

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Autumn 2014

In this Issue

Riding for MND	
The Methodist Circuit	2
Superintendent's Message (continued on page 4)	3
Take 5 at Murton!/Mumbles Holiday Club	4
Brunswick involved in Evangelism	5
Supernumerary Minister/Circuit Calender	6
Celebration in Brecon/Synod 2014	7
Bookshelf/Harvest Splash	8
Garth Hewitt/Pitton with Passion	9
Fan at Brunswick/Whatever!	10
Mary and Martha	11
Wesley Guild Clydach/Trilingual Baptism	12
As One Who Serves/Pitton	13
40 Years of Female Presbyters	14
Dates for your Diary/Sunday Live	15
Lighthouse to Lighthouse (continued)	16
Lighthouse to Lighthouse (continued)	17
Gower Show/Murton Remembers	18
Plan for Autumn 2014	19
Circuit Churches	20

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 17th November 2014

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RIDING FOR MND



Over the summer Peter Dunstan and David Boakes, two members of Mumbles Methodist Church, joined a group of cyclists riding from the Llandudno lighthouse in North Wales to the Mumbles lighthouse, a distance of 180 miles. They were raising funds for a charity set up by their friend Neil Cunningham who lives with Motor Neurone Disease.

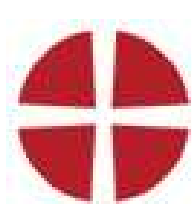
(further details on pages 16/17)

A man cannot have faith without asking, neither can he ask it without faith

Edward Marbury



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to the Autumn 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.

The General Secretary of the Methodist Church Rev Martyn Atkins in his recent pastoral letter has encouraged all churches within Methodism to place a renewed emphasis on evangelism. Martyn has consistently encouraged the church on this during his time in office and we would do well to heed his words following the recent Statistics for Mission report at this year's annual conference.

Regular collection of Methodist statistics began in 1766, when membership numbers were reported for the first time. The present system of data collection and statistical reporting, based on an online annual return is known as *Statistics for Mission* and dates back to 2002. From this information, a Connexional-level statistical report is prepared for the Methodist Conference every three years.

Statistics can never tell the whole story of the Church's mission and ministry, and its limitations have always been recognised. Nevertheless, as the 2011 Conference report put it, statistics enable us to 'find out something about what we are, who we are, where we are, how we have changed and are changing, and, to a certain extent, what we are doing'.

The report that came to this year's conference stated that even though there is much life and health across our Connexion the trajectory of British Methodism is clearly downward overall. Undoubtedly there are many reasons for this but my guess is that we are not that different in this respect from many other Christian denominations witnessing in Britain today.

This report may well be the wake-up call that we need that stops us from doing the same things year after year and expecting the outcome to be different. It should serve as an encouragement to us as we try new approaches to worship and mission whilst going back to the Gospel and

reminding ourselves that Jesus' last words to his disciples whilst on earth was to 'Go and make disciples'.

In chapter 12 of John's Gospel we read that Jesus and his disciples were going to Jerusalem for a religious festival and that 'among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks'

These Greeks had heard of Jesus and they wanted to meet him. They approach Phillip and said to him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus" (v.21). So Philip along with Andrew to introduce the Greeks to Jesus.

"Sir, we want to see Jesus". How is that request going to be answered today? How are people who have not yet met Jesus, and perhaps don't know anything about him, going to meet him? I think the answer to that question has two parts to it.

First, people are going to see Jesus when his followers look more like him.

Can people see something of Jesus in us? Can they see Him in our homes, in our relationships, in our places of work, in the way we spend our leisure time. In those places we called to be the likeness of Christ.

Second, people are going to see Jesus when we introduce them to him, so that they can come to know him for themselves.

Michael Harvey, the founder of Back to Church Sunday has travelled the world and spoken to thousands of church leaders and groups on the subject of 'invitation'. His message is a simple one.

If everyone in the church invited someone, congregations would double in a day. The more he explored that thought and the more research he conducted he discovered that between 80 – 95% of people in the church will never make a personal invitation to anyone. He found that fascinating and then looked at why so many didn't want to make a personal invitation and he called those reasons 'locks'. As churches we have to address the locks that hinder invitation.

Continued on page 4

The almighty power of God in the conversion of a sinner is the most mysterious of all works of God.

Thomas Hooker

Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit



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news in brief

Morryston

Saturday 4th October 2014
"Harvest Splash" - creative
activities for all ages.
10.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m.
Free entry but donations
invited for Water Aid

Saturday 22nd November
2014 High Tea 3 p.m.-5 p.m.
tickets £5

Sketty

Saturday 4th October 2014
10 a.m.-12 noon
Coffee morning and stalls
run by Save the Children

Saturday 1st November 2014
10 a.m.-12 noon
Coffee Morning and Craft
Stall.

Special greetings to **Doug Powlson** who was 90 on 14th August

Reynoldston

Passionate prayer and praise
every Thursday at 10 a.m. and on
Sunday evenings at 6 p.m.

Penlan

Bible Fellowship every Tuesday
evening at 7.30 p.m.

Macmillan coffee morning,
Saturday 11th October
11.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.

