

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 12

News and Updates

1. **Congratulations** to Elwyn and Gwenno (one of the newest members of Jubilate) who were married on 15th August – such lovely news! We wish them many more years of happiness together.

2. **Married in 1956!** Congratulations to Tony and Janet Deacon who will be celebrating their 64th Wedding Anniversary on 8th September (and Tony is 85 on 4th). We send them, and all with anniversaries and birthdays in the coming days, our very best wishes.

3. **Thanks from Revd Michael:** “Thank you so much to those who spoke and to the Church for the sentiment and kind words expressed at the close of my final preaching service on Sunday. The speeches were quite a surprise, especially with the comments read from the letter of my former colleague Terry Hurst. That was a nice touch and very thoughtful. June and I appreciate the gifts celebrating our Golden Wedding Anniversary, the two Portmeirion mugs are superb and chocolates are always welcome. We were so surprised to receive the gift tokens which were totally unexpected – how kind of you all; thank you. We were also pleased to receive greeting cards for our Anniversary. I have always set great store by receiving cards for special occasions and it was such a pleasure to receive one from the church and from members of the congregation. Thank you. I think the service went well, and Audio-Visuals arranged by Derek made such a difference to what might otherwise have been a struggle to make a fitting final service. I hope the final hymn, which was a favourite anthem at one of my previous churches (*You shall go out with joy*) enabled people to go home with a spring in their step! Thank you most sincerely, for your prayers, support, good wishes, and gift. Michael.”

4. **Sunday Worship** – on Sunday 30th we will be joining the congregation at St Mary’s at 11am. Our service on 6th September at 10.45am will be led by Terry Jobling. Worship sheets are still being prepared for those unable to be with us.

5. **Welcome to Revd Jacquie** – Revd Jacquie Evans takes up her appointment as our Circuit Superintendent Minister, living at the Newtown manse, on 1st September. Those of you who receive the Circuit Magazine will have read that she grew up in a Welsh family, and worked in social work education throughout North and Mid Wales for many years before entering the ministry. She was ordained in 2013, and her previous appointments have been in the Aire and Calder district, and more recently, the Waveney Valley Ecumenical Partnership in East Anglia. She is also involved in Girlguiding UK, and is hoping to continue this interest in mid-Wales. We also welcome her husband Jon Purcell who comes from a long-established Methodist family in Northern Ireland, and was University Librarian and Director of Library Services at Durham University until his retirement in 2017. In 2018 he was appointed to the voluntary post of Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives.

6. Welcome Service, 3rd September at 7pm

The service will be conducted by Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, and representatives of the Circuit, Newtown Cytun, Welshpool Churches Together and Girlguiding will be offering their welcome, to which Revd Jacquie will respond. Hopefully, if you wish to attend, you will have booked. If you haven't, phone 850514 as soon as possible.

From Revd Marian (*This contribution seems appropriate as we welcome Jacquie*)

Some years ago, I went to the United Methodist Church Conference in Kansas to assist at the ordination of a minister who had spent a year as a Probationer Minister in the circuit where I was Superintendent. I was invited to attend the whole of the Conference as a visitor and, for the most part, enjoyed the experience although it was very different from the British Methodist Conference.

One of the discoveries that delighted me was that in the USA each Conference (the ruling body of the church) has a 'Board of Laity' and the role of members of the Board seemed to be supporting the ordained ministers – I'm sure they do more than that, but that was a very visible part of their ministry. They handed out leaflets suggesting ways to 'encourage and celebrate our clergy' and, although there are some things on the list that don't 'fit' with Methodism in Britain, there are others that do.

1. Pray for the minister before Sunday services
2. Give hand written notes and cards (nice notes!)
3. Work with the minister's positive qualities instead of trying to change their negative ones
4. Write down (on paper) the names of those whom you would like the minister to remember in prayer, or who need a visit ... instead of telling them and expecting them to remember
5. Provide workable and pleasant office furniture
6. Annual compensation increases!!
7. Have a work day occasionally in the manse garden, if the minister would appreciate it
8. Provide a meal – brought to their door, either homemade or takeaway (as long as the minister knows beforehand)
9. Could you give a gift card for a meal out, or a gift of money for Christmas and birthdays?
10. It is healthy for stewards to offer a constructive critique and not criticism

The church in America operates very differently: some churches have four ministers, each responsible for a different aspect of the church's life – preaching, pastoral, music, organisation etc.; with smaller churches, a minister could have responsibility for, perhaps, two smaller churches. The stipend (allowance paid for living expenses) increases according to the amount of responsibility and the size of the church, and manses are 'fabulous'! For many years, ministers from the United Kingdom were able to take part in ministerial exchanges with the United Methodist Church ministers and some chose to transfer to the USA. In the same way there were those who came here, particularly as probationers, who elected to stay.

