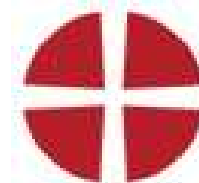


# CONNECT



The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

## Bible Month 2019

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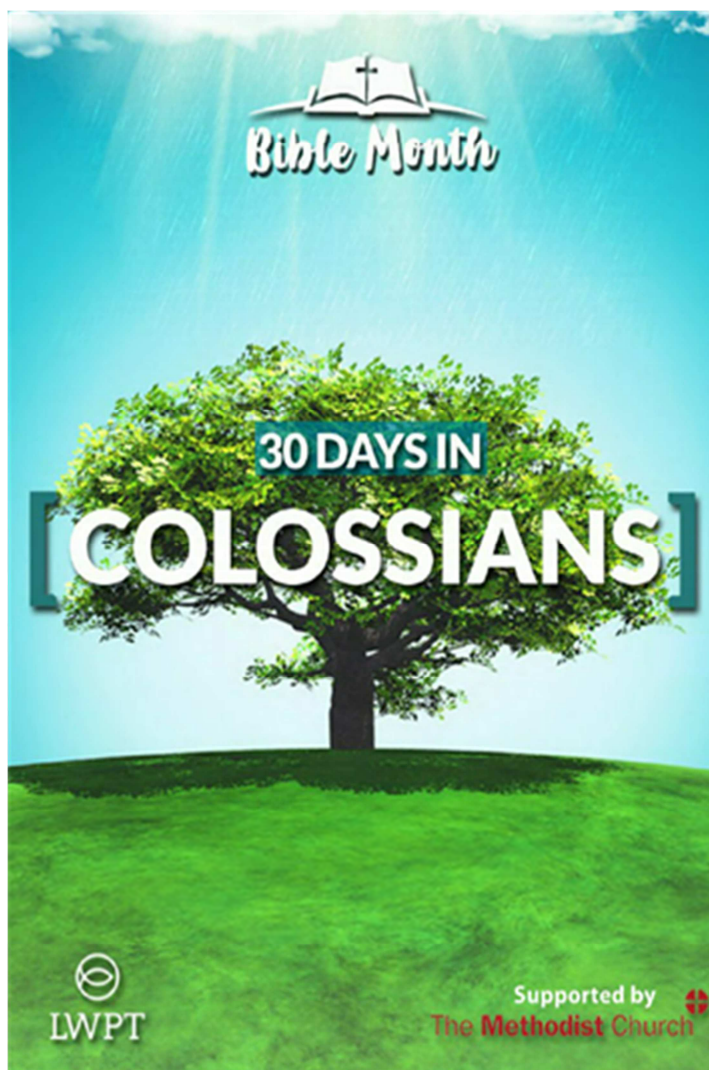
### *Tell us all your news*

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 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

### Editor

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The Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit will once again be taking part in Bible month, a national initiative that encourages churches to focus on one particular book of the Bible for 30 days.

The first Bible Month in 2017 was on the letter of James, and the second, in 2018, on Jonah. The chosen book for 2019 is the New Testament letter of Colossians.

*(Read more on page 4)*

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*The Swansea and Gower Methodist  
Circuit is a Registered Charity  
No 1134882*

**news in brief**

**Uniting Church Sketty**

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June – Strawberry Tea .3pm Tickets £5  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July – Coffee Morning – 10am-12noon  
Proceeds for Guide Dogs for the Blind  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July – Songs from the Shows by Abbey  
Players 7.30pm Tickets £6 Saturday  
3rd August – Coffee Morning – 10am-12noon for  
Alzheimer's Research Wales  
Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September – Coffee Morning 10am-  
12noon Proceeds for Save the Children

**Brunswick**

Coffee mornings on the last Saturday of every month.  
Bible Study every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at  
11.00 am in the Welcome Room

**Mumbles**

Theo's Coffee Shop - open daily 9.30 am – 4.30 pm  
Wednesday Lunchtime Worship 12.15 pm

**Wesley**

Bible Study every Tuesday 9.30 am  
Lite Bites – every Thursday 12 noon – 2.00 pm  
Asian Fellowship – 3.30 pm 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of  
every month

**Penlan**

Gardening project – Tuesdays (weather permitting) Tel:  
208154  
After School Meal and Play, every Monday in term time  
3.30 pm (Booking Required)  
Messy Church 14<sup>th</sup> July and 11<sup>th</sup> August at 3.00 p.m.

**Clydach**

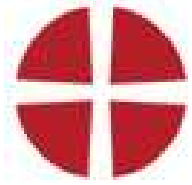
July 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm "Letters from Bethlehem" with Rev John  
Howard, former Mission Partner in Israel/Palestine,  
organised by CYTUN. Capel y Nant Hall.  
July 10<sup>th</sup> at 2.15 p.m. Tea and Hymns, especially for  
people in Residential Homes, but open to all. Capel y  
Nant Hall.  
July 28<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. Service in Waverley Park organised  
by CYTUN, led by Rev Leslie Noon.

