

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 32, June 2021

News and Updates

1. Thanks – Mildred would like to thank everyone who sent her good wishes for her 93rd Birthday. She is making steady progress after her fall and hopes to be back among us soon. **Andrea** extends her thanks for all the cards and messages of sympathy she received following the death of her father. Your kind words and thoughts were much appreciated.

2. Happy Birthday - congratulations to Glennis Evans and Jennifer Platt who will be celebrating their 91st Birthdays on 21st and 24th June respectively, and to Edith Thomas, celebrating her 95th Birthday on 25th. We extend our good wishes to them, and to any others celebrating Birthdays this month.

3. Services in June, 10.45am *(Please continue to book for Communion services, 850514)*

Sunday 6 th	Terry Jobling Zoom Circuit Easter Offering Service at 6pm – joining details:- Meeting ID: 827 3163 2317 Passcode: 462769
Sunday 13 th	Revd Marian (Holy Communion)
Sunday 20 th	Canon Julia Francis
Sunday 27 th	Revd Marian (Holy Communion) <i>(Revd Jacquie is away)</i>

4. For the Diary – as well as the regular activities which have already resumed, the following are planned: *(NB July events subject to any restrictions in force at the time)*

Church Council: Monday, 7th at 7.15pm

Circuit Meeting: Tuesday 15th at 7pm

Gallery Group: Friday 18th at 7pm

Friday Fellowship: Friday 25th at 2.30pm – annual visit to Derwen for Cream Tea

Walking Group: Saturday 26th – a Local Walk, meet at church at 10.30am

Coffee & Lunches: Saturday 3rd July, 10 to 2 - Cakes & Scones, Soup, Ploughmans & Puddings, with Craft Sales in the church Foyer

Mid-week Movies: Wednesday 7th July at 2pm

5. Charity Appeals - many thanks for your generous responses to recent appeals:

Count Your Blessings (Lent Appeal for Action for Children): £285.20

Easter Offering (Methodist Fund for World Mission): £326.52

Christian Aid (including one donation of £500): £702.61

Annual Appeal for Methodist Homes – with 90 Care Homes and 70 Retirement Living Schemes, MHA is a national charity, enabling people “to live well in later life.” In June each year, the Circuit has an envelope appeal for MHA and on Sunday 13th, designated MHA Sunday, we remember the work of the charity, its carers and residents, in our prayers. Envelopes for your donations will be available in church.

6. Job Vacancy – Church Cleaner, 6 hours per week, £10 per hour. Further details will be posted on the outside Notice Boards, Circuit website, MyWelshpool and Job Centre. Closing date for applications: end of June, with interviews in July.

Revd Marian: 'High Days and Holy Days'

My Methodist Diary shows three major Saints whose feast days fall in June – Saint Barnabas, Saint Peter and the Birth of John the Baptist.

St Barnabas is commemorated on **June 11th**. He was a Greek Jew who joined the Jerusalem church soon after the crucifixion of Jesus, sold his property and gave the proceeds to the community of Jesus' followers (Acts 4:36-37). Barnabas was one of the Cypriots who was sent to the church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-22) to see what was going on and what the rumours were all about. He preached there before going to Tarsus to look for Saul. Together, they worked among the people of Antioch for a year and it was there that the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians'. The two of them undertook joint missionary activity (Acts chapters 13 and 14) and then went to Jerusalem. Barnabas and his cousin Mark, along with Paul, were joined by Luke on a number of journeys, evangelising. Shortly afterwards, a serious conflict separated them, and Barnabas sailed to Cyprus (Acts 15:39).

It is believed that Barnabas was killed and buried in Cyprus, his homeland.

