

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Spring 2015

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CHURCH STANDS IN THE GAP

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 1st June 2015**

Editor

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The Methodist Church in Swansea is responding positively to the needs of the homeless and those struggling with drug and alcohol addictions. The Night Shelter was again open on Saturday nights during the months of January and February at Sketty Methodist Church and was supported by over 75 volunteers working shifts. Each night of the week was covered by churches of different denominations opening their doors and providing a bed for the night and a hot meal. The Night Shelter is organised each year by Swansea Hope and the Methodist Church is pleased and proud to play its part. Please read more about this wonderful project on page 11.

In October last year the brand new Ogof Adullam Drop-In Centre opened at Brunswick Methodist. This Methodist project for the homeless is based in central Swansea is open three nights a week throughout the year. Project Co-Ordinator, Huw Davies, said "the response to Ogof Adullam in our first few months of opening has been phenomenal. There is a real need in our city at the moment and it's good to see the Methodist Church meeting that need and standing in the gap".

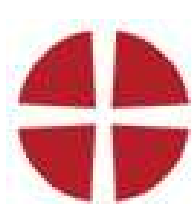
Read all about the work of Ogof Adullam in the centre pages.

Faith, mighty faith the promise sees, and looks to God alone; laughs at impossibilities, and cries it shall be done.

Charles Wesley



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to the Spring edition of Connect which is full of interesting information concerning the work of the Methodist Church here in Swansea and throughout the UK.

As I write this message I am mindful of a new report that has been produced by a coalition of UK churches including the Methodist Church titled 'Time to Rethink Benefit Sanctions'. The report contains new data recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act which highlights the severity and length of sanctions under Welfare Reform, and how sanctions affect vulnerable groups such as children and those with mental health problems.

In 2014, one million benefit sanctions were imposed on people. This means their payments stopped for a period of between one month and three years. The most common reason for being sanctioned is being late or not turning up for an appointment.

Paul Morrison, Public Issues Policy Adviser for the Methodist Church said "Sanctions impact disproportionately on young people, care leavers, homeless people, single parents, the mentally ill and those with long term illness. This system causes problems for the very people that most need help. Sanctions don't just have a financial impact. Many claimants have spoken of the shame, demoralisation and loss of self-worth caused by this system. As Christians we believe that everyone is loved, valued and made in the image of God, and we have a responsibility to challenge any structure or system that undermines that dignity."

The Churches are calling for a full and independent review of the regime and for urgent reform of the hardship payments system to avoid the deliberate imposition of hunger. Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty said, 'If you commit a crime, no criminal court in the UK is allowed to make you go hungry as a punishment, but if you're late for an appointment at the Jobcentre, they can remove all your income and leave you unable to feed you or your family for weeks at a time. Most people in this country would be shocked if they knew that far from providing a safety net, the benefit

sanctions policy is currently making thousands of people destitute. This policy must be reviewed urgently." Read the full report –

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/rethink-sanctions-report-0315.pdf

Membership

I am pleased to share with you the good news that churches across our circuit are welcoming new members. This resulted in the circuit reporting an annual increase in the recent statistical returns. Well done everyone and keep it up!

Easter

Let us rejoice that our Easter faith offers us not only a glorious future but life here and now as we live with the light of the risen Christ shining in our hearts.

There's a story about a recent convert to the Christian faith who was asked by his unbelieving friend 'I hear you have become a Christian' 'Yes' said the convert

'Then you must know a great deal about Jesus Christ, tell me what country was he born in?' 'I don't know' replied the man

'Well, then how old was he when he died?' asked his friend 'I don't know' said the man

Well can you tell me how many sermons he preached, or how he was born or how he did his miracles or how he was raised from the dead? Again the man said, 'I don't know'

'You don't know very much for someone who claims to be a Christian' his friend said,

You are right the man replied, 'I am ashamed of how little I know but this much I do know. Three years ago I was a drunk and in debt. My family was falling to pieces. My wife and children would dread my return home at night. I was desperate. It was then I gave my heart to God. I have given up drinking and we are out of debt and my wife and I are in love once more. All that Jesus Christ has done for me. That my friend is what I know.

May God bless you this Easter.

Howard

My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ.

Billy Graham

Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit



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news in brief

Sketty

Coffee mornings for charities on
the 1st Saturday of each month
10.00 a.m. – 12 noon

Brunswick

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

Every Wednesday at 10.30 a.m.
FAN (Friends and Neighbours)

11.30 a.m. Intercessory Prayer
Meeting.

Mumbles

Lunchtime Worship every
Wednesday at 12.15 p.m.

Theo's Coffee Shop open daily
from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Wesley

Lite Bites & Fellowship every
Thursday at 12 noon.

Bible Study every Tuesday at
10.00 a.m.

Tuesday Ladies Group every
Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. (during
school time).

Dutch Auction – 28th April

Murton

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

Reynoldston

Prayer and Praise every
Thursday at 10.00 a.m. and on
Sunday at 6.00 p.m.



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

The Alpha www.alpha.org

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

Easter Offering 2015

'The leaves of the tree...'



