

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 10

News and Updates

1. We send **good wishes** to all who will be celebrating birthdays this week, and to those of you who are not feeling 100% at this time. We're pleased to see both Richard and John out and about and recovering well.

2. **Sunday Worship** – Welshpool held its first ‘lockdown’ service on 26th July, when 31 worshippers gathered, spaced 2 metres apart, for Holy Communion conducted by Revd Marian. There could be no singing, spoken responses, exchanging the Peace, chatting or socialising – for some, perhaps a handicap – but we were able to appreciate the liturgy, the message, and being able to share communion again - after so many weeks a special and moving experience and a step towards ‘normality’ whatever that turns out to be. Our grateful thanks are extended to Revd Marian for being with us to lead us, and to Derek, whose untiring work, wading through so many sets of guidelines and ensuring they were all followed, enabled us to worship with minimum risk. We are looking forward to our next services on Sunday 2nd August at 10.45am, when Graham will lead us and on Sunday 9th when Revd Marian will be with us again. Our Home Worship Sheets continue to be prepared for those unable to join us.

3. **Opening for Individual Prayer** – now that our Sunday worship has resumed, our mid-week opening for Individual Prayer has been rescheduled to Wednesdays, from 10 until 12 and 2 until 4. (We are no longer open on Mondays and Thursdays.)

4. **Welcome Service** – the Circuit Welcome Service for Revd Jackie Evans will be conducted by Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, Chair of the Wales Synod, and will take place on Thursday 3rd September at 7pm at Welshpool. Because of the current regulations and the need for social distancing, we will have to restrict numbers attending to our maximum allowed capacity (50-55), including the Meeting Room, where the service will be relayed on the screen. Admittance will be by ticket only – details of how to reserve your place will be published in the next issue of “In Touch”.

5. **Budget Management Course** – From our CAP volunteers: “After all these months of lockdown and people being furloughed, we are now looking to set up a Budget Management Course for people who have money problems or who can’t make their budget balance. It will be run by CAP trained volunteers. We are not saying we can sort your money problems out but we can listen and hopefully we can point you in the right direction. We are looking at the end of September early October to start a three night course. The course will be held hopefully in the Gallery of the Methodist Church with social distancing and hand sanitising in place. It's completely free and confidential. You have nothing to lose. Give one of the team a ring on 01938 580067 or 07398276155.”

6. **Yamaha Keyboard**, with stand, now surplus to requirements and looking for a new home, in exchange for a small donation to church funds. Tel: 01938 850514.

Marking Loss – a Litany of Lament

(From "Beyond Exile: a service to celebrate a return to public worship", Methodist website)

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.

Day followed night, every week had a Sunday
and that was the day for church.

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.

We made our plans, we held our meetings,
kept the roof on the church and the show on the road,

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.

We would see colleagues, friends and loved ones again
and we would embrace, laugh and share stories as we always have.

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

And now, we know something new.

We know that the world is not ours to control,
and that our plans are confounded by the smallest microbe.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land.

And now, we know something new.

We know that the church is not committees, agendas and buildings,
it is us, in homes, streets, hospitals throughout the world.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land.

And now, we know something new.

We only have today with those we love, today is the day
to say 'I love you', to mend an argument, to hold on tight.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land.

From the Newsletter of the Fellowship of Christian Motorcyclists: August 2020

(An extract)

"... The routine of our daily lives, including our Sundays, has been challenged. New terminology has become commonplace – 'lockdown', 'pandemic', 'social distancing', 'isolation', 'vulnerable people', 'domestic violence' – to be swiftly followed by 'community spirit', 'zoom call', 'volunteer', 'sacrifice'. Sunday morning worship has been extended to the whole week as various segments of a service are planned, recorded and posted in the cloud to consume as and when convenient. People who have not stepped foot in a physical church building for years are now 'attending' a service. Our local Methodist minister reports he has gone from 120 attending his service on a Sunday to over 500 tuning in during the course of the week. Parents of young children and elderly less mobile people tied at home are now able to join in groups using technology. Has a 'new normal' arrived? As lock down starts to ease, I have heard so many people say they don't want to go back to the way things were. The change of routine forced upon us in 2020 has disrupted our lives and we can't gloss over the tragedy of events, but we can have our routines and traditions shaken. Our Lord can use the circumstances we find ourselves in for good. Even the church can go into expansion mode as it reaches out to meet the needs of communities around it, and becomes tangible, real, accessible and able to compete for attention in modern society."

