

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Summer 2014

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Tell us all your news

Keep us informed with news of people, activities and special events by sending your contribution to the Editor or sending her an email.

**Deadline for the next issue
is
Monday 18th August**

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Dedication at Penlan

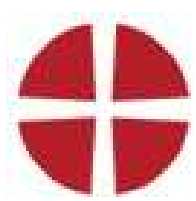


Rev Leslie Noon & Mr Mike Hedges, Assembly member for Swansea East in front of the new mural at Penlan Methodist Church painted by local artist Mary Hayman

(continued on page 14)



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Connect magazine. I hope that you enjoy reading all of the interesting articles concerning the work of the Methodist Church here in Swansea and the wider Methodist Connexion.

At the end of May and the beginning of June four quite different events took place here in the Swansea and Gower circuit. The first was the Wesley Day/Aldersgate Celebration at Brunswick which included a celebration of Holy Communion, the second was the Spring Fayre at Morriston, the third was a mural dedication at Penlan and last but not least the Easter Offering dedication at Sketty.

All these events were really well organised and supported which shows that we really are beginning to take seriously the fact that our Methodist circuit is not made up of eleven individual churches but one church working in eleven different communities. This was brought home to me when the circuit outreach group organised Easter leaflet distributions in the Brynhyfryd and Sandfields areas of our city and Methodists from all over Swansea came to help out. I know it's not possible to support every service or event that is organised but we can support some of them and when we do we find that it makes a big difference and so keep up the good work!

The Bible reminds us to 'encourage one another and build each other up' 1 Thess 5 v 11 Why? Because when we live by faith in this life encouragement from others is essential.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read about an early church leader called Barnabas whose name means 'son of encouragement'. Through his encouraging words and actions Barnabus certainly lived up to his name.

When Saul of Tarsus who had previously persecuted the church suddenly and dramatically became a follower of Jesus there were many in the church who found it difficult to trust him. Saul maintained that he had had a change of heart, but

how could they be sure that he was genuine. Many must have thought that it was all a ploy to destroy the Christian movement from within.

No wonder the Christians at Jerusalem acted cool towards him when he visited the city as a new convert. In Acts 9 it says 'when he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple'

It was then that Barnabas came forward and spoke up on Saul's behalf introducing him to the apostles and convincing them that his conversion was genuine. You could argue that Saul would not have become the great Christian leader that he did if it had not been for Barnabas opening doors for him.

Barnabas we are told was "a good man and full of the Holy Spirit" - that is why he looked for the best in people and not the worst. That is why he looked for the promise in a person and not the problems. The gift of encouragement is so important today especially when there is so much discouragement in this world. Barnabas through his encouraging words and actions was doing what all Christians should do. He was imitating Jesus.

Jesus encouraged people everywhere he went. He often said to people, "Fear not," or "Take heart," or "Be of good cheer." He praised the poor widow when all she had was a penny to give at the temple (Luke 21:3). He praised John the Baptist when he lay discouraged in prison, saying that no one born of woman was greater than John (Luke 7:28). At every opportunity, Jesus provided an uplifting word. He knew how important encouragement is in nourishing the human spirit.

May we be imitators of Jesus and always be there to encourage, support and build one another up in the Christian faith.

Howard

Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit



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About the Methodist Church

The Methodist Church is one of the largest Christian churches serving Great Britain, with nearly 209,000 members and regular contact with 512,000 people. It has 5,023 churches in Great Britain, and also maintains links with other Methodist churches with a worldwide total membership of over 80 million. Its activities, both alone and with ecumenical and secular partners, are based on four aims known as Our Calling:

1. To increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love
2. To help people to grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care
3. To be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice
4. To make more followers of Jesus Christ.

Registered charity no. 1132208.



Open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5pm
for Morning Coffee, Hot and Cold Light Meals,
Daily Specials and Afternoon Teas
Theo's Coffee Shop is at Mumbles Methodist Church
(01792 363803)

Alpha www.alpha.org. The next Alpha course in Mumbles will take place in September 2014.

Swansea Samaritans are available 24 hours a day providing confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts. Their phone number: 01792 655999

CONNECT Summer 2014

The Lamplighter



The Lamplighter is a Christian outreach initiative in Bishopston that began in the mid 1990's when Rev Chris Lee arrived at St. Teilo's Church. He and his wife Tessa had in mind to open a Christian Book shop with coffee facilities, within the village. Suitable premises were found and in the spring of 1994 a lease was signed with St. Teilo's church for a 5 year term. **The Lamplighter was born.**

The name 'LampLighter' is taken from Matthew's Gospel Chapter 5 where Jesus describes his followers in verses 14 and 15 as 'the light of the world'

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to the whole house. In the same way, let your light shine before all people so that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

The shop seeks to 'minister' to the whole community and is staffed not only by volunteers from St. Teilo's but also from the Methodist Circuit and various other denominations. It's a popular and well used coffee shop where refreshments are served and has a children's play area.