**at Brunswick Methodist Church on
Sunday 19th April at 6.30 p.m.**

"On either side of the river is the tree of life ... and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2)

As we hear world news, we see the need for reconciliation and healing – of individuals, communities and nations. Jesus sent out the first disciples to "proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal". Wholeness remains part of the Good News which the Church offers.

The Easter Offering Dedication service for 2015 draws inspiration from the prophetic visions, in Old and New Testaments, of the Tree of Life, producing leaves for healing. We hear stories from partner churches engaged in healing and healthcare and from countries around the world where the church is involved in national and international reconciliation.

LGCM – Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement

The South Wales/De Cymru group is a very friendly and welcoming group, and is open to LGBT people and their friends. We usually meet on a weekday and in various venues across South Wales. Meetings always start at 19:30 with a short period of devotions followed by a speaker, discussion or event. Meetings end with some social time over a hot drink and snacks. For further information please email us southwales@lgcm.org.uk

Next Event - Friday 10th April. Easter Communion at City URC, Cardiff CF10 3BZ at 7.30 pm, led by Rev. Gareth Rayner-Williams

Sketty Panto



Peter Pan 2015

Is there a point? Oh yes there is! Over the years I have heard people question why churches put on pantomimes. I'd like to explain what I think they have to offer.

First of all, they're fun! And we need fun in church. Secondly, they bring people together. We had people in the cast aged between 5 and 80. We had people in the cast who are very involved in church life and those who are much more on the fringe. We had people from the Methodist part of the congregation and the URC part of the congregation. We had members of our Brownie pack and our Junior Church. And TOGETHER we put on our pantomime.

This is what church is about. Making relationships with each other, with people in the community who come to watch and of course with God. And with every pantomime basically telling the same story – that good will overcome evil – well that's also at the heart of our Christian faith.

We enjoyed it. Oh yes we did! And we raised a total of £2,000 of which £1,500 went to Ty Hafan.

Rev Leslie (or Polly the Parrot)

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

Fellowship with Christ is participation in the divine life which finds its fullest expression in triumph over death. Life is a larger word than resurrection, but resurrection is, so to speak, the crucial quality of life.
William Temple

New Year, 'New' Home



On January 4th our congregation at Clydach returned to the Church Hall at Capel y Nant as their worship space. Over the previous four months a major refurbishment had taken place, removing the former stage and suspended ceiling, insulating throughout and putting in additional toilet, new fitted kitchen, and storage cupboards. With all new doors, windows, and flooring (with underfloor heating) it was all very fresh and new, but with our pulpit and banners back in place it also felt familiar. The new sound system provided a very good experience for those who could tune in to the hearing loop, and there is a fixed projector and screen for use when we want it. A problem with the echo in the building was made better by having the new plush chairs in place, and other solutions are being explored. The small electronic organ, which has replaced the piano, gives a very different quality and variety to the music. We look forward to welcoming you to the new venue for meetings in due course. In the meantime you can get an impression from the photos.

Pam Cram

Murton Methodist Church

**Is holding Coffee Morning in the church hall
on Saturday 18th April from
10.30 a.m. to 12 noon**

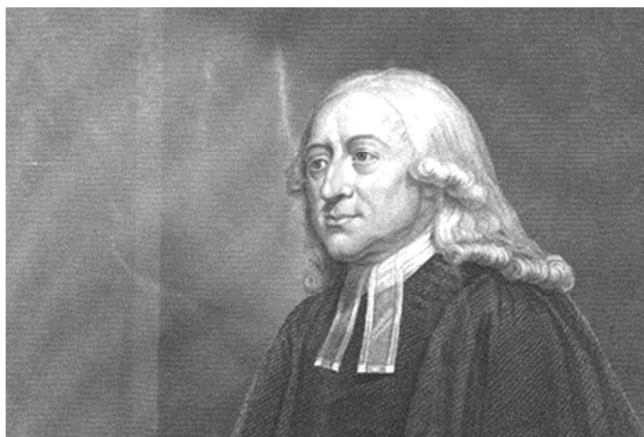
**All proceeds to the Circuit Project 2015
Amelia Trust Farm**

Morrison Christingle Service



Both the children and the adults enjoyed this
Christ's Light Service

John Wesley's plea

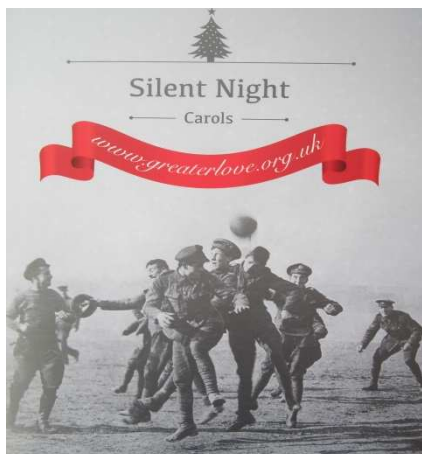


(It has been said that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and a man who never left his Anglican roots, had more influence on this country during the 18th century than any other person alive at the time. The following quote sums up a man who was on fire for the Gospel and it is perhaps a timely reminder for all of us of what commitment means as we embark on another year of service.)