An Ecumenical Harvest Service,
Sunday 19th October at 3.00 p.m

Brunswick

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

Wednesday 10.30 a.m. FAN
'Friends and Neighbours'

Wednesday 11.30 a.m.
Intercessory Prayer Meeting

Circuit Outreach Meeting
Monday 20th October at 7.00p.m

The Alpha www.alpha.org

The Alpha Course commenced at Mumbles on Wednesday
17th September 6.00 p.m. meal 6.45 p.m. film

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

Message from the Superintendent

(continued from page 3)

Here are some of the main reasons (locks) why church members do not invite others to church:

1. I have to suffer and I don't want my friends to suffer.
2. It's the church leader's job – I mean that's what we pay them for. It's not my responsibility
3. I have no non-church going friends
4. It will be boring for them
5. Faith is a private thing.
6. If they really wanted to come, they'd come.
7. I don't want to be seen as weird
8. They might ask about my faith and why I go to church
9. What if I'm rejected

That last one 'What if I'm rejected' is seen as the biggest reason we do not invite because no-one wants to hear the word 'no'. All of our lives we do what we can to avoid being rejected. Michael Harvey then asks – who do we know who was rejected, and not just rejected but scorned, beaten and shamed. Jesus suffered all these things and if we are following him then at times we will be rejected.

But this fear of rejection and people saying no to us paralyses us when it comes to inviting people. We think they will say no and so we don't even bother asking the question, but there's also a very big chance that they will say 'yes'.

All we have to do is invite just like Andrew, we cannot influence the answer – people are free to choose. It may be that God has been working in that person's heart over a long period of time and they are just waiting for someone to ask them. Who knows? And the truth is we will never know unless we do it.

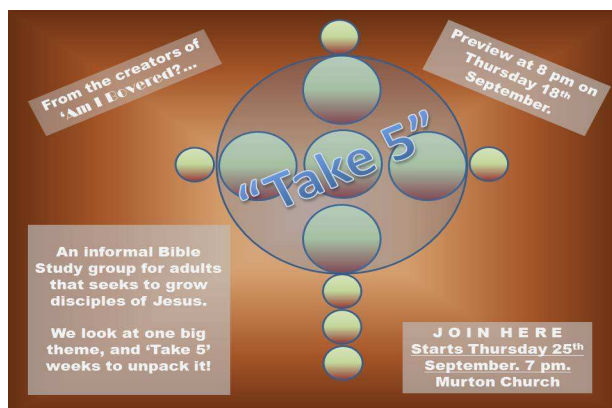
Let us be about showing people the love and the grace of Jesus and then let's invite them to meet him.

Howard

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

Take 5 at Murton!



When older members of the congregation said that they liked the sound of the 'Am I Covered?' group, and responded in a survey that they would like an informal Study group in order to deepen discipleship, we came up with 'Take 5'. Launching in late September, the group will consider 5 key questions of faith and life, with the aim of strengthening faith and deepening discipleship.

The first five sessions, 'How Can I believe?' will ask: How can I believe in God? How can I believe the Bible? How can I believe in Jesus? How can I believe in Prayer? How can I believe in the Spirit? The group will be an ecumenical venture with St Teilo's Church in Wales, but the Thursday evening meetings will be based at Murton.

'Take 5' meets in the Wesley Room at Murton from 7 pm to 8:30 pm on Thursdays for series of five weeks at a time, commencing on 25th September.

For details call Rev Andy Walker, on 01792 232867.



Children and helpers at Mumbles holiday club during the last week in August visiting the new Mumbles lifeboat station

He does most in God's great world who does his best in his own little world.

Thomas Jefferson

Brunswick involved in Evangelism at the Sea Front

On Sunday the 24th of August, we had an amazing time at the Sea front near the Civic Centre. Our UNITAS group, that is our Churches Together in the City Centre in Swansea held a Songs of Praise Service. The wonderful Salvation Army Band led the singing. This event was a true act of witness.

The weather was simply beautiful, as people passed by the Sea edge hearing lovely songs of praise.

Ken Singleton reached out to many people as he gave them the orders of service. Many chose to witness the entire act of worship. It was an amazing experience in that we were among the people, a reflection of John Wesley's way of evangelism.

Leaders were chosen to talk about their choice of hymns, I chose "In heavenly love abiding" by Anna Letitia Waring. Born in 1823, she wrote this hymn when she was 27 years in 1850. She died in 1910 at the age of 87 years. Anna had written many hymns, but "In heavenly love abiding" was voted her very best. This hymn carried me through my stationing period last year. I worried about where I would go and what it would be like. I felt I needed to abide in Christ. No storms of life would frighten me even if their loud roars surrounded me. If I wanted to walk on water, I would have to get out of the boat, surely, no devastation would occur if God were around.



In verse two, "Whenever he may guide me nothing shall turn me back because my Shepherd is beside me" highlights that Christ is in charge of our lives and we should follow to wherever He may guide. Christ knows what is best for us. We are not to doubt the way He leads.

Verse three encourages a positive outlook on the future because Christ guides us to where the pastures are green as Psalm 23 says, "He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me besides the still waters." Sometimes the future is just dark clouds and it is hard to measure our hope, but God has our treasure and we must walk with Him. This hymn shone light in what seemed to be darkness. It can be used to encourage those experiencing difficulties and changes.

Although our futures may look dark and cloudy, God, who sees all and is all, surrounds us. The shepherd is beside us so nothing can we lack. All we need is to walk with God.

In the love of Christ.

Rev. Siperire Mugadzaweta



Time for a Smile

It was Palm Sunday and five-year old Johnny stayed away from church with his granny because he wasn't feeling too good. When the family returned home they were carrying some palm branches and Johnny wanted to know what they were for. His mother explained that people held them over Jesus' head as he walked by. "Wouldn't you just know it," said Johnny, "the one Sunday I don't go and he shows up."

