

## Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

### “Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

### “IN TOUCH” issue 15

#### News and Updates

1. **Happy Birthday** to all who will be celebrating birthdays this month – we know of some, but no “specials” have been notified. Don’t forget to let us know of forthcoming birthdays ending in ‘0’ or those which are 90+. Thank you.

2. **Get Well Soon!** We send good wishes to Sheila Wilson, who has broken her arm, to John Kneale, who has had surgery on his foot, and to Peter Kenyon (who with his wife Margaret, we saw regularly at our Saturday Lunches) who is in hospital in Newtown. We remember too Bet Holmes, who moved to Welshpool recently and has been attending our services. Bet starts a course of hospital treatment this week. We continue to think too, of those of our church family, who, for various reasons, are not yet able to join us for worship. We assure them that they are not forgotten.

3. **Morning Worship** - continues each Sunday at 10.45am. (Service Sheets for home worship continue to be prepared and sent, thanks to all the contributors.)

October 11<sup>th</sup> – Revd Marian (Holy Communion)      Service Sheet – Revd Marian

October 18<sup>th</sup> – Nigel Evans

Service Sheet – Graham Smith

As it gets colder, don’t forget to wrap up warm. Why not bring a blanket or a fleecy throw? We will try to minimise draughts, but will still need to have air circulation.

4. **All We Can: “Change begins with a Bicycle” Harvest Appeal** – if you were at church last Sunday, you will have received a tube of Smarties – a treat for you, with a request to fill the tube, when empty, with coins for this appeal, which you will have read about in the last edition of “In Touch”. Please return your full tube by/on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November. Other donations for this Bicycle Appeal can be left in one of the donation boxes in the foyer (please place your donation in an envelope marked Harvest Appeal). Alternatively, if you are unable to get to church, post your envelope to us at Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street, SY21 7JP. Thank you.

5. **Meetings** – good news! Subject to Church Council’s consent, we will be resuming some of our church activities which come into the Methodist Church’s and Welsh Government’s permitted categories. We will be moving forward cautiously, with just one activity per week, with Jubilate, (under its new temporary name, because we can’t sing, ‘Faith, Fun, Fellowship and Flasks’ – bring your own coffee!) at 10.00 am on the first Monday of each month, starting in November. Other groups - Bible Reading at midday on the second Thursday, Gallery Group on the third Friday at 6.30pm, and Bible Reading/Contemplative Prayer on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at midday - will recommence this month. Risk Assessments will be undertaken and those attending will observe the regulations re: social distancing and the wearing of face coverings. If you have any questions about any of these activities, please contact the leaders of the groups – wk.1 Janice; wk.2 Derek; wk.3 Graham; wk.4 Derek/Bill.

In addition, there will be a Worship Consultation meeting, open to all, on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October, at 2pm. Do join us as we consider our worship in the coming months.

Your views and your suggestions for the future are important to us.

## October: Black History Month

You will have seen and heard reference to this in the media. Black History Month is held to mark and celebrate the achievements and contribution of black people throughout the world, and also to educate all on black history.

Named among the “Undeclared 44 most Influential Black Americans in History” are many names that we would recognise – for example, Muhammad Ali, Maya Angelou, Duke Ellington, Aretha Franklin, Jimi Hendrix, Jesse Jackson, Michael Jordan, Martin Luther King, Barack Obama, Jesse Owens, Sidney Poitier – but what about the most influential black people in our own times in the UK? The Methodist Church has chosen four black people whose stories are told on its website, one each week throughout the month. The first of these is **Sybil Phoenix**, born 1927, a Guyanese who moved to London in the 1950s, built the first black youth club in Britain, changed the Church’s understanding of race relations and was the first black woman recipient of the MBE.

Sybil Phoenix (nee Marshall) spent her first thirty years in her native British Guiana (now Guyana). She was a trained classical singer and seamstress, ran a sportswear and leather goods business and was a youth worker at Clubland, run by the Methodist Church in Georgetown. Despite her accomplishments, when she and her fiancé Joe moved to London in 1956, they knew the same hurtful experiences that any black immigrant encountered. They married at Shepherds Bush Methodist Church and soon moved to Lewisham.

Around 1961 Sybil responded to a social worker’s urging to take up foster care, and over several decades her extended family grew to hundreds. She raised the money to build the first black youth club in Britain. When it was burned down by the National Front in 1977 she announced: “My name is Phoenix and with the help of God I will build a new centre from the ashes.” This she did within four years, and at the same time she opened a supported housing project for 21 homeless women aged 16-25. In 1973 she was the first black woman to be awarded the MBE, followed by the OBE in 2008. She was Mayoress of Lewisham in 1998-9.