**"Give me one hundred preachers and worship
leaders who fear nothing but sin and desire
nothing but God, and I care not whether they be
ordained or lay, they alone will shake the gates of
Hell and set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."**

Murton Ladies Guild Christmas Celebrations

Tearfund Silent Night Carols service



On Tuesday 16th December 2014 the Murton Ladies Guild held their Christmas celebrations evening with Bring a Friend Night. Everyone was given a Tearfund Silent Night booklet which told us all about the 1914 Christmas truce when the guns fell silent as German and British soldiers laid down their weapons to exchange greetings, play football in No Man's Land and sang carols, but then they returned to their hostilities.



The evening also included a flower sugar craft demonstration from one of our members, Ruth Painter, and this led to a round of the "Generation Game" with two ladies, Verna Clifford and Julie Barrow, going head to head and having a go at making their own. Other challenges included a Whose baby are you? and a prize for the member who came up with the best cure or remedy. The

outright winner was Tina Fordham who brought in a book called 'Primitive Physic a Book of Old Fashioned Cures and Remedies' by William H. Paynter. Upon reading the book we found John Wesley himself had also contributed.

The evening was rounded off with refreshments prepared by the Committee including Stollen, homemade mince pies and shortbread.

Teresa Lewis



Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) is a new movement within the British Methodist Church which seeks to resource individual women and women's groups in a variety of ways. It came into being fully at the official launch on 1st July 2011 in Southport.

MWiB was formed largely through the coming together of Women's Network and the British Unit of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women but aims to reach out beyond either of these groups.

It seeks to "offer a broader menu" for women today. There are lots of opportunities to meet, locally, nationally or internationally, but there are also resources for individuals to use at home, at work or with their families.

MWiB remains part of the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB), has a seat at the Methodist Conference and relates to many parts of the Connexional Team, however, MWiB does not have Connexional Team staffing, nor funding from the Connexional budget. It is self-funding and autonomous.

Morrison Methodist Church

**Is holding a Spring Fayre
on Saturday 23rd May
at 10.30 a.m.**

Lots of stalls, including plants

Traidcraft Trip to Cuba

What do you think of when you hear Cuba mentioned? Havana cigars? Fidel Castro? The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis? Well cigars are still everywhere, but Fidel Castro has handed over to his brother, and Cuba in 2014 is very different to Cuba in 1962! Following the fall of the USSR, Cuba had to find new ways to 'survive'. Opening up to tourism is just one of many changes. We joined the November Traidcraft trip, which, as well as visiting co-operatives with fair trade status, also included visits to many tourist attractions.



Pam in Revolution Square in Havana.

Cuba is a fascinating and complex place. In many ways it's like stepping back in time – very old American cars in Havana, ox-carts and ox-ploughs in the countryside, very little internet access; and yet the medical system is comparable to, if not better than, that in many 'developed' nations. The revolution in 1959 set up free healthcare and education alongside guaranteed low price food for 60% of each individual's needs. There's an amazing mix of skin colour around, with very little evidence of any prejudice. On the other hand, recent changes are seeing those able to earn through private enterprise and tourism becoming relatively rich, while others still rely on low State salaries; and colour is beginning to be an issue with 'blacks' apparently coming out worst.



A street in Havana showing run-down houses and an old car – typical of Havana streets

On our trip we had a few days in the capital, Havana. Then we travelled to the middle of the island, visiting amongst other places a sugar plantation; the World Heritage town of Trinidad; and the Bay of Pigs – site of the famous victory of the revolutionaries against the attempted CIA-led invasion. Highlights of our visit to the south coast were a walk through indigenous forest to a waterfall, where it was possible to take a swim; and a morning bird watching trip when we were lucky enough to see the tiny bee hummingbirds. Next we travelled to the mountains in the west, visiting an orchid garden, a former coffee plantation, and a fascinating 'eco-village' in an area of restored forest. Finally we had a couple of days to explore Havana again.

Along the way we visited farmers and gardeners, and were very well fed! Some time ago you may have bought 'Fruit Passion' orange juice, and the packet may have featured an orange farmer in Cuba. We had a meal at the home of the man featured. At 89 years of age he's still farming, and loving it, but he can no longer supply oranges as there is disease in the citrus trees across Cuba and elsewhere. In Cuba, fair trade organisations have to negotiate through the Government, rather than directly, as it is the State that chooses which co-operatives they think have the ability to meet fair trade requirements. Important factors are that the crop is organic (generally the case in Cuba), and that quantities can be guaranteed. The local co-operative still benefits from supplying fair trade goods, and with their premium the groups we visited have established a small fruit processing factory; a mechanics' workshop that serves the farms and community; and a 'diner' next to the workshop, providing drinks and snacks.



Casper, a farmer whose picture used to appear on Fruit Passion orange juice packs because he supplied the oranges.

(continued on page 8)

Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones. And when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake.

Victor Hugo

(continued from page 7)



Traditional form of transport in the rural areas – ox power.

An article like this can only scratch the surface of our visit, and only give a tiny snapshot of a fascinating place. With the news of the thaw in relations with the U.S.A. being announced just after our return we feel we were there at just the right time – as history was about to be made. We watch with anticipation – and some concern – to see what the future will hold.



Second is us with a few others from the trip enjoying breakfast on the roof of our guest house.

Pam Cram

Solace

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater.

He sendeth more strength when the labours increase.