As your new minister takes up her appointment, how can you show your support?

On the Right Lines

(From 'The Beckoner', the newsletter of Beckminster Methodist Church, Wolverhampton)

A few years ago, Upper Arley Church of England First School (situated in the area of the Severn Valley Railway) became a Primary School, and this gave the opportunity to change the school's name and badge. It was decided to keep the name Upper Arley C of E Primary School, but change the school's logo. The children came up with a stylised logo of an engine and a coach on Victoria Bridge across the River Severn. This is also on the large board in School Lane, at the entrance to the school. At a meeting of chairs of the governing bodies for Church schools, the speaker hoped the new badges would show some aspect of the Christian message. Canon Owain Bell thought quickly and replied the badge demonstrated 'The Journey of Life.'

What is it, we wonder, about clergymen and railways, particularly steam railways? The Right Reverend Eric Treacy, Bishop of Wakefield, was a great enthusiast. He had a photographer's line pass and took thousands of photographs which appear in many books. He even had an engine named after him.

(Our own past minister, Revd Martin Dawes, is also a keen enthusiast, and returns to the area regularly in September for the Llanfair/Welshpool Light Railway Steam Extravaganza weekend).

Most of you will be familiar with "Thomas the Tank Engine" and all his friends, Edward, Percy and the naughty trucks. These stories were written by Revd Wilbert Awdry for his son Christopher, and they, with the model engines and track, remain popular still today. Awdry would be amazed if he could see the love that children still have for Thomas.

Another curious thing is that three successive Chief Mechanical Engineers of the London and North Eastern Railway, Patrick Stirling, Nigel Gresley and Henry Ivatt, were all sons of clergymen. These three were responsible for some of the best steam engines ever built.

One clergyman wrote "Clergy are interested in what makes for life-changing experiences ... life is about being alive ... the steam locomotive is the nearest to a living thing that man has ever created ... it combines four of the old elements of the universe: earth, air, fire, water."

Eric Treacy once said that steam engines expressed the pent-up energy, even the anger and frustration, ministers often feel but are seldom able to express.

A vicar was once noticed leaving the vicarage every day just after lunch and cycling to the railway bridge. There he watched the Flying Scotsman pass beneath. When asked about it, he replied that it was the only thing that moved in his parish without him having to push it!

One vicar's wife said she did not understand her husband's passion for railways. She said that he was like a railway train – very hard to deviate from a set path and not at all liking to be diverted along a different route from the planned timetable!

As usual, let the Bible have the last word: *from Isaiah chapter 6*

"The Lord's train filled the temple ... and the house was filled with smoke."

Sing Praises! Julia's choice of hymns for Monday's 31st August and 7th September

'My first choice, for 31st August, is "Eternal Father, strong to save" (StF 517), a great favourite amongst families with relatives in branches of the Royal or Merchant Navy, or who frequently go to sea –from fishing vessels to pleasure craft or water sports. All across the world this hymn is favoured by navies and associated forces. It was written around 1860 by William Whiting in response to his own experiences of tempests at sea, and as an encouragement to a friend about to cross the oceans. It reflects upon the psalms and creation stories, whilst also reminding us of Christ walking on water and stretching out his hand to calm the raging waves. I chose this hymn thinking about how our RNLI have been under great pressure this year, putting their own lives in danger from the elements, as they always have done, but alongside this, facing the additional dangers of infection whilst going about their duties. Coastguards and Lifeguards too have been under pressure. Many beaches were left unmanned earlier in the year and the public seemed generally disregarding of the risk they were placing themselves in. We have been only too aware as the summer has progressed of how much we take for granted many who are volunteers along our coastline. The additional perils of those seeking asylum have added to the number of calls on the bravery of both Navy and volunteers.

On September 7th we consider the feast day of St Mary, which falls on 8th. The beautiful stories found in St Luke's gospel are examined as we seek to understand that young, devout Mother. I have used the words we read as Mary's response to the angel in Luke chapter 1 as baptism preparation tasks for young parents, who would return a week later with their own words describing their initial responses, and the hopes and promises they had thought about for the immediate and long-term future.