Thought for the Week

(Sent to me by a friend, and written by his friend, Revd David Fleming, a retired Anglican priest who has held a number of positions, including Chaplain General of Prisons 1994-2001)

We don't meet people by accident. They are meant to cross our path for a reason.

July 20th was the festival of St Margaret of Antioch. Legend has it she was a female dragon slayer, now long forgotten but during the mediaeval period one of the most famous saints. It also happens she was patron saint of my first church in Liverpool. I went there to begin my training as a Priest. I say begin because even at 83 I am still learning. Anyway I went there straight from School, National Service and College and I wasn't prepared for a lot of things. I was particularly unprepared for people who came and begged for money. I found it hard to distinguish those who were genuine and those who were not, so I guess I tried to put off giving out money as much as possible. One day, after a service, I spotted a man crossing the church car park. I knew somehow that he would come and ask me for money. Sure enough, he came straight up to me and opened up with "Is this the Catholic Church?" Now at other times I might have said, 'Well in our creed we say we are part of the Holy Catholic Church' but I didn't and quite deliberately to get rid of him I said "No – this isn't the Roman Catholic Church, it is up that road just over there." I half expected him to go away with his tail between his legs but he didn't. He simply said, "I don't expect it matters – here's half a crown, please give it to the next person who comes and asks you for money!" I was the one who slunk away! I don't know if you remember that bit in Hebrews that says 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Hebrews 13:2). I still reckon to this day that I entertained an angel who taught me a very real lesson about serving people.

So watch out. YOUR angel may be on its way!

I kept in touch with my vicar long after I left that parish, so when his wife told me he was desperately ill in hospital in Doncaster, I went to visit him. I arrived a bit before visiting hours but asked the Sister if I could go in. She took me to a four-bed ward and said 'He's there'. I thought she'd made a mistake. There were only two patients in the ward and the one she pointed to certainly wasn't him. He was just a 'husk' of a man, very, very gaunt and very, very weak. Anyway, I spoke his name and sure enough his eyes opened and he smiled as he recognised me. I sat down beside him and we began to talk about old times, our families, and what is happening to the Church. But all the time I had this inner turmoil about what illness had done to this giant of a man. When the proper visiting time began a young woman came into the ward, came up to Frank, and gave him a hug and a kiss and a card. She was so cheerful, and grateful to Frank. It turned out that her father had been in the next bed to Frank. He too had been desperately ill, but Frank, from his own bed and out of his own weakness had been able to speak with him, and when his wife and this daughter had come, Frank had prayed with them and for them, and given them the comfort and strength to help them over the sadness of their loved one's death. She had made a special journey to thank Frank for that ministry given from his own infirmity. My vicar was their Angel.

So watch out. YOU may need to be someone's angel today!

From Barbara R: "Time" (*Veronica Pagel*)

A baby is born; a baby cries; time goes by in a sigh.
Schooling, working, marriage; too soon they say goodbye.

Time is not important when you're young and fancy-free.
But time is of the essence when you're older, just like me.

The ticking of the seconds, the chiming of the hours;
Some folk want to stop time, but it's not within their powers.

Time goes by - "time after time" - they've made it into a song,
But what is time when you're all alone? Just on, and on, and on.

Forty, fifty, sixty - the decades slip away.
But there's time to do what you must do - don't sit and just decay.

So make time for people; make time to do much good.
Don't say "My time is limited", or say "I wish I could".

Just get on and do it. Fill your time with joy and hope.
It's surprising, time spent caring will always help you cope.

Time is Oh! So precious! Spend time with those you love.
Time would not exist at all, but for the One above.

From Betty: *from Helen Mellicost's 'One Hundred Graces'*

I was regretting the past and fearing the future.
Suddenly God was speaking.
"My name is 'I AM'". I waited.

God continued: "When you live in the past, with its mistakes and regrets, it is hard.
I am not there. My name is not 'I was'.

When you live in the future, with its problems and fears, it is hard.
I am not there. My name is not 'I will be'.

When you live in the moment, it is not hard.
I am here. My name is 'I AM'.