Our new supernumerary minister



which will take quite a bit of time. We also have a caravan which we hope to be able to utilise far more than has been possible whilst in circuit work. One of the things about retirement which we are looking forward too is the chance to spend weekends with family and friends. Our son, Paul, followed us to Berlin and stayed there and we have a German teenage grand-daughter as well as many German friends whom we will also wish to visit. All this by way of saying we may be away quite a lot!

But it is good to be back and we look forward to meeting you in various contexts over the coming years.

With love in Christ
John and Lynda Atkinson

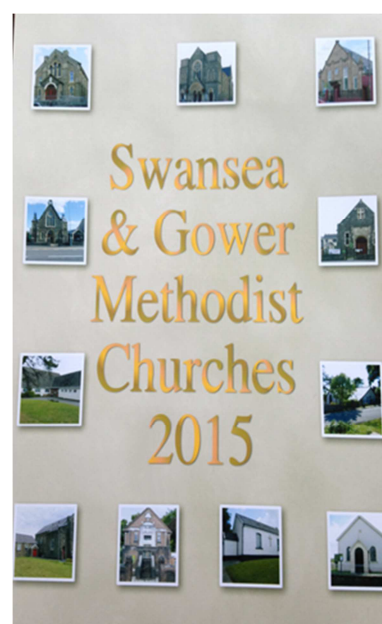
Dear Friends

It is twenty years since we left Swansea to work as Mission Partners in Berlin so despite the fact that many will remember us there will undoubtedly be plenty who don't; so a few words of introduction: John has just 'sat down' after thirty years in ministry of which exactly half were spent in South Wales – Newport, Swansea and Gower and latterly the Vale of Glamorgan (Penarth and Barry). The remainder was divided into eight years in Berlin and seven in Tamworth and Lichfield. In Swansea we were based at Sketty and thanks to Jean Kirkwood we have been kept up to date with events here through regular copies of the church newsletter.

There is a sense in which we never really left Swansea since our daughter Sarah stayed here and in 1996 we bought a house in Carlton Terrace in which she lived for twelve or so years before we took it on when Sarah moved to Llandovery. Lynda has in fact already been living here for the last three years but now we are truly here to stay. Squeezing all our furniture and possessions into the one house has been a bit of an exercise and is likely to remain so for some months yet, given the number of boxes stacked in various places.

We have lots of projects in mind for retirement. Lynda has already been working with the Swansea Little Theatre as their set artist and John intends to join in there too. John is determined to take a break for at least a few months from preaching, though will no doubt re-surface at some juncture. Although retired he continues to be Chair of Governors at Rydal Penrhos (Methodist) School in North Wales

2015 Circuit Calender



A brand new 2015 calender showing all of the churches in the circuit has been produced by Ray Davies from our Wesley church in Brynhyfyd. Each calender costs £4.95 and all profits are going to the building fund at Wesley. This is an ideal gift for Christmas and one that would look good adorning any wall at home or the office

There is a copy of the calender in each church for you to look at before you make your order.

Ray's contact details are
raymond.davies1@ntlworld.com Tel: (01792) 521681

A Celebration in Brecon



The afternoon of May 3rd saw Brecon cathedral filled with Methodists from many parts of the world. This was in remembrance of the death, 200 years ago, of “the most famous of all Breconians”, the Revd. Dr. Thomas Coke. The preacher was the Revd. the Lord Leslie Griffiths and there were speakers talking about various aspects of Coke’s life. Brecon museum also exhibited a special display about Coke, which lasted several weeks.

The Revd. Dr. Thomas Coke was educated at Christ College, Brecon, became Bailiff (Mayor) in 1770 and was ordained priest in 1772. He worked as parish priest in South Petherton, Somerset, but in 1777 the church bells rang out to celebrate his being driven from the parish; he was “too Methodist in his ways”! He was the young protégé of the now elderly John Wesley; Wesley commissioned him to serve the Methodists now established in the newly independent America. Here Coke ordained two new presbyters and appointed Francis Asbury as Superintendent (Bishop). From that time the church flourished and became an independent denomination in the United States. Imagine the bravery of Coke, who made nine voyages across the Atlantic in the small wooden ships of those days.

The issues of slavery were paramount at that period. Coke’s ship was once blown off course and on Christmas Day 1786 he landed safely on the West Indian island of Antigua. He was met by a Methodist preacher, John Baxter and conducted a service for the group of slaves gathered for worship by the plantation owner called Nathaniel Gilbert. Coke organised a new church there and by the time of his death there were 12 Methodist circuits in the West Indies with 17,000 members.

John Wesley preached “the world is my parish”, but Thomas Coke made the words a reality. He had a passion for mission beyond our shores. He founded

the Wesleyan Missionary Society and gave it much of his personal wealth, and that of two wives, for the recruitment and training of the first men to work overseas. After the death of his second much loved wife he decided to join the six young recruits who were to found the church in Sri Lanka and India. After four long hazardous months at sea he was found dead in his cabin. Thus there is no grave near that of the two wives buried in the Parish church of St. Mary’s at Brecon.

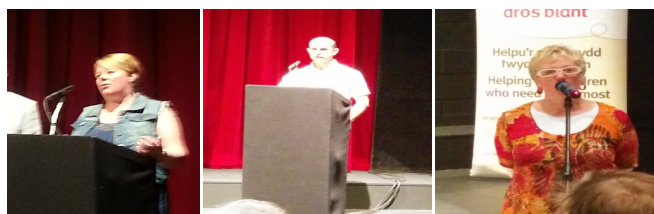
No wonder there was a celebration in Brecon this May, with speeches from Methodist Church House London, from the U.S.A., Jamaica and Sri Lanka. How very sad that so few Methodists in Swansea know this story of our heritage.

