

SPRING! – And what does that mean for you?

Is it a time when you look forwards – an exciting time – a time of new beginnings' new experiences' new growth, new life?

Or is it, maybe, a time of restlessness, of longing, of dissatisfaction – a feeling that there should be more to life than this, as the yearly cycle starts all over again?

Or is it, even, a time when you look back – summing up what has gone on

in those dark months of Winter, a time to

consider what has been left behind – a time to think about what has changed, what is different now?

Is it, perhaps, a time to anticipate – a time to plan ahead, to dream, and to consider how you might make those dreams come true - a time of revolutionary life changing decisions?

For me, Spring can be all of the above! As the days start to grow longer again we literally experience more light in our day to day lives. It is hard to suppress the feeling of optimism that accompanies that (and why *should* we deny it?).

Every Spring brings with it the inescapable message of HOPE, and for us as Christians, as followers of 'The Way', this HOPE isn't merely a renewal, a repeating of the lessons and blessings of last year, the year before, and the year before that. It is a stepping out – a moving on – a challenge, as we see new life springing up all around us. We see new life growing from plants that have been in the soil for years and years – it's a sign that they're alive and healthy – they haven't

See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19

given up yet! The plant that does *not* put out new

shoots, new growth, is a very sad plant indeed – it is not really living at all – it is, in fact, dying! Plants *must* grow, and growth means, inevitably, change.

It's the same with all the young animals and birds we see arriving in the Spring. They *have* to grow - that is what they are designed to do! And, as they grow, they change. Some change is slow and gradual... some is fast and quite dramatic, but change they *must*, or they will die. Staying the same is not an option.

And that is just how it is for us! We *must* grow, (whatever our age)... We must grow spiritually in faith every day. If we stay on the spot, we will end up digging ourselves into a trench that will stop us going anywhere. Just like all living creatures, we *must* move, we *must* develop, we *must* mature.... learning new skills, trying new ideas, discovering new talents, investigating new possibilities, listening for new callings.

Life for us should never be a

'Groundhog Day' experience, going over the same things again and again until they lose any meaning they once held for us. There is an undeniable comfort, a safety to be found in the familiar. How reluctant we are to accept change! Why is that I wonder? – Are we too tired or too lazy to change our way of living, and to adjust our way of thinking? Do we fear the vulnerability that 'new' brings with it? Are we worried that the new won't be as fulfilling as the old – that the unknown won't match up to the familiar?

What are we thinking of? – Have we forgotten who we

are, where we are, and where we are going?

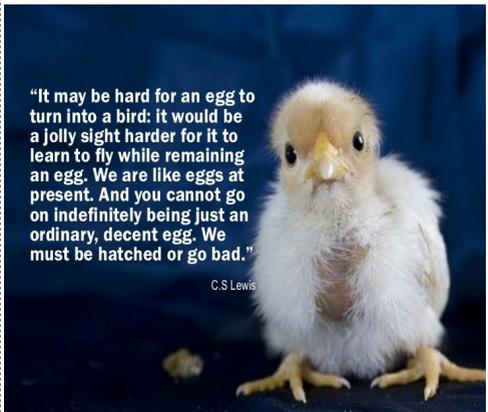
We are children of the true and living God, aren't we? We are on a journey through this World on our way to the next. This is not our final destination, we are on our way to Heaven! Easter reminds us that our way has been prepared by God's own son Jesus, and now we have His Spirit with us, in us, to show us the way. We aren't travelling alone – there's no need to panic! This life is not

"There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind." CS Lewis

random, it's all part of the plan.

So think again – SPRING! – And what does that mean for you?

Kat Bond



Spring Letter 2023

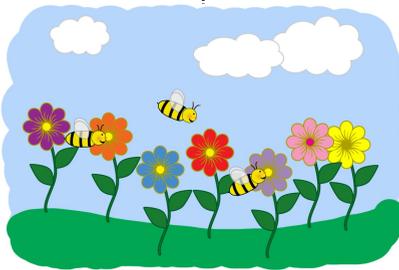
It is a very funny feeling to wake up on New Year's Day and think that this is the year that I retire, but that was exactly what I did, and I remember friends who have travelled this path before telling me that the next few months will go very quickly. Indeed, my diary is already filling up with things that I am planning to do post retirement, places to go, people to see. Something that ministry does not give you time for.