A Prayer of Augustine

O God, make me beautiful within – it is the beauty most worthy of Thy name, and it is made by the thoughts we think. There is only one Kingdom worthy of the name – it is the Kingdom of Heaven. But is it not also the kingdom of man's mind? For the Kingdom of heaven is within us. When our thoughts and intentions are in harmony with God's will, we shall express them in action. The Kingdom of Heaven will have come.

Quote (*source unknown*)

"I believe that for everyone in the world there will come an hour of destiny – or, if you will, of self-fulfilment.

There will be – unless we finally say 'no' to God and lose all hope and faith – an opportunity to fulfil that purpose for which God brought us into being."

The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland's July project

Throughout July, the Hymn Society has been publishing on its website a hymn and reflection for each day of the month, with various contributors. The one for 26th when this issue of "In Touch" was being put together, seemed particularly relevant, as earlier in the day we had met for the first time for many weeks, but were unable to greet each other with a handshake or a hug, or exchange the Peace as we shared Communion.

"A Touching Place" (Methodist Hymns Old and New 121; John Bell and Graham Maule)

The contributor, Ann Harrison writes: "The opening line 'Christ's is the world in which we move' affirms that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it; then we're reminded of the call of Jesus to love our neighbour and to care for people in need – the poor, the marginalised, the suffering.... 'people riddled with doubt'

The Gospels frequently tell of Jesus reaching out and touching someone to heal them or bless them, and in the chorus of this hymn we sing:

*To the lost Christ shows his face,
To the unloved he gives his embrace,
To those who cry in pain or disgrace,
Christ makes, with his friends, a touching place.*

At this time of pandemic and social distancing, it's poignant to be reminded of the potency of touch. Kathy Galloway, a former leader of the Iona Community, writing about prayer with laying-on of hands says that touch, received in a non-threatening way, 'comes as a real liberation ... an experience of grace, a moment of making whole'. We all understand the value of a sympathetic hug. How hard it has been for those bereaved during this pandemic to have to keep their distance from those they longed to comfort physically. Yet what a wonder, that staff in busy hospital wards sat holding the hands of the dying.

As our churches reopen for worship, we may not be able to share the Peace with each other physically, but as the people of God, we know ourselves embraced by Christ and called to share his healing touch in imaginative ways.

John Bell and the late Graham Maule set their words to a beautiful traditional Scottish melody, 'Dream Angus'. Graham's mother, having sung him this Gaelic lullaby in his early years, sang it again at his bedside in hospital shortly before he died of cancer last year, and it was sung again by a solo soprano voice at the service of thanksgiving for Graham's life in Glasgow.

So let us ponder anew how we, the friends of Christ, can show his love, comfort, and care to the lost, the unloved, the grieving or despairing."

"Take Heart" - from Leah's 'Friendship Book'

Do not despair when things look grey; just hold your courage high,
It may be bad but stick it out; you'll win through by and by.
For life is full of ups and downs, not roses all the way,
And even though a cloud appears, keep smiling come what may.
Don't think that you're the only one who's had it really rough,
There are lots of people in the world who've had more than enough.
But strength is given by unseen hands if you will stop and pray,
And God will lead you through the storm towards a brighter day.

From Pat P: "Recipe for Good Health"

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.

For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others.

To lose weight, let go of stress, hatred, anger, discontentment, and the need to control others.

For poise, walk with knowledge and self-esteem.

To strengthen your arms, hug at least three people a day.

Touch someone with your love.

To strengthen your heart, forgive yourselves and others.

Have a Healthy Day!

"A Tourist's Prayer" (found by Derek in a 1970s St Mary's Parish magazine)

Heavenly Father, look down on us, your humble obedient tourist servants, who are doomed to travel this earth taking photographs, writing postcards, buying souvenirs and walking around in drip-dry underwear.

We beseech thee O Lord, to see that our plane is not Hi-jacked, our baggage not lost and our overweight luggage and illegal imports are unnoticed.

Lead us to good inexpensive restaurants, where the wine is included in the price of the meal, and the staff speak our tongue.

Give us the wisdom to tip correctly in foreign currencies we do not understand.

Grant us the strength to visit museums, palaces and cathedrals, and if perchance we skip an historic monument to seek private pleasure, have mercy on us, for our flesh is weak.