To added affliction He addeth His mercy,

To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance;
when our strength has failed ere the day is half done.

When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
our Father's full giving is only begun.

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,

His power has no boundary known unto men,

For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth and giveth again!

(submitted by Vivienne Meller)

Freda and Iestyn would like to thank everyone from the circuit who joined the celebration of the life and ministry of Rev Alf Austin. We are particularly grateful to all those involved with the conduct of the funeral, the ministers and stewards, and those who provided the floral arrangements and refreshments. The support for us both so widely expressed has been a great comfort at this time.

We would also like to thank everyone for their generous donations in his memory which resulted in gifts of £468 to the RAF Association and £460 to Tŷ Conway Day Centre (Swansea Carers' Centre).

God bless you all.

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You can now follow Methodist news on Twitter at **twitter.com/methodistmedia**

And you can follow our weekly prayer by following **twitter.com/methodistprayer**

Food Banks

Thanks again to all those in our churches who contribute food to the food banks, or support Swansea Food Bank or Ty Croeso financially. Sadly the amount of food given out last year is 50% up on the previous year, but the generosity of people in the run up to Christmas, especially through the regular collections in the supermarkets was amazing. In 2014 the total number of people receiving food across the Swansea Food Bank outlets was 5,664, 32% of whom were children. This works out at an average of c.110-112 people per week. A large proportion of the food parcels goes out, of course from the main centre at Gorseinon and the CityChurch. At Ty Croeso we gave out food parcels for 661 people during the year. Swansea Food Bank is working with 132 Agencies.

Pam Cram

Murton Men's Mighty Meal!

The Men's Fellowship New Year lunch saw an enthusiastic group of regulars and friends gather round a long table at the Olchfa House Carvery to enjoy a sumptuous roast dinner. The group usually meet on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 2pm, at Murton (in the comfortable surrounds of the Wesley Room). A variety of speakers bring knowledgeable and entertaining presentations on themes ranging from Sport to History to Theology to Engineering. Each summer the men arrange an outing to a place of interest, recent ventures have included the Cefn Coed Colliery Museum and a boat trip upon the River Tawe. This endeavour is also followed by a meal – usually back at our favourite Carvery!

Please feel welcome to join us for any or all of our remaining Wednesday afternoons of the Season. The meetings for the coming months will be on March 25th, April 29th, May 27th and June 24th. Details from Dennis Reed (Tel: 232153) or Clive Jones (Tel: 232381).



Seeds of Hope at Penlan

With membership down to four people and a congregation usually between three and six, many might wonder what the point is of Penlan Methodist Church.

Well, the point is that of all our churches, it is in the middle of a deprived estate. This brings with it a number of challenges, and whilst we cannot change the world, there is some sense that to continue to be a Christian presence in this area of Swansea is of significance.

We have therefore been exploring different ways of being church. And we are delighted that we have formed a partnership with a Christian gardening project. Carl, who leads this project, and who also works with Ogof Adullam and Prison Fellowship comes every Friday to Penlan, bringing with him a few friends. They have started preparing the ground, and over the next few weeks will begin to plant seeds, so that later in the summer, vegetables will hopefully be beginning to grow. We always share in a cup of tea and a biscuit for the last half hour or so.

Can you spare any time between 2-4pm on a Friday? Would you like to be part of this project? If so, please speak to Rev Leslie. Any help or interest would be gratefully received – and after all, aren't we all in the business of planting seeds, never knowing when or where they may take root and flourish? Please also pray for us and the project.

Thank you.



Carl (Project Leader) and Pat (member of Penlan) check the strawberry plants recently planted.

Rev. Leslie Noon

Unexpected Rescue



"Doug and I were due to travel up to Ayrshire in Scotland to see my family one Eastertide a few years ago. It had been raining quite heavily the evening before, but despite several "local flood alerts", we decided to set out anyway, trusting God to get us there safely, as I hadn't seen my family since the year before. Even though I've now been living in Swansea for over 42 years, I still become "homesick" for "Bonnie Scotland" quite regularly and I just didn't want the disappointment of not being able to go there for another visit!

So off we went, quite early in the morning, i.e. at approximately 4.00 a.m., planning to take our usual route, by-passing Brecon and so to Leominster, then the M6 motorway. We got as far as the other side of Brecon, near to the Hay-on-Wye Toll Bridge. You've guessed it! The road was completely flooded and there was just no way through, without the car plugs becoming water-logged, etc. The time was approximately 5.30 a.m., still dark, with not a soul anywhere nearby, not that we expected anyone to be around at that early hour! That is, until we were just pondering whether or not to turn around and go home. Suddenly, and very quietly, another car pulled up alongside us and asked where we were intending going. I expect our answer must have raised a wee smile when we announced that we were travelling to Scotland, hopefully! Without further ado, the driver advised us to turn around, travel back a few miles down the road we'd just come and we'd arrive at a side-junction on our right. Take that turn, he said, and in a few miles time it will bring you out past where the road has been flooded!

I'm very pleased to say that we eventually arrived in Scotland, safe and happy and very grateful indeed to our "Guardian Angel" (as I called our "rescuer"). You see, God was indeed with us, to guard and guide, as

He always has done and always will do, if we put our trust in Him!