On **June 24th**, the church celebrates **the Birth of John the Baptist**, the forerunner of Jesus who 'prepared the way of the Lord'. Usually, it's the day of a saint's death that's celebrated as his or her feast day, because it marks his or her *dies natalis* or "birthday", into eternal life. There are two notable exceptions to this 'rule': the birthday of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and that of John the Baptist. I've written before (in the last 'In Touch') about Ein Karem, the village where John was born and where Mary found her elderly cousin Elizabeth, mother of John. Luke, alone, tells the story of Zechariah, John's father, who was present in the Temple in Jerusalem, and the birth (Luke 1:5-25 and 1:57-80). The second passage contains the story of the naming of the child and the Song of Zechariah, *The Benedictus*.

As an aside, this year Conference Sunday (the Sunday falling during the nine days of the annual Methodist Conference, the ruling body of the Methodist Church) falls on June 27th!

The stories of the life of **St Peter**, whose feast day is on **June 29th**, are familiar to us: a Jewish fisherman called by Jesus to follow him; his name change from Simon to Peter the Rock, although at some important moments he was called 'Simon, son of John' (John's gospel calls him 'Simon' 17 times!). His family came, originally, from Bethsaida in Galilee (John 1:44) but during the period of Jesus' ministry Peter lived in Capernaum, at the north west end of the Sea of Galilee, where he and his brother Andrew were in partnership as fishermen with James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Luke 5:19). From the gospels, it seems that Peter was one of the three disciples closest to Jesus and shared in the most significant events in his ministry. You know the stories! In the Acts of the Apostles Peter is taken to task by the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 4:7-22 and 5:18-42) who want to know how he has effected the healing first of a lame man and then of many. Later, he received a vision of God that allowed for the eating of previously unclean animals, so Peter takes a missionary journey to Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea (Acts 9:32-10:2), becoming instrumental in the decision to evangelise the Gentiles (Acts 10). Simon Peter applied the message of the vision on clean animals to the Gentiles, and follows his

meeting with Cornelius the centurion by proclaiming that "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10). It is possible that the Letters of Peter in the New Testament were written by Peter or by a spokesperson for him. According to tradition, Peter died in Rome, crucified upside down at the command of the emperor Nero in AD64 and his tomb is beneath the altar in St Paul's Basilica in Rome.

Palestine and Israel

I'm sure that you will have been saddened as I was at the renewed violence in Gaza and the West Bank in Israel. Those of you who came to an evening a couple of years ago to listen and view the slides heard me speak of Daoud Nasser, a Palestinian Christian, who lives with his extended family on a farm outside Bethlehem, and the collection that evening was sent to them for their work. Those of you who have visited with me know that the 'farm' is a series of caves in which the family lives as they are unable to obtain planning permission for any building. For the last 28 years they have been involved with the Israeli courts arguing to retain their land, for which they have the deeds. They run an organisation called 'Tent of Nations', determined to do all they can to promote peace, and working with women and children whose husbands and fathers have been killed. Each year, many volunteers go to stay to work with the groups and on the land.

On Friday May 21st, a negotiated ceasefire began and on Sunday I received an email –

"May 21, 2021

Today was a very hard day. While we were on our way to the farm after picking up some farming tools from Bethlehem for ploughing, we received a phone call which left us with no words. The neighbouring farmers informed us that our farm was set on fire. Our day took a sudden shift as we rushed to the farm, tried to secure water to extinguish the flames with our very limited sources on the farm, and call for help! It was appalling to witness the rapid spread of the fire to more fields, damaging the thousands of olive, almond and grape trees. Thankfully, we were able to control the situation with the help of family members and nearby villagers after spending seven hours in the smoke. It was very devastating to see all of the new trees we had planted and watered for the past five months were gone in seconds. To this moment, we do not know the cause of the fire or who was behind it. We will inform you as soon as we know more. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

Blessings and Salaam"

Daoud says: "As we received the Holy Spirit, we became His witnesses. We are rising up from the ashes".

Please remember Daoud, his sister Amal and their families in your prayers.

(If anyone would like to assist Daoud and his family to "rise up from the ashes", you can donate directly through a new account set up through the Charities Aid Foundation.

