

Welshpool Methodist Church, High Street

“Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love”

“IN TOUCH” issue 39, January 2022

Note: details given here for Services and Events are subject to cancellation or change, depending on any new restrictions which are imposed, either by the Welsh Government or by church stewards because of rising infection rates. Notice of any cancellations will be posted on the church notice boards, or for latest information phone 01938 850514. (Those listed below are still planned at the time of printing.) Currently at Alert Level 2, we need to resume 2m social distancing, which reduces the number of seats available in church. Please book for Communion Services (except 9am) – the Meeting Room may be used for ‘overflow’ for other services. We have to maintain good air flow for adequate ventilation, so come suitably dressed to keep warm. We would encourage you to take a Lateral Flow Test before coming to church and ask that you stay at home if you feel at all unwell.

News and Updates

1. Happy Birthday to Allan Everard, who will be 97 on 9th January. Allan and Helen moved to Borth to be near their family some years ago, but are still very much a part of our church, keeping in regular contact and supporting us. We extend our good wishes to Allan, and any others with birthdays this month.

2. Services this month

Sunday 2 nd	Revd Marian, 10.45am – Covenant Service with Holy Communion
Sunday 9 th	Terry Jobling, 10.45am; United Service at Welsh Chapel, 6pm
Sunday 16 th	Andrea Davies, 10.45am; Revd Jacquie, 4pm, tea service
Sunday 23 rd	Revd Rob Saunders, 10.45am (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)
Sunday 30 th	Revd Jacquie, 9am HC and 10.45am, with St Mary’s

3. ‘What’s On’ in January

Mondays, weekly	Jubilate, 10am
Wednesdays, weekly	Church open for private prayer, 10am – 12
Wednesdays, except 5 th	Craft Group, 2pm – 4pm
Thursdays 6 th & 20 th	Reading the Bible Together, 12noon – 1pm
Thursday 6 th	Zoom Quiz Evening, 7 for 7.30pm start (details from Derek)
Saturday 1 st	New Year’s Day Coffee Morning, 10am -12
Wednesday 5 th	Mid-Week Movies: “Philomena”, 2pm
Wednesday 12 th	Stewards’ Meeting, 7.15pm
Saturday 15 th	Coffee and Lunches, 11am – 1.30pm
Thursday 20 th	Welshpool Churches Together Meeting, 7.30pm
Friday 21 st	Friday Fellowship – speaker: Revd Jacquie, 2.30pm
Friday 21 st	Gallery Group, 7pm

4. Weekly Home Worship Sheets – many thanks to Derek who has been preparing the Worship Sheets produced by our team of ministers and local preachers for the past 2 years. For 2022, this task is now being passed to Kevin Gilman, Trefeglwys, but we will continue to send them out to those of our church who still require them.

5. Playgroup has now closed its doors after 13 years with Karen Kerr at the helm. We extend our grateful thanks to Karen for her dedication and leadership, and to her various helpers who have supported her over the years.

6. Christmas Fair - many thanks to organiser Fiona, all her helpers, and all who supported the Fair, which raised the excellent sum of £1,233 for Church Funds.

7. Mid-week Movies (5th) – “Philomena”: ‘Falling pregnant as a teenager in 1952, Philomena Lee (Judi Dench) was sent to a convent to be looked after as a “fallen woman”. When only a toddler, her baby was put up for adoption by nuns and whisked away to America. Philomena spent the next fifty years searching in vain until she met Martin Sixsmith (Steve Coogan), a journalist as cynical as Philomena was trusting. Together they set off on a hilarious and uplifting journey that would change their lives forever’. (“Wonderfully moving and funny, Dame Judi breaks your heart then mends it.”) Best Film nominations: Oscar, Bafta, Golden Globe.

All welcome. Free admission.

From Revd Marian: High Days and Holy Days

January begins with the **Naming and Circumcision of Jesus** on the **1st** day of the New Year (Luke 2:21), according to Jewish tradition, new-born boys are circumcised eight days after birth. In Matthew’s Gospel, an angel tells Joseph that he is to name the child ‘Jesus’ (Matthew 1:21) so some parts of the church commemorate that journey to Jerusalem and the Temple when Simeon recognises the infant Jesus as the one he has been waiting for and Anna tells everyone about the child.