The shops sells a range of books and cards for all occasions, many cards with Christian text. We have an extensive range of gifts and Fairtrade products are also stocked. The shop is also a booking agency for the Swansea Grand Theatre. We offer an excellent selection of Christian books, including Bibles and children's books. In addition we sell good quality non-Christian books, including those of local interest, children's and material for Church use. We can order books, usually at very competitive prices. All profits are donated to charity (not to Church funds) and each year different charities are chosen. The Christmas cards sold

support Ty Olwen, Leprosy Mission, RNLI, Air Ambulance. All the staff at the Lamplighter are volunteers, around 40 in all, and the shop managed by myself. The Lamplighter is located on Bishopston Road (in the centre of the village) and is recognised as a Tudor-like building that overhangs the road. Why not come and bring your friends for coffee/tea and light refreshments? As long as we have advance notice, we can also accommodate groups (up to 14+).

The Lamplighter is open on the following times:

Monday	10 am – 4 pm	
Tuesday	9 am – 10 am	Mum's Craft Session (all welcome)
	Close at 4pm	
Wednesday	10 am – 4 pm	
Thursday	9.30 am – 3 pm	Communion 9.30 am
	3 pm – 5 pm	Youth Cafe
Friday	9 am – 10 am	Mum's Coffee Morning (all welcome)
	3 pm – 5 pm	Youth Cafe
Saturday	10 am – 4 pm	
Sunday	Evening – Am I bovered?	Teenage group meeting with Rev.Andrew Pearce and Rev.Andrew Walker

Please do not hesitate to drop in. Or perhaps you would like to become one of our volunteers. You could become one our 'regulars' doing two hours a week or be on a 'back up' list and help whenever you can. You can contact me on 01792 361190 or email c.buckler@btinternet.com. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Caroline Buckler



The Lamplighter recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and the picture shows Volunteers enjoying tea with Bishop John Davies.

You might as well try to hear without ears or breathe without lungs, as to try to live a Christian life without the spirit of God in your heart.

Dwight L.Moody

European Paralympics come to Swansea! 18-23 August 2014



Yes to Swansea! It's the first time that the event has been staged anywhere in the UK – and we have an opportunity to be part of it.

I shall be volunteering as one of the Chaplains at the event. I'm still a bit in the dark as to what I shall be doing – but I know I'm looking forward to it. I'm even going to have a 'uniform' to show that I'm part of the Chaplaincy Team! (a bit like the Games Makers at the London Olympics). We will be working in shifts throughout the day – based in the Chaplaincy Centre in the University, but hopefully also being able to mingle with the spectators and athletes and even watch some of the competitions.

Around 600 athletes from 40 countries will be competing in the event which will be based in the University Sports Village. I'm sure I'll be telling you more about my experiences when it's all over.

For more information and to buy tickets to the events, check out the website:
<http://www.paralympic.org/swansea-2014>

Rev Leslie Jane Noon

Sketty Methodists/Bethel URC We stood.... as one!

On Sunday 1st June, during the morning service, a crowded church at Sketty stood as one to affirm their assent to becoming a single congregation LEP. It was a remarkable and moving moment, and some tears of joy were in evidence!

During the service, in which we had a special blessing for baby Ava, who in many ways is a child of the LEP as she was born very shortly after Bethel and Sketty started to worship permanently together, we thought about journeys – and how we do not always know what lies before us. But with faith, and with the light of Jesus with us, we can take one step at a time, trusting God will be there for us.

And now we have taken the next step to becoming one – and remarkably (although unplanned) that was the lectionary reading from the Gospel of John for that day "that they may be one as we are one".

There are still many practicalities to sort out (for example, what will the new name for our church be?), and in Methodist terms, we still must seek permission from both Circuit and District. But we now know the direction in which we are travelling – to become a united church made up of Methodist and United Reformed traditions. Hallelujah!

Rev. Leslie Noon

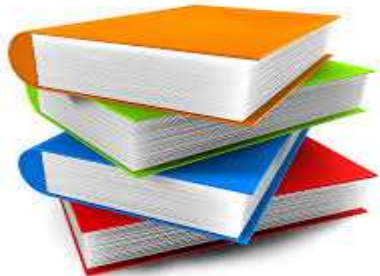
Messy Church

Coffee Morning and Fundraiser

Reynoldston Village Hall

Saturday 28th June from 10:30 am

Bookshelf



1. TENNIS WHITES AND TEACAKES by JOHN BETJEMAN – a treasure trove of Betjeman's poetry, private letters and musings, celebrating his England – a place of patriotic poets and seaside coves, village teashops and eccentric dons. The chapters include childhood, friends, comedy, seaside and many more.....an ideal way to while away the summer months

2. TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE by SOLOMON NORTHUP – a true story (also a film). Solomon was a free man, a successful violinist, who was kidnapped and sold into slavery. He was forced to work as a carpenter and a cotton picker in the Deep South. First published in 1853, this story proved to be a powerful story in the debate over slavery in the years leading up to the Civil War. It is a story of courage and conviction, injustice and brutality.