Protect our wives from bargains they do not need or cannot afford – lead them not into temptation for they know not what they do.

Keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them with us – save them from making fools of themselves at social gatherings. Above all, do not forgive them, for they know exactly what they do!

Finally, when our wanderings are over, grant us the favour of finding someone who will look at our movies and photographs and listen to our prattle, so that our journeys as tourists will not have been in vain.

Amen.

"Methodist Talent..." (Passed on by Graham)

A strongman at a circus squeezed the juice from a lemon between his hands.

He then said to the audience:

"I will offer £100 to anyone in the audience who can squeeze another drop from this lemon."

A thin scholarly looking woman came forward, picked up the lemon, strained hard and managed to get a drop.

The strongman was amazed.

He paid the woman and asked: "What is the secret of your strength?"

"Practice", the woman replied. "I was the treasurer for a Methodist Church for thirty-two years!"

Laughter, the best medicine!

Here are more statements about the Bible written by children. They have not been retouched or corrected – incorrect spelling has been left in.

1. David was a Hebrew king who was skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in biblical times.
2. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the magna carta.
3. When the three wise guys from the east side arrived they found Jesus in the manager.
4. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
5. St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.
6. Jesus enunciated the golden rule, which says to do unto others before they do one to you. He also explained a man doth not live by sweat alone.
7. It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.
8. The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels.
9. The epistels were the wives of the apostles.
10. One of the oppossums was St. Matthew who was also a taximan.
11. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage.
12. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

And more sentences from church bulletins or from announcements in services

1. Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
2. Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
3. Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
4. The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
5. The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.
6. This evening at 7pm there will be hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
7. The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.
8. The Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet on Thursday at 7pm. Please use the back door.
9. Weight Watchers will meet at 7pm at the Presbyterian Church. Please use the large double doors at the side entrance.
10. The Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: 'I Upped My Pledge – Up Yours.'

Answers to Puzzles in Issue 9

From the Supermarket

1 Single cream 2 Cheese 3 Large eggs 4 Bread 5 Self-raising flour 6 Tomatoes 7 Toilet rolls
8 Soap 9 Kitchen towel 10 Bin bags 11 Cling film 12 Gravy salt 13 Grapes 14 Toothpaste
15 Chicken pieces

Desserts

1 Summer Pudding 2 Banana split 3 Cheese board 4 Bread 5 Baked Alaska 6 Sundae
7 Spotted Dick 8 Bakewell tart 9 Trifle 10 Torte 11 Knickerbocker glory 12 Rhubarb crumble
13 Charlotte Russe 14 Waffle 15 Jelly

Quiz Time:

Seaside Holidays – *things associated with holidays by the sea (from Oswestry Methodists)*

1. Sounds as if this tree provides things for playing (5, 5)
2. Mascara vanished in temporary accommodation (7)
3. Not amateur, nor ladies with help – to walk on? (9)
4. Between one.....and a hard place with a puddle? (4, 4)
5. A Pisces with fragments, once in newspaper? (4, 3, 5)
6. Edit around – it comes and goes (*anagram*) (4)
7. A little glamour and some ping-pong for luxury camping (8)
8. Sounds like a kind of doll joining people stood in a line (8)
9. No Nuns toil at using this in the hot sunshine (*anagram*) (6, 6)
10. Sounds like a just reason for a cycle outing (10, 4)
11. Ted's UK AC bedpan (*anagram*) (6, 3, 5)
12. Stars and cast Les found together, dodgy build (4, 7)
13. A pack of cards for person in charge of a meeting (4, 5)
14. Little Donald has the means to unlock a small trek (6, 4)
15. A mad kind of putting (5, 4)

In the Garden – *anagrams. One word unless (2) after clue. (From Betty H)*

1. HERBAL WE ROW
2. SAP ED
3. LA NEW WORM
4. LIFE ERR ZIT
5. BEES ED SOX
6. CARE WANTING (2)
7. ETCH GESTURED
8. HOPE PIES
9. LET ROW
10. COT MOPS
11. BRAT WE TUT (2)
12. TAP IN TOPS (2)
13. VOLES GRANGED (2)
14. CREATES US
15. CARD FLO ME (2)

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 11, which will be out on 12th August, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, or by phone 01938 850514, or by post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 8th. All contributions welcome. (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514).