Donate on line:- <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/17091#!/DonateDetails>

That should take you to The British Shalom-Salaam Trust
Tent of Nations

Alternatively, if you are not able to donate on line, you can give a cheque to Revd Marian, made payable to her, and she will make the donation for you. Thank you).

Sing Praises with Julia: Julia's 'Hymn for the Month'

My choice for this month is "O Lord my God How Great Thou Art" (StF 82)

In 1982 or thereabouts, Cliff Richard brought his Gospel Concert tour to the Octagon Theatre in Reading. The seats our church group obtained were way up at the back of the theatre along the wall. The whole theatre was arrayed before us – small, intimate, rounded, as its name suggests.

Cliff's concerts always included hymns for all to join in, as well as testimonies, performances and interviews. Many had come to experience the testimonies and faith stories from the famous faces on the platform – encouraging open gospel proclamation in a setting very different to inside a church, surrounded by stained glass windows, crosses and familiar ritual.

On this occasion, the final hymn was this one:

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
consider all the works thy hand has made..."

My main memory of the Reading concert is, having travelled with a minibus load from the church, standing with them along the back row, swaying, and belting out for all we were worth:

"Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee,
How great thou art, How great thou art."

We owe the hymn's popularity in our hymn books to translator Stuart Hine (1899-1989), who published it in his Kingsway/Thankyou Music in 1953. Karl Boberg, a Swedish pastor and poet (1859-1940) wrote the original poem which is the basis of the first two verses in 1885, following a thunderstorm (which had delayed his journey home), and its aftermath of calm lake and birdsong. It began to be passed across communities of Scandinavia and Northern Europe to the Ukraine, sung to a folk melody, and translated into both German and Russian. This is where the missionary Stuart Hine came across it.

During the next 21 years, Stuart Hine translated it into English and added to it, until it was published in the form we know it today. He added the third verse after listening to the account of the Crucifixion read aloud, and watched as the faces of the people around him responded to hearing the account. It was another decade before he added the final verse.

During the 1940s, Hine had to return to London. Here he worked with refugees for many years. The one question they all asked was "When are we going home?" Hine wrote his final verse:

"When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart;
then shall I bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art..."

The human soul sings with the homing instinct. This hymn is a popular funeral choice because of its uplifting final verse. I've sung it with bereaved families many times, as well as during worship in all kinds of settings. I imagine you have too.

My best wishes, Julia

Thought for the Month by Revd David Fleming (*adapted and used with his permission*)

The speaker held up a £20 note. He asked, 'Who would like this £20 note?' Everyone in his audience put their hand up. He said, 'I am going to give this £20 to one of you but first let me do this.' He crumpled the note up. (He must have been using one of the old paper notes!) He then asked, 'Who still wants it?' Every hand shot up. 'Well,' he continued, 'what if I do this?' Then he dropped the note on the ground and stamped on it. He picked it up and showed it to the crowd. The note was now crumpled and dirty. 'Who still wants it?' All the hands still went up. 'My friends,' he said, 'I have just taught you a very important lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it, because though it was crumpled and dirty, it did not decrease in value. It was still worth £20. Many times in our lives, life crumples us and grounds us into the dirt. We make bad decisions or deal with poor circumstances. We feel worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value. You are special – never forget it!

The bible is full of people who might seem worthless. One author writes that Jesus's family tree in Matthew chapter 1 reads like a Who's Who of the Good, the Bad and the Ugly! Liars; Deceivers; Schemers; Faithful followers; Murderers; Adulterers; Kinsmen; Idol worshippers; Child sacrificers; Reformers; Polygamists; Prostitutes...