3. WHEN GOD WAS A RABBIT by SARAN WINMAN is a book about a brother and sister, childhood and growing up, friendship and families, triumph and tragedy and everything in between. It could be described as offbeat, quirky or even a dark comic tale. But where did the title come from?

4. CHOSEN – an autobiography by MICHELE GUINNESS. Michele was brought up to love all the traditions and rituals of her Jewish culture. But in her teens she felt that something was missing in her life. Searching for answers would lead her somewhere she could never have imagined. She married Peter, great great grandson of Arthur Guinness, the brewer, who to her family's shock became an Anglican clergyman.

5. WHEN HITLER STOLE PINK RABBIT by JUDITH KERR. Judith was born in Berlin. She left Germany in 1933 to escape the Nazis. She is well known as the author and illustrator of the popular Mog series and "The Tiger Who Came To tea". Michael Morpurgo write about this book, "Judith Kerr's experience of being a refugee is the heart of her great novel....It was always a powerful story, but it has, over the years, become a hugely relevant story too...." (for readers aged 9-12 years).

Janet Neilson

Time to Smile

The family of an elderly clergyman bought him a mobile phone. They felt it would be a good way of keeping in touch during his travels. They rang him when he happened to be driving on a motorway. Not sure what to do, he pulled over, picked up the phone and his daughter shouted "Daddy, someone has reported that an old man is driving the wrong way on the motorway, so please be careful." He shouted back, "There's not just one, there's hundreds of them."

A country parson went to a reunion at his old University. Most wore expensive suits with bulging waistlines. Proud of his figure, he said to his wife, "I reckon I'm the only one here who can still wear the suit he wore when he graduated." His wife glanced around the room and said, "You're the only one who has to."

A church pastoral visitor decided to take her 4 year old daughter with her when she visited a retired old minister who was bed-ridden. They all chatted for a while and then the little girl went quiet. She was staring at a set of false teeth in a glass of water. As the mother braced herself for a few questions, the girl whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

A vicar took some of his parishioners on a trip to the Holy Land. One man in the party, known to be a bit of a skinflint, asked if they could take a boat trip on the Sea of Galilee. "Sure," said the vicar, "but I believe it costs the equivalent of forty pounds." "Good grief", said the man, "no wonder Jesus walked."

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Street Child World Cup



In just a few days time 31 countries will join host nation Brazil in competing for the coveted FIFA World Cup. The home nation are hoping to lift their sixth world cup on home soil, what many people don't realise, however is Brazil have already won a World Cup on home soil! We're not talking about professional football but about the Street Child World Cup that took place in Rio at the end of March. The event, the second World Cup of its kind to be held, brought together 230 children from 19 different countries in a boys and girls tournament with the Brazilian girls and Tanzanian boys victorious.

I have been lucky enough to volunteer at both Street Child World Cups and witness these children being given the chance to be just that-children. The message behind the event was that 'No child should have to live on the streets' yet it is estimated over 100 million across the world do. Often they are mistreated by their Government, their basic rights ignored, as they are seen as a nuisance that needs to be removed. In Brazil for example a street child is killed every hour of every day! In reality however they are children, just like your children, who want to play football, swim, dance, and have fun.

Some may question what a football tournament of this nature will actually do in reversing this mistreatment. Why bring 230 children together just to play football? Well on the surface this is a very good question, however in reality the impact is significant. To begin with football is a universal language. If you put a football in front of children they will start doing keep-ups, showing off their tricks and play a match. The fact therefore the children spoke a variety of different languages really didn't matter. They spoke football!!

Furthermore although the event was a football world cup, the football was simply a tool to bring the children together. During the two week event the children participated in a variety of different activities including arts and crafts and dance. All the children took part in a conference that allowed them to tell their story to the other children there and also to make their Governments aware of what they've been through in order to campaign for their basic human rights.

The Street Child World Cup therefore was a significant event in beginning to lobby Governments across the world for rights of street children to be recognised. Furthermore since the event the hosts have been asked to host a national summit in Brasilia looking to address the way street children are treated across the country. The National Assembly of Pakistan recently passed a resolution ensuring the rights of the estimated 1.5 million street children in the country after hearing about the boys' bronze medal success. The sad thing however is it takes an event of this kind for Governments to address the issue of abuse of street children, or even that there are street children at all. Therefore while watching the millionaire footballers taking part in the World Cup take a moment to think about the millions of children forced to live on the streets all over the world.