Of course, as I started to reflect, I wonder how Jesus felt in the final year of his ministry – did he recognise it as so? Jesus' ending was full of both tragedy and hope, mine is somewhat different. Planned endings follow through in expected ways, sudden endings don't.



This letter will cover the months that bring winter to an end, and the development of Spring. We will see a time of great celebration with the coronation of King Charles, and we will remember with great fondness our late Queen who many of us felt would go on forever. But that is it, everything changes, nothing stays the same. Sometimes I envy the more laid

back among us who can take everything in its stride and nothing seems to faze them. When I feel stressed I often turn to words of comfort, and words from the Bible spring



out. Sometimes, a really good reflection on words we know so well is produced, and so I share with you Tom Gordon's reflection on Psalm 23.

The Lord is my shepherd ...
I know that.
It's an image I like,
of tenderness and awareness,
of leading and following,
of protection and permanence,
and all directed to me.
I like that.
The Lord is my shepherd ...
a shepherd for me.

The Lord gives me shepherds ...
I know that.
It's an image I like,
of parenting and friendship,
of role-models and examples,
of love shown and standards kept high,
and all to benefit me.
I like that.
The Lord gives me shepherds ...
shepherds for me.

The Lord makes me a shepherd ...
I know that.
It's an image I like,
of time and commitment,
of talents and attitude, of loving and healing,
and all called forth from me.
I like that.
The Lord makes me a shepherd ...
A shepherd ...That's me.

Tom Gordon.

So, in this season of new lambs, let's remember that we are all shepherds...

Every blessing,

Jacquie

Pentre Llifior Chapel A rollercoaster ride!

Part 1

Earlier last year there was an article in the 'Methodist Recorder' about the Rev. James Buckley who is currently the face of 'The Rev. James ale. James Buckley served as a Wesleyan itinerant preacher during the formative years of the Methodist church (1791-1839). He became involved with chapel projects in England and Wales, one of which was Pentre Llifior. Sadly, all of the other chapels he was involved with were later either demolished, replaced or sold with Pentre Llifior being the only one remaining.

Pentre Llifior was scheduled to close in 1998 but the Rev. Brian Hoare, a past President of Conference, who took the 200th anniversary service, postulated that **'it should not close as the chapel was a rarity, largely unaltered since erection in 1798'** - one of only two 18th Century Wesleyan preaching houses remaining in Wales. 91 people from this Circuit attended that service and, in response to Brian Hoare's comments, a small group including the surviving two members and guest organist, agreed to investigate the chapel's story to see if there were grounds for its restoration and development as a Methodist Heritage Site and continuing worshipping community.

Research revealed the connection with the Rev. James Buckley who

became a significant personality within Methodism. James Buckley headed the first set of trustees at Pentre Llifior and, in April 1798, bought the site for the chapel (for 10 shillings) from Evan Nock of the Panney Farm. The society was then based at the Pentre Farm (John Wesley preached there in 1769).

The chapel and the stable building were in a deplorable condition due to a chronic lack of repairs over 60 years. The only work recorded was some repairs to the roof and the installation of electric lighting plus tubular heating under some of the pews in 1964 - separately, 12 shillings had been spent replacing catgut with nylon in the chapel clock!

Fortunately, we were soon joined by several new members and two helpers enabling us to institute remedial repairs and to replace some items. This involved removing poorly applied Victorian paintwork (using razor blades & sandpaper over five months), considerable repairs to three walls and the application of attractive pale green and white paint to the pews and walls (similar to that in Leicester's iconic 1815 Bishop's Street chapel) plus new planking for the floor and a new carpet.