In 2005 when I was installed as a lay canon at Hereford Cathedral in a service of amazing ritual and ceremony, the business of the day concluded, and we took up Evening Prayer at the Magnificat. I stood and gazed at the wonders of the building – its arches and carvings, artistry in the altars, metal work, wood – and the devotion of people of faith for so many generations of Christianity. As the organ struck up and the choir voices began to sing, my own heart sprang up and I truly felt those emotions... "My soul doth magnify the Lord... He has regarded the lowliness..."

So our next hymn is Tell out My Soul (StF 186)

Timothy Dudley Smith, who wrote this modern version of the Magnificat in 1962, was a former bishop of Thetford in Norfolk. He has written over 400 hymns, and this one is a favourite of many. He was my lunch companion at a conference in Norwich during his time there – a quiet gentleman, now aged 93. He still sends his family a new Christmas carol written on their cards each December.

Both hymns can be read as prayers if you are struggling to sing on your own, although YouTube, for the technical amongst you, has both.

Small Group Gatherings – following Mark Drakeford's update last Friday 21st, we are told that we can prepare for "small group gatherings", in anticipation of being given the go-ahead at the next Government 3 weekly briefing on 11th September. **Jubilate** members might like to keep Mondays from 14th free – even if only to meet to chat and listen to ourselves singing from recordings we have made in the past.

Holy Helpers (from another "Thought for Week" by Revd David Fleming – see issue 10)

'In the fourteenth century Europe was ravaged by the Black Death and everyone was scared and desperate. Some monks in Germany got together a list of saints who were believed to be particularly effective against various diseases. There were fourteen and they were named "The Holy Helpers". Central to the fourteen were three Virgin Martyrs, St Margaret with the dragon, St Barbara with the tower, and St Catherine with the wheel. The idea soon spread. Sweden added St Dorothy and France the Blessed Virgin Mary. You may have seen them depicted on paintings and screens in churches you have visited. They are a reminder that we are surrounded by 'Holy Helpers' and therefore not alone in whatever we have to face.

I am certain that each of us can look back over our lives and pick out particular people who by their love, their example, their wisdom and their sacrifice have helped us to become what we are and it is important to remember that, and them.

We are not alone. So hold them in your heart and.....

If they have died do as our prayer book suggests "Pray for those whom we love but see no longer." Close your eyes, and picture them as you remember them and thank God for all they gave you. Your Gentle Remembrance will change the world.

If they are distant from you pick up your pen or your phone and start "I thought of you and I just want to thank you..." The rest will come. Your Kind Words will change the world.

If they are near you just reach out your hand and touch theirs and say 'Thank you'. Your Tender Touch will change the world.

And if you think you got here through your own effort look in a mirror and say 'Big head – give me a wider vision.' Your Humble Voice will change the world.

Remember today someone, somewhere, will want you, just as you are, as their 'Holy Helper'. Your Willing Heart will change the world.

And if you don't believe a word I say – just try it – you have nothing to lose – but your world and our world **will** change.'

From Pat P:

What would you say is the most important part of your body?

Some friends were having a discussion about this and Rose said: "The eyes."

"No, the ears," replied Jemima, "so that you can enjoy friendly arguments like this!"

Then Agnes, who was probably the oldest person in the room, added, "I think you're both wrong. To me, the most important part is my shoulder, not because it supports my head, but because it can hold the head of a friend or loved one when they cry."

How true!

Everybody at some time or another needs a shoulder to cry on and a friend to offer that shoulder. People will sometimes forget what you said and what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

From Graham: "The Beauty in a Weed" *(author unknown)*

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read
beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree.
Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown,
for the world was intent on dragging me down.

And if that weren't enough to ruin my day
A young boy out of breath approached me, all tired from play.
He stood right before me with his head tilted down,
and said with great excitement, "Look what I found!"

In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight,
with its petals all worn – not enough rain, or too little light.
Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play.
I faked a small smile and then shifted away.

But instead of retreating he sat next to my side
And placed the flower to his nose and declared with surprise,
"It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful too.
That's why I picked it; here, it's for you!"

The weed before me was dying or dead.
Not vibrant of colours, orange, yellow or red.
But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave.
So I reached for the flower, and replied, "Just what I need."

But instead of him placing the flower in my hand,
He held it mid-air without reason or plan.
It was then that I noticed for the very first time
That weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.