In the Methodist diary, the first Sunday in January, in 2022 on **January 2nd**, is **Covenant Sunday**. The Methodist Worship Book says that ‘From the earliest days of Methodist societies, John Wesley invited the Methodist people to renew their covenant relationship with God. Wesley drew much of his material for the service from seventeenth-century Puritans and subsequently made changes to it . . . The emphasis of the service is on God’s readiness to enfold us in generous love, not dependent on our deserving. Our response, also in love, springs with penitent joy from thankful recognition of God’s grace.’

Some people take down their Christmas decorations on **January 6th, the Feast of Epiphany**, believing that the Christmas season ends here, the twelfth day of Christmas. It doesn’t – the season continues until February 2nd, Candlemas, or The Presentation of Christ in the Temple. The Epiphany (or ‘revealing’) of Christ is one of the oldest Christian festivals and used to hold together the Visit of the Magi, or Wise Men, and the Baptism of Jesus, both occasions when Jesus was recognised for who he is.

Each year, the **Baptism of Jesus** is celebrated on the Sunday after **January 6th** – this year on the **9th**. Already, Jesus is an adult, preparing for his ministry and he appears at the Jordan River to be baptized by John. At his baptism, a dove descends and Jesus is affirmed as God’s beloved son. Similarly, our baptism affirms us as God’s beloved sons and daughters.

Later in the month, the **Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity** is held. The time begins on **January 18th** and always ends with the feast of the **Conversion of St Paul on January 25th**. For 2022, the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been prepared by the churches of the Middle East and they have taken as their theme: 'We Saw His Star in the East'. 'The story of the Magi visiting the Holy Family in Bethlehem is one very familiar to us. The Magi have sometimes been seen as a symbol of the world's diversity – different religions and cultures – that comes to pay homage to the Christ-child. The story might therefore represent the unity of all created that God desires.' (Introduction to the worship material for the week available on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website.)

St Paul is an interesting character whose influence is greater than we often imagine. The New Testament contains a number of his letters (as well as some that, wrongly, are attributed to him). He is known as The Apostle to the Gentiles and was given the Hebrew name Saul. Born in Tarsus, a Roman city, he was a Roman citizen and a scholar, trained in the Jewish Law. Because of a Jewish tradition that sons should learn a trade, Saul became a tent maker. Because of his concern that some Jews were following The Way (as the first followers of Jesus were known), Saul became the worst enemy of Christians, hunting them down and even arranging to have them killed. He was a witness to the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen – maybe Saul was the one who ordered his stoning (Acts 7: 54 – 60), 'the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul'. While Saul was on his way to Damascus, having sought permission from the High Priest and the Sanhedrin to arrest Christians there, Saul heard God questioning his actions . . . and you know the story. It's in the Book of Acts, Chapter 9. One of the greatest persecutors of the Christian community loses his sight, gains insight and becomes an ardent missionary, promoting his new-found faith.

The day after the celebration of the Conversion of St Paul, on **January 26th**, parts of the church commemorate **Saints Timothy and Titus**. These two shared in the ministry of Paul. Timothy had a Greek father and a Jewish mother named Eunice. Being the product of a "mixed" marriage, he was considered illegitimate by the Jews. It was his grandmother, Lois, who first became Christian. He was with Paul in Rome during the latter's house arrest. At some period Timothy himself was in prison (Hebrews 13:23). He became Paul's representative at the Church in Ephesus. Timothy was comparatively young for the work he was doing. Several references seem to indicate that he was timid. One of Paul's most frequently quoted lines was addressed to him: "Stop drinking only water, but have a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses" (1Timothy 5:23). Obviously not a Methodist! In the New Testament there are two letters from Paul to Timothy.

Titus has the distinction of being a close friend and disciple of Paul as well as a fellow missionary. He was Greek, apparently from Antioch, and he's seen as a peacemaker as well as an administrator. When Paul was having trouble with the Christians in Corinth, Titus was the one who smoothed things out (2 Corinthians 7: 7a, 15). He also worked in Crete as Paul mentions in his letter to Titus (Titus 1: 5).