Alice Rutter

Synod 2014

The Methodist Church in Wales gathered for its annual Synod at Theatre Hafren in Newtown on Saturday 13th September. As well as dealing with the usual administrative tasks the Synod heard good news stories from various circuits including the proposed work with the homeless and those with addiction issues through the Ogof Adullam project based at our Brunswick church. Jean Lang was introduced to the meeting as the new Synod Safeguarding officer for South Wales and spoke passionately about the work of safeguarding in the church and community. The proposal that Sketty Methodist become part of a local ecumenical project with Bethel United Reformed Church was formally agreed by the meeting.

These and many other reports and discussions made Synod a very interesting and rewarding meeting. It was good to see that the Methodist Church is alive and well here in Wales.



(From left to right) Leslie Noon, Huw Davies and Jean Lang addressing Synod

Rev. Howard Long

I do not want to merely possess faith, I want a faith that possesses me.

Charles Kingsley

BOOKSHELF



MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN by Jean George

A classic adventure story for children aged about 9-11 years. Sam runs away from the city to live off the land in the Catskill Mountains. His home is a tree and Frightful, a young peregrine falcon, is his hunting partner. Sam learns many skills to enable him to survive. But, how does the story end – happily ever after or not?

Janet Neilson

PERFECT by Rachel Joyce

Summer 1972 – eleven year old Byron and his friend begin “Operation Perfect”, a hapless mission to rescue Byron’s mother from an impending crisis. Winter, present day – Jim cleans the tables in a local cafe. He is a solitary figure struggling with OCD. His job is a relief from the rituals that govern his nights. How are these people connected? Only time will tell.

THE CLEANER OF CHATRES by Salley Vickers

This novel tells the story of the mysterious and elusive Agnes Morel, whose little acts of kindness around a rural French cathedral touch the lives of others with consequences both good and bad. But when her tragic past is exposed, Agnes must face up to the truth of her origins.

THE LITTLE OLD LADY WHO BROKE ALL THE RULES by Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg

Martha Andersson, aged 79, dreams of escaping her care home and robbing a bank! She has no intention of spending the rest of her days in an armchair and is determined to fund her way to a more exciting lifestyle. She and her friends cause uproar by protesting.....

PLACES OF ENCHANTMENT by Graham B Usher

This book is about meeting God in landscapes. Many people who have given up church appreciate the spiritual benefits they gain from climbing a mountain or walking in nature. But how and why do we encounter God in land, forest, river, mountain, desert, garden, sea and sky?



“Harvest Splash”

Creative activities for all ages

Sat. October 4th

10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Morrison Methodist Church

School Road, Morrison

(next door to Sacred Heart)

Admission: Free

Donations to Water Aid.

Children must be accompanied

By a responsible adult

Garth Hewitt "Conspiracy of Love" Concert



This was Garth's second visit to Sketty in as many years, and he did not disappoint. Garth, an Anglican Priest, is the founder of the Christian charity Amos, whose aim is to support some of the "forgotten communities" of the world: the peasant farmers in Nicaragua, the Street Children of South Africa, the Dalits ("untouchables") of India, and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West bank. Through images, stories and, of course, song, Garth told us of the dignity of these people, and their determination not to "go under" despite circumstances which would make many of us give in. Garth had just returned from an arts festival on the West Bank ("Bet Lahem live", organised by the Amos Trust), at the time of the murder of the three Israeli teenagers, and the subsequent tit-for-tat murder of the Palestinian youth: events which contributed to Operation Protective Edge (the Israeli incursion into Gaza which began at the end of July, and at the time of writing, is still ongoing). His stories from Israel/Palestine were therefore all the more poignant. He gave examples of "beautiful resistance" to Israeli occupation of the West bank practised by some groups of Palestinians. This included the planting of trees and cultivating quiet spaces next to the 8m high "separation wall".

Garth also sang songs from the recently discovered National Chartist Hymn Book, which Garth has put to music: songs with a spirituality committed to social justice, written around events in 1845 but with remarkable relevance to our own society today. Titles include "Sons of Poverty" and "God of the poor", and include words such as "Raise, raise the cry. Let all respond: Justice, and pure and equal laws". The songs are available on Garth's CD "Liberty is Near!"

Although attendance on the evening was disappointing (but thank goodness for Methodists!), those present were entertained by Garth's easy and non-judgemental manner. More importantly, we were challenged to play our part in alleviating suffering and confronting injustice: the calling, surely, of all Christians.

For more information about Garth's CDs, the work of the Amos Trust, and the forthcoming visits to Nicaragua and Israel/Palestine (open to all), please look at the Amos Trust web-site: www.amostrust.org

I may well invite Garth back to Swansea next year: so if you came this year, please spread the word and encourage others!

Alan Cram

Aldridge packs Pitton with Passion!



It was standing room only on 25th July, when Aldridge Youth Fellowship (AYF) once again packed our lovely Chapel to capacity when they visited for their annual Youth Camp. Passionate praise, worship and testimony were shared, not only with the congregation on Sunday morning, but each evening back at the Pitton Cross Site.

Many of the young people gave their lives to Christ for the first time, or made re-commitments during the week. It is always a privilege to host this group, and they really appreciate the freedom they have to be able to come to a local church and lead worship.

Andy Walker

Put your nose into the Bible every day. It is your spiritual food. And then share it. Make a vow not to be a lukewarm Christian.

Kirk Cameron

CONNECT Autumn 2014

FAN Group Meeting

At Brunswick, every Wednesday at 10.30 am, we meet for friendship in a group called FAN. What does FAN stand for? It stands for Friends And Neighbours. Some like to use another meaning, Friends Across Nations.

