

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Spring 2016

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Tell us all your news

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

Deadline for the next issue is Monday 23rd May 2016



Young people have their say on priorities of Methodist Church

Young Methodists from across the country have taken the opportunity to share their priorities and passions for their Church, highlighted for the very first time in three new 'manifesto' documents.

Following research undertaken at the Methodist Children's and Youth Assembly, 3 Generate, three manifestos outlining the foci of the different age groups have been published online. This new venture is intended to raise the voices of the young people of the Church and highlight the real and varied concerns close to their hearts.

Split into the three age group tiers of the assembly - 8-11s, 11-18s and 18-23s - the manifestos highlight many different issues important to young Methodists including: the environment, poverty, bullying, disability accessibility and the refugee crisis.

Craig Gaffney, Youth President of the Methodist Church added: "These statements are essential reading for all Methodists across the Connexion. It is vital that everyone in the Church engages with the voice of young people and the topics close to their hearts. All of the issues raised should be important to the whole Church and its membership and should be a regular focus for any Christian living out their faith. It's so encouraging to see that the young people of the Methodist Church are so passionate about social and global issues. I am proud to be part of a Church where even our youngest members have a heart for those in need."

To read more visit

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/3generate>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit



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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

Uniting Church Sketty

Sponsored walk on **Monday 30th May 2016** (Spring Bank Holiday) around the **Swansea Marina**. There will be a choice of walks in terms of distance - Mini Stroll (approx 1 mile); Mini Sprint (approx 2 miles); and Mini Marathon (approx 3 miles). In aid of the Circuit Project – ZrJ Trust.

Coffee mornings for charities on the first Saturday of each month 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Brunswick

Big Book Fair Saturday 30th April to Monday 2nd May from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Coffee morning every last Saturday of each month.

Murton

Coffee morning every Tuesday from 10.00 a.m.

Mumbles

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

Book Sale Monday 4th April to Saturday 9th April

Wesley

Due to building work, Wesley will be worshipping at Penlan from 3rd April for 12 weeks.

Morriston

Spring Fayre with plant sale Saturday 21st May from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Prayer and Bible Study meetings take place throughout the circuit. Please contact the minister/church stewards for more information.

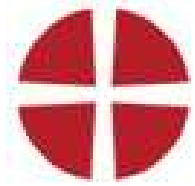
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True Christianity has more to do with the revelation of God than the research of man.



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to the Spring edition of Connect, a magazine about the work of the Methodist church here in Swansea and throughout the UK. A big thank you to Myra Maddock for all her hard work editing and producing the magazine every quarter and to all those who have contributed to this edition with stories about the exciting work of God taking place in our churches and communities.

Risen

As we approach Holy Week and Easter I would like to commend to you a film called 'Risen' which by the time you read this will have just been released in UK cinemas. 'Risen' starring Joseph Fiennes follows the story of the Resurrection, as told through the eyes of a non-believer. Clavius, a powerful Roman Military Tribune, and his aide Lucius, are tasked with solving the mystery of what happened to Jesus in the weeks following the crucifixion, in order to disprove the rumours of a risen Messiah and prevent an uprising in Jerusalem.

The film's producer Rich Peluso said, "What we're seeing from non-Christians and those who do not regularly attend church is that they do not feel preached to when they see the film. They don't feel hit over the head with Jesus or the Bible. But, they are intrigued by this man Jesus and His followers. They are intrigued by the story of what happened, the birth of Christianity and the fact that the infrastructure of Judea, both the Sanhedrin and the Jewish leadership and the Roman leadership were all about crushing Him and His followers. So that automatically lends them credibility.

"Jesus is not talking at them heavily through this movie. It's through Clavius' interactions with Jesus and Clavius' interactions with the disciples that we learn of Jesus' teachings and we learn who He is as the Son of God.

We have some wonderful cinema's here in Swansea so why not go and see the film this Easter and invite family and friends.

Encouragement

All of the special Holy Week and Easter services

taking place throughout the circuit are included in the plan at the back of this magazine. Many of our churches will be involved in walks of witness, special ecumenical events, distributing leaflets and using social media to share the message of God's love. The best way to share the Good News of Jesus in my opinion is not just through the words we use, however we choose to communicate them, but by what we are prepared to do for others even if that is through showing someone else a simple act of kindness.

The cross and resurrection of Jesus are at the very heart of the Christian faith and I would like to encourage you in all that you are planning to do to bring glory to His name.

Easter Offering 2016

This year's Easter Offering service will take place at our Mumbles church on Sunday April 24th at 6.00p.m. The preacher will be Rev Felicity Randall, Superintendent of the Llanelli and Carmarthen Circuit. This year the focus of the service is the work being done, supported by the World Mission Fund, to bring 'life in all its fullness' to Dalit women and girls. Last year throughout the Methodist connexion a total of £427,500 was raised for the World Mission Fund through the Easter Offering.

