

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 17

News and Updates

1. **Happy Birthday** – congratulations to Jane Postings, celebrating her 90th Birthday on 17th November, and to Derek Painter, who reaches his “three score years and ten” on 14th. To them and to all with birthdays this month, we send our good wishes.

2. **Condolences** – we extend our sympathy to Margaret Kenyon, of Buttington, whose husband Peter has passed away. Peter and Margaret were frequent diners at our Saturday Lunches.

3. **Sunday Worship** and **Wednesday Prayer** – we look forward to resuming worship on 15th when Andrea Davies will be leading our service at 10.45am, (home Worship Sheets will continue to be sent out), and Private Prayer on Wednesdays from 11th.

4. **“All We Can” Harvest Appeal** – thanks to those who have already contributed via donations and Smarties tubes, amounting to date to £212 for the Bicycle initiative. Please let us have any further contributions and tubes (and also any Lent “Count Your Blessings” bags) as soon as possible. Thank you.

5. **Thanks** to Terry Jobling, who has volunteered to organise book exchanges, and to Betty Hyam, who has also offered her help. When restrictions allow and if space can be found, it would be good to reinstate a small library at church. In the meantime, if you are looking for a particular book, or have a book to recommend, please get in touch with Terry (01938 552349, joblingterry@gmail.com).

6. **Dates for the Diary, November** – as new guidelines now permit a limited number of our mid-week activities can resume. Please phone/email if you wish to attend:
Thursdays 12th and 26th at **11am**: Bible Reading (bring your own Bible) - contact Gordon
Friday 20th at 7.00 pm: Gallery Group – contact Graham
Monday 30th: Jubilate (Faith, Fun and Fellowship) at **10.15am** – contact Janice

7. **“Twin a Bin” - ‘Twin for £45 – Get a Sticker – Transform Lives!’**

Do you know that 2 billion people have no refuse collection whatsoever? At least a third of the world's waste is subject to open dumping into the nearest stream or gully, or a convenient piece of ground for burning. In these ‘plastic days’, open burning releases smoke and toxins estimated to cause 270,000 deaths globally each year, and in developing countries, one person dies every 30 seconds from diseases caused by plastic pollution and rubbish. TEAR FUND is devoted to reducing or recycling plastic waste in countries where it is an environmental hazard. To raise funds for this initiative, organisations and individuals are invited to “twin a bin” for a donation of £45. Church Council approved the required donation to enable our church to twin one of its wheelie bins to support this scheme. Donors receive a sticker for their bin, acknowledging their participation. If you would like to twin your bin, contact Gordon (01938 850514) for more information.

8. **MHA Christmas Friendship Appeal** – due to Covid 19, this year's appeal is going online. For details of how to send a virtual card, visit www.mha.org.uk/christmas.

From Tony H: a further follow-up to “Whither Now, Welshpool?”

In Issue 15 Janice kindly included my contribution to what, I am sure, both Gordon and I hoped would be an interesting and productive debate. Although there are rumours that people do have some views nothing else has appeared in print, at least so far.

I believe that once Covid-19 has passed and if our work is to continue into the future, we need to give very serious consideration and provide answers to Gordon's question ‘Whither Now, Welshpool?’ (*In Touch* issue 13). Unfortunately when I sent in my contribution (late) the editor had to make some cuts as the space available would not allow for the text which I also sent to try to give my listings of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and threats a context. So I am trying again!

Gordon makes some radical suggestions, in part I suspect, to get us thinking and debating. I don't think that I would go as far as purchasing *The Talbot*, a potentially even more expensive building than ours. But in many ways I share Gordon's view of the problems of attachment to “buildings”. However, our Church has already made incredible progress with its buildings creating excellent multifunctional spaces which now serve a wide variety of Church and Community uses.

Gordon asks “What would you do?” Well we need a plan. I am sure that none of us have all the answers, perhaps not even one, but if we continue to bury our heads in the sand and just assume all will be well we are deluding ourselves and depriving succeeding generations of the inheritance we enjoyed in terms of worship, fellowship and community spirit. This would be very selfish.