FAN a Registered Charity that was started here in UK by Gill from Cardiff. She saw the need for people who were lonely to come together for a chat and have a cup of tea in friendship. Gill intended that many people everywhere would start similar groups since this is international. Individual FAN Groups are independent organisations that hold meetings where Friends and Neighbours listen to each other with respect.

The FAN Charity objective is to promote religious and racial harmony by developing and strengthening good relations between individuals of all races and cultures thus fostering a spirit of kinship, mutual understanding and respect among the peoples of the world.

Registered FAN groups meet for an hour in a listening circle. There is no fee required to attend a FAN group meeting. Any money donations are used towards refreshments at meetings.

People come to listen and talk about their daily lives. No one gossips or criticises. Everyone speaks when they feel comfortable enough to do so. We do not advise anyone about their life. We meet in friendship, whatever our background or religion.

Those who have attended FAN group meetings at Brunswick have found them enjoyable and friendly. We would like people around us to find shelter, warmth and friendship here. All friendly persons are welcome to join.

Remain Blessed,

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta

Whatever!



When their younger brothers and sisters wanted to join our teenagers for the ever popular Sunday evening 'Am I Bovered?' discipleship group, there could only be one answer, 'Whatever!' The new group – yes it is called 'Whatever!' - will meet before 'Am I Bovered?', at 6 pm to 7 pm on Sunday evenings at the usual venue, 'The Lamplighter Café', an ecumenical project in Bishopston.

There will be a brief 'bit in the middle' where both groups mingle over their hot chocolate and popcorn, before the younger ones head home and the older ones meet for their group. Our term begins with our second Youth Weekend at the St Madoc Centre, North Gower, from 19th to 21st September. We have seen this group really flourish in the past year and develop some great friendships which we pray will sustain them through their journey of faith into adult life.

Rev.Andy Walker



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)



You were made by God for God and until you understand that, life will never make sense.

Rick Warren

New Take on Mary and Martha



Sometimes places like Iona and Lindisfarne are referred to as 'thin places', places where visitors feel a deep sense of the presence of God, and where time somehow 'stretches'. The place that has often done this for me is the Sheldon Centre in the Teign Valley close to the edge of Dartmoor.

Originally a farm, it was taken over in the 1970's by the Church Army as a centre for youth camps and activities. Facilities were basic, but many groups enjoyed the countryside and time away from home. While working with church groups in this way the Warden, Carl, discovered that many of the clergy accompanying the groups came with all kinds of problems and sometimes suffering from stress. Out of this discovery came the vision for a place of retreat that would support clergy.

In the 1990's the Society of Mary and Martha was formed, a lay community that took their inspiration from the knowledge that Jesus often took time out in the home of Mary and Martha at Bethany. There are currently five full-time members in the community, with several others who live in for a while, or come in from the local area during the day.

I first visited Sheldon in those early years, when some of the facilities were still rather basic, and meals were shared in the community's kitchen. Since then, step by step and with major fund-raising and grants, each of the farm buildings has been improved or replaced, giving en suite facilities throughout, comfortable lounges, fully fitted kitchens, dining area, new chapel, as well as beautifully maintained gardens. The latest development is a new residential 'green house' for the Community, whose current residence is the original farmhouse.

Some of the facilities can still be used by self-catering church or school groups, but the main ministry is to clergy, offering retreats and workshops (stress prevention), and bolt-holes for those who need to be away from the Vicarage/Manse at time of crisis or as part of a Sabbatical.

For the past couple of years I've been a volunteer in the kitchen at Sheldon two or three times a year for a week at a time. This involves a lot of chopping of vegetables as almost all of the food is prepared on the premises using produce from the community garden. As I have a 'food intolerance', I'm often put in charge of 'special diets' too, and have recently been asked if I'd be willing occasionally to be in charge of the kitchen for a day (Gulp!).

Having had huge benefit from Sheldon personally during my Ministry, I thought it was time to give something back. This became my 'project', while Alan has his Tanzania project.



Rev. Pam Cram

CIRCUIT MISSION SUNDAY

October 12th 2014

At Penlan Methodist Church

3.30 p.m. Presentation of the work of the Amelia Trust Farm by Deacon Lorraine Brown

4.30 p.m. Faith Tea

6.00 p.m. Circuit Service and launch of the Circuit Project 2014/15

On days when life is difficult and I feel overwhelmed, as I do fairly often, it helps to remember in my prayers that all God requires of me is to trust Him and be His friend. I find I can do that.

Bruce Larson

Wesley Guild Clydach

This year our Wesley Guild in Clydach has had some very interesting and enjoyable afternoons. To name a couple of activities, we've had poetry readings, treasure items brought in by the members, such as silk cards from the war, first toys, and other interesting keepsakes. We also had a talk on Romania by Caroline Buckler, and a talk on the book bus in Africa given by Sandra Cuthill, with very interesting slides.

In June the Guild, along with friends from Morriston Chapel, enjoyed a trip and guided talk to Hereford Cathedral. Then in August we all visited the Lamplighter in Bishopston and had a very warm welcome and talk by Caroline. After lunch we had another talk on the Copper Jack river cruise up the river Tawe, which was enjoyed by all.

Earlier in the year two of our members met with Ann Beynon who gave some tips on making a banner, which I'm pleased to say we have completed ready to display at our Centenary service on 19th October, which will be led by Rev. Howard Long, followed by tea and cake and to which you are all welcome.