This special service is one of the few occasions throughout the year when we as a circuit of churches come together to worship and so I urge you to make every effort to attend. Your presence is important and makes a difference.

Howard



Without doubt the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God.

A. W. Tozer

Salt of the Earth

Early in the year one of the Independent Welsh Chapels in Swansea closed. Asked to comment on this, Geraint Tudur, General Secretary of the Independent Union, said that church isn't about buildings but people. He urged the church to get out into the community. S4C picked this up, alongside having noticed an article about Ty Croeso in the Evening Post, and came to interview some of us at the Welsh learners' group in Ty Croeso. There was then a very good item on their evening news. This was a rare opportunity for aspects of mission to get attention in the media and hopefully helped in our struggle to get Ty Croeso better known in the area. Our project was founded because our local CYTUN group, several years ago now, recognised that we needed to come out from our comfortable 'ghettos' and connect with the community. Although not a project of CYTUN, Ty Croeso is run by members of about 7 local churches, mostly members of CYTUN (Churches Together) Clydach, but not all.

The CYTUN group is itself making every effort to get out and be 'Salt of the Earth', in keeping with this year's Unity Week theme. In December some of us spent half an hour on the Monday before Christmas singing carols in the foyer of the local Co-op. We've been doing this for several years now, primarily to bring some of the Christmas spirit to local people, but also raising money for Shelter Cymru (£60 this year).



A year ago Capel y Nant organised a prayer walk on behalf of CYTUN, on the theme of the environment, pausing at various appropriate sites in the community. Another is planned, taking up a different theme, and this was discussed as part of one of the Week of Prayer for Unity morning prayer sessions held in different churches around Clydach and Trebanos. Suggestions were invited

for stopping points for prayer, themes and route. We had so many suggestions that we may have the basis for 4 or 5 prayer walks over coming years!

Another part of our reflections in the Week of Prayer involved stones with words such as peace, love, hope written on them, or a cross marked on them. These were a tactile and visual focus during one of the readings for the day. After the reading we exchanged stones as a sign of blessing, and were invited to use them as the basis for a small cairn in our churches the following Sunday, to remind ourselves that we are precious, living stones in Christ's church. At Wesley we then each received a stone to take home as a focus for further prayer. Between 15 and 20 people attended the prayer sessions during the week, but in this way the prayer rippled out through many more.



During our autumn Church Council meeting we looked at the Circuit Mission Policy, and considered whether, and in what ways, we are fulfilling the various clauses of it. We were astounded, and very pleased, to find that our small congregation of only 15 members was doing something (sometimes quite a lot!) in most of the aspects of mission mentioned, either as a church, or as individuals, and through activities like CYTUN and Ty Croeso.

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We must confess that we have broken God's Laws, and we must be willing to renounce our sins. This is the first step to happiness, peace and contentment.

Billy Graham

(continued from page 17)

We are particularly proud of our small Guild group, made up of a handful of members of the church plus a number of 'adherents', who in December raised a fantastic £1300 through their craft fair and small spin off activities. This will mostly buy gifts for the Mr X Appeal next Christmas, but a substantial amount was also given to the special appeal for flood victims in Calderdale.

So both our congregation and Ty Croeso may be small, but sometimes 'small is beautiful', and it only takes a little salt to enhance the flavour of the whole recipe!

Pam Cram

Circuit Project 2016

Zambuko ra Jehovah Sponsored Walk

Zambuko ra Jehovah (ZRJ), also known as Zimbabwean Orphans, provides funding for 30 children in rural Zimbabwe who have been orphaned due to AIDS. The money is used for the children's school fees, school uniforms, shoes, stationery, food and other essentials. The Swansea and Gower Circuit is supporting this charity for the next two years.

As part of the fundraising events Uniting Church Sketty is organising a sponsored walk on **Monday 30th May 2016** (Spring Bank Holiday) around the **Swansea Marina**. There will be a choice of walks in terms of distance - Mini Stroll (approx 1 mile); Mini Sprint (approx 2 miles); and Mini Marathon (approx 3 miles). The walk is aimed at everybody - adults, children and dogs! There will also be a quiz for the children.

Start times are flexible between 1.30pm and 3.30pm and there are plenty of coffee shops en route! Sponsorship forms, entry forms and maps will be available in all churches during late April / early May.

"Love one another...."

So is the command from Jesus. In November, the week after the terrorist attack in Paris, Uniting Church Sketty sent a letter to the Swansea Mosque expressing our concern for the increased attacks on Muslims in the UK (up 23% in Wales). The Mosque was touched by our letter and wrote back inviting us to visit.

The visit was arranged to take place on 1st March. About 40 of us attended and we were warmly welcomed. After hearing the call to worship we were allowed to sit at the back and observe while evening prayer took place. We were then given an introduction to Islam and allowed to ask many questions. Beautiful food had been prepared for us, and after informal conversation over the food, there was a chance to ask more questions.



