

## Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

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

### “IN TOUCH” issue 37, November 2021

#### News and Updates

**1. Good wishes** to all with birthdays this month, to those recovering from surgery, receiving treatment or unwell at home, and those no longer able to worship with us – we think particularly of Roy Cook as he approaches his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday next month.

#### **2. Sunday Services**

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Graham Smith, 10.45am
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Revd Marian, Holy Communion, <b>4pm</b> (Please book) (Remembrance Sunday United Service at St Mary's at 10.45am.)
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Andrea Davies, 10.45am Prayer & Praise, Afternoon Tea Service, 4pm
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Revd Jacquie (Holy Communion), 9am, followed by Breakfast Revd Jacquie, 10.45am.

#### **3. Events and Activities**

Mondays, weekly	Jubilate, 10am
Mondays, weekly	Playgroup, 1pm
Wednesdays, weekly	Church open for private prayer, 10am – 12
Wednesdays, except 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Craft Group, 2pm – 4pm
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mid-Week Movies: “Calendar Girls”, 2pm
Thursdays 4 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup>	Reading the Bible Together, 12noon – 1pm
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Morning & Stalls: Crafts, Cakes, Books, 10am – 12
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Church Stewards' Meeting, 7.15pm
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Music Club Concert: Aristi con Brio String Quartet, 7.30pm
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Open Meeting re: Marriage and Relationships, 7pm
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Gallery Discussion Group, 7pm
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Morning and Friendship Lunches, 11am – 1.30pm
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Friday Fellowship: Julia Francis, 2.30pm
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Walking with Friends, 10/10.30am. (Details from Derek, 556117)

#### **4. IT Tuition**

Derek is offering IT tuition, both for individuals to improve their own skills, but more importantly for anyone interested in learning how to operate the sound system and screen projection in order to assist on Sunday mornings. This is a vital role to ensure backup if Derek cannot be present. Get in touch with him if interested (556117).

#### **5. More volunteers required, can YOU help?**

We need an additional Communion Steward, and, if we are to resume our Monday Coffee Mornings, two more volunteers to join the team. Let us know if you can help.

#### **6. Open Meeting, Marriage and Relationships, 17<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm**

Following Conference's vote to accept the recommendations in the “God in Love Unites Us” report, Church Councils are required to decide whether or not same sex marriages should be conducted in their churches – this meeting is an opportunity to share your views before our Church Council members make the final decision.

## From Revd Marian: “High Days and Holy Days”

On the last evening in October, some of us have to tolerate the 'Trick or Treat' of All Hallows' Eve or Halloween before, on **November 1<sup>st</sup>**, celebrating All Hallows or **All Saints' Day**. This day is in honour of all the saints, known and unknown. For us, the day recognises the bond that remains between those who have died (the church triumphant) and the living (the church militant). The Methodist church says this day is about 'giving God solemn thanks for the lives and deaths of his saints, including those who are famous or obscure'. St Paul: 'To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:7). 'To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours' (1 Corinthians 1:2). Today, he could well have written: 'To the church of God in Welshpool, called to be saints...'

The following day, **November 2<sup>nd</sup>**, is **All Souls**, when parts of the church remember all who have died. I wonder how many of you look at the last two sections of hymns in 'Singing the Faith', headed 'Death, Judgement and Eternal Life' and 'The Communion of Saints'. There are some wonderful hymns there but with each new hymn book, there are fewer hymns in those sections.

Although she isn't listed in my Methodist diary. I think **St Hilda of Whitby** deserves a mention. Her feast day falls on **November 17<sup>th</sup>**. **Hilda of Whitby** (c.614-680) is the founding abbess of the monastery at Whitby which was chosen as the venue for the Synod of Whitby in 664. She was baptised on Eastsr Day 627AD in a wooden church built near the site of the present York Minster. She's an important figure in the history of Christianity in Britain. The Venerable Bede tells her story. When she was 33, Hilda responded to Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne's request to begin a community in Northumbria and, here, she learned the traditions of the Celtic Church which Aidan had brought from Iona. Hilda was abbess at several monasteries, unusually she was in charge of both men and women and was recognised for the wisdom that drew kings to her for advice. At the Synod of Whitby, among other decisions taken was the one determining the way that the date of Easter is determined.

**Sunday November 21<sup>st</sup>** is the Feast of **Christ the King**. This is the last Sunday of the Church calendar before a new liturgical year begins with Advent. This day points to a time when the Kingdom of God will be established to the ends of the earth. Traditionally, one of the readings on this day tells of the sheep and the goats being separated (Matthew 25) where Jesus says that 'just as you did it to one of the least of these who are my family, you did it to me' (Matt 25:40).

