of my Lord,
and dwell in His house for ever.

Also from Pat: A Sabbath well spent
Brings a week of content
And strength for the toils of tomorrow
But a Sabbath profaned
What so e'er may be gained
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow

From Allan E. (Borth)

Mostly people in hospital don't much communicate. They are either sedated or consumed by their condition, not concerned with their neighbours, but mine was talkative and between bouts of coughing which convulsed him, he asked about my naval service.

Then he said: "I was at Scapa Flo".

This harbour in the Orkneys was the scene of a rebellion rising from a severe reduction in ratings' pay when many officers went into early retirement.

He continued: "We were in the canteen for elevenses before the daily rum issue (which didn't include me at my age). Suddenly the doors were slammed to, and we were formed up and marched to a parade ground. Some of the ratings identified as ringleaders were dismissed. Others like me spent the next twenty years behind bars."

The following morning, the neighbouring bed was empty.

From Helen E. (Borth)

"Well Said" *(from Canada)*

The six most important words – "I admit I made a mistake"

The five most important words – "You did a good job"

The four most important words – "What is your opinion?"

The three most important words – "If you please"

The two most important words – "Thank you"

The most important word – "We"

From Gwenno

"Covid-19"

I remember when Corona was a fizzy drink,
Now we're expected to sanitise hands in the sink.

This virus has taken so many of our loved ones,
And nurses and carers attend wearing gowns and visors.

They say "Be alert", wear a home-made mask.
Most of us tackle this task, and do as we're asked.

We're been told to stay safe – and stay at home.
Those of us who keep busy don't moan, and try not to roam.

Our vehicles are running out of warranty.
It's a blessing that birds and butterflies are not in quarantine.

I say "Take a leaf out of Captain's Tom's book –
Positive spirit, cup always half full, he looks for the good".

We hope this will be a new way of life, with people taking time to talk to each other, without hurry or strife.

Thank God, who has blessed us with plenty of sun;
We'll meet again, and have fun, when all this is done!

From Graham **Eating in our Childhood Days!**

Chickens didn't have fingers in those days

Chips were all plain

Cooking outside was called camping

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh

Curry was a surname

Healthy food consisted of anything edible

Kebab was not even a word, never mind a food

Muesli was readily available – it was called cattle feed

Oil was for lubricating; fat was for cooking

Oranges and **Bananas** appeared mainly at Christmas

Pasta had not been invented – it was macaroni or spaghetti

Pineapple came in chunks in a tin – we had only ever seen a picture of a real one

Pizza sounded like a leaning tower somewhere

Prunes were medicinal

Seaweed was not recognised as a food

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days and was regarded as being white gold

Take-way was a mathematical problem

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves, and never green

Water came out of a tap – if someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock

Yoghurt hadn't been heard of by any of us

The things we never ever had on our tables in those days – **elbows, hats, mobile phones!** Anyone remember?!

Also from Graham **A Senior's Perspective of Facebook!**

For those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists, I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, and what I will do later on and with whom.

I give them pictures of my family, my dog, me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I also listen to their conversations, give them the "thumbs up" and tell them that I like them.

And it works just like Facebook.

I already have four people following me.

Two police officers

A private investigator and

A psychiatrist

QUIZ TIME!

Lines from Charles Wesley's Hymns *(Courtesy of Christian Guild Hotels)*

As we have recently celebrated Aldersgate Sunday, this quiz seems appropriate.