Nigel Cram



On Sunday 27th July at 7.30 a.m. BBC Radio Wales will broadcast a service of worship from Mumbles Methodist.

Wesley Guild Clydach



We are a small group in number only seven, but do a great deal of things through out the year. This coming October we will be celebrating 100 years of guild in Clydach. The service is to be held at 3pm on the 19th of October and led by Rev Howard Long. A warm welcome is given to all the Churches in the area.

The guild meets every Wednesday at 2pm as a house group and has a number of speakers from different back grounds with a monthly talk by the Rev Pam Cram, also we do a number of fundraising coffee times. Our main fundraising is on behalf of the Mr X Appeal where we hold an open day at the home of Marilyn Harry where we have a table top sale. Last year we were able to buy Christmas gifts for 75 children. We feel that no child should be without a gift at Christmas. We also hold Macmillan coffee mornings and a Christmas craft fair in late November/December. Also we go on days out, this year we will be visiting Hereford Cathedral where we are having a guided tour of the Cathedral.

For more information on the guild contact Marilyn Harry on 01792 844256

Following up on my query last time whether anyone could suggest a good collective noun for Methodists, I had three suggestions I think, but the best, by far, was a **'melody' of Methodists!** That came from Pam Tucker – so congratulations to her.

Pam Cram

How Your Life Can Change

My name is Nancy Downing and I am a member at our Wesley church in Brynhyfryd. I have been married to my husband John for 49 years and we have two grown up children, 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. We are just an ordinary family. The following words have been written by our granddaughter Rebekah.

My name is Becky Buxton, I'm 25 and I live in Worle, North Somerset with my husband Chris and my two beautiful children, Ava May (2) and Charlie (10 months). I've been incredibly lucky to have the family I do and they really do mean the world to me.

In February 2014 I was diagnosed with Hepatosplenic T-Cell Lymphoma . This type of cancer is extremely rare and I have been classed as terminal although various treatments may prolong life. It's been months of operations, chemo, radiotherapy and an unbearable time away from my children. I've gone from weeks to live to near remission and it's fair to say it's been a rollercoaster of emotion for me and my family.

There has been some good to come out of my situation. I've experienced the amazing generosity of my friends and even people who do not know me. I've met some amazing people and I've experienced firsthand all of the amazing organisations that support those suffering with cancer such as the Antony Nolan Trust and the South West Teenage Cancer Ward.

I would like to help to raise as much awareness and support for these organisations as possible. You can read more of my story at my website www.cancermum.com.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Becky



Becky with her children Charlie and Eva

Partnership Annual celebration at Clydach



In the photo, left to right, are: Dewi, Gwyneth and John (members of Capel y Nant), Llew, Pam, and Janice (one of the Capel y Nant organists who also enjoys playing for our services sometimes).

Each year in May or June, our church in Clydach celebrates the partnership between ourselves and the Welsh congregation in a special bilingual service. We renew our covenant with one another by reading together the key aims of our partnership – a handy reminder of the reasons we're together. This year our preacher was from the 'Independent' background – Llew Picton Jones, a Minister with the Union of Welsh Independents, serving in Pontarddulais. Llew originates from Clydach so is well known by most of us. He spoke about unity – the difficulties and the joys – using personal illustrations from his experiences in both Pontarddulais/Hendy, which has some 20+ churches, and Llangennech, where there is very positive co-operation between the four non-conformist churches, made easier by the fact they are all Welsh language. Drawing on Jesus' prayer that his disciples would be one, Llew encouraged us in our journey together, emphasising we do it because that is Jesus' prayer not just for those first disciples but for all of us today as well.

Part of the benefit of our sharing a service together is the opportunity it gives us to learn something about one another's traditions and history. This year Rev. Pam Cram and Rev Dewi Myrddin Hughes spoke about world mission. As Methodists this year marks two hundred years since the death of the 'father of Methodist world mission', Thomas Coke. Pam spoke

of how Coke, himself from Brecon, had been instrumental in finding preachers to work in the medium of Welsh, at a time when much of Wales was classed as part of the 'mission field'! This was the start of what is now 'Talaith Cymru', the Welsh language District. She also recounted how Coke traveled the world visiting the various embryo mission stations, and wrote his final letter home in April 1814 from the island of Madagascar, pleading for missionaries for India. He was on the way to the East Indies but died and was buried at sea in early May 1814. Dewi then told us how the Welsh Independents, as part of the Council for World Mission, sent missionaries to Madagascar in 1817, and still maintain a strong link with that island.

Prayers on the theme of mission, unity, and community outreach were led by Anne Gregson and we concluded the service with the new hymn 'Go to the world' from Singing the Faith.

Pam Cram

Murton Welcomes New Members!