This year on 1st November from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. (at Clydach Community Centre, Vardre Road, Clydach as our own building is being renovated) we will be holding our Christmas Fayre of handmade crafts and items, the proceeds from which will be used to buy gifts for the Mr X Appeal, which the Guild has supported for over 25 years. We may only be a few members but we all work together as a family, knitting sewing baking and crafting. We all look forward to welcoming you.

For more information contact Marilyn on (01792) 844256

Marilyn Harry

Food Banks

Collections for local food banks are an ongoing outreach and are greatly appreciated by the residents of Swansea.

Thank you all very much for your donations.

Trilingual Baptism



Godparents Terry and Beth; John Walters; Sofia, Diana and Nigel

In Clydach we're used to bilingual services, but on August 31st we went one step further with a trilingual baptismal service for Sofia Oanea-Cram, grand-daughter of Pam and Alan Cram. The service was conducted by Rev'd Canon John Walters, a family friend, who is fluent in Welsh and occasionally slipped into 'the language of heaven', but he also made a brief attempt at Romanian for the benefit of the family of Sofia's Mum, Diana. Programmes had been prepared that included some key headings and instructions in Romanian. Sofia appeared to be taking in the whole proceedings, and charmed the congregation. This service took place in the main chapel, and this will be our congregation's home for the next few months as the hall is completely refurbished.



Pam Cram with Sofia

Trust in yourself and you are doomed to disappointment;.....but trust in God and you are never to be confounded in time or eternity.

Dwight L.Moody

As One Who Serves

A new venture in Clydach has been the Village Fete. It took place over the first weekend in August and is an attempt by the Community Council to bring the village together and build a greater sense of community.

On the Saturday Waverley Park in the village became a hubbub of sound and activity, with stalls, a dog show, Clydach in Bloom results, and in the evening a children's disco. Some of the local churches took stalls in the marquee, as did Ty Croeso, jointly with Pam's Fair Trade stall.

On the Sunday, a community service was held in the marquee, organised jointly by Pam Cram and Chris Pavett (the assistant Pastor of Calvary Pentecostal church) on behalf of the Council. The theme was 'Service', both because it was the inauguration of the new Community Council Chair and also the centenary of the start of the First World War. The programme included songs by the Calvary children, a reading in Welsh by Community Councillor and member of Capel y Nant, Gareth Richards and an address by Chris.

As an example of community involvement an 'Open the Book' style story-telling was given by Allan and Nesta Rees and Alan Cram, based on the story of Nehemiah and entitled 'A Time to Build' (see photo below). Alan impressed everyone with a very dramatic death scene, sadly difficult to capture photographically!



Following the service the children enjoyed a picnic of juice and crisps, and the adults shared in a strawberry tea.

We were delighted to learn that the Chair of the Community Council, Julie Davies, had chosen Ty Croeso as her charity for the year. Proceeds

from the tea would be shared between Ty Croeso and the two churches who had prepared it, St. Mary's and Calvary. It is hoped that this will become an annual event, that more and more people will get involved and that it will inspire more people to serve in the community through the various groups involved.

Rev.Pam Cram

Next Stop Pitton!



When Chrissie Butt and Dave Parker from Leeds tied the knot at Pitton Chapel on 11th August, they explained to the Minister, Rev.Andy Walker, that the guests would be arriving at the Chapel by bus. "I assumed they meant a standard contract-hire 48-seater coach" explained Rev. Andy. "My mouth dropped when an old red London RT bus pulled up, number 22, destination Piccadilly Circus!"

Rev.Andy, who grew up in the 'Country area' of London Transport operations was overjoyed. "You've made my day" he explained to the congregation. It was a wonderful celebration, and the third wedding that Pitton has been able to host since the inspiring renovation of the Chapel which was completed in 2011. "It's just a shame we don't have a balcony at Pitton", Andy lamented, "as I missed out on the opportunity of uttering those timeless words, 'plenty more room on top!'"

Rev.Andy Walker

40 Years of Female Presbyters 1974 – 2014

To mark the 40th Anniversary of the Ordination of women to the presbyterate in the Methodist Church, a service of celebration was held on Saturday 21 June at Wesley's Chapel in London.

The preacher for the service was the Revd Ruth Gee, President of the Methodist Conference 2013/14. The ministry of word and sacrament was celebrated in a service of word and sacrament.

A new hymn was written for the occasion and The Revd Nicola Morrison organised a choir of female voices to lead the hymn during the service.



Extract from Ruth Gee's sermon

It wasn't easy for the women who responded to God's call to be presbyters and were ordained in Bristol in 1974. They began to pave the way for the rest of us, and we followed in a way that is not smooth but that is well marked.

Today I give thanks that within the Methodist Church there is no role that is not open to women - that is a precious and rare thing.

But we cannot be complacent because there are still those places and gatherings where women who are ordained know what it is to be seen as unusual.

We still know what it is to be accepted in some places with curiosity or caution. We still know what it is to have our calling and identity as presbyters denied by some because of our gender, because of an integral part of our being.

There is pain in that and it is a pain shared with others, with men and women who find themselves marginalised or have limitations imposed on them because of those things that are an integral part of their being as those who are known and blessed by God.

Read the Rev Gee's sermon in full

http://methodist.org.uk/media/1191116/40th_anniversary_sermon_ruth_gee.pdf



Rev Siperire Mugadzaweta with Rev Ruth Gee

RUBY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY of Alan and Pam Cram

In celebration of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, Alan and Pam Cram are holding a barn dance at Penclawdd Community Centre from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday 27th September. It's a family event with nibbles and cold drinks in the interval. The invitation is open to all, but it would help if people could let Alan or Pam know if they're coming. No presents, please, just your presence – though if you really want to give something, cash gifts to one or both of their special 'retirement' causes are always welcome i.e. Heshima in Tanzania (the project Alan helps with), and Sheldon Centre in Devon (where Pam goes a couple of times a year to act as 'galley slave').