The chapel achieved Methodist Heritage Site status in 2003 and by 2008 more action had been taken. This included replacement of the globe lights with hand-blown pendant lamps, the re-installation of

pew number plates and chapel hat pegs (found in the stable), replacement of the harmonium, the installation of safety rails to the stairs and gallery and the ditching of unsuitable furniture.

The latter were supplanted by items from Holland, including four oak chairs, an oak lectern and two low cupboards, one featuring three arches (the Trinity) and the other bearing a fine carving of St. Jude - the patron saint of lost causes!

Shortly afterwards we were included in T.J. Hughes's book "Wales's Best One Hundred Churches" and further encouraged by a surprise individual legacy of £20,000 in 2007. The latter, with money put aside in previous years enabled us to embark on a scheme to restore the chapel, replace the unauthorised lean-to building with a Georgian style porch plus conversion of the stable into a meeting room with a kitchen and toilet/shower room along with an enlarged parking area. This was completed in 2012 and a rededication service was conducted by the Rev, the Lord Griffiths of Pembrey, the Superintendent minister at Wesley's City Road Chapel, London on the 28th September, 2012, also a past President of Conference.

The next five years saw modernisation of the heating system and installation of secondary double-glazing in the chapel. The former

followed an unfortunate event when a lady visitor burnt a shin when stretching a leg under a pew in front of her. Shortly afterwards, a glance at the visitor's book revealed one lady had commented Pentre Llifior's pews were the hardest and most uncomfortable she had ever experienced! This was a wake-up call so immediate action was taken to obtain a full set of bespoke pew runners.

The importance of having a bible based quotation as the chapel ethos had been recognised but what could it be? This was resolved after a chance visit to Oakhampton where I found a memorial stone to John Wesley, Charles Wesley and John Nelson, an itinerant from Yorkshire, and the welcome they had received, bearing the words '**Be Not Forgetful to Entertain Strangers**'; those biblical words now appear on all our letterheads, leaflets etc.

The five years of work after 2012 were marked by a large increase in visitor numbers and Pentre Llifior was blessed by its inclusion in Christopher Wakeling's monumental "Chapels of England - Buildings of Protestant Non-conformity" despite the chapel's location in east Wales - a singular honour.

Andrew Mathieson

Part 2 will be in the next issue. The full article is available on the Circuit website or from the Editors.

**BRAIN -TEASER – a few riddles.
Can you work them out?**



1. What gets wet when it dries?
2. What comes last in everything?
3. What goes up when rain comes down?
4. Who is the biggest out of Mr. Bigger, Mrs Bigger and Little bigger?
5. What is full of holes but can hold water?
6. What starts with T, ends with T and is full of T?
7. I am the beginning of the end and the end of space and time. What am I?
8. I cannot scratch myself even though I have hands. What am I?
9. What is more useful when it is broken?
10. The more there is, the less you see. What is it?
11. What's the one thing you will always overlook?
12. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?

Submitted by John Purcell

Answers on the back page

Ministers

Chair of the Synod: Rev Dr Stephen Wigley
Superintendent: **Rev Jacque Evans**
 01686 625690
Supernumerary: Rev Penny Burkill
Supernumerary: Rev Bill Jones
Supernumerary: Rev John W Newbury BA
Supernumerary: Rev J Michael Taylor BD, BA

Local Preachers

Mr Terry M Jobling OBE
Mrs Eileen Jobling
Mr Graham Smith
Mrs Eleri Wyn Williams
Mrs Doris McNulty
Mrs Maureen Douglas
Ms Bet Holmes
Mr John Harbron
Mrs Andrea Davies
Mrs Kat Bond

