

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 11

News and Updates

1. **Wedding Anniversary celebrations!** Congratulations to Bryan and Joan Langford who will be celebrating their Diamond Wedding on 13th August, to Michael and June Taylor who celebrate their Golden Wedding on 17th, and to Terry and Jane Postings who celebrate their Diamond Wedding on 20th. We send them, and all with anniversaries and birthdays in the coming days, our very best wishes.

2. **Sad news** – the Revd Derek Bedford, a minister in this circuit in the 1980s passed away on 31st July, aged 87, in a Nursing Home at Ross on Wye, where he had been cared for in recent months. The family funeral is on 14th August at the Green Lane Burial Field, Abermule, and, as soon as conditions allow, his wife Meryl plans to arrange a Thanksgiving Memorial Service at Newtown Methodist Church, where Derek was much involved in the planning and building of the ‘new’ church in 1984.

3. **Open for Individual Prayer** – each Wednesday, from 10 until 12 and 2 until 4. We extend our thanks to our team of volunteer ‘stewards, in attendance as required by current guidelines.

4. **Morning Worship, 16th August** – this will be Revd Michael’s last service following his decision to finally “retire” and offer no more preaching appointments on the Plan. We will be joined by representatives from Newtown Methodist Church, and if necessary we shall be relaying the service into the Meeting Room if we cannot accommodate everyone in the church. The following **Sunday, 23rd**, Revd Marian will lead our service of Holy Communion in the church.

5. **Welcome Service for Revd Jacquie Evans** – this Circuit Service will take place at Welshpool on Thursday 3rd September at 7pm, led by Revd Dr Stephen Wigley. The need for social distancing means that we can only accommodate a congregation of 55 maximum, using both the church and the Meeting Room. Admission is by ticket only, and invitations have gone out to all Circuit and Church Officers, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, with responses due in by 17th August. If you wish to attend, please let me know so that the remaining tickets can then be allocated.

Thanks, Janice 01938 850514

6. **Walking with Friends** – resumes on Saturday 22nd August with a walk to Powis Castle and beyond, leaving church at 11am. Please bring a picnic lunch.

7. **Future Church and Community Group activities** – many of us are wondering when we can resume our usual activities – Coffee Mornings, Lunches, Playgroup, Prayer & Bible Reading, Mid-Week Movies, Gallery Group, Fellowship etc, and community groups who use our premises have been enquiring when they can restart their meetings. At the moment we don’t know when this will be, as we are waiting for guidance from the Welsh Assembly and Methodist Church. Apart from worship and prayer, currently only outdoor gatherings are allowed. Let’s hope we hear soon!

International Left-handers Day, 13th August

Are you left-handed? Left-handers represent only 10% of the world's population – the highest rates, 10% or more occur in N. America, Australia, New Zealand and western Europe, and the lowest, 4-6%, in Asia, Africa and S. America. Several theories attempt to explain the geographical variation in the prevalence of left-handedness – without any agreed conclusion.

In 1976 the American Dean R. Campbell founded Left-handers International to celebrate the uniqueness of left-handers, and since then International Left-handers Day has been celebrated annually on 13th August.

Many studies on the differences between right and left-handers have been undertaken, with some interesting results. It has been shown that left-handers score higher when it comes to creativity, imagination and intuition, and they are also better at rhythm and visualisation. The belief that there is a link between talent and left-handedness has a long history, and left-handed people are more likely to be geniuses. (20% of members of MENSA are left-handers). Some notable left-handers from history are Aristotle, Leonardo de Vinci, Mozart, Lewis Carroll, Mark Twain, Marie Curie and Benjamin Britten.

A study in 2014 showed that left-handers are better drivers than right-handers – probably, it concluded, because cars are designed for right-handed drivers, and left-handers need to pay more attention to detail. The study also wondered if left-handers are more likely to be elected President of America as 8 of the last 15 presidents have been left-handers, including Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barak Obama.

In some sports, it is harder for right-handed people to adjust to competing against left-handers, so left-handers have an advantage. Left-handed sportsmen include tennis players John McEnroe and Martina Navratilova, boxers Joe Frazier and Joe Calzage, golfers Bubba Watson and Phil Mickelson, snooker players Jimmy White and Mark Williams, and cricketers Gary Sobers, Brian Lara and David Gower.

Researchers also believe that left-handers are 'wired' in a way that makes them able to recover from a stroke better than right-handers, because, in a left-handed person the part of the brain in charge of staying alert can spread out on both sides, while in right-handers, it's only on the right side.

Left-handers will tell you that the world is designed for right-handed people and lefties have to endure lots of little daily struggles right-handers might not think twice about – using scissors, opening cans with a can opener, peeling vegetables with a peeler, writing in a spiral notebook or ring binder, playing a guitar (unless it's one made especially for left-handers)....