**Saint Cecilia** needs a mention – she is commemorated on **November 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Tradition tells us that Cecilia was born into a noble family in Rome in the early 200s AD and, despite her vow of virginity, she was forced by her parents to marry a pagan nobleman named Valerian. During the wedding, Cecilia sat apart from the rest of the wedding party and 'sang her heart to God'. She was killed for her faith and a church in Rome, St Cecilia of Trastevere, is named in her honour. Musical compositions have been dedicated to her and many music festivals are held around the time of her feast day. She is the patron saint of musicians.

This year, the **First Day of Advent** falls on **November 28<sup>th</sup>**. This has become a time of waiting and preparation for the great Christmas celebration. As with the season of Lent, Advent was a time of penitence before a major festival and the traditional themes for the four Sundays are The Last Things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. The lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath has become familiar to us, whether we use four red candles and a central white one for Christmas Day or three purple, for the first, second and fourth Sundays and a pink one for the third, Gaudete Sunday (Gaudete = rejoice), lightening the sombre mood of the season. Some of us remember Steeleye Span singing 'Gaudete', a carol written perhaps in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Back to a Biblical saint – **Saint Andrew**'s feast day falls on **November 30<sup>th</sup>**. You know about him – he was one of the first disciples of Jesus, the brother of Simon Peter, and they were fishermen from Bethsaida in Galilee (John 1:44). He was the one who introduced his brother to Jesus (John 1:42) and who found the young boy with five loaves and two fish and brought him to Jesus (John 6:8), who then fed the crowds. When Philip wanted to tell Jesus about some Greeks who wanted to see him, Philip went to Andrew first and they went together to Jesus (John 12:20-22). Historians say that Andrew was a missionary in countries around the Black Sea. He was crucified on an X shaped cross (St Andrew's Cross) on the instructions of the Roman Governor Aegeas in AD60. As well as being patron saint of Greece, Ukraine, Romania, Russia and Barbados, in 1320 he became patron saint of Scotland.

*Periodically, Revd Marian reports on the state of affairs at The Tent of Nations, a multicultural educational and environmental farm project that seeks to break down barriers on the Palestinian West Bank. The following is a summary of a recent letter received from Daoud Nasser, who, with his family, owns and runs the farm.*

"It has been a challenging year. Israeli settlements continue to expand and the sound of construction works and traffic on Palestinian land is continuous. Young, bright Palestinians are discouraged, and seek a future elsewhere. Ownership of the land continues to be contested and our lawyers battle with both the military authority and the Judiciary. December 13<sup>th</sup> is the next step in the legal process.

Earlier in the year arson destroyed over 1000 trees, severely impacting the almond and grape harvest. Local villagers and the army have damaged other crops, including 50% of the important olives. Thankfully the fig crop was good. New trees have been planted and an irrigation system installed – thanks to the support from friends. New batteries have been installed on the solar power system, but a new inverter is now needed, as well as replacement solar panels – all very costly.

On a more cheerful note, delegations from various European Consulates, Development Project Leaders and the Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem have all visited the farm. Volunteers, too, continue come to stay to give working support, especially at harvest time".

*In the circumstances, it is hard for Daoud to be very optimistic, but he says:*

"Although our path is full of obstacles we need to keep looking forward. We are determined to continue this path of 'Sumud' (steadfastness), without giving up. The journey continues with faith, love and hope in action".

## Sing Praises with Julia

Before I begin, I would like to say thank you to those folk who have expressed their pleasure in receiving the hymns I have chosen via "In Touch" since it began last Autumn. I think the news-sheet has really been a lovely way for us to remain in touch, as the title has suggested.

My hymn choice this month looks towards the beginning of the Church's lectionary year, and especially prepares us for our Advent journey:

### **Singing the Faith 169, Charles Wesley's "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Come thou long expected Jesus,<br>from our fears and sins release us, | born to set thy people free,<br>let us find our rest in thee.      |
| 2. Israel's strength and consolation,<br>dear desire of every nation,    | hope of all the earth thou art,<br>joy of every longing heart.     |
| 3. Born thy people to deliver,<br>born to reign in us for ever,          | born a child and yet a king,<br>now thy gracious kingdom bring.    |
| 4. By thy own eternal Spirit,<br>by thine all-sufficient merit           | rule in all our hearts alone,<br>raise us to they glorious throne. |

I once read that of the 6500 hymns that Charles wrote, all had rhyming couplets or rhymed alternate lines in the verses. What an achievement to find a way to express his faith with such brevity and conciseness for the witness of worship. As he wrote so many hymns, one wonders how he managed it. Look at verse 2 and the rhyming of 'consolation' with 'every nation' – so beautifully chosen and yet the rhyme doesn't seem contrived in any way. (If you look up the numerous hymns by Charles in your hymn books, you can test out this theory.) Of course, as a founding priest of Methodism he is rightly leading from the front in our singing. He lived between 1707 and 1788, so his hymns have been around a long time and still resonate with our congregations.