**Murton**

Coffee Morning 10.00 am every Tuesday morning in  
the Wesley Room.  
Luncheon Club 12.30 pm on alternate Thursdays in  
Murton Church Hall. Booking essential Tel 234045



## Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to the Summer 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 and to all those who have contributed to this edition with interesting stories about the exciting work of God taking place in our churches and communities.



One of my favourite characters in the New Testament is a man called Barnabas. We read about Barnabas in the Acts of The Apostles and see that he played an important role in the early church. His name means 'Son of Encouragement' and he certainly lived up to it.

When Saul of Tarsus who had previously persecuted the church suddenly and dramatically became a follower of Christ there were many in the church who found it difficult to trust him. It's easy to see why they felt that way, I mean how could they trust a man who had persecuted them so fiercely. Many must have thought that he was up to something and out to destroy the Christian movement from within. It says this in Acts 'when he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple' Acts Ch 9 v 26

It was then that Barnabas came forward and spoke on Saul's behalf. He introduced him to the apostles and convinced them that his conversion was genuine. You could argue that Saul would not have come to be the great Christian leader he was (we know him as Paul) if it had not been for Barnabas opening doors for him.

How important it is for the church to give a good welcome to people. Barnabas welcomed the newcomer and then he encouraged him to use his gifts in the service of Christ.

We need people like Barnabas in our lives! We need people who will build us up with words of encouragement and hope, not tear us down with words of despair. There are far too many mood hoovers in this life who drain the energy out of everyone around them with their negativity.

Jesus was constantly encouraging people. Notice how often Jesus said to people, 'Do not be afraid' or 'Take heart, ". He praised the poor widow when all she had was a penny to give at the temple (Luke 21:3). He praised John the Baptist when he lay discouraged in a prison, saying that no one born of woman was greater than John (Luke 7:28). When Jairus received the news that his daughter had died – Jesus kept walking with him and told him to ignore the news and believe (Mark 5 v 36). At every opportunity, Jesus provided an uplifting word. He knew how important encouragement is in nourishing the human spirit and that it can change the direction of a person's life.

What a marvelous example we have of Barnabas who saw in Saul of Tarsus great possibilities and potential and who then paved the way for the newcomer to use his gifts. How vital it is for us then to encourage one another in the Christian faith and to use our gifts and talents in the service of Christ.

It was William Arthur Ward who wrote 'Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will never forget you.

**Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.**

**Howard**

## Easter Offering 2019



Our Circuit service, following the materials provided by Methodist Women in Britain, brought together stories from 5 very different nations, but all with stories of food and activities shared between people of varied backgrounds. They were stories of hospitality and understanding, all illustrating the theme of "Longer Tables, Lower Fences". At the end of the service we were challenged to think about situations where we might have opportunity to speak to someone we don't know, or don't know so well – and sharing refreshments prepared by members of Mumbles afterwards gave one opportunity perhaps to do just that!

Our Easter Offering this year raised £2,434.47 which was an increase of around £340 on last year. However, there had been a significant decrease last year. The average over the past 4 years has been about £2,400. Thanks to the churches for collecting and/or giving from church funds, and to all who took part in the service.

At the service Rev. Howard Long thanked Janet Neilson for having been our MWIB representative, and for organising the Easter Offering for several years. I'd like to thank her also for her clear instructions for how and when to get the resources etc. this year.

As a denomination we have 65 partner churches overseas, and the World Mission Fund supports a number of "mission partners" from the UK, as well as local 'Nationals in Mission Appointments'. Through the fund we also respond to emergency situations and give grants for development, education, health, and environment projects in many of those nations. There is information about some of these projects online: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) and there's a regular 'One Mission Matters Magazine' (available in print or online), and a World Church News (I think only available online). Also available are regular newsletters from Methodist Women in Britain (online only, I think), and there's a review of the

last year of Methodist Women in Britain available in print. If you're interested in any of these but don't have internet access, do contact me and I'll see if I can help.

Pam Cram

On Easter Sunday, Janet Neilson retired as one of the organists at Uniting Church Sketty, after 40 years service. Janet, Alan Sykes and Eleanor Price have all served on the organ rota for 40 years and have been presented with certificates from ArtServe (the successor to the Methodist Church Music Society).



## The Methodist Conference 2019



The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world. The 2019 Conference will take place from 27<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> July in Birmingham.



*(continued from front page)*

Rev Howard Long, the Superintendent minister of Swansea and Gower said, ' Bible Month has proven over the years to be a time when we can all come together and enjoy reading and learning the same Bible passages together. Not only will you be hearing a sermon on the passage but you'll also be discussing it in a Bible study, engaging with it online or chatting about it over coffee. Bible month for our circuit will take place in July and I'm sure it will be blessed time for us all'



*Mumbles Youth Event*

### **Sidholme, Sidmouth**

In last year's Connect you may have read about our Lindor's holidays. For many years now Jean Long has organised these fellowship weeks.

This year we have a change of venue and we will be staying in Sidholme, Sidmouth, a Christian Guild Hotel. We are fortunate to have the same Speaker, Rev. David King.