A Methodist Local Preacher for many years, she worked closely with the British Council of Churches to forge links between peoples of all faiths. Her greatest contribution to Methodism has been a paper which challenged and changed the Church’s understanding and approach to race relations. As a result she co-founded MELRAW, the Methodist and Ecumenical Race Awareness Workshops, providing anti-racism training for members of the clergy.

Her unquestioning care for people and her campaigning against any kind of discrimination had a profound effect on many people, as did her firm belief that a battle against unjust structures does not have to involve bitterness. Sybil, now aged 93, says of herself: “I am a woman of faith, and a Christian who believes strongly in service to others.”

More information about Sybil can be found at:

<https://windrushfoundation.com/community-champions/sybil-phoenix>

More Black History Stories will appear on the Methodist Church website each week.

## Homelessness Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> October

Homelessness takes different forms, the most severe and visual is rough sleeping by the street homeless. Ruth Musalski, the Political Editor of Wales Online writes:

*"We should be surprised; we should be shocked; we should be enraged at the continual yearly increase in numbers of people sleeping rough across Wales".*

As we know, people become homeless for a variety of reasons - being evicted by a landlord, losing a job, health problems, relationship problems, or disaster such as fire or flood. Here are just three examples: *(from the Methodist website)*

**Ian** - Ian's had lots of jobs, and has worked as a carpenter, a handyman for the BBC and at local hospitals. He used to live in a flat but got into rent arrears and was evicted. He's now living on the streets. He says it's not nice to be homeless. "You get cold and wet and people look down on you. I want to tell people I'm not a beggar, I'm just someone trying to get my life back together."

**Ellie** - Ellie has been homeless for a few months. For 15 years she had a house where she lived with her three children, but now she gets shelter where she can and the children aren't with her anymore. It's tough on the streets, and dangerous, especially for a woman. She says "There is a stigma attached to being homeless, but a lot of us are decent and intelligent people. I pray every morning, I don't hurt anyone, and I keep trying to be a better person. I want to say to people out there: Give us a chance. Give us one minute of your time just to say 'Hi, how are you?' That's the best way you can help."

**Frank** - is Hungarian and had a serious work accident a year ago, falling from a height of 26 feet. His recovery has been long and difficult and he has been struggling ever since. He tries to hide his homelessness as much as he can. It's a lonely life. Frank says: "I wish people out there would be a bit more open-minded. Nobody wants to be homeless, but life is complicated and people can end up in difficult situations. That doesn't make them any better or worse than other human beings. Try to be understanding - and next time, try to give a little smile. Sometimes, that's all it takes to make a person who is homeless feel better."

Almost 600 people died while homeless in England and Wales last year, the average age of death was just 44 for men and 42 for women. A homeless rough sleeper is 9 times more likely to commit suicide than the average person. There has been a 165% increase in rough sleeping since 2010 and currently 170,000 families and individuals are experiencing the worst forms of homelessness in Britain, including all age groups, people with physical and mental health problems, ex-prisoners, asylum seekers and refugees, and people leaving care. This is expected to almost double in the next 25 years unless there is change.

The next time we come across a possible rough sleeper, whether in a city like Birmingham or as we cross the bridge from Frankwell to the shops in Shrewsbury, or even in Welshpool, when we see the lad selling the 'Big Issue' *(although perhaps he's not homeless?)*, let us remember those pleas of Ellie and Frank, and spare a moment to smile and say "Hello".

*For more stories from people like Ian, Ellie and Frank, and to find out about the ways in which Methodist Churches in various parts of the Connexion are helping the homeless, go to the Methodist website, [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk).*

## **Sing Praises! Julia's choice of hymns for Mondays 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October**

An interview with David Attenborough is usually worth listening to, and have you noticed how well he answers children in an uncomplicated and never patronising manner? He is frequently asked about conservation. Lately, I've been listening to many speakers on this subject. So many of us were excited by the emergence of nature's fight back during lockdown, but I'm sure so depressed by the littering when folk came out of their homes and began to behave with total lack of respect for both the environment and community they were visiting.

My first hymn choice, for **12<sup>th</sup>**, is **Beauty for Brokenness** (StF693), a reminder that for all our faults as stewards of creation, we must never give up our prayer that the beauty of the world will be healed, however broken, and that we must ask for strength to respond to the challenges which are ahead. Graham Kendrick is a prolific hymn writer and very often makes the singers realise they are to be part of the solution. We cannot sit around waiting for the work to be done without rolling up our sleeves. The refrain puts into our mouths the plea to be not just a spark, but a burning flame:

*"God of the poor, friend of the weak, give us compassion we pray;  
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain; come change our love from a spark... to a flame"*

My second choice this week, for **19<sup>th</sup>**, is **Just as I am** (StF556) by writer Charlotte Elliot. She suffered infirmities and physical weakness, but came to believe that this enabled her to speak to others in her hymns about God's love and calling to each of us. Whatever our skills or gifts may be, we can offer them to God without risk of rejection. 'Just as I am' has encouraged Christians to come before the Lord and know themselves welcome. Our many doubts about worthiness are put aside as we learn the Gospel stories and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Doubts, fears, sins – all put aside by the promises of God. Charlotte Elliott was buried in Brighton where she died in 1971.