May he do the same for you, dear reader!"

Irene Dendle

Reynoldston

'Knit for Africa' helps knit together the community!



When Shirley Davies of Reynoldston Chapel felt God's calling to begin a new group for the community, she stepped out in faith with no idea how fruitful the endeavour would be. With full support of the Church Council, the monthly craft group, 'Knit for Africa', has brought new people into the sanctuary of the Chapel on a Tuesday afternoon to share a common passion for crafts of different kinds (not just knitting), and a common desire to make a difference to those on greatest need.



Knitted hats and teddies

(continued on page 15)

A New Equation! We love this kind of maths!

**Sketty Methodist + Bethel URC
= Uniting Church Sketty**

Yes, after years of working together and months of worshipping together, Sketty Methodist Church and Bethel United Reformed Church will formally become one congregation on 1st June 2015. And our new name will be Uniting Church Sketty.

This is a cause for real celebration in the life of our two churches, and we hope that members of the Circuit will support us in our Festival Weekend.

Celebration Journey

Friday 29th to Sunday 31st May 2015

A Celebration Journey is what we're calling the Festival Weekend when we will be launching our new combined church 'Uniting Church Sketty'. It promises to be an exciting and happy time, as we celebrate the journeys that the two churches have each made, leading to this new part of our journey together. And of course, underpinning it all is our understanding that God journeys with us.

A Journey with God – Celebration with flowers

On Friday 29th, Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st May, the church will be open to visitors to come and see our church decorated with flowers and displays illustrating the story of God throughout the Bible as well as sharing in refreshments.

Official Launch – Saturday 30th May at 2pm

Specially invited guests and dignitaries, friends from our Methodist Circuit and URC region and other churches in Sketty are invited to come to the formal launch of Uniting Church Sketty which will take the form of a service, followed by refreshments. We extend a warm welcome to all friends in our circuit to join us.

Sunday 31st May – celebratory services

As a church family we will continue our celebrations with a special all age service on Sunday morning followed by a Songs of Praise service in the evening.

Rev. Leslie Noon

Building Our Vision At Wesley Coffee Morning

We were pleased to see so many friends from across the circuit at the launch of our new building project, Building Our Vision, on a very cold January 31st. Tea, cakes and biscuits were served and friends sat, relaxed and chatted together. The cake stalls were very popular and raised £80. The very persuasive ladies on the bric a brac stalls managed to raise £70 with their sale of "most desirable objects". We would like to thank everyone who came along and supported us to help raise so much money towards our project. Money is still being donated and we await the final figure.



Our "vision" is as a result of our success since our major refurbishment of the church in 2001. Since having the "luxury" of a kitchen facility, the church members have provided a weekly "Lite Bites" lunch every Thursday which has embraced many people from outside the church, within the Brynhyfryd community and further afield.

A modest offering at first, with the voluntary time given by our members, it has developed into a regular meeting place for people of all ages and has provided our church with a modest revenue to cover costs and a contribution to church funds. The provision of this lunch facility has extended to take aways and even home delivery, if an elderly person is unable to visit us.

With the success of "Lite Bites" and also other functions throughout the year where the kitchen is heavily used, the time has inevitably arrived when it is not big enough nor adequately organised to sustain the use to which it has been subjected. This was highlighted in the Methodist Church's Quinquennial Building Report of 2010 and until the present our volunteers have "coped" with the situation.

Some temptations come to the industrious, but all temptations attach the idol.

Martin Luther

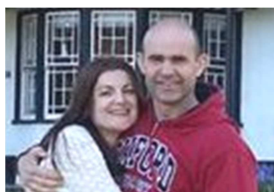
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Methodist Church, Swansea Circuit at HSBC
Swansea
Sort Code: 40 43 31
Account number: 92676273
Reference: OGOF

Cheques can be made payable to Methodist Church Swansea Circuit and can be sent to the treasurer: Mr Bernard Gwyther, 104, Rhyd y Defaid Drive, Derwen Fawr, Swansea, SA2 8AW. Please include a note stating it is for Ogof Adullam.

If you would like any further information about the project or would like to help out in any way, please get in touch with us, we would love to hear from you. ogofadullam@gmail.com or 07919 053732.

God Bless.



Huw and Cerys Davies

Night Shelter at Sketty Methodist

With some apprehension we welcomed our first six guests to the Night Shelter at Sketty on 3 January. Only three of the six guests joined us for the evening meal and all were quite quiet. It was an uneventful weekend and a good opportunity to review the organisation and volunteer experience; we were able to identify some 'lessons learned' with a view to improving in the weeks ahead.

The following weekend we welcomed 5 of the six guests who had accessed the shelter the previous week; it was noticeable they were more willing to engage with the volunteers and were appreciative of our support. Guests were generally polite and co-operative and again there were no significant problems.

The apprehension returned when we heard there were 12 referrals for our third weekend and 11 of the 12 had accessed the Shelter at Linden on the Friday evening. The profile of some of the new referrals suggested they could be more challenging. Only 8 of the 12 accessed the Shelter at Sketty, but guests and volunteers had a really good evening. Two of the guests were friends and talented musicians who entertained guests and volunteers with their YouTube videos of their music. Of the 8 guests that night, 2 had full time jobs; one was up very early intending to walk from Sketty to his place of work to start work at 7.30 a.m.; thanks to Ian McCloy who had volunteered on the overnight shift, he was given a lift. We were delighted that two of our guests stayed for morning worship and joined us for coffee.