Rev Leslie presenting Mr Arjan Ali with a basket of 'tete-a-tetes' to mark St David's Day and the conversation (tete a tete) that we shared.

We are extremely grateful to Mr Arjan Ali, the Chairman of the Mosque who arranged our visit and all those who were present and who were so welcoming. The hospitality was gracious and the grace of God was present. We hope it will be start of a meaningful relationship in which we seek to reconciliation between two faiths and in a small way contribute to peace in our community. As Jesus also said, "Blessed are the peacemakers".

Rev.Leslie Noon

Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him and expect help from Him, He will never fail you.

George Muller

Day Trip to Brecon (The blind leading the blind)

**CHRISTIAN AID
CYMRU**

On Saturday 26th September, with the help of my friend, Maxine and her guide dog Yassy, we went to the 70th Anniversary of Christian Aid Wales at Brecon Cathedral. The speakers were The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, John Davies, Chair of Christian Aid Wales' National Committee and The Rt.Revd.Dr.Rowan Williams, Chair of Christian Aid, with an introduction by Huw Thomas, Head of Christian Aid Wales.



Bishop Rowan, the Dean of Brecon, Bishop John Davies and Huw Thomas, head of Christian Aid Wales

It was a wonderful day and the weather was perfect, but it was a very, very long day. We caught the bus to Brecon from Swansea, then walked $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the Cathedral. A passenger on the bus took us the quick way.

All the people we met were wonderful, from the staff at the coffee shop to Rowan Williams, who said to me that he wished he could be back in Mumbles.

The cathedral was packed – standing room only – and the feeling was warm and friendly. Most of the service was in Welsh (I did not know so many people in Brecon spoke Welsh), but the jist was easy to understand.

Christian Aid continues to work all over the world, even in the U.K., to help men, women and children who are struggling to survive the

grinding poverty that continues to blight the lives of hundreds of thousands. As Christian Aid Wales turns 70, "Together we have achieved so much. Yet there is still much more to do".

As I said, it was a wonderful day, as we sat in the sun in the grounds of the cathedral, enjoying a lovely coffee, then lunch. After the service we made our way back to the bus station.

I gave up my ticket to Twickers to see Wales beat England (World Cup 2015) but it was worth it.



Bishop Rowan and Bishop John

Christine, Maxine and Yassy the guide dog.

My sincere apologies to Christine. This article should have appeared in the Winter 2015 issue of Connect. Due to my oversight it was omitted.

Editor

Pause to Ponder

Witnessing is removing the various barriers of our self-love to allow Christ, living within us, to show himself to our neighbours

Anon

Through my handicaps, I have found myself, my work, my God.

Helen Keller

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opportunities for recreational breaks. For those who want to come and just rest and relax, there are usually vacancies alongside planned courses.

Some forthcoming events include:

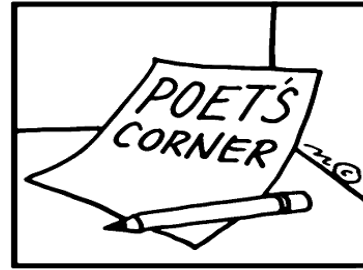
Prayer and Refreshing - monthly
Intimacy with God - March 21-25, led by the House team
Healing Wounded History - April 11-15, led by Russ Parker
Walking with Jesus - July 25-29, led by the House team
Prophetic Art - August 13-19, led by Bhari Long
Empowering Hope - September 5-9, led by Marilyn Baker and Tracy Williamson
Individually Guided Silent Retreat - September 12-18, led by Rob Hingley

Further details are available online at:
www.nicholastonhouse.org; Nicholaston House,
 Penmaen, Gower, Swansea, SA3 2HL;
 Tel: 01792 371317
 Email: managers@nicholastonhouse.org

Sylvia Cox
 Trustee at Nicholaston House



Brunswick women's fellowship Christmas dinner



Gold Rush

The sun rose above the hilltop,
 bright and golden
 as we raced along the grey
 motorway,
 anxious about time
 on that fine,
 Spring morning.

The radio informed us of bombs
 and wars,
 our young people dying on foreign soil
 for oil;
 we pray that the conflict will cease,
 and sigh for peace,
 but put our foot down on the gas -
 we must go fast!

Reaching the port a little late,
 they waved us through
 the barrier gate,
 to board the ferry
 laden with cars and trucks,
 heavy with the black gold
 for which we've sold
 our souls.

© Diane Norton

Brunswick Methodist Church Book Sale

From Saturday 30th April

to

Monday 2nd May

From 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people.

Horace Greeley

Nicholaston House - Finding peace



Nicholaston House is set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty overlooking Oxwich Bay on the Gower Peninsula. Here, people can find acceptance, peace, hope and healing, in a Christian setting.

