

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 7

News and Updates

1. **Congratulations** to Jennifer Platt who will be celebrating her 90th Birthday on 24th. We send our good wishes to her, and also to Edith Thomas, 94 years young on 25th!

2. **Get Well Wishes** are sent to all who are not feeling 100% at this time, including friends from Newtown Methodist Church.

3. **Sunday Worship in our ‘Church without Walls’** - Our Service Sheet for 21st June is being prepared by John Harbron and for 28th June by Rev Bill Rowell.

4. **Thanks** - Margaret Fisher writes from Hucknall, Nottingham: “I would like to say a big thank you to all my friends at Welshpool Methodist Church for remembering me and sending me the news letter. It is really lovely when it pops through the letter box. Can I also take this opportunity to give you all a virtual hug! I can’t wait to be able to come back to beautiful Wales and see all my friends again”.

5. **Small Books** - In our last newsletter we asked which the shortest books in the Old and New Testaments are. With 21 verses Obadiah is the shortest in the OT, and with 13 verses 2 John the shortest in the NT.

6. **From Revd Bob** (*Bob and Jenny will be leaving us next month after 5 years in our circuit*)

No matter how strange it appears, life has gone on these last few weeks – life without much social contact – and, given the shortages that have appeared on supermarket shelves, for some of us, life without home baking or toilet rolls – besides which, social distancing and self-isolation must appear quite normal. I have found it difficult to get my head around the idea of church without people, worship in particular. I guess most of us have taken steps to earth ourselves, continuing to do at least some of the things we did before we went into quarantine – baking cakes and scones for friends and the like. I was making lemon and lime marmalade recently; when it came to ‘bottling’ I put four or five small jars together for when I go pastoral visiting in crisis. A lot will hopefully change as a result of Covid-19 but the requirement of mutual support will always be binding on the people of God.

As time goes on it seems increasingly unlikely that we will be able to share in anything like a farewell service that we have known – if anyone has any alternative suggestions I’d be happy to hear them – my hope would be for a service in praise of the generosity of God who calls each one of us into ministry and develops in each a particular set of skills and abilities that enable a particular outcome – which may or may not be the one intended.

Among the contributions to the ministry of the Welshpool Bro Hafren Circuit I would be hoping to celebrate are those of Michael Jones, who was Senior Circuit Steward when I arrived and is currently in hope of standing down or at least assuming a more consultative role; Stan Mountford, Circuit Property Steward without whom life in the Manse at least would have been quite fraught - his oversight of the management of the Circuit property portfolio and his willingness to go into bat

against TMCP have been of inestimable worth, and he too seeks to be relieved of his responsibilities; Michael Taylor, who is taking another crack at sitting down – he expressed a wish to do so when Sue left but was willing to continue with 'light duties' at Welshpool; Janice, Derek, Emma, Anthea, Kevin, Andrew ... Church stewards, local preachers, magazine producers and contributors, tea makers and washers up, cake-bakers, gatherers in worship, readers of the Bible – we are together the people of God, the Body of Christ in this place, ours is the ministry that God has blessed, ours is the ministry that God will continue to bless in the times to come, wherever we exercise it, with whomever we share it.

All is in place for us to relocate to Tempo in mid July. The shed is tidied, the garage halfway tidied, the books have been sorted – some for the third world via Book Aid and some for charity around the area. Some furniture has been sold, some marked for Phoenix, some given away. Moving from a spacious Manse to a three bedroom bungalow takes some planning – what can I live without, what can I not live without? These are questions that have confronted us all in different ways over these past weeks.

Tempo is a wee village with its own Methodist Church, ten miles from Enniskillen on the road between Lisbellaw and Fintona; the bungalow is a couple of miles outside the village. Our nearest neighbour is about a quarter of a mile away; all that we need to live to a ripe old age in relative comfort and in reasonable health is to be found in Enniskillen. There is a garden – Ummer Road runs between the house and the front garden; a garage/workshop, and a byre – complete with cobbled floor and dung channel. In time I hope to add a greenhouse so as to extend the growing season a week or two – Co. Fermanagh can be cold and damp.