I hope you will enjoy reading through and singing these hymns.

*My best wishes and prayers, Julia Francis*

### **The Welshpool Prayer Circle** (from Eileen)

Eileen writes: "Do you know that Welshpool has a Prayer Circle and this has passed the 10 year mark? Every month an updated list of needy people is shared between intercessors. That means the folk who are willing to pray for other people and who are committed to doing this and doing it confidentially.

At present there are about 10 intercessors, but it would be good if we could have more. It would be helpful as long as these people realise they must avoid all mention of names.

Those who pray can choose how they do this. Some may pick out one person in need and concentrate just upon that one. Others may prefer to pray for more needy people at one time.

If you would like to join in this outreach, then of course you would be at liberty to choose the method you would find the best.

Thank you for reading this short piece and it would be lovely if you could join us!"

*Eileen Jobling, 01938 552349*

## **“Whither now, Welshpool?”** (From Tony H in response to the article in issue 13)

We all need to reflect upon and pay thanks for the immeasurable amount of work which has been done by so many during these difficult times to continue to follow our declared mission “Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”. However, if our work is to continue into the future we also need to answer Gordon’s question “Whither now, Welshpool?” (*In Touch 13*) Gordon asks: “What would you do?” Well, we need to plan if we are to survive, and planning always begins with the same first step – an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, so here is my contribution to this analysis, which I am sure will be seen by some as controversial, if not downright sacrilegious.

### **Strengths**

- Regular services with different leaders providing variety
- Sound doctrine
- A committed congregation – a family
- Active church groups - bible study, discussion groups, walking with friends, &c
- Well regarded musical presence through Jubilate
- A motivated group of volunteers
- Good use of modern technology
- Community wide involvement - building use, film, concerts, quizzes, outings, &c
- Well situated buildings in the High Street accessible to all
- Multifunctional space which can be equally sympathetic to a religious service or a Spring Fair
- Modern electronic equipment for all functions
- Buildings which are generally in good order
- Different rooms which can be used for different functions at the same time
- Well equipped kitchen

### **Weaknesses**

- An aging (and therefore) declining congregation
- Relatively few members under sixty years of age
- Inability to fully deliver mission
- Financial challenges
- Services and environment which do not appeal to the young
- Over-extended volunteers and workers – shortage of volunteers
- Lack of vision – “we have always done it this way”
- Failure of churches in Welshpool to work effectively together

### **Opportunities**

- A new Superintendent Minister
- Evangelism to enhance the congregation especially younger individuals
- The desire for something meaningful in life
- Services which reflect the wants and needs of younger people
- Utilisation of modern modes of communication – outreach
- Increased engagement with the wider community especially younger people
- Good relationship with the community

### **Threats**

- Financial challenges – through declining congregation and potential loss of income from hirers of the premises
- Building problems
- Terminal decline in congregation
- Lack of value of church/religion in general
- Increased secularisation of society

**We must start planning for the future NOW. Please send in your contributions to this debate.**

**From Pat P:**

### **HOW TO GET ON IN LIFE**

"Take pains," said the window.  
"Never be led," said the pencil.  
"Do a driving business," said the hammer.  
"Aspire to great things," said the nutmeg grater.  
"Make light of everything," said the fire.  
"Make much of small things," said the microscope.  
"Never do anything off-hand," said the glove.  
"Just reflect," said the mirror.  
"Be sharp," said the knife.  
"Find a good thing and stick to it," said the glue.  
Practical tips for everyday living for us all

**From Andrea:**

### **KEEPING IN TOUCH**

I visited my dad yesterday,  
Asking him about things, things I wanted to remember.

He slowly stirred the heaviness of memory  
Into the sweetness of past times,  
Carefully selected manageable pieces  
Of who belonged to whom, and when,  
And then he smiled,

"Yes, your grandfather made toffee, treacle toffee;  
He made it and broke it all up  
Put it in little bags and sold it;  
He made money for the Sunday School".

I knew about the toffee  
Can still taste its dark sugars,  
Feel the sharp edges, too hard for my infant teeth;  
A treat lasted a long time.  
I didn't know about the fund-raising.

One thing led to another  
We reminisced all afternoon,  
And the sun lit the windows.