In the gardens, beautifully maintained by a dedicated team of volunteers, there is a prayer walk with secluded spots perfect for quiet contemplation and a Celtic-style chapel for more prolonged times of worship. The porch displays God's promise to Nicholaston House: *In this place I will give peace*. This is the experience of many people who come and stay. All rooms are en-suite and for those who want to spend time alone with God, free from interruptions, there is also a self-contained studio apartment.

The house provides an ideal venue for groups to come and spend time together enjoying ministry and fellowship providing their own leadership. Alternatively, upon request, ministry can be provided by the House team. Many churches avail themselves of this facility, either for an away day or a short break.

The aim of Nicholaston House is to enable people to experience healing, restoration and refreshment as God pours out His love on their lives.

Each month time is set aside for a week of Prayer and Refreshing when guests come to



Celtic-style chapel

share their journey with God and any difficulties they may be experiencing. Prayer ministers spend time listening to guests and praying with them. Other regular events are Overcoming Eating Disorder courses, proving to be revolutionary in some people's lives.

The Nicholaston House brochure provides information on training and support courses, special events and retreats, together with

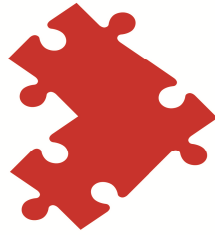
(continued on page 16)

Every morning is a fresh opportunity to find God's extraordinary joy in the most ordinary places.

Janet L. Weaver

Giving feedback to Preachers

Worship: leading & preaching



When did you last give feedback to the preacher at the end of the service?

I don't mean just, "Thank you for your message" or "Lovely Service" or "I really enjoyed your sermon"

Of course we all benefit from words of encouragement, and I do not mean to underestimate the importance of that. But here I am talking about more specific feedback, perhaps a comment on how you responded to the message, such as "*Your interpretation of John 14: 6 really moved me*", or a question such as, "*I didn't quite understand a particular point you were making*" or even, "*I didn't quite agree with your interpretation there.*"

It isn't easy, is it? Perhaps we are afraid of offending the minister or local preacher? Yet most, if not all, preachers will respond positively to feedback. Questions and comments are always helpful if they are given in a positive manner, but if you tell the preacher you didn't like the service, do try to explain what it was you didn't respond to, and the reasons why, or even your views on how it might be improved!

I speak as a preacher; most of us do need honest positive feedback from members of our congregations if we are to improve our delivery of the gospel message.

Perhaps a real constraint is that there isn't time for a long discussion with the preacher in the queue to leave at the end of the service! Then perhaps you could tell the preacher you have some comments and arrange to discuss them later?

All preachers benefit from feedback, but for one group it is a particular requirement, and that is local preachers in training, whether in the early stage of "on note" or the continuing training of

"on trial" leading up to accreditation as a local preacher.

At various stages in the training process, the process requires a more formal feedback with some members of the congregation asked to participate by answering questions such as:

- How clear was the aim of the service?
- For you, how successfully was the aim achieved?
- What were the strongest points of the service?
- What were the strongest points of the sermon?
- What aspects could be developed further?

Currently Local Preacher training is undergoing a process of change. The "Faith & Worship" Course (which is 26 years old) is being replaced by a new process, known as "Worship: Leading & Preaching". The new course materials will be delivered on-line instead of by published manuals, and will apply the best practices of current educational theory on how to deliver training of new preachers and test their competence.

Instead of writing assignments to show their understanding of the course material new preachers will be required to prepare and submit portfolios of work, including records of services which they have led, and providing evidence of the congregation's response.

Whether or not you have previously been asked to participate in giving feedback to local preachers in training, you will certainly be asked to do so in future. As part of this process, you may be asked to complete a simple form or questionnaire.

So I hope that this article will go some way to explain the changes in how new preachers will be trained, and also get you to think about how you might be able to help in future by giving specific feedback on services which you have attended.

Ken Allison (Circuit Tutor for Local Preachers in training).

You have one business on earth - to save souls.

John Wesley

Home Sweet Home

After 9 months of worshipping in our 'second home' of Bethel, Uniting Church Sketty is delighted that we are now back in our Wesley building on Dillwyn Road. During that time much of the building was stripped back to its bare bones. Due to the extensive dry rot, caused by a leak in the corridor, the whole sanctuary floor was excavated to a depth of about 4 feet. Plaster was hacked off walls to a height of 6 feet. A big hole was dug, down to the basement, to expose and dispose of contaminated wood and soil. It has been a mammoth task, and during this the building was a sad, dirty, seemingly wrecked place. However that is now a distant memory. The church has been put back together again – it is freshly carpeted and painted. New chairs replace the back rows of pews and plans are now also underway to completely refurbish the balcony as well. We are so glad to be 'home sweet home'.

Rev. Leslie Noon

that approximately 12 people from across the Circuit have volunteered at Night Shelter venues this year, many of them volunteering on a Saturday and making up a good proportion of the volunteers involved at this venue.

