

# WELSHPOOL METHODIST CHURCH

Minister: Revd Keith Edwards

Tel: 01686 625690

**"Celebrating and Sharing God's Love"**

**"The MESSENGER"**

**January 2024**

We extend a Warm Welcome to ALL - to visitors or anyone worshipping with us for the first time. Please make yourselves known to us. If you are with us on a Sunday morning, do join us after the service in the Meeting Room for a cup of tea/coffee.



**A blessed New Year  
to YOU  
and to ALL people  
near and far  
PEACE and JOY  
be yours.**

**"We spend January 1<sup>st</sup> walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives not looking for flaws, but for potential."**

(Ellen Goodman)

**A Christmas message for us to take forward into 2024**

**Pray for peace this Christmas**

**joint message from Wales' Christian Leaders**

The news has been full of the terrible tragedy unfolding in Gaza after the awful terrorist attack on Israel. Thousands of children killed in a war they did not choose. It seems a long way from the Christmas adverts here and the pressure to be merry. It is understandable that the church leaders in Jerusalem have invited Christians there to forgo any unnecessarily festive activities and stand strong with those facing affliction. They see it as standing in support of those continuing to suffer, just as Jesus did by being born as a baby in Bethlehem two thousand years ago.

Jesus was born in land occupied by the Romans. He was born away from home because of an imperial census.

There were family tensions around Mary being pregnant and Jesus was laid in a feeding trough because there was no room at the inn. Herod killed the boys in Bethlehem to get rid of the threat to his power. All these are part of Christmas, along with our joy at God's love and the traditions which help us celebrate.

This Christmas we may be aware of tensions in families, and the difficulties of making ends meet. This year we remember the wars in the land of Jesus' birth, Ukraine and other parts of the world. We also remember that this year was the centenary of the Wales Women's Peace Appeal which took a petition to America about joining the League of Nations to promote "Law not War". It was a message signed by around 60% of women in Wales and went from home to home and hearth to hearth, showing what the co-ordinated work of ordinary people could achieve.

**We need peace in our world.**

We may want to be free of tensions in our families. We may long for five minutes of peace for ourselves in all the Christmas preparations. Why not come to church to find space to reflect and make time to pray for peace this Christmas?

**We are praying for joy and hope for all.**

***Mark O'Toole** (Archbishop of Cardiff and Bishop of Menevia)*

***Andrew John** (Archbishop of Wales and Bishop of Bangor)*

***Simon Walkling** (Moderator of the Free Church Council of Wales)*



**With all the recent rains and storms I thought the following might be appropriate for this edition.**

*These thoughts on how a favourite hymn can inspire us and help us to reflect on our lives is adapted from a piece written for a service in Newtown church by Joanne Saward:*

***"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain  
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?"***

Some of the best thoughts seem to happen at the kitchen sink. I was watching through the window where a purple clematis was being blown around. No matter which way the wind blew it still managed to recover and stand tall. At this point a favourite hymn sprang to mind, a hymn we had sung in church the previous Sunday. I remembered that I had been particularly reluctant to attend that morning service but was so glad that I did when we had the opportunity to sing a hymn which has always been uplifting for me and has often given me renewed strength. With the words in my head I began to reflect on my life and the life of my family over the last few years.

**A few years ago, living in South Wales, our lives were extremely stressful. Our cables were well and truly strained and on a rising tide, as a family, we were drowning.** After spending Christmas 2019 in Mid-Wales we realised we wanted to move up here. Preparations were well underway when lockdown hit and stalled our plans. Now, I realise that even lockdown had its positives. We had more time to spend together as a family - quality time; we were living, not just existing. For the first time in a long time we were seeing the good things in our lives, we were aware of the brightness of a safe harbour.

Priscilla Jane Owen's lovely hymn is one of my father's favourite hymns and that is probably why I chose it for my own wedding. Little did we know, on that day, how every verse would be so appropriate to our lives over the years. No matter how rocky the road gets or how blown we may be, just like the clematis outside the window, we can ride the storm. No matter how many clouds unfold their wings of strife over us I know that our anchor will not drift but remain fastened to the Rock which cannot move.

We humble ourselves to the mercies of God and recognise our need to be anchored to him. We live in a dangerous and unpredictable world yet we can still have peace and joy because our souls are anchored deep in our faith.