It was a privilege and a delight to welcome Pauline Hargreaves, David and Bryony Ball and their children Sam, Cerys and Ziggy, along with Jonathan and Mary Griffiths into Membership at a service of celebration at Murton on Sunday 18th June. Jonathan and Mary join us from Mumbles Baptist Church, now living locally to Murton and finding it easier to get to us, whilst Pauline and also David and Bryony and family have moved to Murton and Bishopston from other parts of the UK. All have found a warm welcome and made good friends at Murton. We 'share' David and Bryony's membership with our friends at St Teilo's C.I.W., Bishopston, from where we also 'share' another new member, Sue Raad, whom we welcomed into membership at a Churches Together evening Advent celebration.

This sharing reflects a very strong relationship between the two churches, and a consensus amongst many in the two communities that we are 'one Church'. We look forward to welcoming others into our fellowship in the coming months and have been blessed by recent visitors and those new to the area who have joined our number.

Rev. Andy Walker

Believers, look up - take courage. The angels are nearer than you think.

Billy Graham

Christians and our Environment



Are you a GREEN CHRISTIAN?

(www.greenchristian.org.uk) People of a certain age in our circuit are fortunate to have free bus passes. This encourages us not to use our cars. But having a bus pass is only relevant if you can get on to a bus and you don't have too much shopping to carry home. I expect most of us have to use our cars when we "do a big shop". Of course, there are also many disabled people who rely on their cars for every journey they make, otherwise they would be unable to work, shop etc., But the motor industry really needs to press ahead with making more eco-friendly petrol, diesel and electric cars, and many more electric charging points are needed at motorway service stations and in our towns and cities.

I try to use my car only a few times a week, by storing up all the journeys I need to make in one or two days, rather than every day. However this is not always possible if you don't live near a frequent bus service and many other reasons.

Some people may justify the use of the car when they want to take exercise in the countryside or by the seaside, or to visit family and friends. But again, according to circumstances you could use bus, train or even cycle. However, most of Swansea and Gower is not conducive to safe travel by bike. The average amount spent on each kilometre of road per year is nearly 10 times that spent on railways.

What about air travel? That's another contentious issue! Do you feel guilty at racking up air miles when you go on holiday? In the past five years, air traffic at UK airports has increased by over 25%.

Looking at the wider picture, how far has our food travelled? We have to support the need to reduce transportation, packing and processing. Buy locally at Local Produce Markets/Farmers' Markets at Sketty (Bishop Gore School on the 1st Saturday morning of each month); Mumbles (2nd Saturday); Penclawdd (3rd Saturday) and Pennard (2nd Sunday).

We are a Fairtrade Circuit, which is another way we can be GREEN CHRISTIANS. Do we support the

climate change campaign – OPERATION NOAH (www.operationnoah.org).

It is time for our society to learn to be stiller and slower. But in other ways we are pilgrims with urgent purpose and a long way to go. The journey on which God invites us is against the tide of trends and policies.

Has your congregation considered becoming an ECO-CONGREGATION? In Sketty we recycle used batteries, stamps, spectacles and mobile phones. We are unable to recycle used printer cartridges at the moment as "the bottom seems to have dropped out of the market". Spectacles are taken to a local optician for use in developing countries. Stamps are sent to the Leprosy Mission, but there are other charities which will accept them. Batteries can be taken to local supermarkets or amenity sites. Mobile phones (remember to remove your SIM card) can also be sent to national charities. To learn more about becoming an ECO-CONGREGATION visit www.ecocongregation.org



Janet Neilson

Did You Know

That you can sign up for a number of e-newsletters from the Methodist church. Just visit the website www.methodist.org.uk

Anyone who thinks sitting in a church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car.

Garrison Keillor

‘Contrasting Narratives’

We all know situations where two people in a disagreement have completely different perspectives on what’s happened. It’s hard to see how the two ‘stories’ can possibly be reconciled. The more entrenched the tension the harder it is to see how things can be resolved.

On the other hand, if we only hear one of the two stories we may take one side, in complete ignorance of the quite legitimate pain and grievances of the other party. Discovering the other ‘narrative’ might lead to confusion but at least moves us away from prejudice, and from actions we might regret once we ‘see’ more of the situation.

I came across the term ‘contrasting narratives’ in a document recently sent out from the Methodist Council, a briefing document on the arguments for and against the ‘Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS)’ in relation to Israel. This was launched in 2005 by Palestinian civil society groups, calling for a range of non-violent actions against the backdrop of increasing settlement construction in the Palestinian Territories (illegal under International Law). Those who have read anything about Israel /Palestine will feel that maybe the better phrase, also used in the document, is ‘competing narratives’.

I recommend that anyone with any interest in this subject gets a copy of the document. I share here just a few points (in my own words except where in inverted commas).