Being two years short of my pensionable age I shall be working half-time with the congregations of Tullyroan and Cranagill – part of the Dungannon and Charlemont Circuit where I was a local preacher back in the early Eighties. Most ministers of my acquaintance have worked well beyond what we used to call retirement – I'm just starting early. When I'm not working I shall be painting (first), putting up shelves and sorting books (second) and gardening (third). Beyond that, I'm open to offers or will be carrying on gardening.

Please God this will be the last move we make, at least until residential care or the cemetery is indicated. I've lost count of the number of times we've moved, but it doesn't get any easier – the wisdom of experience is outweighed by the increasing frailty – I shall try not to gather too much clutter for my children to sort when the time comes. Years ago a chapel steward seemed to think of the Manse as being her attic and as a result we have carried a few bits of her furniture without getting a deal of use from them. We are hopeful that they will travel with us no longer.

Please forward your suggestions for alternative arrangements for the Circuit Farewell to the stewards or myself.

All Love, Bob

Date for your Diary

All being well, restrictions permitting, the Welcome Service for Revd Jacquie Evans will be held on Thursday evening, 3rd September, and will be led by the Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, the Chair of the Wales Synod - *time and venue to be confirmed.*

A personal message from the President of the Methodist Conference – June 2020

"It was with outrage and deep sorrow that we have witnessed the recent brutal killing of George Floyd in the United States.

But outrage and sorrow are not a sufficient response to racism and inequality in society. How to begin a process of change? It starts with self-examination and listening to the people whose lives are affected by discrimination and hate.

This week, I received these words from a Methodist living in London:

"The young people whom I have worked with over the last 15 years have felt the impact of racism in every institution they have been part of from schools, to university, to work places, and other than local support and informal church networks they have not found the Methodist Church a place that speaks up for them."

As your President, I start by saying I am sorry. Sorry for being silent when we should have spoken out against the everyday injustices that affect BAME communities. I am sorry that, despite our efforts, we have not done enough for those who feel excluded and we need to do better. We know this includes people of all ages from the Windrush generation to the very young. I am sorry when we have not listened carefully enough and not challenged the assumptions of white privilege and bias.

Repentance can lead us to change, to embody a gracious, loving spirit of inclusion and understanding. There is no excuse for racism. All people are made in God's image. We are one body in Christ Jesus.

I hope we can listen more carefully to the voices of BAME members, especially younger people, who face racism, discrimination and violence on a daily basis. Then our church must be brave, speak out, speak up and challenge racism wherever we find it, especially when we find it in ourselves".

The Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference

From Graham: John Wesley's 18th Century Manifesto

This list, based on John Wesley's writings and on display at the Wesley Museum attached to the New Room in Bristol, couldn't be more relevant today.

1. Reduce the gap between rich people and poor people
2. Help everyone have a job
3. Help the poorest, including introducing a living wage
4. Offer the best possible education
5. Help everyone feel they can make a difference
6. Promote tolerance
7. Promote equal treatment for women
8. Create a society based on values and not on profits and consumerism
9. End all forms of slavery
10. Avoid getting into wars
11. Share the love of God with everyone
12. Care for the environment

From Gordon: "A Pigeon's Lament"

'I do miss Colston! Outside Gregg's – his shoulder just the height to perch! My eyes don't get any better, and those Brummie pigeons are faster to the crumbs nowadays. Freddie, he roosts at the library, so knows everything. Says Victoria's looking worried. He says she was over the Empire – Empress or something. Billy, he does Trafalgar Square, and comes to Bristol for a break, says Nelson is panicking. Heights don't bother him, after all the time he spent in the crow's nest. It's just a long way down to knock him off. He thinks that after Trafalgar, Brits ruled the waves so monopolised shipping, even slave ships. Billy said to him: "That meant the navy patrolled seas and stopped the slave ships reaching America". He seemed a bit more at ease after that. Taffy's from Denbigh and says Stanley doesn't care a jot. Wales never took to him, even though he was probably the greatest African explorer, because he fell for an American woman. "They say I worked for Leopold in the Belgian Congo in the late 1870s, which I did, but that was before the Congo atrocities were made public. That was done by Morel, an Anglo Frenchman, about 1900, and he worked in Liverpool. Why don't they give him a statue?"