I heard my voice quiver, tears shone like the sun
as I thanked him for picking the very best one.
"You're welcome," he smiled, and then ran off to play,
Unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.

I sat there and wondered how he'd managed to see
a self-pitying woman beneath an old willow tree.
How did he know of my self-indulged plight?
Perhaps from his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight.

Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see
The problem was not with the world; the problem was me.
And for all of those times I myself had been blind,
I vowed to see beauty, and appreciate every second that's mine.

And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose
And breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose,
And smiled as that young boy, another weed in his hand,
Was about to change the life of an unsuspecting old man.

From Helen E: A Nicaraguan Lord's Prayer

Don't say 'Father' if you don't behave like his child each day.

Don't say 'Our' if you only ever think about yourself.

Our Father who art in heaven....

Don't say 'Hallowed be your name' if you don't honour that name.

Don't say 'Your Kingdom come' if you are weighed down by material goods.

Hallowed be your name; Your Kingdom come....

Don't say 'Your will be done' if you don't accept the hard times.

Don't say 'As in heaven' if you only think of earthly matters.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven....

Don't say 'Our daily bread' if you have no concern for the hungry or the sick.

Give us this day our daily bread....

Don't say 'Forgive us our sins' if you remain angry with your brothers.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us....

Don't say 'Lead us not into temptation' if you intend to continue sinning.

Don't say 'Deliver us from evil' if you won't make a stand against injustice.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil....

Don't say 'Amen' without considering the words of your prayer.

For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.

"The Earth is the Lord's"

This is the theme of the Methodist Prayer Handbook for 2020/2021 (September-August)

The handbook includes prayers for every day of the year, with contributions from around the Connexion, from both ordained and lay contributors, including children. The centre pages give the lectionary readings for each day along with a reading from the Psalms and an appropriate hymn from 'Singing the Faith'.

The following prayers are from Day 8, from the Church in Wales:

God of field and farm, forest and ocean, you entrust to us the stewardship of this incredible planet. We remember before you those whose work is to husband and harvest it, and pray that you will teach us again, each one, to love your world, to love each other, to love ourselves, and above all, to love you. Amen.

Revd Jenni Hurd, Synod Cymru Chair

Heavenly Father, to share the good news, your Son, Jesus, climbed mountains, wandered through fields and crossed over waters. Help us to remember today, as we travel down different roads, that this earth remains precious, created in love and graced by your presence; so may we tread lightly and discover afresh the way of your kingdom. Amen.

Revd Stephen Wigley, Wales Synod Chair

(Copies are available, price £4.50, from Methodist Publishing, or order from Janice)

Answers to Puzzles in Issue 11

NHS

1 Operation 2 Ventilator 3 Beds 4 Consultant 5 Ward 6 Shift-work 7 Pharmacy 8 Gloves 9 Scan 10 X-Ray 11 Mask 12 Appointment 13 Reception 14 Trolley 15 Sanitiser

Sports and Games

1 Badminton 2 Polo 3 Darts 4 Baseball 5 Pool 6 Pelota 7 Curling 8 Cricket 9 Skydiving 10 Canoeing 11 Golf 12 Mountaineering 13 Show jumping 14 Cycling 15 Fencing

Quiz Time: Numbers and Letters Example: 36 I in a Y = 36 inches in a Yard

(Most clues thanks to **Betty H**, a quiz brought back from a cruise – something a bit different)

1. 1, 2, B my S
2. 4 S (S, S, A, W)
3. 4 W in a M
4. 6 W of HTE
5. 5 D in a W
6. 7 B for SB
7. 13 a BD
8. 24 BB in a P
9. 30 DHS, A, J and N
10. 3 C in a F
11. The 39 S
12. 40 D of L
13. 52 W in a Y
14. 60 S in a M
15. MSL 70 MPH
16. 77 SS
18. 101 D
19. 240 OP in a P
20. 366 D in a LY
21. 1066 B of H
22. 1966 EW the WC
23. 12 D of C
24. 18 H on a GC
25. 66 B in the B

And finally, to make you smile.....

Bargain Buy! (Elizabeth Gozney, from 'The Friendship Book' 2014)

I got myself a stylish coat, a super bargain buy,

And hoped, parading down the street, I'd catch an envious eye!

Amid the crowds, a voice I know, called after me to shout:

"I know you've been to the Jumble Sale – that's the coat that I threw out!"

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 13, which will be out on 9th September, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, by phone 01938 850514, or post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 5th. All contributions welcome. (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514).