"Come thou long expected Jesus" is one of a series of hymns which remind us to look again for the coming of Christ in our lives – appropriate for us as the skies darken over the winter to prepare for the coming of the Light of the World. Looking to the Nativity, we have the repetition of the word 'born' in verse 3, surely chosen to emphasise the promise of Christmas and cementing this in the Advent hymn list as it brings us towards the festival, as we spend weeks in examining our readiness for Christ, as well as realising the gracious gift to the world. "From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee."

The tune I am most familiar with for this hymn is Stainer's 'Cross of Jesus', a late 19<sup>th</sup> century offering. My Anglican hymn book gives as a alternative 'Halton Halgate' by Boyce or 'Stuttgart' by CF Witt. I hope you know one of these (*'Stuttgart' is usually the Methodist choice*) and can sing it in your kitchen at home; especially remember that Jubilate members will be with you in spirit. We all need to exercise our singing muscles in readiness for the joyful season to come as the year progresses through December.

Blessings to all, Julia

## Thought for the Month

The story is told that in World War II a church building in Strasbourg, France, was hit during an air raid. After the bombing had ceased the members of the church looked over the damage. In spite of the devastation they were pleased that a statue of Christ with outstretched hands was still standing. It had been sculptured centuries before by a great artist. The people discovered however that both hands of Christ had been sheared off by a falling beam. Later, a sculptor in the town offered to replace the broken hands as a gift to the church. The church leaders met to consider the offer, and, after giving it considerable thought, decided not to accept. They felt the statue without hands would be a great message to everyone that the work of Jesus Christ is often done through His people. If there are sick, lonely, or hungry people around us, we are the hands the Saviour will use to answer those needs. Instead of repairing the hands, the church decided to put up a plaque at the base that states: "I have no hands but yours" – a reference to a prayer of St. Teresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body now on earth, but yours,  
No hands but yours, no feet but yours.  
Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world;  
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good;  
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all people now. Amen.*

The story reminds us that it is sometimes not enough simply to pray that God will help someone else. Sometimes we need to answer that prayer ourselves.

## Real love is.....

Every Monday morning our Jubilate gathering begins with one of the members sharing a 'Thought for the Day' and/or a prayer. This was part of Andrea's offering one Monday last month.

A primary school class were asked to write down what they thought "Real Love" was. A little girl wrote the following:

"Real love is when you have lost a front tooth and you smile at your friends. They smile back because they still love you even though you are a bit missing".

Andrea's prayer (the last four lines of which appear in this year's Prayer Handbook):

Lord of every distanced star and grain of desert sand,  
Your love and care encircle all:

Mighty cedars and mustard seeds,  
Lifting eagles and lowly wren,  
Ferocious lion and fluffy lamb,  
Poisonous viper and playful child,  
Bandaged leper and tax-collector,  
A woman of Samaria and the Centurion's servant.

Universal Lord, we would be more like you,  
Help us to understand and love those we perceive to be different,  
Help us to accept and love all those who march to a different drum,  
Open our hearts to embrace the world in your name. Amen.

## **From Gordon:** Castle Caereinion Garden Dramas

This year seems to have produced some Castle garden wildlife dramas, so I thought I would share some of them with you.

In late March a blackbird started to build in the shelter where we keep the wheelie bin. Curiously, it did not know how to build a nest - it was just a shapeless mass of grass which was quickly abandoned as a cold spell descended. However, some four weeks later a second attempt was more successful, and some three or four eggs were laid, which subsequently hatched. We were away when the birds would have fledged, but on our return there were no sightings or tell tale squawks to suggest success. Four weeks later in June, I cleared out the old nest debris assuming that the last attempt at a brood was passed. Not so, another nest was built in the same corner and three young birds fledged, with signs that one or two survived for a few weeks at least. Perseverance pays even for blackbirds.

The second tale is more dramatic. It was late June just as night descended, and a raucous din was coming from a tree in the corner of the garden. Two magpies were to blame, and as I ventured outside in the gloom to investigate, I could hear two owls hooting away. Soon they were joined by a third owl, perching on a nearby telegraph post. The magpies were raising a brood in a tree some twenty metres away that were only days from fledging. The 'magpie-owl' din continued for a further five minutes, then all went quiet. Next morning it was clear that the young magpies had constituted the owls' supper and the adults no longer visited the nest to feed their chicks. For a few moments I felt sorry for them, then remembered that magpies excel at just that, raiding nests for eggs or fledglings. 'Just deserts' is the expression that comes to mind!