Sally is a real sweetie. She flies down from Glasgow twice a year, stops in Chamberlain Square in Brum, feeds up, then down the Severn to Bristol. We had something going at one time, but I never knew what she was saying, a real thick accent. She says Livingstone hardly says anything. The strong silent type you know. He did make some dreadful mistakes, and had to find safety from the natives with slave traders on more than one occasion. But some of those Exeter Hall speeches really gave it to them about the slave trade. "They need some new trade so they aren't dependent on slaving and ivory," he said in a rare talkative mood. Freddie thinks he's safe as he's anchored to a great big lion on a massive plinth.

I spoke to a friendly heron yesterday. A fish he had a chat to, before slipping it down his throat, said Colston was really cheesed off down there in the water. Some barnacles have settled in his arm pit and just bang on about all the plastic they have to swallow. "Why can't they fret about their own problems instead of what happened two centuries back?" he heard Colston say.

Sorry. I must get back to Gregg's for a snack. I think I'll try the Nails for a perch, assuming they are still there, that is.'

On the wall of a pub in Dublin: "A wise man keeps one eye on the past. A fool keeps two"

From Pat P: "Family Recipes" by C H Spurgeon, well-known for his published sermons
For repairing "Jars" – Use mutual love mixed with readiness to forgive. General good temper is admirable cement.

Preserving – Our tempers are best preserved by using as little of the vinegar of sarcasm as possible, our heart by using an abundance of the oil of grace

To cure a cold – Do all the good you can; love your neighbour as yourself

Pickles – Those persons get into them most who meddle with other's business

Tart – Such replies, which some think smart, generally lead to soreness (and often sourness)

Fritters – Gossiping, late rising and laziness soon fritter away precious hours

Sweets - The sweets of "doing good to others" will never cloy. The more of them the better, I say.

Childhood memories!

From Allan E. (Borth)

The Bollin Valley carries the Bridgewater Canal on an aqueduct fully a mile long. The canal rises a good thirty feet at this point. Created by an army of navvies using wheelbarrows to shift a mountain of soil, the course of the canal continues towards the village of Lymm to meet with the Mersey at Runcorn. As well as providing two-way passage there is a towpath used by horses. I know the area and the towpath. As a scout group we were camped a mile away. Under canvas for the first time, the weather was kind. Some of the older ones built a bridge over the river using poles and their knowledge of knotting. As a twelve year old my activities centred around providing fuel for the cooking fire.

Amongst organised activities was a wide game dividing thirty into attackers and defenders. The attackers had a half hour start to fade into open country to be followed by defenders intent on preventing their return to camp.

That is how I came to be on the canal towpath. I had walked along the river bank and reached the canal, heading towards Lymm. Realising I was being followed by a defender I needed to get out of sight, and so I descended the banking to follow the line of the hedged field. Shortly I came across a stream which flowed from under the canal. Taking shoes and socks in hand I stepped into the stream. It was dark in the culvert, but there was headroom, and then light. On the other side, I made my way back undetected.

From Gordon:

Two or three of us slipped away from the main group down a short track to a well, or spring. The coins in the bottom were too great a temptation. We filled our pockets! (Like Allan, we were twelve or thirteen, and on a school geography trip). That evening, soon after lights out in the dormitory, the door creaked open and in came a ghost (clothed in bed sheets!) We were berated by the ghost of Rev William Mompesson! (The ghost turned out to be our Chemistry Master, and I respected him thereafter for being such a good sport!)