January 27th is **Holocaust Memorial Day** which I wrote about last year.

Sing New Year Praises with Julia

This month I have selected **StF 594 Living Lord**

*Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us, you are one with us, Mary's Son;
Cleansing our souls from all their sin, pouring your love and goodness in;
Jesus our love for you we sing, living Lord.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do this in remembrance, Lord, of you;
Into our lives your power breaks through, living Lord.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us, born as one of us, Mary's Son;
Led out to die on Calvary, risen from death to set us free;
Living Lord Jesus, help us see you are Lord.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, we would come to you, live our lives for you, Son of God.
All your commands we know are true; your many gifts will make us new;
Into our lives your power breaks through, living Lord.*

As we turn away from the carols and seasonal hymns, I find this hymn is just perfect for the beginning of the new year. It takes us smoothly from the crib to the cross, putting sacrifice and sacrament central. The alternative verse endings of "Mary's Son" and "Son of God" seesaws between the human and the divine. The advent plea we sang, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" has turned into a bold statement, a gentle reminder of the spiritual gift... "You have come to us, you are one with us."

The second verse is written for Holy Communion. It's a good choice for Covenant Services, and for all of us it offers a new year commitment to "offer our souls for cleansing (v1) and acceptance (v 4)."

"Your many gifts will make us new; Into our lives your power breaks through, living Lord".... so inspirational. I find most congregations are familiar with this hymn, so I'm sure you will have sung it at some point in a worship setting.

Putting words and music together, who can deny the uplifting combination "*Living Lord, Jesus help us see, you are Lord.*" Patrick Appleford (1925-2018) wrote both words and music so it's no accident they blend so well. He was a director of education in SPG/USPG and later in the UK in the Chelmsford diocese, having spent some time in Zambia. Those of you who watch BBC's "Call the Midwife" may be interested to know that he was a curate in Poplar from 1952-58 – the original books and programmes covered that period. I've scanned my copy of Jenny Worth's book, but can't find many instances of the local clergy being mentioned. However, I'm sure Patrick Appleford would have recognised the characters, situations and conditions of that period in the East End when the drama first came to our screens. Like Jenny Worth, he would draw upon his life experiences and the needs of the people with whom he worked to influence his writing.

My best wishes to you all for a new year that has a joy in looking forward; and the preparation to find safe ways to praise together in the future months.

Julia

From Pat J: 'ACTION FOR CHILDREN'

The Carols and Coffee Morning on December 20th in aid of Action for Children was a great success. £220 was raised on the day, giving a total of £340.65 after the sale of toys at playgroup and earlier donations. This was a team effort by Janice, Jubilate, Derek, Karen, Liz, Terry Jobling and so many of our church members. Thank you to all who helped and attended.

Since 2008 I have sent £5,150 to the Charity and recently asked how this money has been spent. Nina from Action for Children has replied:

"I have checked the record for Welshpool Methodist Church. To date these funds have gone to Action for Children as funds to be spent where the charity feels it is needed. Here are some examples of what these monies will have supported.

Fulfilling unmet need – unrestricted funds allowed Action for Children to set up our Parent Talk service which gives parents of children up to the age of 19 free advice and support by phone or on line UK-wide.

Piloting new approaches – unrestricted funds allowed us to pilot a small-scale Emergency Fund to support families in 2019 which we were able to replicate on a much bigger scale in 2020 to support families hit by the Covid pandemic. We wouldn't have been able to do this without having piloted it in 2019.

Campaigning – our services aren't the only way that we change children's lives. Unrestricted funds also help us ensure children have safe and happy childhoods. We campaign on a national scale, tackling the big issues. A recent success of this has been the changes we were able to bring to the Domestic Abuse Bill to better reflect the risks of domestic abuse to children. Thank you for your support."

From Pat P: "Eating in the Fifties"

'Pasta' had not been invented. It was macaroni or spaghetti.

Curry was a surname. A take-away was a mathematical problem.

Pizza? Sounds like a leaning tower somewhere.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.