There is much more to be done and there are concerns for the people we have not been able to help; we have done the best we can and must continue to pray for guidance to help us to determine how we can best support this vulnerable community in the future.

Gwen Dumelow

Garden 2gether



Night Shelter and Ogof Adullam

Ogof Adullam has been open every Saturday afternoon from 1.00 to 5.00 through January and February in support of the Night Shelter. It was anticipated this would enable the Night Shelter guests to benefit from this additional provision, but as far as we are aware none of the Night Shelter guests have been to Ogof Adullam during this period.

A comparatively small number of the regular Ogof Adullam guests have made use of the additional opening hours and a few new guests have also been welcomed.

The additional opening hours have only been possible thanks to Huw and Cerys who have been present at every session and to approximately 36 volunteers from across the Circuit. We are very grateful for their support and we hope some of the Circuit volunteers may consider extending their support by continuing to volunteer at the regular sessions throughout the year.

The number of guests at Night Shelter has also been low compared to previous years; no more than six guests at any session, but all have been very grateful for the shelter and hospitality they have enjoyed. It is estimated

A new gardening group is starting, to help "lick the prayer labyrinth back into shape", at the Amelia Farm. People from the Barry circuit are spearheading this project, but help would be appreciated from anyone who can give a few hours occasionally during the growing (weeds!) season. If you would like to help, please contact Janet Neilson (202085).

Rev Ronald Hoar, a former president of the Methodist Conference and Chair of the Manchester and Stockport District and his wife Peggy wish to be remembered to all their friends in Swansea, particularly members of the former Wesley Guild at Brunswick where Ron conducted some Guild weekends.

Currently living in Prestatyn where Ron is a Supernumerary minister, he and Peggy are shortly leaving to live in New Zealand where 4 of the 5 grandchildren live. They are to live in a retirement village quite near to one of their daughters. Their son Jonathan who is a doctor is coming over to the UK to accompany them on the long flight to New Zealand. Our love and prayers go with them.

Jean Long

If God has given you life abundantly, why aren't you using it?

Luci Swindoll

News from Brunswick



On the 22nd January at a Women's Fellowship Meeting we had a very enjoyable evening when we were entertained by Reverend John Artkinson, his wife Lynda and their daughter Sarah.

They entertained us with Sydney Carter's Songs and Poems. It was so melodious that we all joined in with the singing.

As we are in the season of Lent one of their songs "Judas and Mary" got me thinking. Judas critiqued the extravagance of Mary with the expensive perfume which she poured on Jesus' feet. The summary of this song of Mary's extravagance brings out the fact that love for Christ and love for world are interdependent.

Many people talk about giving up something for Lent. I suggested that we give up criticising others and instead try to say something positive about someone daily for the 40 days while Jesus was in the Wilderness fasting and praying. I suggested also to say the Lord's Prayer daily for the same period. Hoping we can take this up for eternity.

As the evening was so good I asked John if they could do this again as a fund-raising activity for our Circuit Project Zimbabwe Orphans and the answer, was "yes yes we will do." So watch the space. God is with us!

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta

Easter Offering



Our annual Easter Offering service will be on Sunday April 24th at 6 pm at Mumbles. The theme for the service is "Child, get up!" This year's service was inspired by the words of Jesus in John 10:10 – "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The service focuses on the plight of Dalits in Indian society. Our speaker will be Rev Felicity Randall, superintendent minister of the Llanelli and Carmarthen circuit.

All church treasurers will have received details about counting the money in the envelopes etc., If not please contact me for those details, which have changed again this year!

Thank you, in advance, for contributing to this year's Easter Offering collection, which we hope will exceed last year's total, which was £2,153.32.

Last year throughout the Methodist connexion a total of £427,500 was raised for the World Mission Fund through the Easter Offering.

Janet Neilson

Pause to Ponder

Hope is a dimension of the spirit. It is not outside us, but within us. When you lose it, you must seek it again within yourself and in people around you – and not in objects or even in events.

Vaclav Havel

Whenever someone as rich as God invests His prize possession in a dying market, that means He knows something about the market no one else does.

Myles Munroe

What Easter Means



I listened and read about nine UCB Radio Presenters reflecting on "What Easter Means to Them" and I felt I needed to share something about their reflection as it had a big impact on me. Three of the nine felt Christmas and Easter have the same purpose.

One of the three, Steve Best said that Christmas is the beginning of the story and Easter is the climax to it. He said, "Our Faith hinges on the child that was born into poverty in a stable dying in the cruellest fashion and confounding His killers to rise again from the dead in glory and all because He loves us that much."

Paul Hammond expressed that to him, Christmas and Easter are inexorably joined. The Angel appeared to Mary and said, "You will call his name Jesus for He will save His people." (Matt 1: 21). Paul the apostle said that this happened as part of God's plan, when time was right (Galatians 4:4). He says this means it was planned from the first moment of history through to birth, the cross, and the resurrection, even to when he later discovered the truth of the Gospel. God the Creator had the plan all interwoven to give Himself for us so that we discover that He loves us unconditionally.