*"We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love."*

**"The Messenger" invites its readers  
to come forward with their own thoughts  
on one of THEIR favourite hymns.**

*(Perhaps we could compile a shortlist and  
use them as a basis for a future service?)*

**First week of January:**

**Mon. 1<sup>st</sup>. No Coffee Morning. No Jubilate**

**Wed. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Church open for private prayer 10-12.00**

**Craft Group 2-4.00pm.**

**Sat. 6<sup>th</sup>. Coffee Morning 9.30-12**

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January - Sunday after Epiphany**

*Lectionary: Gen.1: 1-5; Ps.29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark1:4-11*

**Morning Worship led by Nigel Evans at 10.45**

**This Week:**

**Mon.8<sup>th</sup>. Coffee Morning 9.30-12. No Jubilate**

**Wed.10<sup>th</sup>. Church open for private prayer 10-12.00**

**Craft Group 2-4.00pm.**

**Film showing 2-4.00pm. 'CLICK' Adam Sandler. Kate Beckinsale**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

*Lectionary: 1 Sam.3:1-10 (11-20) Ps. 139: 1-6,13-18; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1: 43-51.*

**Morning Worship led by Andrea Davies at 10.45**

**Evening Worship led by Revd Keith Edwards at 6.00pm.**

*This is a Welshpool Churches Together service.*

**This week:**

**Mon. 15<sup>th</sup>. Coffee Morning 9.30-12. No Jubilate**

Wed. 17<sup>th</sup>. Church open for private prayer 10-12.00

Craft Group 2-4.00pm.

Fri. 19<sup>th</sup>. **NO** Friday Fellowship until **February**

when the speaker will be Revd Keith Edwards

Sat. 20<sup>th</sup>. Coffee and lunches 10.30- 1.30.

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January.** **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

*Lectionary: Jonah 3: 1-5,10; Ps. 62: 5-12 1 Cor. 7: 29-31; Mark 1: 14-20.*

**Morning Worship** led by Revd Keith Edwards at 10.45

**Afternoon Tea Service** will be led by John Harbron at **4.00pm**

**This week:**

Mon.22<sup>nd</sup>. Coffee Morning 9.30-12.00. **No** Jubilate

Wed.24<sup>th</sup>. Church open for private prayer 10-12.00.

Craft Group 2-4.00pm.

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January.**

*Lectionary: Deut. 18:15-20; Ps. 111. 1 Cor. 7: 29-31; Mark 1: 21-28.*

**Morning Worship** led by Revd Keith Edwards at 10.45

This will be a **Covenant Service.**

**This week:**

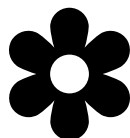
Mon.29<sup>th</sup>. Coffee Morning 9.30-12.00. **No** Jubilate

Wed.31<sup>st</sup>. Church open for private prayer 10-12.00

Craft Group 2-4.00pm.

**A very early reminder to note in your diary!**

**SPRING FAYRE**



**SATURDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY**



# **ROTA FOR SUNDAY DUTIES**

## **JANUARY**

**JAN 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**Stewards:** Bert and Anne  
**Music:** Gill  
**Welcome:** Fiona  
**Teas:** Eric, Jean and Fiona

**JAN 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Stewards:** Chris P and Trish  
**Music:** Gill  
**Welcome:** Tony H  
**Teas:** Pat P, Pam B, and Liz P

**JAN 21<sup>st</sup>**

(both services)

**Stewards:** Anne and Eric (Tea: Chris R.)  
**Music:** Vio (Tea: Vio)  
**Welcome:** Terry P  
**Teas:** Pat J, Chris P and Trish

**JAN 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Stewards:** Bert and Trish  
**Music:** Vio  
**Welcome:** Eric  
**Teas:** Joan, Margaret and Dorothy



## 2024 - A year for Growing - Rev. Keith

Dear Friends,

I remember a few years ago we took on two rescue dogs, and I was reminded of an old saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks". But guess what - you can, we tried it and it worked.

There is an ingrained, all-too-often-proved-true, prejudice that when we get older we can't, or won't, change any more. This is despite some great examples in the Bible - like Abraham, Sarah, Moses and Caleb and that's just the first six books - and some great passages of Scripture that challenge us to keep on changing to become more like Jesus:

*2 Cor. 4: 16 - Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*

Two of the people we meet in the Christmas story are old in years, but fresh and new in faith. They are Anna and Simeon, who greeted the baby Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem (*Luke 2: 22 - 38*). I wonder how many asked them, "Why can't you just act your age?" or "When are you going to be more realistic?" But they kept believing - believing in the vision and the answer to their prayers.



And you may know many older yet faithful people who have inspired you, all of whom are proof that you can "teach an old dog new tricks".

It's a matter of the heart, not age!

It's a matter of faith, not experience!

So as we stand on the edge of the New Year in 2024, no matter what age we are, let's make a commitment that we will never stop growing and reaching toward Jesus. While resolutions may come and go with each New Year, the commitment to grow with Jesus continues right up to the moment we meet him face-to-face.

God Bless

Keith.

### Congratulations are in order:

Firstly, with humble apologies,  
belated congratulations to Revd Michael Taylor  
who celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in December.