All chips were plain. Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Chickens didn't have fingers in those day.

None of us had ever heard of yogurt. Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

Cooking outside was called camping. Seaweed was not a recognized food.

'Kebab' wasn't even a word, never mind a food.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly muesli was readily available. It was called cattle feed.

Pinepples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.

Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it, and charging more than gasoline for it, they would have become a laughing stock.

The one thing we never ever had on/at our table in the fifties?

Elbows, hats and cell phones!

Roy Cook – a Celebration of his 100th Birthday. A full life, well lived. Congratulations!

Roy was born on 28th December 1921, at Shilstone Farm, Bishop's Tawton, near Barnstaple, Devon. He had 3 older brothers, the oldest of whom died aged 21/2. One younger brother, born when Roy was 5, sadly died at 2 days old. His parents were Methodists, and both his mother and one of his brothers were musical, and both played the organ. Roy attended the local school, at first walking the 21/2 miles there and back each day, but when he was a little older, he rode there on his pony, which he tethered at the farm adjoining the school during lesson times! When he was 11, he became very ill, and was off school for some time. Diphtheria was diagnosed, and his parents were told he also had a weak heart (which was to serve him well for at least another almost 90 years, and is still going strong!!) As he recovered he was disappointed not to be allowed to play any sports and then he was told it wasn't diphtheria he had had after all, but a bad case of tonsillitis!

In his teens his parents sent him as a boarder to Shebbear Methodist School where he was doing well academically, but really missed the farming life. His headmaster was disappointed, when, aged 15, after only three terms, his parents allowed him to leave, to work back on the farm they had moved to, the other side of Barnstaple. Four years later, Roy and his older brother, having taken over the tenancy and then buying the farm, were running it in partnership, until they went their separate ways. During these later teenage years, Roy was active in the local Young Farmers Club at Braunton, and took courses in thatching, sheep shearing and stock judging.

Roy was called up for war service in 1942, aged 21, and served 31/2 years in the RAF. After initial "square bashing" at a base in Blackpool, he was posted to Andover, Hampshire. It was obviously meant to be, for while there, he met Joy, a fellow singer at the Methodist church. After an 18 month courtship, they were married in 1944 (by a young minister who was conducting his first marriage ceremony - but all went well!) Fortunately, Roy was posted back to Devon, to Chivenor, just 2 miles from the farm, and although Joy was not a country girl, she adapted well to her new life, even though, at first, the water supply was from an old pump, and there was no electricity for 3 or 4 years! When Roy was posted to Ireland as an engine fitter (and where he also looked after the gardens at the base), Joy went back to live with her parents until Roy was de-mobbed in 1946.

Soon afterwards, they bought a 90 acre dairy farm near Cullompton, and their only child, Malcolm, was born in 1950. It was a tough life, and for relaxation, Roy and Joy went to dancing classes, and enjoyed choral singing, both taking solo parts on occasions. Roy also served as Youth Club leader. Malcolm was a boarder at Queen's College, the Methodist School at Taunton, but he, like his dad before him, wanted to get back to the farm, and gained an apprenticeship, training as an agricultural engineer (later moving to Bromyard, and then to Welshpool.)

In the early 1970s, Roy and Joy decided to leave farming. The farm was sold, and they moved to live in Cullompton. Roy then worked for the Milk Marketing Board for 8 years, and then for 12 years as an Agricultural Engineer, before retiring in 1991.

In his retirement, Roy took up two new hobbies – wood carving and oil painting. Anyone who has visited him will have seen the beautiful work he has produced.

Roy and Joy celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1994, then a few years later, sadly, Joy became ill, passing away in November 2001. Roy moved to Welshpool in February 2002 to be near his family, living in Gungrog Hill before moving to Dorothy Hughes House in February this year, where he has settled happily and says he has been made most welcome. Although he misses his garden and his pot plants, he has been able to help the House gardener with some small jobs during the summer.