We need to take coping with change seriously for change is the only certainty. And to deal with this all organizations plan so that, hopefully, they will survive. We need to do the same. I recognise that at the outset there will be the argument that “Church” is different from other organisations. We need to recognise that it is not different but that it does have differences.

This self analysis and the development of a plan **must** be done through a frank and open debate which is not in any way hostage to the past but is based on reason. And here Gordon has taken the first step. At least, at present, our strengths and opportunities well outweigh the weaknesses and threats, which is a very good start.

From Gordon: Are we at the Crossroads?

What does the future hold for Welshpool Methodist Church? That has been the question posed by myself and Tony Harvey in recent articles in “In Touch”.

Tony has listed our strengths and weaknesses – always a useful start. We live in a secular age where the relevance of the church to today's challenges of global warming and pollution seems unclear, to say the least. Covid shows we are not in charge, even if we ever were. Are we to be a minority pursuit, set aside from most people's daily concerns, or do we have a message with a practical value or application? If we do, do we need to lay the foundations of a different future? These are the issues we need to consider.

The Church Council has given its blessing to any group of those who recognize these concerns to gather facts, consider the issues, and perhaps prepare some

possible ways forward. How we meet, exchange ideas, and review progress is to be decided. The time frame is not fixed, but subject to circumstances, 9 – 12 months is perhaps realistic. If you would like to participate in what promises to be a worthwhile exercise, then register your interest with either of the following:

Gordon: 850514, rhodes4144@mail.com Tony: 559087, Tony@Montgomeryshire.EU

Remember: "Time and tide waits for no man" (Geoffrey Chaucer) - We need to act NOW!

From Betty H: Lines from a clock in Chester Cathedral *(which seem appropriate to include here)*

When as a child I laughed and wept, time crept.

When as a youth, I dreamt and talked, time walked.

When I became a full grown man, time ran.

When older still I daily grew, time flew.

Soon I shall find on travelling on, time gone.

Sing Praises! Julia's choice of hymns for Mondays 9th and 16th November

Julia writes: "Our themes during November, both secular and in church, reflect our need to remember our loved ones absent but in our hearts, so we have All Saints, All Souls and The Fallen in War, then in December Road Peace (remembering those killed on the roads) and Quiet Christmas Worship (*Service of Light*) for bereaved families. My first choice, '**For all the Saints**' (StF 745), is a popular Victorian hymn written by Bishop William Walsham How especially for celebrating Saints Days. William How was born in Shrewsbury though his priesthood took him to London where he worked amongst the poorer communities; he later became Bishop of Wakefield. This is a lengthy hymn, written as a processional, allowing clergy and choir to walk the length of cathedral naves while it is sung. Various tunes were written for it, but in 1906, Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote 'Sine Nomine', the rousing tune to an inspiring hymn we sing today, usually on All Saints Day, but it is equally appropriate for Remembrance Sunday, as 'Sine Nomine' (meaning 'without name'), reminds us of 'the tomb of the unknown soldier' and all those fallen in battle without a known grave. Williams chose this title to honour greatest and least. When we sing this hymn we get a full spectrum of glory and hope rising through the verses. Each double Alleluia after the unusual 3 lines of verse increases the rising sense of praise and optimism— "But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day".

For my second hymn I have chosen "**The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended**" (StF 147), as it suits every remembrance occasion. It is an evening hymn accepting the closing of eyes on the world, the darkness of night, then the change as we follow the full circle of the sun, and waking eyes across the shores, the promise of a new dawn coming, the brightness of the new horizon and the eternal promise of faith. This hymn is sung annually as Women stand in solidarity with less advantaged 'sisters' on the first Friday of March, Women's World Day of Prayer. Written around 1870 by John Ellerton (who appears regularly in our hymnals) it is coupled with the tune St Clement composed by Clement C Schofield.

It is often difficult to imagine certain lyrics without their corresponding tunes, and here again, the marriage of words and music has become so embedded in our memories that we can sing this anywhere I think. So enjoy your singing and lift up your hearts to one another in prayer. My best wishes, Julia Francis".