Worship Leaders

Mr Alan Bradburn and Mrs Anthea Bradburn
Mr Derek Painter

Visiting Preachers

Mr Nigel Evans
Canon Julia Francis
Rev Marian Jones

Church & Hymn Books	Times	05-Mar	12-Mar	19-Mar	26-Mar
		2nd Sun in Lent	3rd Sun in Lent	Mothering Sun	5th Sun of Lent
		John 3:1-17	John 4:5-42	Luke 2:33-35	John 11:1-45
Welshpool	9.00				
H ON	10.45	Holmes	M Jones HC	Davies	Harbron
SIF WB	6.00		WCT UB WDP	4pm Evans ATS	
Cefn	10.00	Davies			
H ON	6.00				
P Llifor	2.30	AACG	W Jones HC	AACG	Harbron
H SIF WB					
Newtown	10.30	Smith	Bond	Evans HC	N Evans
H SIF WB	6.00				
Caersws	10.30	UP	N Evans	Harbron HC	Evans
H WB					
Trefeglwys	10.00	Evans HC		Burkill	
H M					

Visit www.wbmethodists.org.uk for any changes to the Plan

02-Apr	09-Apr	16-Apr	23-Apr	30-Apr
Palm Sun	Easter Sun	2nd Sun of Easter	3rd Sun of Easter	4th Sun of Easter
Matt 21:1-11	John 20:1-18	John 20:19-31	Luke 24:13-35	John 10:1-10
Smith	Evans HC	M Jones	N Evans	11am St Mary's
Jubilate WCT		4pm P & P ATS		
Evans HC				
AACG	Evans HC	AACG	N Evans	AACG
Holmes	Harbron HC	Wgley	Evans	Bond CA
@ Llanwnog	W Jones HC	Bond	Smith	Holmes
W Jones HC		Burkill LS		Smith

Church	07-May	14-May	21-May	28-May
& Hymn	Vocations Sun	6th Sun of Easter	Aldersgate Sun	Pentecost
Books	John 14:1-14	John 14:15-21	John 17:1-11	John 20:19-23
Welshpool				
H ON	Evans	M Jones HC	W Jones	LA Francis
StF WB		WCT UA	4pm P & P ATS	
Cefn		N Evans		
H ON				
P Llifor	Evans HC	AACG	Bond	AACG
H StF WB				
Newtown	W Jones HC	Davies	Evans HC	Holmes
H StF WB				
Caersws	Burkill	Evans HC UM	Smith	Davies
H WB				
Trefeglwys		Harbron HC		Evans HC
H M				
Visit www.wbmethodists.org.uk for any changes to the Plan				

REFERENCES USED IN THE PLAN

BOOKS

H Hymns and Psalms
M Methodist Hymn Book
ON Methodist Hymns Old & New
S The Source
StF Singing the Faith
WB Methodist Worship Book

SERVICES

AA All Age Worship
AACG All Age Cell Group
ATS Afternoon Tea Service
BAP Baptism
BC Breakfast Church
BTCS Back to Church Sunday
CA Chapel Anniversary
CAP Christians Against Poverty
C&C Carols and Christingle
CHS Community Hymn Singing
CMM Christian Music Ministries
Cov Covenant
CS Carol Service
EO Easter Offering Dedication
FF Flower Festival
HC Holy Communion
HF Harvest Festival
Jub Jubilate
LA Local Arrangement
LS Lambing Service
P&P Prayer and Praise
SKS Sankey Service
SoP Songs of Praise
SS Sectional Service
TF Welshpool Transport Festival
WCT Welshpool Churches Together
WDP World Day of Prayer
WPCU Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
UnS Circuit United Service

UNITED SERVICES

UA at Anglican
UB at Baptist
UM at Methodist
UP at Presbyterian
URC at URC
UW at Welsh Chapel

OTHER

T Transport Required
TS Trial Service

All Ages Pages

Stare at the four dots in the centre of this picture for about thirty seconds. Then, close your eyes and wait for an image to appear. What did you see? Did you see an image of Jesus? Some people see the image of Jesus and some don't.



Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. *John 20:18*

*Because of Good Friday you can look back and not be afraid.
Because of Easter you can look ahead and not be afraid.
Because of Ascension Day you can look up and not be afraid.
Because of Pentecost you can look in and not be afraid.*

The Hug!

It's wonderous what a hug can do.
A hug can cheer you when you're
sad and blue.
A hug can say, "I love you so,"
Or "I hate to see you go."