Jess Cook, although she was not born to Christian parents, used to enjoy Easter chocolates and a few fun crafts as a young girl. In her twenties she went to a local church and for some reason the joy in the run up to lent as well as on the Easter day was infectious. From then on, Easter has been a significant thankworthy time of year when she feels forgiven by the grace. She enjoys Christmas celebration just as much as Easter.

I concur with Abi Gregory, who like me travelled the Via Dolorosa "The way of Sorrows". Slowly and steadily like Abi, I tried to imagine how Jesus walked towards His death, towards the cross going uphill carrying that heavy ragged cross. All this for you and me. Thank you Jesus for your sacrifice, your life, our freedom, your death, our hope.

Dudley Anderson states that Easter is a time to reflect on the gruesome crucifixion of Jesus. He divulges the Bible says that the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ. Jesus humbly died on what we call Good Friday to endure those wages for us, only to rise again victorious on Resurrection Sunday. He says if we believe this story and confess Him as Lord we can be saved from eternal death.

Anne Henderson says, "I love Easter because it tells the whole story not only of that Jesus died on the cross but the Good News that God raised Him from the dead." She proceeds, "It is exciting because it makes me have a relationship with God who not only created me but has a great plan for me. Easter has changed my life not just in the world but for eternity and that is something to celebrate every day."

Robbie Frawley's reflection is interesting. He responds saying, "Easter to me is the time I am reminded that Jesus thought I was worth dying for. I wonder what was happening in His mind in the Garden of Gethsemane. What I do know is that He loved me so much He went through with a plan that would save me. A plan that can save you too."

Jez Chalmers says, "I believe in Easter because it's the pinnacle of kindness. I regularly fall short of my own standards not to mention God's and yet rather than getting the punishment I deserve, He forgave me at terrible cost to Himself."

Finally, Samuel Ball responds with, "I'm blown away every Easter to think that God would give the most precious thing He had, to save me. It puts my faith in perspective, and increases my perspective of the sacrifice that was given us all."

I want to conclude by saying this, Easter is very special to us all because, like all the

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Worship is giving God the best that He has given you.

Oswald Chambers

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Radio Presenters said, it is a time for us to thank God for His wonderful Love. He gave up His only Son Jesus Christ to go through such a terrible subjection on the rugged cross in order to redeem us. I also agree that Christmas, just like Easter are all part of God's plan for our Salvation.

Let us take time to also reflect on What Easter means to us.

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta

In Out, In Out, and Shake it all about

As I write this the in/out referendum on Europe has just been announced. The news is full of who's for 'In' and who's for 'Out'. What with that and all the shaking about of the election primaries in the States, it's easy to feel like shutting out the whole lot. Unfortunately, amidst it all, the elections for the Welsh Assembly (and Police Commissioners) on May 5th are likely to get over-shadowed. Turnout last time was only 41%, considerably lower than the UK elections, and it could dip lower given so many distractions.

CYTUN (Churches Together) and Citizens UK are keen that we should realise how important the Wales elections are, and hope we will help to promote discussion on the issues. Churches are often at the forefront of holding Hustings, and these two organisations are co-operating this year to encourage us to do just that. It could be particularly important in some of the constituencies in this area, with Gower now a marginal following the retirement of MP Martin Caton, and MEP Edwina Hart about to retire in Swansea East.

However, don't just think in terms of the constituencies. You're represented in the Welsh Assembly by five people! Because we have a form of proportional representation in Wales, it's not just a matter of the usual two party 'ding-dong' in 'first past the post' constituencies. There's also the regional vote, on party lines, where even the smaller parties have a chance of a break-through, and the four people who come through as MEPs by that vote are just as much your representatives in Cardiff as is the individual elected the traditional way.

But does it really matter, you may ask? What does the Assembly do anyway? Recent research has shown that there's a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about that. Asked how much money the Assembly has to spend, most people think in terms of millions – but in fact expenditure is £16billion p.a. The majority of people now realise that the Assembly is completely responsible for health and education in Wales. Not many are aware of the wide range of responsibilities now held at the Welsh Assembly. Decisions are made in Cardiff about agriculture, economic development, environment, culture, transport, local government, social welfare, sport, tourism, planning, fire services and flood defences. Pretty significant then.

Those of us who attended a recent meeting with CYTUN and Citizens UK in Sketty about holding hustings are looking at possibilities. Might you be interested in helping arrange one, possibly not for any one constituency but for the regional candidates? Do you know of any other church or organisation that's thinking of holding a hustings in Gower, Swansea East or Swansea West, OR a hustings for regional candidates for South West Wales? If so please contact me on 845942.