So, if you're a left-hander, Happy International Left-handers Day! You are in good company – including Prince William and the late Queen Mother!

Other notable dates in the coming days in August

- 19th World Humanitarian Day
- 20th World Mosquito Day, commemorating the discovery in 1897 by British doctor Sir Ronald Ross of the link between mosquitoes and malaria transmission
- 23rd International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
- 26th Women's Equality Day

Sing Praises! Julia's choice of hymns for Monday's 17th and 24th August

'As I am watching the harvest in the fields around me this summer, I have chosen for this issue, two traditional harvest celebration hymns. The first, "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (STF 100) is a joyfully nostalgic one from many school assemblies. It is rather lengthy as we sing the first verse as a refrain after every group of listed items, but I don't think we shall mind if we are singing this with our cup of coffee in our kitchens. The writer, Cecil Frances Alexander, was married to a parson and ran the Sunday school, but could find very few hymns to use with her young charges that they could understand in relation to their own experiences, while at the same time learning about the gospel, so she set about writing hymns for them herself. Her main published work is the collection entitled 'Hymns for Little Children' and in all, she wrote about 400 hymns and poems. Indeed, she pops up so often in the hymnody of our chapels. She wrote the lovely carol 'Once in Royal David's City' in order to shape the story of the nativity. In 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' she has collected together the story of creation. She also wrote 'There is a Green Hill far away'. It's strange to imagine growing up without these staples in our worship. She died in 1895 and is buried in Derry cemetery, Londonderry.

'Come you Thankful People, Come' (STF 123) is not my own favourite, but I know this is another treasured hymn. It was written by Henry Alford, a renowned scholar, who was brought up by his curate father and entered the ministry himself, but refused high office in the church. As with other harvest hymns, he compares the crop of the field with our selves, as the ultimate harvest – "Come with all your angels, come; bring that glorious harvest home." Henry Alford died, aged 60, in 1870.

Both these writers were well-respected by other members of the poetic and hymn writing communities of their day. Harvest Festivals were really only just becoming a feature of village life at this time. New hymns were needed for these celebrations and new forms of service were written. (It had been in 1843, that Revd Robert Hawker invited parishioners to a special thanksgiving in Morwenstow, Cornwall. If you want to read about a really elaborately decorated church, we find in 'Kilvert's Diaries 1870-79' a description of the way in which Francis Kilvert's parishioners dressed the church at Clyro.) Today, harvest festivals are the most popular and still the largest attended services in our church and village calendars.

Please pray for our church officers, who continue to reach out to us all with this newsletter and the many other ways they have served us since the lockdown began in March.

My best wishes, Julia Francis'

"Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2)

This is the theme of Roger Jones' (Christian Music Ministries) August mailing, which some of us receive and which can be found on the CMM website. It reminded me of a chorus I used to sing as a child in Sunday school. You may remember it...

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus; look full in his wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.*

However we picture Jesus today (probably so differently to when we were children) we can still find these words of reassurance comforting in these challenging times.

From Revd Marian: “Rainbows

During lockdown, so many people have been grateful for the care they have received and rainbows have appeared everywhere as signs of gratitude. I've always loved rainbows and, over the years, I've seen not only 'double rainbows' but once, in Leeds, the sky looked like oil on water as the rainbow colours melded across the sky. A strange sight!

The rainbow appeared as a sign of God's solemn promise to Noah 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.”

You'll know the story of the building of the Ark, I'm sure – this is the updated version!

Early in the 21st century, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in Britain, and said, “Once again the earth has become wicked and over-populated, and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans, thy sons and their wives.”

He gave Noah the blueprints saying, “You have 6 months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights.”

Six months later the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard – but no Ark.

“Noah!” he roared. “I'm about to start the rain. Where is the Ark?”

“Forgive me, Lord,” said Noah, “but things have changed.

I needed a building permit. I've been arguing with the inspector about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim I've violated the local byelaws by building the Ark in my yard and exceeding the height limitations. We had to go to an Appeal Tribunal for a decision.

Then the National Grid demanded a bond be deposited for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they wouldn't listen.

Getting the wood was another problem. There's a ban on cutting local trees in order to save the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls – but they wouldn't listen either!

When I started gathering the animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued the accommodation was too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space. I am required to apply for 834 different licenses to keep wild beasts on private property.

Then I was told I couldn't build the Ark until an environmental impact study had been conducted on your proposed flood. Further, the pitch to water-proof the Ark is a banned substance now as it is damaging to the environment.

Immigration is checking the status of most of the people who want to work. The scaffolding to build the superstructure is not approved by the Health and Safety Executive and its use is forbidden except for private structures of less than 5 cubits...