Numbers continued to be high for a couple of weeks, until most of the guests were accommodated; two went into hospital and, sadly, some were banned.

It was something of a shock when the number of guests dropped to only 2, and in the last couple of weeks of February the one or two guests referred were accommodated in a B&B. As a consequence of this change, the Project leaders took the decision not to continue through March and closed the Night Shelter for 2015.

Feedback from both guests and volunteers has been positive; many volunteers have remarked on how much they have enjoyed helping at the Night Shelter and we hope they will want to volunteer in the future.

A special thank you to Rev'd Leslie Noon who gave up every Saturday evening to be at the Night Shelter and also a huge THANK YOU to the 75+ volunteers including team leaders, hosts, cooks, shoppers, drivers and those who opened the church for the bedding at 8.00 a.m. every Saturday.

In addition to the practical help, we were also blessed with generous contributions to the funding, and we thank everyone who has given so willingly of time and money to support this work.

Gwen Dumelow

The circuit says a big thank you to Gwen for all her hard work with Night Shelter this year. Without her it wouldn't have happened. Howard

Satan doesn't have to make you bow down to him; he just has to keep you from Jesus.

Charles Spurgeon

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The knitted garments mainly and Teddy Bears and hats, are sent off to Uganda, Kenya and South Africa through the work of the Greenfields Charity [Reg'd No. 1150657]. See www.gfafrica.com. To join the group, contact Shirley Davies (Tel: 391138).

Shirley is very keen to come and talk to Church groups - especially Women's fellowships - about her work and to share her testimony of faith in Jesus and the power of prayer. If you would like to invite her along, or for more information about the knitting group, please give Shirley Davies a call on Tel. 391138.

Alpha at Brunswick



God is so good at last we are holding an Alpha Course at Brunswick.

This picture was taken at the 7th week of the course on "How and Why Should I Tell Others"? Everyone present found out that it really is important to tell others what we have found in Christ. Wherever we are.

In Alpha you learn something every time you are there. You always gain at Alpha. We thank Ken Allison for leading us.

CADW 'To keep or protect.'



Well, we had probably all agreed on a name for a baby girl, 'Daisy'. But when the latest addition to the Walker household arrived he was, without any doubt, a baby of the male variety! So it was as much a case of which boy's names to avoid as to which to choose. We already have two 'J's' in the family, and a cousin Jacob, so that initial and name wasn't really an option.

Other names were considered, some that Andy liked (including Timothy or Matthew) some that the other boys liked (Edward, Thomas), some that other people thought would be rather funny (Luke 'Sky' Walker)! But in the end we all agreed with Mum, Emily, that 'Christopher' was a beautiful name. Not only is it uncommon in our wide circle of community and family and friends, but it also has special meaning, 'the indwelling of Christ'.

Christopher's middle names are of his two Grandfathers; Alan (Emily's Dad) and David (Andy's Dad). With the surname 'Walker', this gives our new arrival a Welsh name, through his initials CADW – meaning to keep or protect. We will certainly do all we can to love and protect Christopher, and his brothers Ben, Joe and Josh, all the children and young people in our care.

Our sincere thanks to everyone for all your good wishes and prayers. We are grateful for the many cards and gifts to welcome him. We pray that Christopher and his generation will grow to know without doubt the 'indwelling of Christ', and grow to love and serve him as saviour and Lord.

Andy & Emily Walker.

**'Congratulations to
Julius and Siperire Mugadzaweta
on their
40th Wedding anniversary'**

There are times when I draw near enough to touch Him, then I know that He has been there all the time.

Anon.

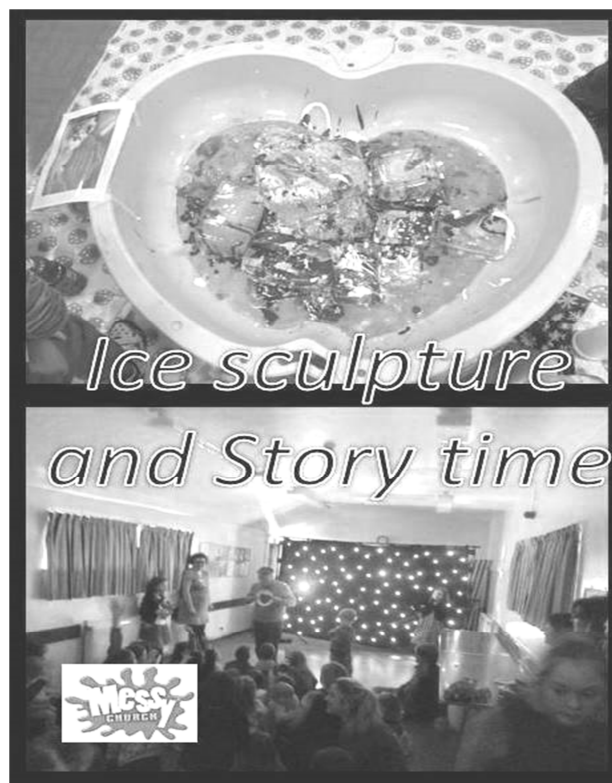
'Frozen' Messy Church helps to Break the Ice!