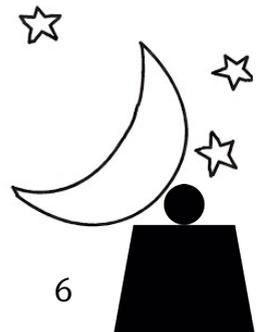
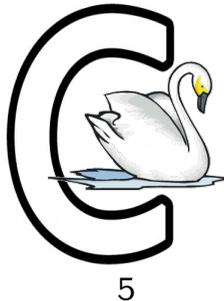
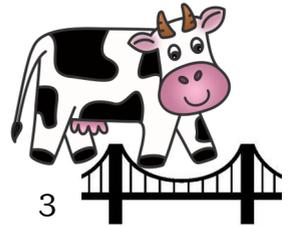
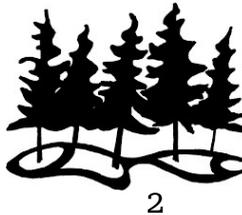


A hug is, "Welcome back again."
A hug can soothe a small child's pain,
And bring a rainbow after rain.
The hug, there is no doubt about it-
We scarcely could survive without it!

A hug delights and warms and charms.
It must be why God gave us arms.
So, stretch those arms without delay
And give someone a hug today!

Author Unknown

Pictograms: Can you guess these six places in Wales?
Answers on the back page.





BUT THE HATS REMAIN A MYSTERY BY A. NON. MOUSE Chapter 9



The story so far:

Despite being imprisoned Claire has been rescued and is recovering in a convent. A visitor arrives who is unfamiliar to her, she is removed, but Claire is very shaken up by the incident. Sometime later Claire receives a letter that she wishes to share with Sister Gwen, as she is passing it over there is the sound of a gunshot.

Out on the driveway a woman's body lay inert on the gravel. It was the woman who had tried to visit Claire earlier. Some of the nuns were gathered round trying to help as best they could. Claire and Gwen were looking out of the window at the commotion.

The two of them looked at each other horrified. In the distance they could hear sirens so someone must have called an ambulance, the police or both. Claire's instinct was to rush out to see if she could help. As if on cue Sister Gwen raised her hand to stop her.

"There's nothing that you can do. Everybody who can help is out there, she will get the best treatment possible. Now how about getting back into bed?"

Claire clearly didn't want to, but she recognised the wisdom of Gwen's words, and reluctantly acceded to them. At that moment she could hear the sirens getting louder making it clear that the emergency services had arrived. A voice carried itself on the wind.....
'She's alive!'. Claire sank back on her pillows in relief.



A few minutes later sounds of the siren of an ambulance were heard going off into the distance, and Claire fell into a deep sleep.

In the refectory the nuns were all agog with what had happened. Each sharing their own experience of the event with some widely differing viewpoints as to what had happened. Sister Gwen joined them, reassuring everyone that Claire was fine just a bit

shaken up and had at last fallen into a deep sleep.

Gwen talked to the nuns and said that she had made contact with someone called 'Kirsty' who seemed to know the most about Claire. It appeared that Claire did not have any family.....Gwen informed the sisters that Kirsty would be coming to the convent this evening and would be staying overnight and she asked that a room could be made up for her.

Later that evening a taxi dropped Kirsty off at the convent. She was greeted by Sister Gwen who took her into the parlour to talk to her. Ostensibly to bring her up to speed, but in reality, Gwen wanted to check her out and be satisfied that Claire would be safe.



Gwen was amazed that Kirsty had never met Claire before but was trying to find out what had happened for her aunts, Freda and Elsie.

'It was all a bit of a puzzle Gwen, and I love a good puzzle so that's why I went to Wetherby Services to try to find out more, and that's when I realised that she had been abducted. But why would anyone abduct a

Methodist Minister who was minding her own business and just moving to her new Circuit?'

'Kirsty, I think that's question that we will have to ask Claire when she recovers. We do need some sort of explanation, if only to make sense of it all. The police have informed us that the woman who was shot is going to make a good recovery, and I think that the letter that Claire got from her, goes some way to explaining what had happened and why. But I think that it is wise to let Claire recover, I think that she will tell us in her own good time. The only thing that I have managed to glean, which makes some sense of this, is that it is about what Claire did before she came into the ministry.'