From Rev Marian:

I don't need to tell you that it's a strange time we're living through! Some people are coping with restrictions and isolation better than others; I think most of us are wondering when we will return to some semblance of normality, whatever the 'new' normal will look like.

Charities are suffering more than most, with their usual methods of fundraising almost at a standstill. Charity shops are still receiving items for sale although, where I live an appointment has to be made to drop off goods. A friend of mine who works in a hospice charity shop told me that, one morning, there were three volunteers in the shop but no customers and no-one came in to browse. Food banks are needed more than ever and are requesting monetary gifts rather than food, although food can still be given via supermarket collections. There are no street collections and, as churches were closed for months (and many are closed now), the usual church collections for various charities haven't taken place. You and I know that there are other ways of giving still open to us.

What set my mind thinking about this? I came across a poem and wondered about this year's 'Poppy Appeal'.

Why are they selling poppies, Mummy? Selling poppies in town today?

The poppies, child, are flowers of love for the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy, Mummy? Why not a beautiful rose?
Because, my child, men fought and died in the fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies so red, Mummy? Why are the poppies so red?
Red is the colour of blood, my child, the blood that our soldiers shed.

The heart of the poppy is black, Mummy. Why does it have to be black?
Black, my child, is the symbol of grief for the men who never came back.

But why, Mummy, are you crying so? Your tears are giving you pain.
My tears are my fears for you my child, for the world is forgetting again.

Author unknown

We are invited – no, required, - to reflect the generous love of God.

From Andrea: November Prayer

When poppies flame on wreath and coat,
November memories stir the heart;
O may the love of God bring hope
To places war still tears apart.

While burnished trees weep their last leaves
On cenotaph and private grave,
O may we share those words of truth
That Jesus died, our souls to save.

And if we live as we should live,
We spread the message of His word;
O may God's love light many fires,
Bring peace and healing round the world.

From Jon P: A Lockdown Prayer (from Nadia Bolz-Weber, a Lutheran pastor in the USA)

(A prayer included by a colleague in devotions at a recent Methodist Heritage Committee meeting)

I do not know when we can gather together again in worship, Lord.

So, for now, I just ask that:

When I sing along in my kitchen to each song on Stevie Wonder's 'Songs in the Key of Life' Album, that it can be counted as praise...

And that when I read the news and my heart tightens in my chest, may it be counted as a Kyrie...

And that when my eyes brighten in a smile behind my mask, as I thank the cashier, may it be counted as passing the peace...

And that when I water my plants and wash my dishes and take a shower may it be counted as remembering my baptism...

And that when I stumble upon a Tabitha Brown video and hear her grace and love of you may it be counted as hearing a homily...

And that as I sit at that table in my apartment, and eat one more homemade meal, slowly, joyfully, with nothing else demanding my time or attention, may it be counted as communion.

Amen

From Barbara R: "Hugs" by Carole Brewer (from her book 'Verses for the Virus')

Our hugs have all gone missing – we need them back real soon

They're as urgent as the vaccine to keep us Covid-safe, immune

A hug to say "I've missed you", "I'm sorry" or "Well done"

A hug that helps heal heartache, or a 'bounce-off' hug for fun

A gentle hug that holds a newborn, a bear hug that squeezes tight

Those for bedtime or 'good morning' or 'everything will be alright'

A hug's a precious feeling we'd never thought we'd be without

Of all the things on hold right now, a hug's right up there, there's no doubt.

So when this wretched time is over and we're told it's safe to do

Our arms will do what's natural and wrap round loved ones close to you.

(Poet Carole, 58, has been a community volunteer for many years since a serious illness and stroke cut short her working life in 2014. She says: "I've always loved writing poetry. I'd write to mark birthdays, weddings, and family events both happy and sad, and also when I was in hospital having chemotherapy. During lockdown, I decided finally, to put something in print, so I published my book "Verses for the Virus", a donation from sales going to NHS Charities Together and Mental Health UK)

From Betty H: Read a Book (from "No Place like Home" by Linda Weltner)

'In real life, I have qualms, a moral code, a sense of duty. I live within confines.