We were staying at Eyam, where, during the bubonic plague of 1665-6, Rev Mompesson, the village's newly arrived priest, instigated a lockdown, with the villagers quarantining themselves in a famous act of self-sacrifice, to prevent the spread of the plague, which infected fleas had brought to the village in a bundle of cloth.

The well we had burgled (known now as Mompesson's Well) was where, so many years before, villagers had come to place money in six holes drilled into the top of the boundary stone alongside the well to pay for food and medicine left by their anxious neighbours for those who were shielding. Vinegar was used to disinfect the coins left in payment.

By the end of the outbreak, more than a quarter of the village's population of almost 1,000 were dead, including Mompesson's wife. The plague, however, was contained.

Why not share some of your childhood memories with us in the next issue of "In Touch"?

From Terry Jobling

Sadly, we will soon be saying goodbye to Bob and Jenny as they go to their new work. This has made me reflect on the ministers and their partners I have known since student days. They have offered such a rich variety of gifts and blessings. I do get irritated when somebody says to me: "What do you think of the minister?" when the implication is that I should say something critical.

I remember an amusing incident in our previous circuit, when somebody said to the minister's wife, Mrs. Cleaver (not knowing who she was): "Do you get on with your new minister?"

"I have to," she said, "I live with him!"

Our ministers and their families need our care and support as well as the reverse.

We wish every blessing on Bob and Jenny as they journey on, and we look forward to welcoming Jacquie and Jon, who will be joining us.

Join us for Jubilate family's Monday morning 'Hymn Sing Along at Home'!

Julia writes: "I am choosing hymns for June inspired by my reading of the book of Ruth and her beautiful words to Naomi from chapter 1 on the journey back to Bethlehem: 'Your people shall be my people and your God my God'. Now, that's quite a statement.

Our hymn for **Monday 22nd** is "Glorious Things of Thee are spoken" Singing the Faith 748 Words are by John Newton, clergyman, preacher and evangelist, whose numerous hymns are still popular today. In his younger days he was sent into the Navy and worked on Slave ships, but during the years of pressure from reformers like William Wilberforce, he worked hard to repent and became a firm abolitionist. In v.1 we have the vision of a distant and desired destination – the central focus of Judaism in Jerusalem at the foot of Mt Zion. Here we are asked to approach the abode of God with confidence as God has created a strong fortress where he will protect all comers – though, of course, it represents to us that other abode of God, heaven. In v.2, the Streams of Living Water is a term for Christ, whose coming to us quenches the thirst of our souls. In v. 3 we are reminded that it is through God's grace that we are called to "Zion's city" – our imperfections and failures are not counted against us. We are called into this glorious presence because he wants us there. Amazing!

David, who is a descendant of Ruth and Boaz, is famous for being King over Israel and a Psalmist. For **Monday 29th** our hymn is The King of Love my Shepherd is (StF 479) Based on Psalm 23, this hymn reminds us of the way in which God will provide for all our true needs. The words are by Henry Williams Baker, a clergyman, and the proprietor and contributor to various publications of hymns, including 'Hymns Ancient and Modern'. On his deathbed, aged 55, he is reputed to have quoted v.1 So rejoice with us: "Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever".

Lockdown Limerick

To the lockdown advice we've stayed true,
Observing the daily curfew.
But for those upon high
Different rules apply:

'Do as we say, not do as we do!' *(from Peterborough, Daily Mail)*

From Audrey: "Lockdown Blues"

(Sent to Audrey by her friend from the village of Wellesbourne where Audrey used to live)

There once was a lady near Warwick
Whose age made her feel pre-historic.
Not as old as the Queen,
But since Covid-19
She was gated, lest it turned out bubonic.

Stuck at home just to garden and clean,
She soon tired of making things gleam.
All this housewifely choring
Was getting quite boring,
So she wanted to find a new scheme.

Looking round she soon spotted some flaws,
Rotten windows and cracks in the doors.
And drains that were stuck
With dead leaves and much muck
So she set to, in her old overalls.