Finally, if you're interested in knowing more about the Assembly and the issues involved you can find information, and 7 briefing papers on a variety of topics, at www.cytun.org.uk

Rev.Pam Cram

Mumbles Methodist Church

Book Sale

Monday 4th April to

Saturday 9th April

From 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

The Church that does not evangelise will fossilize.

Oswald J.Smith

Zambuko ra Jehovah Trust

Since the handing over of the (ZRJ) Zimbabwe Orphans from the Coventry group, we have had a fund raising coffee/ tea and cakes morning with raffle tickets held at the Mansion House. I also gave a presentation of (ZRJ) Zimbabwe Orphans.

This Mansion House Fund raising endeavour was well attended by our Circuit Members. The Mayor was in attendance throughout the whole time and he was able to take us round the Mansion House.



Lord Mayor Councillor John Newbury, Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta and Mrs .Bernardine Jennings.

The Mayor has a soft heart for the disadvantaged people of Africa as he has been to Zambia, so he feels for our Zimbabwe Orphans also.

As regards presentations of the Charity, I have been invited to go and talk about Zimbabwe Orphans to two Ecumenical groups so far.

The first group was Churches together at All Saints in Mumbles at a Christian Prayer for Unity Service. Their Theme was "Who then is my Neighbour." This went very well with the neighbours we support who are far away the "Zimbabwe Orphans."

The second group was at Wesley Eaton Road Methodist Church. Here they gave a donation of £100 cheque.

I am also scheduled to go to the third group at Marriott Hotel to go and give a presentation to Dunvant Christian Fellowship group that meet there. After the presentation we will have a bible study talking about being transformed by the presence of God.

This year, God willing, I will be going to Zimbabwe to see and carry out the mission we have all agreed as a Circuit to do: pay school fees, buy uniforms ,school shoes, stationary and provide food for the 30 selected Orphans of Nhangabwe. I may check on the borehole and garden as well.

Thank you all for the care of these Orphans.

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta

Methodists to commemorate 100 years of legal Conscientious Objection

Methodists from across the country will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the right to refuse to fight in war at a special free event held at Englesea Brook Chapel, Crewe, on Sunday 20 March.

Led by the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, former President of the Methodist Conference, this unique service will include prayers and reflections around the commemoration and will be broadcast live online for others to watch around the world.

Dr Jill Barber, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, historian and Director of Englesea Brook Museum explains the relationship between conscientious objection and the Methodist Church: "At the start of the First World War, many Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists were challenged to reconsider their attitude to war and peace. Methodists such as Bert Brocklesby and Jack Foister faced prison, rebuke from their families or church community, and even death, for their principled refusal to take up arms. As a result of their courageous stance alongside others, Britain became the first nation to enshrine in law the right to Conscientious Objection."

We may be nothing, but in God we can be mighty.

Smith Wigglesworth

What is a Sabbatical?



Three months' holiday? No! It's not supposed to be that. But it is supposed to be three months away from ministry, a time in which ministers may re-charge their batteries and come back to the demands of ministry rested and renewed. A sabbatical is given by the church after ten years in ministry and then every seven years.

I have my first sabbatical this year and shall be taking it straight after Easter. Some of the things I have planned include:

- A week's retreat for ministers at Sheldon, in Devon
- A week's course called *Transforming Church Conflict* – a course for church ministers who want to develop new skills for raising self-awareness, deepening understanding of conflict and teaching methods for transforming conflict.
- A week in Tenerife, when my nephew is getting married and I have been asked to lead the ceremony.
- Spending time with family and friends who I don't see much of.
- Going to Methodist Conference and in particular to support Rachel at her ordination. I have been Rachel's mentor during her probation.

I'm looking forward to it, but know I will miss my church family while I'm away. So if you see me out and about, don't ignore me!!

See you all in three months or so!

Rev Leslie Noon

The egg that shares the Easter story



Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has an Easter story booklet in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and makes a donation to charity from its sales.

The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010. It was a real struggle as all the supermarkets turned it down at first. To date, more than one million eggs have been sold, with 750,000 of these sent through the post directly to churches and schools. Not only has there been an increase in Fairtrade chocolate sales, but nearly £200,000 has been donated to charity.

As part of their commitment to share the Easter story, the Meaningful Chocolate Company always includes a new version of the Easter story booklet in each single boxed Real Easter Egg. This year, the booklet is cross shaped and uses the beautiful artwork of noted children's illustrator, Helen Cann.

Over two sides, and in twelve panels, the booklet tells the Easter story from the entry into Jerusalem to the Resurrection and appearance before Mary Magdalene. The booklet also contains an Easter greeting and an Easter word search. The Easter story booklet is a unique way of sharing the Gospel story in a way which will delight both children and adults.

It's probably too late to buy your Real Easter Egg this year, but let's bear it in mind for next year. This year they have been available in Tesco, Morrisons and Waitrose, but only in their larger stores.