In books, I am free to soar and explore. There are no limits to my being.

Books, with their secret knowledge, free me from myself. I'm never alone. The greatest minds in history wait by my bed; sit patiently in bookcases; respond to my touch. I reach out and they are there, waiting to transport me to another realm.'

Why not take a whole day off from your regular activities and spend it with a book you have always wanted to read.

Favourite Recipes from the Saturday Coffee and Lunch Menu:

1. ALMOND TART (*For a 7" tin – adjust quantities for larger sizes*)

For the pastry: 4ozs SR flour, 4ozs Plain flour, pinch of salt

2ozs lard, 2ozs hard margarine, 2 tbsp cold water (*or use 'ready to roll'*)

For the filling: 2ozs semolina, 2ozs ground almonds, 4ozs caster sugar

4ozs margarine, melted, 1 egg, ¼ tsp almond essence

Raspberry jam, flaked almonds

1. Line tin with pastry and spread base with jam.
2. Mix semolina, ground almonds and sugar.
3. Add melted margarine and beaten egg with essence, and mix well.
4. Pour into pastry case, and scatter with ground almonds.
5. Bake at 170C for 30-40 minutes, until brown and firm to touch.

2. CHOCOLATE FUDGE CAKE (*no cooking required – VERY EASY!*)

1. Crush 8ozs digestive biscuits (put in poly bag and bash/roll with rolling pin)
2. Melt 4ozs margarine in pan. Add to pan 3 dessertspoons drinking chocolate, 1 dessertspoon sugar and 1 tablespoon golden syrup. Stir.
3. Add biscuits and mix well.
4. Put mixture in lightly greased tin, 7"x7", or equivalent. When cool, cover in 6ozs melted cooking chocolate and decorate with chopped Cadbury flake.

To make you smile: "The Dolly on the Dustcart" by Pam Ayres (sent in by Graham)

I'm the dolly on the dustcart – I can see you're not impressed.

I'm fixed above the driver's cab, with wire across me chest.

The dustman, see, he noticed me, going in the grinder,

And he fixed me on the lorry. I dunno if that was kinder!

This used to be a lovely dress, in pink and pretty shades,

But now it's torn, being on the cart, and black as the ace of spades.

There's dirt all round me face, and all across me rosy cheeks,

Well, I've had me head thrown back, but we ain't had no rain for weeks.

I used to be a 'Mama' doll; tipped forward I'd say 'Mum',

But the rain got in me squeaker, and now I been stuck dumb.

I had two lovely blue eyes, but out in the wind and weather,

One's sunk back in me head like, and one's gone altogether.

I'm not a soft, flesh coloured dolly modern children likes so much.

I'm one of those hard old dollies, what are very cold to the touch.

Modern dollies' underwear leaves me a bit nonplussed.

I haven't got a bra – but then I haven't got a bust!

But I was happy in that doll's house; I was happy as a Queen,

I never knew that Tiny Tears was coming on the scene.

I heard of dolls with hair that grew, and I was quite enthralled,

Until I realised my head was hard and pink... and bald.

So I travel with the rubbish, out of fashion, out of style,

Out of me environment, for mile after mile,

No longer prized ... dustbinised! Unfeminine! Untidy!

I'm the dolly on the dustcart – and there's no collection Friday!

Laughter – the Best Medicine!

More imaginary letters, this time concerning **“The Building”**, from “Writes of the Church - Gripes and Grumbles of People in the Pews” by Gary Alderson (lent by Rev Jacquie)

Dear Sir,

I hear the vicar wishes to move the light switch in the church from the north wall to the east door because ‘that’s where we come in and we won’t need to use a torch’. I have protested to English Heritage, the Council, and the Pope, and they all told me they didn’t care. I went to St Mary’s once when I was nine and I don’t see why it should change now.

Marvis Dripping

Dear Sir,

I’m objecting to the vicar’s plans to replace the church steps with a slope, to allow wheelchair users easy access. This is an undesirable change to the architecture. It also implies that Rev Nathan doesn’t have faith in his own prayer ministry.