The trades unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only Union workers with Ark-building experience.

To make matters worse, the Fraud Office and the RSPCA seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species.

So forgive me Lord, but it would take at least 100 years for me to finish this Ark.”

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and the rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, “You mean you're not going to destroy the world?”

“No,” said the Lord, “the government beat me to it.”

From Gordon: "Empire, Vampire or Umpire?"

'Empire' could be defined as a collection of countries under the control of a central authority or governance, often achieved through conquest, but also marriage, negotiation or threat.

Over the centuries there have been as many as 150 empires. The British one happened to be one of the largest, mostly thanks to India. Perhaps we should regard them as the growing pains of humanity, not as some one-off aberration. Do they reflect those oft encountered human failings, the wish of the powerful to remain so, and the wish of the powerless to become powerful?

Here are some of those empires, and to make it easier, they can, with a bit of effort, be sung to 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', and best sung with a bit of gravitas.

1. German, Dutch and Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, Ming Dynasty and Mexican, Umayyad Caliphate.
2. Greek and Pax Britannica, Persian and Median, Brazil and Indo Sindhian, Pax Romana and Magyar.
3. Holy Roman, Japanese, Russian, Yuan, Belgian, Han Dynasty, American, Achaemenid Empire.
4. Ottoman, Tang Dynasty, Iberian Union, Golden Horde Khanate, Yugoslavian and Greek.
5. Babylonian and Swedish, Polish and Byzantine, Tibetan and Egyptian, Indus and Parthian.

(The first person to submit the start and finish dates of the above will receive a pack of 'Smarties'!)

It is perhaps unwise to dwell too long on empires' past shortcomings as we so often overlook the many achievements. Mirroring human failings, there is a certain inevitability about them.

Today's empires are different, but the traditional types are still around for the nostalgic. They are just as threatening if we lower our guard, and their power is less easy to challenge. They impact every aspect of our lives, for good or bad, and against them military might is pointless. Their greatest enemy is public opinion, something we easily overlook. They control food supplies, infrastructures, communications, media, and own more than we dare to acknowledge. They are the major global companies and 'oil and criminal wealth funds'. The taxes they evade could be a great benefit to our public services or improve life for those at the bottom of the ladder.

What a contrast with the teachings of Jesus, who came to serve not to be served. 'We must be like children' and 'love others as ourselves,' he said. Hardly the stuff of empires, is it? Or is it?

From Terry J: How not to boil eggs (a true story!)

Eileen's late cousin's husband Alfred worked in a factory and was a very practical man. People often asked him to do repair jobs.

One day a man brought him an electric kettle which he said would not work, and asked Alf if he could fix it. Alf looked at it, tried it out, and could find nothing wrong.

"What is the problem?" he asked the owner.

"Oh," said his colleague, "it will not boil eggs."

Alfred was astonished by the answer.

"No," said the man, "I just get it to the boil, put my eggs in for the 5 minutes they need, but it turns itself off before they're ready!"

From Pat P: A Good Recipe for Every Day

Into each day's menu put the following:

12 parts of faith, 11 parts of patience, 10 of courage, 9 of work, 8 of hope, 7 of fidelity, 6 of open mindedness, 5 of kindness, 4 of rest, 3 of prayer, 2 of meditation and 1 of well-selected resolution.

Then add a teaspoon of good spirits,
A dash of fun,
A pinch of folly,
A sprinkling of play,
and a heaped cupful of good humour.

Next, pour love generously into the whole mixture, and cook thoroughly.

Garnish with a few smiles and a sprig of joy,
Then serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness.

Now isn't that a Good Recipe for us all?!!

From Andrea

Pleasures of a Pot Garden

(Andrea Davies 2020)

Fuchsias flutter long lashes,
Coyly flirting with hunky beans,
Broad leaved and bulging with vigour;
Runner beans lazily twine
Around their leaning canes, dangling
Long pods, rough riff-raff,
Gangly amongst the scarlet blooms
That flame around their scaffold frame.
Elegant agapanthus slowly,
Slowly start unfurling petals,
Blue and blue and steely white;
Behind a primly pink pot-rose
Nasturtiums splash untidily,
Tipping their red and orange horns
Against the lushly varied green
Of hostas; frilly fingered ferns
Drape the fading marguerites;
My garden smiles right back at me

"If you didn't exist..." (From the Methodist Prayer Handbook 2019/20)

God, if you didn't exist, what animals would Noah have to fill his Ark?

And in the sky, would it be light or dark?

If you didn't exist, I couldn't imagine a world without seasons,

No rain or snow or Christmas trees, no sun or flowers for the bees.

If you didn't exist, I'm sure the stars wouldn't twinkle at night,

And the moon wouldn't shine quite as bright.