The real mark of a saint is that he makes it easier for others to believe in God

The view of the Methodist Church on



Government and Politics

The Methodist Church has long associations with political life. John Wesley was much concerned with the poor and marginalised in 18th Century Britain, many of whom were excluded from participation in the established Church as well suffering from economic deprivation.

Many of the early trade unionists, including the Tolpuddle Martyrs, were members of Methodist churches. The Methodist Parliamentary Fellowship has met for many years and holds an annual Parliamentary Methodist Covenant service in the chapel at the Palace of Westminster.

The Methodist Church has stated that 'the commitment of individual Christians to work for social and political change should be recognised as a fully legitimate form of Christian discipleship'. In a society where self-interest, acquisitiveness and individual happiness are often seen as the over-riding interests, the Church, and Christians within it, are called to witness meanings, values and purposes beyond ourselves, whilst recognising our own self-interest and hypocrisy.

People sometimes argue that involvement in political life involves getting our hands dirty, so is something Christians should avoid. But we believe in a God who is present in everything, including political institutions; a God who is heard throughout the Bible calling for justice for

the widows, orphans and aliens who were oppressed by the powers of the day; and a God who seeks to transform relationship with and between people. If politics is about how we choose to live together and to treat one another, there is surely a place for discerning the activity of God in politics.

How does the Methodist Church engage with politics?

Since 2007, the Methodist Church has pursued its social justice work ecumenically with the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain, operating together as the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT). In March 2015, JPIT was joined by the Church of Scotland on a trial basis.

The Methodist Church believes that working in partnership allows Methodists to influence public policy more effectively and to share strengths with different denominations, without losing the distinctively Methodist approach.

Issues in which the Methodist Church has been active in recent years - include poverty and inequality, the environment and climate change, nuclear weapons and the harm caused by problem drinking. The ways in which the Joint Public Issues Team aims to achieve these goals include:

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You never touch the ocean of God's love as when you forgive and love your enemies.

Corrie ten Boom

(continued from page 11)

- and political institutions - eg through organising the annual ecumenical delegations to the party conferences
- helping the Methodist Church to engage with public policy debates - eg through taking part in Government consultations over asylum issues
- supporting and resourcing members of Methodist churches to reflect on political issues in the light of their faith and to take action - eg through resources provided for the European and general elections

When the Methodist Church as a body engages with political issues, it tries to follow certain principles:

- the Church must be self-critical before it presumes to be critical of others
- Church statements must demonstrate a competence which will be taken seriously
- when seeking to address a context in which people are victimised and marginalized, the Church must engage with them and give serious attention to their views
- consideration should be given to the diversity of insight in the Church, and open debate made possible within the Church

The circuit welcomes new safeguarding officers

Mrs Lynne Taylor (Pitton) and Mrs Pat Davies (Uniting Church Sketty) have been appointed as the new circuit safeguarding officers. Among their many tasks will be to support and advise the Superintendent Minister and other circuit ministers, circuit stewards and local church safeguarding coordinators in fulfilling their safeguarding roles as well as ensuring that any incidents or allegations are referred and followed up as necessary.



Mrs. Lynne Taylor

"There is a growing understanding that protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the core of our faith. Safeguarding is about creating churches that are a safe space for everyone; a space where children can flourish and adults can live up to their potential. It is about enabling everyone to come to Jesus without stumbling blocks of abuse, ignorance, fear, compassion fatigue or the failure to recognise the experiences that so many carry within our communities."

Elizabeth Hall, Former Safeguarding Advisor, Methodist Church in Britain



Mrs. Pat Davies

I would rather work with God in the dark than go alone in the light

Mary Gardiner Brainard

New Local Preacher Accredited



In the picture are (front row) Alice Rutter, Anne Beynon, Caroline Buckler and Cynthia (back row) Ken Allison and Rev Howard Long

On Thursday March 3rd Cynthia Mumford was recognised as a fully accredited local preacher in the Methodist Church at a special service at Mumbles. Cynthia gave a very powerful testimony and the Superintendent Minister preached the sermon encouraging Cynthia to trust in the Lord always and to trust in His Word. A special message from the President of the Methodist Conference was read by Mr Alan Cram (Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Secretary) and a Bible was presented to Cynthia by Miss Alice Rutter one of our longest serving local preachers in the circuit. Following the service everyone gathered to share coffee and cake!



Olivia & Zac about to distribute cakes on Mothering Sunday at Mumbles

Pitton Methodist Church

**Coffee Morning and
“Making a Fascinator” demonstration
by Donna Isherwood**

At Rhossili Village Hall

on Thursday 19th May at 10.30 a.m.

**Cake stall and raffle
Bacon baps for sale after the
demonstration**

**Entry £4.00
Proceeds to Zambuko ra Jehovah**

The Christian’s task is to make the Lord Jesus visible, intelligent and desirable

Len Jones