Jesus came from a long line of outsiders, outlaws, scoundrels, and sinners (Abraham unfairly banished Ishmael and his mother Hagar; Jacob, by his scheming and dishonesty, stole his brother's birthright; David committed adultery and then had the husband of his mistress murdered...) When he entered into the world, he entered into the messiness of the human family, even within his own family, but always remember:

"This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1: 5)

The family of Jesus was made up of people who had less than perfect records. This means there is hope, there is a home, there is a future in this family for people like me and people like you – no matter what we've done or failed to do, or who we've been or failed to be. Rumples or dirt we haven't lost our value to God. He still loves us and wants us and can use us.

(Revd David Fleming is a retired Anglican priest, living in Littleport, Cambridgeshire. I receive David's weekly "Thought for the Week" from friends who live in the same village. David has been Archdeacon of Wisbech, Chaplain General of Prisons, and an Honorary Chaplain to the Queen. One of his other "Thoughts" has appeared in an earlier "In Touch").

Sunday Worship – even if the current Covid restrictions are lifted by the end of the month, until the end of this Methodist year (31st August) we shall continue to hold only one service each Sunday - morning worship at 10.45am. Assuming restrictions are lifted, we shall review our schedule of services and implement what is decided from September. We need to consider whether we should re-introduce the monthly 9am Communion Services followed by breakfast, the monthly Afternoon Tea Services, and the fortnightly evening services. (Churches Together are planning to resume united evening services on the 2nd Sunday each month). Your views on the way forward would be helpful before we draw up the next Plan during July – please let us know.

From Betty H: Health and Fitness

I've been thinking about health and fitness.

I was in a newsagent's yesterday getting the paper and just stopped and stared at all the magazines that are produced on health and fitness, and diets, and various exercise plans for a beautiful and healthy body.

But I think we can do better than that. I would like to offer you a regime for health that not only benefits the body but actually exercises, tones, sculpts, strengthens your feelings and thoughts. I am talking about taking charge of developing a healthy mind.

If you wish to develop a healthy mind, one of the sets of muscles you have to turn your mind to are those of your mouth. You see the Buddha, who is often described as a medicine for the illnesses of humanity, taught that we actually create a lot of illness for ourselves and others through our day-to-day speech. A poisonous tongue infects the speaker as well as the person spoken to. Words spoken or heard can burn in our hearts and minds for days, maybe even years, eating us up. And in the same kind, soothing words of appreciation, of kindness, perfume the air; they nourish and strengthen all who are touched by their fragrance.

It is always easier to see the faults in others than in ourselves, so, to counteract this, today's exercise for your mental health and sanity is to try and rejoice in another's merits. Try to tell one person something you appreciate about them. It can't fail to make you and the world a little brighter.

Dharmachari Nagaraja, Glasgow Buddhist Centre

From Pat P: Learning from your dog!

Life should be a process of continuous learning, and if you let a dog be your teacher, you will learn such things as:-

When loved ones come home, rush to greet them.

Don't pass up the chance to go for an outing in the car, and let the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face make you feel great.

Thrive upon affection and let people touch you.

On warm days take time to lie down on the grass. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie in the shade.

Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.

Be loyal.

If you desire what lies buried, dig until you find it.

If someone is having a bad day, sit quietly nearby, and nuzzle them gently.

Snippets from here and there – (with thanks to various contributors)

"Kindness is a language which the deaf man can hear and the blind man can read". (Mark Twain)

A lot of people regard life as a journey. But I read this the other day:

"We're not human beings on a spiritual journey; we're spiritual beings on a human journey". I think the subtle difference between these two points of view actually gets to the meaning of life. (Captain Charles King)

"God give me work till my life shall end, and life till my work is done". (Winifred Holtby)

"Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be". (Browning)

“June” (2005, Llanymynech)

The curlew calling from the river fields,
the willow warbler's soft insistent tune,
and cuckoo, not too near or far away:
the myriad drowsy sounds of early June.

The scent of dropwort in my border bed,
first meadowsweet along the narrow lanes;
goldfinches with their young on thistledown,
as baby bluetits flit among the canes.