Music, especially choral singing, has played a significant part in Roy's life, and various choirs and singing groups have benefitted from his input. He has sung with the Braunton Methodist Church Choir, the Cullompton Methodist Church Choir, the the Cullompton Choral Society, and was one of the founder members of the Culm Valley Crusade Choir (still going strong today, 40 years later.) Since moving to Welshpool, he has sung with Mary Gordon's group, Ericson Stafford's group, the Montgomeryshire Festival Choir, and, until very recently, Welshpool Choral Society, and the church's Jubilate group. Asked about his favourite choral work, he not surprisingly answered "Messiah". Since moving to Wales, he has developed a love of Welsh hymn tunes and to celebrate his 90th Birthday, the Choral Society joined the church's singers for an evening of Roy's favourite hymns, with, top of the list, "Love Divine" sung to the tune Blaenwern.

I would like to thank Roy for sharing his life story with me. When asked the secret of living a long life, he said he was asked the same question by another lady recently, and told her: "Looking at pretty girls like you!" (Typical Roy! Always with a twinkle in his eye!) We wish him continued contentment in this New Year. In conclusion, he has asked me to acknowledge the help his son Malcolm and his wife have given him, first with his move to Gungrog Hill, and then to Dorothy Hughes House, and he also wishes to express his appreciation for the friendliness and support received from his church family – in particular one member (she will know who she is) 'for being such a special friend.'

Finally, to make you smile: "A COVID Christmas Poem" *(from my brother-in-law in Canada)*

Twas the night before Christmas, but Covid was here,
So we all had to stay extra cautious this year.
Our masks were all hung by the chimney with care
In case Santa forgot his, and needed a spare.
With Covid we couldn't leave cookies or cake,
So we left Santa hand sanitiser to take.

The children were sleeping, the brave little tots,
The ones over 5 had just had their first shots,
And mom in her kerchief and me in my cap
Had just settled in for a long winter's nap.
But we tossed and we turned all night in our beds
As visions of variants danced in our heads.
Gamma and Delta and now Omicron,
These Covid mutations that go on and on.
I thought to myself, "If this doesn't get better,
I'll soon be familiar with every Greek letter."

Then just as I started to drift off and doze
A clatter of noise from the front lawn arose.
I leapt from my bed and ran straight down the stair
I opened the door, and an old gent stood there.
His N95 made him look pretty weird, *(N95 – a type of mask)*
But I knew who he was from his red suit and beard.
I kept 6 feet away but blurted out quick
“What are you doing here, jolly Saint Nick?”

He said he'd been stuck at the North Pole alone,
All his white collar elves had been working from home.
He said Dasher and Dancer were in quarantine,
Prancer and Vixen refused the vaccine,
Comet and Cupid were in ICU
So were Donner and Blitzen, they may not pull through.

And Rudolph's career can't be resurrected,
With his shiny red nose, they all think he's infected.
Even with his old sleigh, Santa couldn't go far
Every border to cross needs a new PCR.
But then the old twinkle returned to his eyes,
And he said that he'd brought me a Christmas surprise.

When I unwrapped the box and opened it wide,
Starlight and rainbows streamed out from inside.
Some letters whirled round and flew up to the sky
And they spelled out a word that was 40 feet high.
There first was an **H**, then an **O**, then a **P**,
Then I saw it spelled **HOPE** when it added the **E**.

“Christmas magic” said Santa as he smiled through his beard,
Then suddenly all of the reindeer appeared.
He jumped into the sleigh and he waved me goodbye,
Then he soared o'er the rooftops and into the sky.

I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight
“Get your vaccines, my friends. Merry Christmas! Good night!”
Then I went back to bed to a sweet Christmas dream
Of a world when we'd finished with Covid 19.

Christmas Quiz Sheet – thanks to all who are participating. £52 has been donated for our current Church's Charity, Welshpool Community Transport. Quiz sheets are still available (£1 Donation invited). Deadline for submitting completed entries is 17th January. Small prize for the most accurate set of Answers, which will be listed in the February edition of “In Touch”.

Thanks to those who have contributed to this issue! For the February issue (40), and probably the last in this format, unless we go into lockdown again, please send your contributions to rhodes4144@gmail.com, tel. 01938 850514, or to 'Brynteg', Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 9AS, by **21st January, or sooner.** Thank you.