Margaret and Tony Harvey  
will have enjoyed 61 happy years  
together on January 16<sup>th</sup>,

Chris and Wyn Richards have their  
Golden Wedding Anniversary on January 18<sup>th</sup>

Very best wishes to them all.

## **The Lifesaving Station** - by Rev Dr.Theodore Wedel (1953)

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was no more than a hut, and there was only one boat; but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea. With no thought for themselves, they went out day and night, tirelessly searching for the lost.

Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area, wanted to be associated with the station and give their time, money, and effort to support the work. New boats were bought and new crews trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of these new members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those who were saved from the sea. They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building. Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they decorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely because they used it as sort of a club.

Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do this work. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in this club's decoration, and there was a memorial lifeboat in the room where the club initiations were held.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick, and some of them were foreigners. The beautiful new club was in chaos.

Immediately, the property committee hired someone to rig up a shower house outside the club, where victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities because they felt they were unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club.

A small number of members insisted upon lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station. The small group's members were voted down and told that if they wanted to save lives, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast.

**They did.**

As the years went by, however, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old station. It evolved into a club, and yet another lifesaving station was founded.

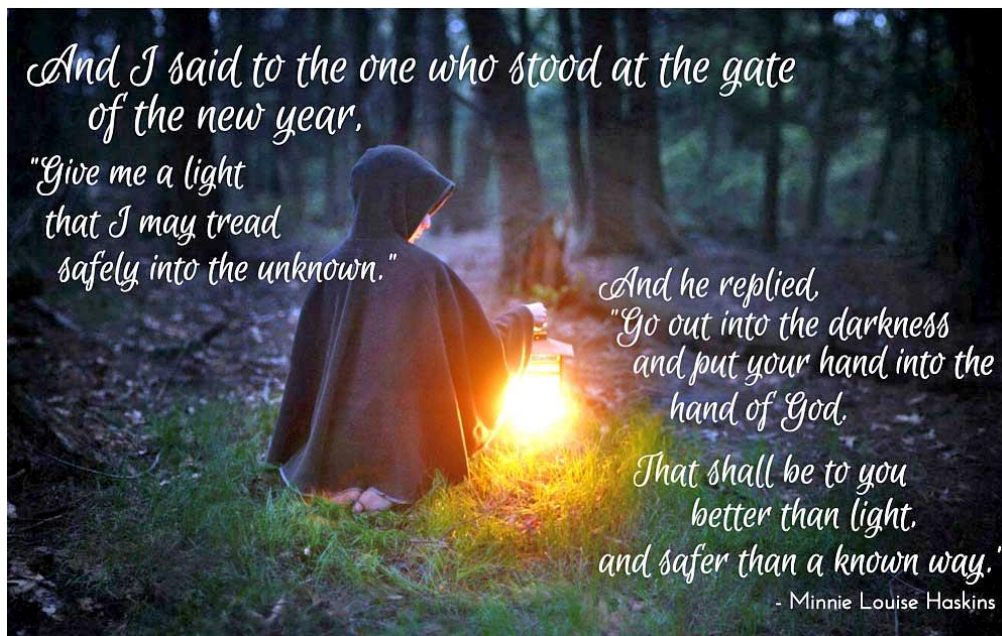
History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that seacoast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore.

**Shipwrecks are frequent in those waters, but most of the passengers drown.**

As Disciples of Jesus, our primary task is to go and make disciples. (See [Matthew 28:19](#).)

To put it another way, we are to go and save lives. Unfortunately, we sometimes forget our purpose.

We need to recover our passion for lifesaving. We need to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. (See [James 1:22](#).)



Minnie Hoskins served as a missionary with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Madras from 1907 to 1915.

In 1912, to raise funds for her work in the Zenana mission to women, she published a small volume of poetry "The Desert" which included the poem "God Knows".

These words form the preamble to this poem, originally written in 1908.

They are commonly known as 'The Gate of the Year'.

This poem was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth the late Queen Mother, who showed it to her husband King George VI. He included it in his famous Christmas message broadcast in 1939 at the beginning of the Second World War. After the King's death the Queen Mother had it engraved on bronze plaques on the entrance to the King George VI Memorial Chapel, Windsor, where both are now interred. It was also read at the funeral service of the Queen Mother.

And GOD said "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future...." **Jeremiah 29:11**

**"Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be"**

*Robert Browning. (Submitted by Vio)*

Thank you for your contributions to this edition of YOUR newsletter. Please, send any February, articles, news bulletins, poems, laugh-lines etc to Andrea Davies, by hand or email ([granni1975@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:granni1975@yahoo.co.uk)) by January 19th.

**Whatever YOU want to share -  
I shall do my best to include it!**