Dates for your Diary

Clydach

Guild Centenary Celebration Service, Sunday October 19th at 3.00 p.m. at Capel y Nant followed by a tea at Bethel Church. All welcome.

Guild Christmas Craft Fair, Saturday November 1st at 2.00 p.m. at Vardre Community Hall, Vardre Road. For further details see the article on page 12.***

Wesley

Lite Bites & Fellowship every Thursday at 12 noon.

Bible Study every Tuesday 10 a.m. at the church from 9th September.

Sketty

New 5-part Autumn Faith and Fellowship series on Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings: Jesus Rediscovered. This includes an optional trip to see Simon Callow in "This Man Jesus" at the Gwyn Hall in Neath on Wednesday 15th October. For more information contact Leslie.

Chaplaincy at the University

Service for the new academic year Wednesday 15th October at 1pm. Rev Leslie Noon to preach the sermon.

Mumbles

Lunchtime Worship every Wednesday at

12.15 p.m.

Theo's Coffee Shop - open daily 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Safeguarding Training – Foundation Module at Mumbles

Tuesday 21st October 6.45 p.m. – 9.30 p.m.

Murton

Table Top Sale, Saturday 25th October 10 a.m. – noon

Christmas Fayre, Saturday 22 November 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Coffee Morning in the church every Tuesday 10.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.

Sunday Live! Launches on 5th October



There will be a buzz of excitement in Murton Methodist Church Hall at 10 am on Sunday 5th October, as a brand new series of 'Sunday Live' services begin. Primarily aimed at our contacts within the community, 'Sunday Live!' will aim to bring in families from our Parents & Toddlers group and other users of our Hall, and those who come along to our Youth Clubs and 'Messy Church' who might not be comfortable with an hour long service in the Church.

The format will be mainly interactive, with video clips, quizzes, profiles on Bible Characters, creative ways of praying and lively worship, as well as some space for quiet reflection. In this coming year, 'Sunday Live!' will meet on the first Sundays in October, December, February, June, and on March 30th.

On the same days as 'Sunday Live!' we will also be offering a shorter formal service of Communion in the Church at the later time of 11:15 am, for approximately half an hour. This we hope will bring in some of our people who cannot get to Church for half-past-ten or who cannot sit easily for the full hour.

Both initiatives will be learning curves for the congregation and their Minister, and we will be discerning what can be learnt through them as we seek to share Jesus in relevant ways within our community.

Andy Walker

Lighthouse to lighthouse – a bike ride through Wales

(continued from the front page)

One Saturday morning in June a group of thirteen cyclists set out from Llandudno lighthouse on a sponsored bike ride through Wales to Mumbles lighthouse, a distance of just under 180 miles. The aim was to raise funds for the Heaton Ellis Trust, a charity that supports research into Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

The idea to do a sponsored bike ride came from friends of Neil Cunningham, who suffers with MND. Neil, who lives in Westcross, was a professional racing driver for many years. He had an impressive career, competing in single-seater racing cars, GT cars, saloon cars and historic racers. Neil raced in Europe, America and Australia. He competed at the Le Mans 24-hour race in France and also worked as a stunt driver for TopGear and on the James Bond film, Quantum of Solace. Since being diagnosed with MND in 2010, Neil has used his talents, time and enthusiasm to raise funds for research into this terrible disease.

I've known Neil for some years and was keen to join in the bike ride to support his fundraising efforts. I dug out my old racing bike from the back of the garage: flat tyres, a worn out chain and hooked teeth on the sprockets weren't encouraging. Luckily my friend Pete Dunstan was around to help and after a lot of fettling it was back on the road. Whilst helping me to fix up the bike Pete got enthused with the idea of doing the ride and decided to come along too, which I was to be very grateful about.

We all met at Oystermouth car park on the Friday afternoon for a photo with Neil before loading the bikes into a van and ourselves into a minibus for the drive north. It's a long drive up through Wales – lots of hills, twists and turns. We were worn out by the time we got there and we hadn't even got on our bikes at that point.

Next morning we left the Llandudno youth hostel bright and early. Well, some brighter than others after a variable night's sleep. Tyres were pumped up and pedal cleats adjusted for the warm-up ride to Llandudno lighthouse for the 'official' start. The road around Great Ormes Head is spectacular; the sun was shining and the wind was light, which was all very heartening. Unfortunately it's all up hill to the lighthouse – hard work straight after breakfast and an early taste of the roads ahead. Anyway, we all posed for a photo before setting off in a big group.

Our route took us along the A470 to Llanrwst before turning onto minor roads across country to Bala. Some

riders were quicker than others, so rather than all ride together in a *peleton*, we decided to ride at our own pace. Faster riders (some were very keen) went on ahead, while others split into smaller groups. I rode with Pete and another friend Gary Hunter and we stuck together for the whole trip, which made it easier and a lot more fun than cycling alone. It took us about three and a half hours to reach Bala for our lunch stop and it was a relief to sit down and relax for a while.

People were very supportive of the fund raising effort – sponsors at home were very generous, and we also received money along the way. At Bala several people took an interest in our ride and wanted to give the group donations – around £60 was collected over the lunch break without any prompting.