'But she was a peripatetic teacher wasn't she? She was always travelling around?'

'That's what you think you know, but I think that there is a lot more to this. Anyway, let's get her well, and then maybe we will find out the full story....'

And so now the explanation

.....

Lent

*Fast from judging others;
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.*

*Fast from emphasis on differences;
Feast on the unity of all life.*

*Fast from apparent darkness;
Feast on the reality of all light.*

*Fast from thoughts of illness;
Feast on the healing power of God.*

*Fast from words that pollute;
Feast on phrases that purify.*

*Fast from discontent;
Feast on gratitude.*

*Fast from anger;
Feast on patience.*

*Fast from pessimism;
Feast on optimism.*

*Fast from worry;
Feast on God's providence.*

*Fast from complaining;
Feast on appreciation.*

*Fast from negatives;
Feast on affirmatives.*

*Fast from unrelenting pressures;
Feast on unceasing prayer.*

*Fast from hostility;
Feast on non-resistance.*

*Fast from bitterness;
Feast on forgiveness.*

*Fast from self-concern;
Feast on compassion for others.*

*Fast from personal anxiety;
Feast on eternal truth.*

*Fast from discouragement;
Feast on hope.*

*Fast from facts that depress;
Feast on verities that uplift.*

*Fast from lethargy;
Feast on enthusiasm.*

*Fast from suspicion;
Feast on truth.*

*Fast from thoughts that weaken;
Feast on promises that inspire.*

*Fast from shadows of sorrow;
Feast on the sunlight of serenity.*

*Fast from idle gossip;
Feast on purposeful silence.*

*Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that sustains.*

*From A Box of Delights, J John & Mark Stibbe,
Monarch Books.*

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 1st March, Welshpool - 2pm: Film -
"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat"

Thursday 16th March, Newtown - 7.30pm: Quiz Night

Saturday 1st April, Welshpool - 9.30am to 12 noon:
Spring Fair

Sunday 2nd April, Welshpool - 6pm: "From Pharaoh to
Freedom", Roger Jones' musical sung by Jubilate

Wednesday 5th April, Welshpool - 2pm: Film -
" The Nun's Story"

Sunday 16th April, Trefeglwys - 10am: Lambing Service

Sunday 30th April, Newtown: Anniversary Service & Lunch

Wednesday 3rd May, Welshpool - 2pm: Film -
" The Lady Killers"

Saturday 6th May, Welshpool: Celebrating the Coronation
with a screening of the ceremony in Westminster Abbey and
associated events. Refreshments will be available
throughout.

A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner: Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.

When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied, the one I feed the most.



George Bernard Shaw

Brain Teaser Answers

1. A towel 2. 'g' 3. An umbrella
4. Little Bigger because he/she
- is a little bigger 5. A sponge
6. A teapot 7. 'e' 8. A clock
9. An egg 10. Darkness
11. Your nose 12. Footsteps

Pictogram Answers

1. Welshpool
2. Blackwood
3. Cowbridge
4. Fishguard
5. Swansea
6. Knighton

Editorial



Open my eyes that I may see
the Presence that is all about me.
Open my ears that I may hear
the voice that is quiet but ever near.
Open my heart that I may feel
the love of my God, close and real.
Open each sense, make me aware of the
Power and Peace always there.

Do you have an anecdote, a poem, a quiz or a funny joke you would like to share; either long or short ... if so we need you! Please do send us items at any time or by mid April 2023, for inclusion in the next issue, which covers the summer. Our sincere thanks to those who have kindly contributed to this issue.

You can send items by post: Foxglove, Beech Close,
Newtown SY16 2QP

by email: editors.marlow@btinternet.com

or you can pass to the minister or stewards.
This magazine is available in glorious
technicolour on the Circuit website:

www.wbhmethodists.org.uk

Bill and Andrea Marlow