A juvenile seagull adopted the village for a few weeks in August. On first sighting he looked weak and under-nourished, but soon won our sympathy, and that of our neighbour. Over several days, with a diet of fat balls, sardines and chicken scraps, the seagull looked much smarter and stronger. It took to perching on local roof tops until one of us appeared with his breakfast, when it would swoop down and waste no time in consuming whatever was offered. After a few weeks it appeared less often, until without a word of a thank you, it flew off for good!

Few sights or sounds herald spring more than swallows and martins wheeling through the sky, but they have been far less obvious in Castle this year and it was not until I was at Llanfair surgery in August that I noticed the sky was full of them, and then in September, a few flocks were seen perching on Castle overhead wires as they made their long journey to warmer latitudes.

Another mini drama concludes this account. On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October at about 10.30pm a power cut plunged us into blackness. Fortunately, it lasted barely a minute. A neighbour gave us a full account next day. Earlier that evening a dead tawny owl was spotted tangled in the high tension terminal of their local transformer. An e-mail was sent to keep the energy network people informed, and they arrived promptly, set about removing the dead bird in the dark, and briefly disconnected the power supply. Nothing like wildlife to inject a little excitement into sleepy old Castle!

**From Barbara:** another tea-towel verse: "What is a Senior Citizen?"

"A Senior Citizen is one who was here before the pill, television, frozen foods, contact lenses, credit cards, and before man walked on the moon.

For us, 'Time Sharing' meant togetherness, not holiday homes, and a 'chip' meant a piece of wood. 'Hardware' meant nuts and bolts, and 'software' wasn't even a word.

We got married first, then lived together, and thought cleavage was something that butchers did. A 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double decker to the bus depot.

We thought that 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat, and a 'crumpet' we had for tea.

In our day, 'grass' was mown, 'pot' was something you cooked in, 'coke' was kept in the coal house and a 'joint' was cooked on Sundays!

We are today's Senior Citizens – a hardy bunch when you think how the world has changed!"

**From Graham:** "The Haircut"

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of his father's car.

The father offered his son the following deal:

"You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little more, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even evidence that Jesus had long hair."

His dad replied, "Did you also notice that they walked everywhere they went?"

**Courtesy of Serendipity Magazine:** to make you smile

'So what if I don't know what 'Armageddon' means? It's not the end of the world.'

'I hate Russian dolls – they're full of themselves.'

'The closest a person ever comes to perfection is when he fills out a job application form.'

' Q. What's the difference between ignorance and apathy?

A. I don't know and I don't care.'

'I recently decided to sell my vacuum cleaner; all it was doing was gathering dust.'

'Just found the worst page in the entire dictionary.

What I saw was Disgraceful, Disgusting, Dishonest and Disingenuous.'

### Quiz Time: “Makes of Automobiles – then and now”

1. The Ouse and Trent bring this together (6)
2. Key is an initial way forward (3)
3. Nag rom backwards together (6)
4. Being dependent – maybe with a garden bird (7)
5. Greek first with lover of Juliet (5, 5)
6. Fabrica Italiana Automobili Torino (4)
7. Hope looking in will find similar sounding gem (4)
8. Looks like somewhere to perch (4)
9. Poetic lake loses little direction and yields possession (8)
10. Real nut arranged for French engineer (7)
11. Motorway designation with fragrant rhizomes – maybe minor? (6)
12. Gold, sulphur, titanium, nitrogen elements together (6)
13. Sounds like the first month of the Jewish calendar (6)
14. Tay too can be put in a different way (6)
15. Ray of sunlight (7)
16. Not rice provides a good combination (7)
17. Old mother .... or living the life of ....? (5)
18. Very old lorry very old letters at the beginning (5)
19. Associated with Gerald and Henry and Harrison (4)
20. London Bridge (8)

### Answers to Quiz in issue 36: “North of the Border”

- |                   |                    |                   |                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Stone of Scone | 2. Elgin           | 3. Highland Games | 4. Capercaillie |
| 5. Thistle        | 6. Haggis          | 7. Wick           | 8. Oban         |
| 9. Glencoe        | 10. Blackwatch     | 11. Balmoral      | 12. Saltire     |
| 13. Braemar       | 14. Pentland Firth | 15. Tartan        | 16. Hebrides    |
| 17. Fort William  | 18. Stirling       | 19. Coldstream    | 20. Shortbread  |

### Christmas Quiz

To raise money for our 2021-2022 Church's Charity, Welshpool Community Transport, and to challenge those little grey cells over the Christmas period, a Christmas Quiz Sheet (45 questions) will be available shortly. Copies can be obtained from me in exchange for a donation for the charity. Small prize for the most accurate answers! See me at church or use the contact details below.

**Thanks** to those who have contributed to this issue! For the December issue (38), please send your contributions to [rhodes4144@gmail.com](mailto:rhodes4144@gmail.com), tel. 01938 850514, or to 'Brynteg', Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by **10<sup>th</sup> December, or sooner**, for printing and distribution by 19<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.