The principle behind 'Messy Church' might be described as being to break the ice between those in the Church and those outside. So what could be more appropriate than a Messy Church session for the community based around the theme of the Disney sensation, 'Frozen'? That was the theme of the recent 'Messy Church' held at Pennard Community Centre in February.

Co-workers Briony Ball and Emma Roberts took the lead in researching and preparing activities that would encourage children and their parents to get active together around clay hearts, marshmallow snowmen, coloured card hands of prayer, iced biscuits, plenty of pink, blue and white paint, and a real ice castle! Messages such as 'Jesus melts our frozen hearts' and 'Jesus loves us no matter what..' were clearly brought into the craft activities.

With 'Frozen' themed Messy Church invitations given out around the local schools and Toddler groups the response was very encouraging; the hall was comfortably packed! Many children and families were with us for the first time – and told us they will definitely be back! Story time and prayer took place among the icicle glow of fairy lights in the side room, and then everyone shared some party food together.



Future Gower Messy Church dates are as follows (generally the 2nd Saturday of the month):

April 18th – Pennard Community Centre
May 9th – Port Eynon Village Hall
June 13th – Murton Methodist Church Hall

We warmly invite those from other churches in the Circuit to come along and experience 'Messy Church'. For information contact Andy Walker. (Tel: 232867). (E: andrew.walker@methodist.org.uk.)



The gospel is a declaration, not a debate.

Gloria Gaither

Brunswick Ashing Service with Holy Communion



It was a service viewed with suspicion because at Brunswick they had not had an Ashing Service for a very long time and people were not familiar with this tradition. Also some members were not sure of what was going to take place.

However I tried to explain that this was an act of penitence. Saying we are sorry by wearing sack cloths and putting ashes saying we are dust and to dust we will return. I said that the Bible is full of stories where people wore sack cloths and had ashes on their bodies as a sign of humility and penitence. Ashes are viewed throughout Christian history as a symbol of humility and sacrifice for those who wear them. In the book of Genesis when Moses found the Israelites having made a golden bull for them to worship Moses humbled himself by putting on Sack cloths and wore ashes. Tamar in 2 Samuel 13:19, Mordecai in the book of Esther 4:1-17, Daniel 9:3, Job 2:8, Jonah 3 :5-8.

In the New Testament, Jesus said "Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Trye and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloths and ashes." (Matthew 11:20-21)

By putting an Ashen Cross on our forehead it is a sign of turning away from sin and asking God for forgiveness.

What was good about it is that those who came were able to understand that all have sinned and come

short of the Glory of God. That at the beginning of Lent we need to humble ourselves before our maker and pray and fast and read our scriptures so that when the devil attacks us he will find us equipped to conquer him like our Lord Jesus did in the wilderness after His forty days and forty nights of fasting and praying.

Reverend Siperire Mugadzaweta

Wesley

Saint Valentine`s Day Tea Dance



On Saturday 14th February Wesley held its first Tea Dance and it proved to be very popular. Many friends from Lite Bites and the circuit joined us for afternoon tea with dainty sandwiches, tea and cakes. Because the atmosphere was so relaxed and friendly people were confident to take to the floor for a waltz, quickstep and even a jive. Donations made £214 and we hope to hold a similar event in the future.

Please note the date of our "Long Awaited Lite Bites 10th Anniversary Dinner" has been changed from 8th May to Friday 5th June. For more information contact Pauline Evans 415323 or Sue Whitelock 415848 or look on the Wesley website.

Don't compare yourself to other Christians. Compare yourself to Christ. He's the one you follow.

Israelmore Ayivor

Ogof Adullam Drop-In Centre

Ogof Adullam – What is it and Why the name?

Ogof is the Welsh word for 'cave'. I'm sure you've all heard of Dan-yr-Ogof (under the caves). And 'the cave of Adullam' can be found in the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel.

1 Samuel 22:1-2

"David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. 2 All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him."

As you can see from the Book of Samuel 'all those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him'. These individuals were the outcasts of society, the ones that were rejected. These same individuals when united became a big part of King David's undefeated army. We serve the same God today that these men served and we believe that God wants to do something special with the broken individuals in the city of Swansea.