She rodded the drains to get flow,
And planted some veggies to grow,
And slapped on white paint
Till the fumes made her faint,
But her spirits still felt very low.

For her efforts all led to disaster,
And she found she'd run out of plaster.
The dog dug up her potatoes
And then chewed trays of tomatoes,
Which meant they'd have to eat pasta.

Though discouraged, she knew it was risky
To resort to white wine and whisky,
So she thought – what I need
Is to do a good deed
That will make me feel useful and frisky.

With eyes that were aged and weak,
And a machine that did stutter and squeak
With many loud curses
She sewed scrubs for the nurses
Till her husband said "Please let me speak!"

"You're quite frazzled – so may I suggest
That for once you should take a short rest,
For I have a strong hunch
(And I'd quite like my lunch)
That you're getting quite grumpy and stressed."

She answered, "Well, just for your sake
I will stop and take a quick break.
For despite what I do
I'm still feeling blue –
So I'm off to my bed to eat CAKE!"

PUZZLE TIME! Parts of the human body (some answers phonetic of spelling)

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|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Garden Flower (4) | 16. A comb has them (5) |
| 2. Seen on a farm (4) | 17. Children at school (6) |
| 3. Soldiers marching? (6) | 18. Prepare for war (3) |
| 4. Funny bone (8) | 19. A number of university men (7) |
| 5. Used by an artist (7) | 20. Very important main road (6) |
| 6. Those in favour (4) | 21. Place of worship (6) |
| 7. To do with the sea (5) | 22. Something to cry on (8) |
| 8. Punctuation mark (5) | 23. A number of negatives (4) |
| 9. Found in hedgerows (4) | 24. Dishonourable person (4) |
| 10. A measurement (4) | 25. Pumping station (5) |
| 11. Buy one from a fishmonger (4) | 26. P + a great singer! (6) |
| 12. Famous for losing a race (4) | 27. In Midsummer Night's Dream (6) |
| 13. Tug boats do it (3) | 28. Bearer of coconuts (4) |
| 14. Strong container (5) | 29. Edge of a bowl (3) |
| 15. Somewhat conceited? (4) | 30. No longer legal tender (5) |

Answers to Puzzles in Issue 6

Lines from Charles Wesley's Hymns – the first lines were:

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|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Captain of Israel's host and Guide | 2. Ye servants of God |
| 3. Thy faithfulness, Lord, each moment ... | 4. Christ the Lord is risen today |
| 5. Sing to the great Jehovah's praise | 6. Earth rejoice, our Lord is King |
| 7. Jesus the name high over all | 8. Thou God of truth and love |
| 9. And can it be | 10. Hark! The Herald Angels sing |
| 11. Come divine interpreter | 12. Father of everlasting grace |
| 13. See how great a flame aspires | 14. Behold the Servant of the Lord |
| 15. Let earth and heaven combine | 16. Love divine, all loves excelling |
| 17. Oh Thou who camest from above | 18. A charge to keep I have |
| 19. Author of faith, eternal word | 20. Christ whose glory fills the skies |

Answers to Flowers and Shrubs

1 Broom; 2 Agapanthus; 3 Bulrush; 4 Cowslip; 5 Pink; 6 Chrysanthemum;
7 Love-in-a-Mist; 8 Phlox; 9 Canterbury Bells; 10 Sunflower; 11 Hollyhock; 12 Hosta;
13 Sweet William; 14 Foxglove; 15 Forget-me-not; 16 Golden Rod; 17 Morning Glory;
18 Viola; 19 Busy Lizzie; 20 Burdock

Laughter – the best medicine!

“Laughter is the brush that sweeps away the cobwebs of the heart” *Mort Walker*

“Laughter helps to bring out the sunshine on a cloudy day” *Francis Gay*

Let's hope there will always be room for laughter in our lives, whatever our situation.

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 8, which will be out on 1st July, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, or by phone 01938 850514, or by post to “Brynteg”, Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 28th June. All contributions welcome. (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514).