The afternoon took us on past lake Bala towards Dolgellau and then over the hills to Machynlleth. The scenery was spectacular but the hills were big. Riding up long hills becomes a slow grind – head down and keep going, but coming down the other side almost makes up for it. On one long descent my bike speedometer recorded a maximum speed of 45mph – not too bad, but Pete actually overtook me going down that hill! Our average speed for the 180 miles was just over 13mph. (Tour de France riders average around 25mph for more than 2000 miles!)

From Machynlleth we rode down to Aberystwyth and our overnight stop. Pasta for tea, but I almost fell asleep in the restaurant – it had been a long day.

The second day began with a tough ride uphill out of Aberystwyth. Shortly after that I got a puncture – the only one that Pete, Gary or I had all weekend. It was soon mended and we carried on to Llanrhytud before turning inland towards Lampeter. The scenery was lovely with Red Kites circling above, but the hills were hard going.



From left to right Peter Dunstan, David Boakes and Gary Hunter

(continued on page 17)

God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons that we could learn in no other way.

C.S.Lewis

Lighthouse to Lighthouse

(continued from page 16)



David Boakes

We stopped for lunch in Lampeter, but I found it difficult to eat the sandwiches and by the time we'd gone on to Pumsaint, I was struggling. It is important to eat and drink enough on a ride like this in order to give yourself sufficient energy to keep going. We had been trying to do that along the way by taking regular drinks and snacking on bananas and cereal bars, but I clearly hadn't eaten enough and had run out of energy. My legs didn't feel particularly tired, but I just had no energy to keep going. It was a peculiar feeling and I was a bit light-headed. We stopped at the side of the road for a break and I was very grateful to have my friends Pete and Gary there to encourage me. Pete gave me some tubes of energy gel, which were very effective. The gels are full of sugar and a bit sickly, but they certainly work. Within ten or fifteen minutes I was feeling a lot better and enjoyed the ride past Talley Abbey to Llandeilo.

From there we felt we were on the home straight and apart from a bit of confusion (I was sure I knew the way...) when leaving Ammanford, it was plain sailing back to Gowerton and down the cycle path to Swansea Bay. We rode round to Bracelet Bay for a photo with

Mumbles lighthouse in the background before going on to a BBQ at the cricket club. The other cyclists had arrived some time before us, but we didn't care about that! It was a great feeling to have made it back and satisfying to know that we'd cycled the length of Wales.

As a fundraising event the ride was a great success, raising more than £8,000 for the Heaton Ellis trust. Pete and I raised over £1,500 and are very grateful for the generous support of many people including lots of friends from Mumbles and the whole Methodist circuit - thank you very much.

Cycling with friends through Wales was a wonderful thing to do and we were blessed with sunshine and light northerly winds to help us along. The trip made me appreciate again what a beautiful country we live in. The hills were challenging, but we took it steadily as none of us had done much training. Pete only really began to tire towards the end of the second day, Gary suffered from cramp occasionally, and I had that one bad spell - which my friends helped me through - but otherwise we were all fine. It was a great experience.

Neil is an amazing character and remains positive and optimistic despite the severe health difficulties that MND brings. He continues to raise funds for the Heaton Ellis trust through his website www.racing4mnd.org. The trust operates with zero overheads so all the money donated goes directly to support research into MND at King's Hospital, London. To date Neil has raised over £50,000 through his website (and this figure is tripled by corporate matched funding) - a tremendous effort.



David Boakes

'Bongo Clive' adds rhythm at the Gower Show!



When the promised Llamas and Sheep failed to materialise at the eleventh hour, Rev. Andy Walker, co-ordinator of the Churches Tent at the Gower Show, realised they needed to quickly find something / or someone to draw the crowds in. A God-inspired conversation at Pennard Community Café led to an approach to 'Bongo Clive'. Clive Edwards from Llanelli is a passionate and gifted music maker with a talent for inspiring everyone and drawing out their musical gifts. The bongo beat sessions every half hour or so were a big draw, and enabled Clive to share something of his powerful testimony of coming to know Jesus and how his living faith in Christ had changed his life.

Also on offer in the Churches Tent were Children's craft and 'free' sideshow games, a Fair Trade stand from the 'Lampighter', squash and biscuits and free picnic space. The Churches also provided Chaplains to the Show, and put on an exhibition commemorating the start of World War I, with free 'John's Gospels' as given to the soldiers on the front line.

A wonderfully warm and inspiring day drew to a close as the Show ground was bathed in worship as the band of the Swansea Citadel of the Salvation Army led our closing Songs of Praise. Sincere thanks to all who gave of their time and resources to enable us to be a presence for Jesus to the exhibitors and visitors.

Rev. Andy Walker

Murton Remembers: 7th – 11th November



Commemorative Festival not to be missed! From Friday 7th November until Armistice Day, Tuesday 11th, Murton Church will hold a commemorative exhibition of artefacts and fresh flowers, banners, artwork and other items to reflect upon the sacrifice and suffering of the Great War. The weekend will include the annual Community Remembrance Service on Murton Green on Saturday 8th November at 10:45 am, and will also incorporate 'Messy Church' in Murton Hall on the Saturday afternoon.

On Sunday 9th November, after a brief evening service, the Lantern Theatre Company will present 'The Hiding Place', the story of Corrie Ten Boom. This will be performed in Murton Church Hall, and will be the second visit of this production, which first came to Murton in May 2011. Tickets for the production should be available on the door, or in advance from Rev. Andy Walker.

The commemorative weekend will finish with the Armistice Day reflection and silence in the Church at 11 am on Tuesday 11th November. Throughout the commemoration weekend the Church will be open, and teas and coffees will be served in the Wesley Room. We do hope that everyone from the Circuit will come over and support this outreach initiative.

Rev. Andy Walker