Eight young goosanders race in mother's wake,
as I stand on the aqueduct to see;
a sun-kissed afternoon of dappled shade,
and may's discarded petals falling free.

We sang 'Jerusalem' the other day –
a blackbird answered from the churchyard yew;
he sang on as we sat to hear God's word,
and in his liquid song that word was true.

O Brother Jesus, did you walk these hills
to grant your blessing? Bless us in our praise,
that all our sweet remembrance of this time
may carry through to winter's shorter days.

Brief glimpse of heaven, sound of angel song,
that this year's June has brought us, may it stay
to lift our hearts, and lift our hearts again,
make spirits glad, and guide on love's bright way.

from “The Angel on Next Door's Drive”, poems by Bill Rowell

“Flaming June”

Sort out all those summer frocks, de-fuzz the legs and ditch the socks,
And why? “It's Flaming June”, that's why! Summer days are soon gone by.
Get outdoors and find some space, then stretch full-length with carefree grace,
It's now the time to catch some rays, and make the most of sunshine days.

Factor fifty on your skin, but take a fleece should sunbeams dim.
If clouds turn grey then flasks of tea lift the mood, quite splendidly.

Should it then come on to rain, please hoist a brolly, don't complain,
At least it's warm if rather wet, “Flaming June's” not done quite yet.

Lawns are lush and flowers bright; still later, skies pale into night.
Long shadows stretch across the grass; grab each day, don't let it pass.

Halfway through another year; how long before it's “Christmas Cheer”?
So picnic under sun or moon, savour all of “Flaming June”!

from “An Unremarkable Morning”, a selection of poems by Andrea Davies

Quiz Time: Professions and Trades (crossword style clues – thanks to Oswestry Methodists)

1. Scales Zodiac sign, with Mr Blessed less the B (9)
2. Tent Sid mixed up (7)
3. Instruct Elizabeth Regina in short (7)
4. Head a piece of seating furniture (7)
5. Look into drive Toyota for animal carer (3)
6. One of the seven dwarfs added to a rocky peak (6)
7. Take 'rail to' who will make a stitch in time (6)
8. Soft fruit and soft felt cap less extra-terrestrial figure, is good with pipes (7)
9. Initially can heat exquisite food (4)
10. See performer in contract or drama (5)
11. Complain and go in for woodworker (9)
12. Israeli, measure of length and almost make a mistake (8)
13. Every single remark under notice backwards initially (5)
14. Alternative current in short with foreign nobleman and my mother's sister (10)
15. Greek letter with item for sale at auction (5)
16. Prohibit the Muppet's frog in short (without the handwarmer) for safe keeping (6)
17. Milk cost H will provide access to your house (9)
18. Set off the weapon with boxer to damp down the flames (11)
19. Remonortsa reversed may see stars (10)
20. Item made to scale may display clothes (5)

Answers to the Wesley Hymns, issue 31

1. O For a Thousand Tongues to sing
2. Hail the Day that sees him rise
3. Let earth and heaven combine
4. Meet and right it is to sing
5. Give me the Faith which can remove
6. Hark the herald angels sing
7. Love divine, all loves excelling
8. And can it be
9. Christ from who all blessings flow
10. All praise to our redeeming Lord

Answers to All things Musical, issue 31

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|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Baton | 2. Metronome | 3. Bolero | 4. Presto | 5. Oompah |
| 6. Percussion | 7. Recital | 8. Overture | 9. Tune | 10. Bach |
| 11. Whistle | 12. Nocturne | 13. Choir | 14. Solo | 15. Triangle |
| 16. Cornet | 17. Banjo | 18. Bagpipes | 19. Clef | 20. Lyre |

Thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. Please keep your items coming in – more are needed if "In Touch" is to continue! (Interesting information, thoughts, poems, puzzles, comments, recipes, etc etc... all welcome). For the July Issue (33), out on 30th June, please send to rhodes4144@gmail.com, tel. 01938 850514, or to 'Brynteg', Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by 26th June.