If you didn't exist, I couldn't imagine being here, with no friends or pets living near.

If you didn't exist, I would feel very dark and sad inside,
because I wouldn't have you by my side.

Written by Amelie, a pupil at St Peter's Methodist Primary School, Canterbury

From Graham: A Bit of Nostalgia... (Pat Fairless)

Back in the days of tanners and bobs,
When Mothers had patience and Fathers had jobs,
When football teams and families wore hand-me-down shoes,
And TV had only two channels to choose.

Back in the days of three penny bits,
When schools employed nurses to search for your nits,
When snowballs were harmless; ice slides were permitted.
And all of your jumpers were warm and hand knitted.

Back in the days of hot ginger beers,
When children remained so for more than six years,
When children respected what older folks said,
And pot was a thing you kept under the bed.

Back in the days of Listen with Mother,
When neighbours were friendly and talked to each other.
When cars were so rare you could play in the street,
When Doctors made house calls and Police walked the beat.

Back in the days of Milligan's Goons,
When butter was butter and songs all had tunes.
It was dumplings for dinner and trifle for tea,
And your annual break was a day by the sea.

Back in the days of Dixon's Dock Green,
Crackerjack pens and Lyons ice cream.
When children could freely wear national Health glasses,
And teachers all stood at the FRONT of their classes.

Back in the days of rocking and reeling,
When mobiles were things that you hung from the ceiling;
When woodwork and pottery got taught in the schools,
And everyone dreamed of a win on the pools.

Back in the days when I was a lad,
I can't help but smile for the fun that I had.
Hopscotch and roller skates; snowballs to lob,
Back in the days of tanners and bobs!

To make you smile!

It was a sad day when the children's pet hamster died. Eight year old Hannah decided a formal funeral was called for, so she obtained a small box, and a little hole was dug at the bottom of the back garden.

Eventually Hannah, with her five-year-old brother Thomas by her side stood there with hands clasped and eyes closed, giving thanks for all the joy and fun their late pet had brought them. They ended with a fervent "Amen".

Then five-year-old Thomas added, "Oh, Jesus, do be careful, and put your gloves on before you pick her up – because she bites!"

Answers to Puzzles in Issue 10

Seaside Holidays

1 Beach games 2 Caravan 3 Promenade 4 Rock pool 5 Fish and Chips 6 Tide 7 Glamping
8 Barbecue 9 Suntan Lotion 10 Fairground ride 11 Bucket and spade 12 Sandcastle
13 Deck chair 14 Donkey ride 15 Crazy golf

In the Garden

1 Wheelbarrow 2 Spade 3 Lawnmower 4 Fertilizer 5 Seed-boxes 6 Watering Can
7 Hedge-cutters 8 Hosepipe 9 Trowel 10 Compost 11 Water Butt 12 Plant pots - *apologies!*
13 Garden Gloves 14 Secateurs 15 Cold Frame

Quiz Time: *(thanks to friends from Oswestry Methodist Church)*

The NHS – names and items associated with our NHS

1. Sounds like musical drama given the cold shoulder (9)
2. For breath, put off little Venice to another time? (10)
3. A short shire county needed on the wards (4)
4. Deceive Asian ruler with beverage? (10)
5. Conflict with Roman 500? (4)
6. Move it, varying times maybe, it's still a job (5, 4)
7. Sounds like an agricultural establishment, and a body of water? (8)
8. Initially – good looking on very elegant sisters (Wear them!) (6)
9. Short direction to begin with, is able – to show things inside? (4)
10. Sounds like he was her last partner? (1-3)
11. Phantom's accessory? (4)
12. Helpful IT item, with greasy medication, not easy to get just now? (11)
13. Once tripe in other form? Usually go there first (9)
14. Could be a bus, could be a car, could be in the corridor (7)
15. Sir in east can make up a cleanser (9)

Sports and Games

1. Inferior kind of pottery made in Stoke? (9)
2. The mint with the hole? (4)
3. Missiles with feathers? (5)
4. Foundation and partner of Tommy Cannon? (8)
5. Shampoo long hair inside? (4)
6. Pot ale enjoyed in a court? (6)
7. Worthless dog with cod related fish? (7)
8. Insect with chirping sound (7)
9. T.V. Company taking a downward plunge? (9)
10. Gain cone while on water (8)
11. Made by VW, hopefully not under par? (4)
12. Routine inn game? (14)
13. Exhibit yourself, leaping over obstacles (11)
14. Shorten and remove Religious Education from using waste material again? (7)
15. Erect to enclose and secure garden space? (7))

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 12, which will be out on 26th August, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, or by phone 01938 850514, or by post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 22nd. All contributions welcome. (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514).