Chas ‘Charlie’ Charkles

Dear Sir,

The vicar is talking about removing some of the pews from St Mary’s church - to ‘create a more flexible worship space’. Disgraceful! The church should be preserved for future generations. This is my family church – the one that has stood for centuries. One day I may even come in and have a look round.

Roland Yoland

Dear Sir,

I have spent the afternoon in the church with my laser measuring device, and there is no doubt, at some point in the last twelve months the lectern has been moved at least nine inches to the right, as viewed from the congregational point of view. When did the Church Council vote for this?

Chas ‘Charlie’ Charkles

Dear Sir,

There is a hole in the roof, letting in water directly above the right hand rear pew. Whenever I speak to the church wardens, they say it will be expensive to fix and they need to get three estimates. This is taking forever. Some Sunday mornings I go home soaked. I’m seriously considering sitting in another pew.

Mandy Pandy

Dear Sir,

I object to plans to put toilets and a kitchen into the space beneath the bell tower. When ‘caught short’ we used to have to run out of the building and perform necessary functions behind the wall in Church Lane. And if we wanted a drink in church, we had to bring our own beer. The new generation has gone soft.

James Dumpling

Dear Sir,

All this talk of lead thieves – I do something about it and I just get complaints. Yes, the gentleman was left dangling from the gutter after I pushed his ladder over, but he wasn’t there for long. When I poked him with the Scouts’ flag, he soon fell off.

Maisie Daisy

Puzzle Time: two quizzes this time!

Women Writers (from Betty H)

1. Under what pseudonym did Mary Ann Evans write?
2. In which Yorkshire village did the Bronte sisters write?
3. Which nineteenth century woman poet eloped to Italy after a secret romance with an equally famous man?
4. Of which Jane Austen novel is Fanny Price the heroine?
5. Which 20th century woman novelist wrote 'To the Lighthouse'?
6. Of which novel is the following the opening sentence: 'Last night I dreamed again of Manderley'?
7. Who wrote a series of books set in the village of Thrush Green?
8. Which bestselling novelist sets most of her work in North East England?
9. Under what name does Barbara Vine also write successful novels?
10. Which historical novelist and biographer is married to the playwright Harold Pinter?

On the Farm (from Oswestry Methodists)

1. Iron Duke is given the push (10, 4)
2. Wrestle with this giant for pile of dried grass (8)
3. Sweet root for a PC at work? (5, 4)
4. Sounds like a yachting centre in the IOW (4)
5. A degree to join the UK navy (4)
6. Join together the season's crop with Her Majesty (7, 9)
7. Motorway, fifty, monarch, in the sitting room (7, 7)
8. Public School provides a drag (6)
9. How great rut provides a drinking vessel (5, 6)
10. Frighten, and boast of it (9)
11. Short Street - with uncooked food (5)
12. Erect tent for use with utensil (9)
13. Direction little Edward has for military exercise? (4, 5)
14. Avoid buying one in a poke with an eye infection (3, 3)
15. Can crow! Sounds like Hovercraft inventor (8)
16. Retrieves the ball, for growing areas (6)
17. Crouches down - to avoid being seen? (5)
18. Touch down pirate? (4, 5)
19. No hue she accommodates the birds (3, 5)
20. Boundary for a cabbage-like vegetable – or is it an animal? (6, 6)

Answers to 'Things associated with the Olympic Games' (Issue 16)

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|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 Trampoline | 2 Judo | 3 Marathon | 4 Flags | 5 Javelin | 6 Pole vault |
| 7 Champion | 8 Hurdles | 9 Relay race | 10 Bronze | 11 Sprinter | 12 Dressage |
| 13 Badminton | 14 Flame | 15 Hammer | 16 Discus | 17 Medals | 18 Gymnastics |
| 19 Boxing | 20 Velodrome | | 21 Mascots | 22 Steeplechase | |
| 23 Weightlifting | 24 Archery | 25 Rowing | | | |

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 18 which will be out on 18th November, to rhodes4144@gmail.com, by phone 01938 850514, or post to "Brynteg", Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by Saturday 14th November (Cake orders: Gwen 555988 or Janice 850514)