- Many argue that it’s important to get dialogue going between the two sides, and the BDS movement “by giving credence to one perspective only, is unlikely to promote an atmosphere for dialogue”. The converse argument is that there is no mutuality whatsoever between Israel and Palestine so there can be no mutual dialogue. The Gaza situation is the extreme of that but everyday life for all in the Palestine territories is “over-shadowed by the experience of military occupation”.
- There is no unanimity within Israeli or Palestinian communities about BDS. The Palestinian Authority doesn’t back it, but there are Israeli groups and prominent Jewish individuals who are in favour of it.

- It’s argued that BDS treats Israel differently from other nations, and thus is ‘anti-semitic’. A counter argument is that “Israel has had more (U.N.) Security Council resolutions passed against it than any other country”. Calls for BDS are out of desperation when law is not upheld.
- There are two approaches to consumer boycott i.e. boycott only of goods produced in illegal settlements in Palestinian Territories (there have been campaigns to get clearer labelling so consumers can choose to do this). A broader boycott of Israel would also hit Palestinians adversely, but many believe “that the pain inflicted by BDS is necessary to achieve rights in the longer term”.
- The threat of divestment is beginning to influence international companies that contribute to the occupation, but removing investments from such companies removes opportunity to influence them on other human rights issues.
- Support for BDS will have an impact on inter faith relationships. The very word ‘boycott’ has painful resonance of the 1933 Nazi boycott of Jews.
- A general boycott of Israel attracts support of extreme groups, whilst “a focused boycott applied to goods and services that directly impact the occupation” is much less likely to attract such attention.
- BDS does not challenge the right of Israel to exist, and is not anti-semitic. It is part of a wider non-violence movement within the Palestinian community in response to repeated failures of talks, and continued settlement development.

This subject is one of the ‘hottest potatoes’ around, and emotions inevitably run high whenever it’s raised. I end with important statements from the Methodist Recorder editorial on May 2nd following the release of this document: “For every argument that can be offered for or against a policy of BDS, there are counter-arguments to be heard.....What will not help are personal attacks on those who happen to hold opinions different to our own. Nor is it helpful to distort other people’s views or to question their motives”.

Pam Cram

Garth Hewitt Concert

amos trust presents

www.amostrust.org



Friday 27th June 2014 - 7.30pm

Sketty Methodist Church
Dillwyn Road, Sketty
Swansea SA2 9AQ

£7.00 (£3.00 children)
for tickets and information
01792 845942 - acram@headweb.co.uk

KM RECORDS



Following his successful concert last year at Sketty, I am delighted that Garth Hewitt is including us again in his UK tour. Garth is the founder member of the Amos Trust: a Christian charity that campaigns for justice for oppressed peoples all over the world, including the Palestinians, the Dalits, and the downtrodden of Nicaragua. The Amos Trust has also been actively supporting the Street Child World Cup, recently held in Rio, and in bringing the ex-street children surfers to Swansea last year, whom many of us met.

Garth will be performing at Sketty Methodist Church on Friday June 27th at 7.30pm. The ticket prices are the same as last year: £7 for adults and £3 for children: a bargain!

amos trust

A Service of a Kind at Brunswick

The Worship Here Team of young Christians led a Spirit Filling Service at Brunswick on 11th April, a day before Palm Sunday.



It was a wonderful service that lifted our spirits.

Rev. Siperire Mugadzaweta

A porof redaer's dearm

Aoccdrnig to a rseerach at Cmabrgide Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt thng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Pettry amzanig eh?

Live as though Christ died yesterday, rose from the grave today and is coming back tomorrow.

Theodore Epp



“Fairtrade doesn’t help the poor?” Well, that’s not Traidcraft’s opinion.

You may have seen some recent press coverage about Fairtrade certification. The rather sensationalised reporting relates to the publication of a recent four-year study by development economists from the School of African and Oriental Studies. The focus of their work was around the benefits of Fairtrade certification in a small number of commodities in two countries in Africa, Ethiopia and Uganda.

We welcome the research and are keen to learn what we can from it. However, we are sorry that instead of assisting in the continuous progress and improvement of Fairtrade, the findings are being used in the media to attempt to cast doubt on its impact on poverty.

Fairtrade has historically focused on smallholder farmers, but much of this study concentrates on the seasonal or casual workers employed by smallholders. There is no doubt that in most cases, these workers are poorer than the farmers who employ them. It has been recognised that Fairtrade standards should be revised to do more for this important group of the rural poor, and hired labour standards in Fairtrade certification have recently been revised as a result. However, such changes take time to filter through to poverty’s front line. And time is a key issue.

With 35 years of experience of working with smallholder farmers and fighting for trade justice in over 40 countries, we believe it is wrong for SOAS and the media to draw from this relatively small study the conclusion that Fairtrade does not improve the lives of the poor.

At Traidcraft, we don’t just believe that fair trade works for the very poor, we know it does. We’ve seen it happen over decades, with whole communities transformed.

Traidcraft works very differently to mainstream buyers of Fairtrade, and our development approach for our producers goes beyond Fairtrade certification.