Supply the first line of the hymns which contain these lines. *(Hope you do better than I did!)*

1. We shall not full direction need
2. The name all victorious of Jesus extol
3. Thy mercy so tender to all the lost race
4. King of Glory! Soul of bliss! Everlasting life is this
5. Demands our choicest songs
6. Sing ye in triumphant strains
7. Angels and men before it fall, and devils fear and fly
8. Did thou not make us one, that we might one remain
9. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray – I woke, the dungeon flamed with light
10. Mild he lays his glory by
11. All who read, or hear, are blessed
12. Thy goodness and thy truth we praise, Thy goodness and thy truth we prove
13. Kindled by a spark of grace
14. Here then to thee thine own I leave
15. Made perfect first in love, and sanctified by grace
16. Jesu, thou art all compassion
17. Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
18. My calling to fulfil
19. Faith like its finisher and Lord
20. Day-spring from on high be near

Flowers and Shrubs *(Courtesy of Oswestry Methodist Church)*

1. A witch may ride one (5)
2. Top kitchen range with utensil, so? (10)
3. They say they do, to a red rag (7)
4. Did a bovine lose its footing? (7)
5. The car's faulty combustion might cause it to do this (4)
6. Mr Packham, with his parent (13)
7. Romance all steamed up (4-2-1-4)
8. Sounds like a crowd of sheep or birds (5)
9. Kent campanologists (10, 5)
10. Solar bloom (9)
11. Prickly wine? (9)
12. Little Hosea says thank you (5)
13. Bill is delightful (5, 7)
14. A hand warmer for Reynard? (8)
15. Remember me (6-2-3)
16. Valuable stick (6, 3)
17. A.M. acclaim? (7, 5)
18. One of an orchestra's string section (5)
19. Occupied girl (4, 6)
20. Sounds like a prickly, clinging GP! (7)

Answers to Puzzles in Issue 5

Edible Fish

1 Skate; 2 Dover Sole; 3 Dab; 4 Brill; 5 Flounder; 6 Tuna; 7 Haddock; 8 Pilchard; 9 Cod; 10 Monkfish; 11 Turbot; 12 Sturgeon; 13 Sardines; 14 Salmon; 15 Plaice

Towns, Villages and Places in Wales

1 Llangollen; 2 Carmarthen; 3 Swansea; 4 Llandudno; 5 Elan Valley; 6 Lampeter; 7 Newtown; 8 Clywedog; 9 Holyhead; 10 Barmouth; 11 Forden; 12 Builth Wells; 13 Abermule; 14 Brecon; 15 Welshpool; 16 Snowdon; 17 Aberystwyth; 18 Borth; 19 Montgomery; 20 Guilsfield

Laughter – the best medicine!

The anniversary preacher had been taken ill shortly before the service and a deputy had stepped in at short notice. Glancing up at one of the church windows which had been broken and replaced temporarily by a sheet of hardboard the preacher said, "I am afraid I am only a substitute – rather like that piece of hardboard filling in for the stained glass."

He was very amused when, after the service, an old lady came up to him and said, "You're no substitute window, lad. You're a *proper pane!*"

A small boy was sitting with his father in church one Sunday and as the collection plate was passed around he was heard to whisper, "You don't have to pay for me Daddy. I'm under five!"

Some weeks after her grandfather died, five year old Samantha was rummaging through the dressing table drawer.

"Mummy," she cried, "Granddad's gone to heaven without his glasses, and he won't be able to see a thing!"

The Sunday school teacher was rounding off her weekly lesson. "So that's the story of Jonah and the whale. What does it teach us?" she asked.

The prompt reply came at once: "You can't keep a good man down!"

A ten-year-old boy recounted to his mother the story of Moses which had been the subject of his RE lesson at school.

"Our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind the enemy lines to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians. He brought them to the Red Sea and ordered his engineers to build a pontoon bridge. After they had all crossed, Moses looked up and saw the Egyptian tanks coming. He grabbed his walkie-talkie and ordered the air force to bomb the bridge and save the Israelites."

His mother looked doubtful. "Are you sure that is how your teacher told the story?"

"Well, not exactly, but if I told you what she said, you'd never believe it!"

Thanks to all of you who have been 'in touch' with contributions for this issue. Please send your news, messages, thoughts, poems, prayers, quizzes, funny stories etc. for issue 7, which will be out on 17th June, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, or by phone 01938 850514, or by post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 14th. All contributions welcome. (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514).