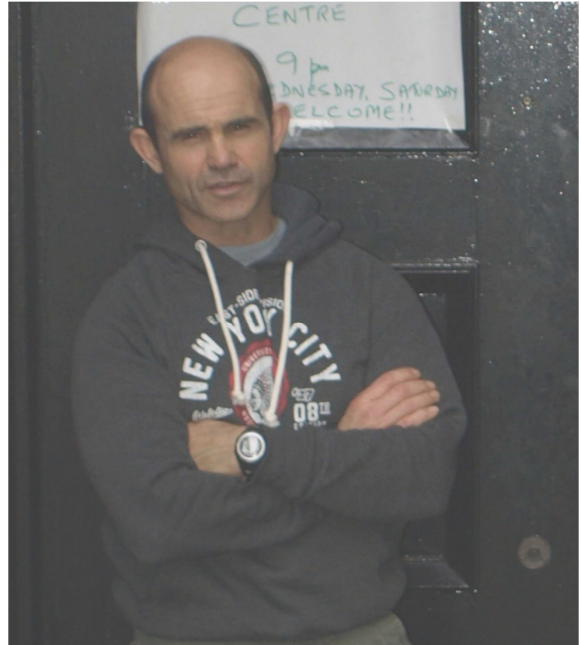
Now that you know where the name came from, the next question is 'What is it?' Ogof Adullam is the name of a new Drop-In Centre project based at Brunswick Methodist Church on St Helen's Road. The centre is open three evenings a week (Mon, Wed, Sat – 5.00p.m to 9.00p.m) offering a 'place of refuge' to individuals experiencing homelessness and alcohol and drug addiction as well as providing a point of contact for prison leavers and asylum seekers. It is intended to be a safe place free of external influences where these individuals can develop safe, secure and loving relationships in a Christian environment.

As Christians we aim to show the love of Jesus in order to help and empower these individuals to turn their lives around and to become all God intended them to be.

Mission Statement:

It is the goal and vision of Ogof Adullam to be able to "feed the hungry, provide a drink for those who are thirsty, invite all strangers in, clothe the unclothed, and to visit all who are sick or in prison" in accordance with Matthew 25:35-40. With God's help we work towards this goal.

Where did the vision for Ogof Adullam come from?



Huw Davies

Having previously suffered from drug and alcohol issues myself and receiving the help I needed to overcome these problems, God gave me a desire to work with these individuals and to help them overcome their addictions. I also worked at a drug and alcohol intervention centre in Llanelli for 2 years. In early 2013 I sat in a meeting of Prison Fellowship at Brunswick Methodist Church. At the time we were discussing how we could meet up with prison leavers in order to build relationships with them but at the same time keep ourselves safe. I then had an overwhelming sense that God wanted to start a 'place of refuge' within Brunswick. Following this, along with Cerys, we met with Rev Howard Long. Since then Cerys and I have put together a presentation and been around many fellowships and committees showing the presentation.

As a result Ogof Adullam opened its doors on 15th October, 2014.

The Need:

Our guests are no different to anyone else in that we all have certain needs. These individuals have a desperate need for:

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(continued from page 9)

(a) a place of refuge – somewhere where they are safe, warm, and welcomed.

(b) a place of contact – somewhere where they can arrange to meet others.

(c) positive relationships/attachments – many of our guests will not have received positive influences from previous relationships. We need to teach them that they are cared for but with boundaries. We need to sit alongside them and build relationships with them.

(d) most importantly these individuals need family – we all need family around us and the 'body of Christ' is God's family.

Some of our guests have no-one else they can turn to so we need to meet their needs. Our guests also need family around them regularly. Cerys and I believe that in order to build relationships with our guests we need to see them regularly over the week and not simply one night.



The Solution:

In view of the above we feel that the solution to these issues is Ogof Adullam' which provides an open door drop in service 3 evenings per week Monday, Wednesday and Saturday (5.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.). We have a group of volunteers who have all received comprehensive training. There is also a 12 Step Addictions group meeting on Saturday evenings. Most importantly we feel that we have been challenged to run Ogof Adullam by Faith. This means that we are not to chase any funding and that we are to be funded through donations from 'the body of Christ'. The reasons for this are that we wanted Jesus to be glorified above all. We do not want the government or the council to say "we did a great job there." No, we want Our Lord to receive His glory. Also, this means that we actually spend time with our guests rather

than time on paperwork warranting what we are doing with any funding.

Why Methodists? (www.methodist.org.uk)

- Social Justice
- For the Wesleys, 'works' as well as faith were essential to the whole of Christian living, and caring for the poor, for prisoners, for widows and orphans mattered a great deal.
- Methodists were not only interested in welfare, they were concerned to remedy social injustice.
- The Wesleys were an influence in prison reform and, inspired by Susanna Wesley, they earned a reputation as pioneers in education.
- Methodists were encouraged to work to their utmost to improve the lives of others. John Wesley exhorted them to "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can."



How you can help

There are a number of ways that you can help if you feel called to do so.

The most important thing that everybody can do is to pray for us and the project, so we ask that you would please remember us in your prayers

We are looking for volunteers who can commit to a regular session, training will be provided.

You can bake some cakes or donate non-perishable food such as tea, coffee, biscuits, tinned/packet soup etc.

We accept donations of unwanted clothes, shoes, sleeping bags, holdalls etc.

(continued on page 11)

CONNECT

Spring 2015



Ogof Adullam

Drop-In Centre



With a warm and welcoming atmosphere.
Open Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 5.00 - 9.00pm.
Come along for a cup of tea, a game of pool
or just a chat in a friendly environment.



Contact: Huw & Cerys Davies
Brunswick Methodist Church
St. Helens Rd, Swansea SA1 3UN
Tel: 07919 053732
E-mail: ogofadullam@gmail.com

ALL WELCOME

A Methodist Project at the heart of the City
with the City at Heart



Ogof Adullam is a project supported and managed by the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit.
Registered Charity No 1134882. www.methodist.org.uk