From the people we choose to work with – usually smaller farmer co-operatives and groups in more remote areas who share our values and mission for change; to the way we choose to work with them – by supporting organisational process and helping farmers to make better choices for themselves; our approach goes well beyond simply buying from the Fairtrade register of producers.

Since its early days Traidcraft has chosen to work closely with producer partners to develop longer-term partnerships so that we can enable progress over a longer period. We work to build the capacity of our producer organisations, putting in place systems and processes to encourage democratic decisions on issues like premium projects, working conditions, children and education.

Unlike many mainstream Fairtrade suppliers, Traidcraft actively chooses the more difficult path. Our reward is to support the more remote, more marginalised smallholders who would simply never get a foothold into fair trade any other way, towards the path to a brighter future. Fighting poverty is not simple, the challenges are complex and a quick fix won’t result in the long-term change that is needed to give people a sustainable future.

Pam Cram

Murton Methodist Church

**Each Thursday from 10 July – 28 August
10.30am – 12 noon
a Coffee Morning and Bookstall
will be held on the grassy area in front of
Murton Chapel (weather permitting)
or in the porch.**

Proceeds to RNLI & Water Aid.

Please join us for refreshments and fellowship.

CONNECT Summer 2014

The Methodist Conference



This year's Methodist Conference will take place at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel from 26th June to 3rd July. The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world.

The conference first met in 1744 under John Wesley, who gathered together his assistants (both ordained ministers and itinerant lay preachers) to confer together about 'what to teach, how to teach, and what to do, i.e. how to regulate our doctrine, discipline and practice.'

Highlights at this year's Conference will include:

- Inauguration of new President and Vice-President on Saturday 28 June
- The JIC report – discussions on commitment to further unity between the Methodist Church and the Church of England - on Tuesday 1 July.
- The response to Same Sex Marriage legislation on Wednesday 2 July.
- Statistics for Mission – latest figures on the make-up of the Methodist Church – on Wednesday 2 July.

The Conference's representative session will open at 2.15pm on Saturday 28 June with the induction of the President of the Conference, the Revd Kenneth Howcroft, and the Vice-President, Gill Dascombe. Following Sunday morning worship on 29 June, Methodist presbyters and deacons will be ordained in venues across the Birmingham District. Over 5,000 tickets have been distributed for the weekend events of the Conference.

Video of the debates will be streamed live online through the Methodist Conference website www.methodistconference.org.uk from Saturday 28 June onwards.

The Conference is a gathering of 306 full members drawn from each Methodist district, along with some who have been elected by the Conference, together with some ex officio members, international, ecumenical and youth representatives, and associate members.



Morrison plant sale and fair made just over £700. We were delighted that so many turned out from the Circuit and that a number came in from the Catholic church next door following their Saturday service. Thanks to all who supported.



Have faith in God; God has faith in you.

Edwin Louis Cole

Penlan's Beautiful New Mural

(Continued from front page)

O God, we give you thanks for the creative gifts which you bestow upon us. In particular we thank you for Mary's artistic creativity and the beautiful mural she has painted. We thank you that it represents the ideas of a variety of people, reminding us that you call us to work together with one another.

May all who gaze upon it be reminded that you would rather die than leave us alone.

May all who gaze upon it be uplifted by the sunrise, representing your love which is new every morning.

Amen

This was the prayer of dedication for the new mural at Penlan, painted by Mary Hayman. And a massive crowd turned out for the service on the evening of Sunday 1st June. From friends around our sister churches in the circuit (Sketty and Wesley cancelled their evening services), to friends from the First Steps Forward disabled group which meets at Penlan, to friends from Phoenix Choir who sang during the service and who also meet at Penlan, to Mike Hedges, the Assembly Member for Swansea East.

It was an uplifting service, exploring the meaning of the cross (the central highlight of the mural), and in which the congregation had chance to respond in their own way at four different prayer and activity stations. There was barely enough room for everyone, but we all went away feeling closer to God and to one another than when we arrived.

Rev. Leslie Noon



A prayer station, making a scratch art cross



A prayer station, lighting a candle to remember

God enters by a private door into every individual.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

CONNECT Summer 2014

New Circuit Steward - Dr. Bob Alderdice



The circuit recently appointed Bob to serve as a circuit steward. He has been a member at Murton Methodist Church for over 25 years where he currently serves as a church steward. A native of Glasgow he was brought up in the Church of Scotland where he became a member of his local church 50 years ago and at an early age became a deacon.

Bob's main church work was with youth particularly the Boy's Brigade which he joined as an 8 year old and eventually became Captain of his local company which had over 100 boys aged between 8-17 years. When he moved to Wales 36 years ago, he first attended Argyle Presbyterian Church in Swansea and was the inaugural Captain of their BB Company and subsequently Chairman of West Glamorgan Battalion and Vice President of the Boy's Brigade in Wales until 1993/4 when work cause him to move to the USA.