My dad always remembers those things which really matter.

*Andrea Davies, September 2020*

*(Andrea's dad is a remarkable 104 and still living in the family home)*

**From: "Writes of the Church – Gripes and Grumbles of People in the Pews"**

*(From Revd Jacquie - Look out for more letters in future issues!)*

Dear Sir,

On Sunday we went to church, and Rosina, our Sunday school teacher was ill, so me and the other children had to sit in the whole time. We cheered when David beat Goliath, and when Rev Nathan said Jesus was alive, we clapped because that is good, so why did Mrs Meringue tell us to be quiet? Has no-one told her Jesus is alive?

*From Grizwold Grommet (aged 6 1/2)*

## **More to make you smile – Laughter, the best medicine**

### **From Graham: Is it a HE or a SHE?**

A language instructor was explaining to her class that French nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designated as masculine or feminine. “Things like ‘chalk’ or ‘pencil’ have a gender association”, she said, “although in English these words are neutral”.

Puzzled, one student raised his hand and asked, “What gender is a computer?”

The teacher said she wasn’t certain, and asked the class what they thought. She divided them into two groups, one male the other female, and asked them to decide which gender should be applied to ‘computer’, giving four reasons for their decision.

The results:

The FEMALE group concluded that computers should be referred to in the masculine gender because:

1. In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
2. They have a lot of data, but are still clueless.
3. They are supposed to help solve your problems, but half the time they ARE your problem.
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realise that if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

The MALE group decided computers should definitely be referred to in the feminine gender because:

1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic.
2. The native language that they use to communicate with each other is incomprehensible to everyone else.
3. Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory banks for later retrieval.
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half of your salary on accessories for it.

### **From Edith: Senior Moment**

As you reach the very top stair, you pause to wonder why you’re there.  
What was it you just had to get? Can’t think for the life of you yet!  
Won’t be the glasses, they’re on your nose. Keys - or that book you chose?  
It’s not the cat – she’s on the chair. Was it shampoo for your hair?  
It must be something important though, or else why were you there?  
You don’t know.

It all goes round in your head.....

Ah! Yes! You were going to bed!

*(Edith says this is what lockdown did to her)*

### **Forwarded by Pat P: Christmas 2020** (This had an accompanying illustration)

“I think the only way to do Christmas this year is to kill the turkey, and have 30 people over for the funeral!”

## Answers to Puzzles in issue 14

### Postcodes

1 Brighton	4 Ipswich	8 Plymouth	11 Halifax	14 Worcester
2 Bromley	5 Canterbury	9 Crewe	12 Shrewsbury	15 Llangollen
3 Colchester	6 Gloucester	10 Reading	13 Llandrindod Wells	

### Clothing

1 Twin set	2 Midi	3 Yashmak	4 Pinafore	
5 Vest	6 Body Warmer	7 Flares	8 Breeches	
9 Gilet	10 Grass Skirt	11 Anorak	12 Hot Pants	
13 Sloppy Joe	14 Kimono	15 Tutu	16 Slacks	
17 Jodhpurs	18 Parka	19 Cravat	20 Cape	
21 Donkey jacket	22 Bloomers	23 Gymslip	24 Sarong	25 Mackintosh

### Puzzle Time: All Things Musical (courtesy of Oswestry Methodists)

1. Throw in – you might catch something (8)
2. A pimple in the US, with that lady indoors (6)
3. Deceive water bird, and peak (9)
4. Use a seat, thank you (5)
5. At first – have you many new songs? (5)
6. Perm host – for Sir Henry Wood's concerts? (3, 5)
7. Go on about David's instrument (4)
8. Two perform these together (5)
9. Veto Josephine a little (5)
10. One an Emperor used during conflagration (6)
11. Mandela's ANC friend Oliver and the result of spending a penny (10)
12. Supporter charge, for trumpets (7)
13. Cloe's pink leg in a mess? (12)
14. Sounds like a number of sheets of paper (5)
15. Place for chest Raphael played in (9)
16. More than one flavours the meal for Haydn (4, 7)
17. Discover this in Tornado Boeing (4)
18. Anira Co just turned round? (7)
19. Going it alone – it sounds way down! (4)
20. Thoroughly clean, embark for Skiffle group? (9)
21. I hum one up? (9)
22. A red one to a bull, and add what sounds like a herb (7)
23. Remove the serpent to be left with Sir Simon (6)
24. She is popular in December (5)
25. Do two fivers make one? (5)

**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 16 which will be out on 21<sup>st</sup> October, to [rhodes4144@gmail.com](mailto:rhodes4144@gmail.com), by phone 01938 850514, or post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, [by17th](mailto:by17th). (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514)