Bob is a metallurgist who obtained his degree and PhD at the University of Strathclyde and spent his career in the steel industry mainly with British Steel and subsequently Corus where he concluded his career back in Wales as Director Technical for Corus Strip Products UK from 2000. He worked for four years in the USA and subsequently Netherlands after the merger of British Steel with Hoogovens.

Bob and Heather live in the Mayals and their son and daughter, Gordon and Lynn, and their respective families also live in Swansea so they are true Swansea "Jocks" who are fortunate to regularly be able to spend time with their three grandchildren. Bob's hobbies are Golf and Bridge.

With God's help he hopes to be a valuable and committed support to the Circuit. He remembers his

time in Sunday School in Gordon Park C of S and at that time they had to memorise a different bible text every week. The one that remains with him was in fact part of the lectionary text the week before he was asked to serve as a Circuit Steward., Isaiah Ch6 v 8

"Also, I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who shall go for us? Then said I, here am I send me"

Bob joins the existing circuit stewards team made up of Derek Norton, Heather Coleman and Bernard Gwyther (treasurer)



Members and friends at Wesley Methodist Church, Brynhyfryd gathered to deliver 1500 Easter leaflets to the surrounding community.

Congratulations to Quentin Hawkins on becoming a Street Pastor. Quentin's commissioning service will take place on Monday 14th July at 7.00 p.m. at the Waterfront Church in SA1

I gave in, and admitted that God was God.

C. S. Lewis



Good Friday procession with the Cross to Cefn Bryn.

It was a privilege to join with friends across South Gower and beyond for our Good Friday act of witness at the cross. Around 50 or more people of all ages gathered in Reynoldston for a series of reflections, readings and prayers on the Upper Green at 11 am. A significant number of those then walked in (mostly) silent witness to the top of the Cefn Bryn, near Arthur's Stone, where the cross was placed.

A time of further prayer and reflection was followed by more silence, broken only by the trill of bird song, and then the booming, mournful cry of pain, 'Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?' – my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Our testimony of Christians coming together is that whilst we may go through struggles, pain and personal trials, God has not forsaken us, but that he lives on in our lives, in our ministry in our service to the community and the wider world.

Rev.Andy Walker



Brunswick Holy Week Walk of Witness



Over 250 people from many different churches in Mumbles gathered for an open air service. Many passers-by joined in the singing and Rev Howard Long gave the address.



Morryston Church Holy Week procession of witness walking up School Road at the start of the walk, with the church in the background

news in brief

Circuit Outreach Meeting

Monday 28th July at Brunswick Methodist Church at 7.00 p.m.

Reynoldston

Passionate prayer and praise every Thursday at 10 am and on Sunday evenings at 6.00 p.m.

Penlan

Bible Fellowship every Tuesday evening at 7.30 p.m.

Brunswick

Bible Study 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 11 a.m.

Wednesday 10.30 a.m. FAN Friends and Neighbours

Wednesday 11.30 a.m. Intercessory prayers

Sunday 24th August at 3.00 p.m. UNITAS (Churches Together in Central Swansea) Songs of Praise at the Civic Centre with the Salvation Army Band

Sketty

Saturday 5th July

Coffee Morning 10 a.m. - 12 noon

Craft for all ages 2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Concert starring Syncopated Sisters and Umbrella Choir 7.00 p.m.

Tickets £5 from Heather Coleman or at the door.

Raising funds for the circuit project *Water Aid*.



What is 'Messy Church'? It has been a popular addition to the Gower calendar on occasional Saturday afternoons since October 2012. Hands covered in paint, or cake, or dough or other sticky, gooey substances; things to cut and stick and paste; stories to listen to; dramas to be involved in; collages to contribute to; games to play; models to construct; hopes and dreams to share. Friendship, conversation, company, slices of pizza, carrot sticks and grapes, tea and cakes, washed down with faith and love! And who can forget the Christmas Special, the amazing production of the 'Stable Trail'?

That sums up Messy Church for me! How about you? Or perhaps you've never been near a 'Messy Church'. Perhaps you're one of those people put off by the name. Perhaps you're genuinely interested and want to know more.

We will be holding a **Messy Church Coffee Morning**, and fundraiser in **Reynoldston Village Hall** (not in the Chapel) on Saturday 28th June. There will be some Messy Church activities on offer, and a selection of tasty refreshments. So please come along, bring the family, and help us raise some funds to bring Messy Church to Gower for another season. Hope to see you there! Oh, yes, and the 'Stable Trail' will return in December!

Rev.Andy Walker

Congratulations to Jean Lang who, from July 1st, will take on the post of Wales Synod Safeguarding Officer (Southern).

The Coffee Morning and Floral Arrangement Demonstration put on by Pitton Chapel in May raised **£749.00** for the circuit project **Water Aid**.