([www.christianguild.co.uk/sidholme](http://www.christianguild.co.uk/sidholme)) Tel: 01395 515104

Email: [sidholme@christianguild.co.uk](mailto:sidholme@christianguild.co.uk)

This year we will be meeting on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September until Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September. We look forward to seeing old friends and new.

If you are interested in coming along, please contact the hotel, information above, or I will give you up to date information.

**Caroline Buckler, Mumbles**

Tel: 01792 361190

email [c.buckler@btinternet.com](mailto:c.buckler@btinternet.com)

### **Christian Aid Concert**



The Lord Mayor, councillor Peter Black and the lady Mayoress Mrs. Angela Black attended a concert in Mumbles Methodist Church by the Excelsior Ladies Choir to raise funds for Christian Aid.

The concert and a collection raised over £800.



Pictured with the Lord and Lady Mayoress is Mrs Christine Hughes, Mumbles Christian Aid representative.

## Tools for Self Reliance



Our circuit project this year has been **Tools For Self Reliance** – supporting sustainable livelihoods ([www.tfsr.org](http://www.tfsr.org)). Our nearest group is based in Porthcawl at 27 Fenton Place (Tel 01656 786367) where our contact is Rev John Hanson.

The mission of TFSR is to reduce poverty in Africa by helping people build sustainable livelihoods through the provision of tools and training. Examples of the success of the project includes Robert, now a qualified carpenter who says, “I can find money for my family’s needs and feel like a respected member of the community” and Mercy who says, “I am in control of my life,” since she has learned tailoring skills.

In March a Social Action coffee morning collection morning was arranged at Murton, where tools were brought for John to take back to Porthcawl.

In UCS, at a meeting of Wesley Club, a collection of haberdashery items was made and given to Pam Murden, who deals with this side of TFSR. Pam spoke about the necessity of items such as cotton, zips, buttons etc, which may make the difference between children being able to attend school, because they have a uniform to wear, and having to miss out on vital education, which will stand them in good stead to obtain qualifications to get a job. There is still time, before the end of September to donate more haberdashery items if you have any to spare. Wesley Club

Wesley Club gave a donation which will go towards the shipment of a container, which will deliver a grit blaster to a workshop in Monza, Tanzania. If you have any more haberdashery items please contact Janet Neilson (202085).



*Pam Murden*

By the time Connect appears we hope to have visited Porthcawl to see the work the volunteers do to bring small tools back into working order to send to several African countries. Unfortunately I don’t think we have been able to help by donating some of the “heavyweight” tools which they need.

To date, the circuit has raised over £1,120 for TFSR.

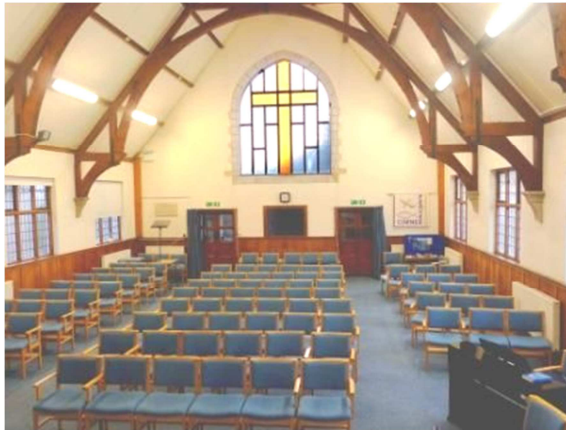
**Janet Neilson**



*Penlan Messy Church*



## Bembridge Methodist Church



I recently stayed on the Isle of Wight and visited Bembridge Methodist Church. When I heard there was a 'Local arrangement', I was not optimistic. However, we were greeted in the driveway, in the foyer and in the church by a number of people. There was a band comprising a keyboard, drums, flute and a saxophone which made a very good sound. There were a number of church leaders involved, many telling interesting and moving stories. After the service we enjoyed coffee, cakes and a chat in the meeting room.

It just goes to show, we should never jump to conclusions!

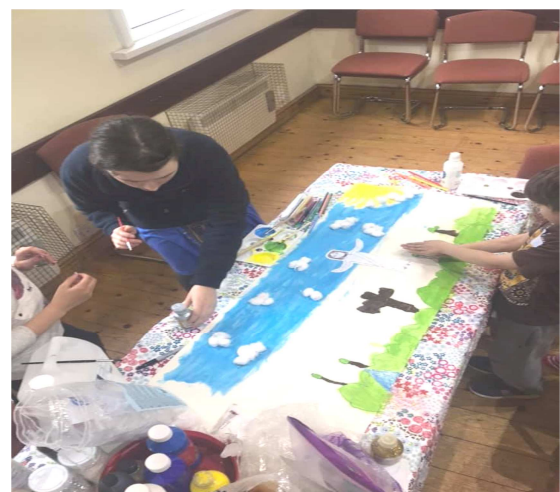
**Caroline Buckler**

**They're selling like hot cakes!  
...Because they are hot (Welsh)  
cakes!**

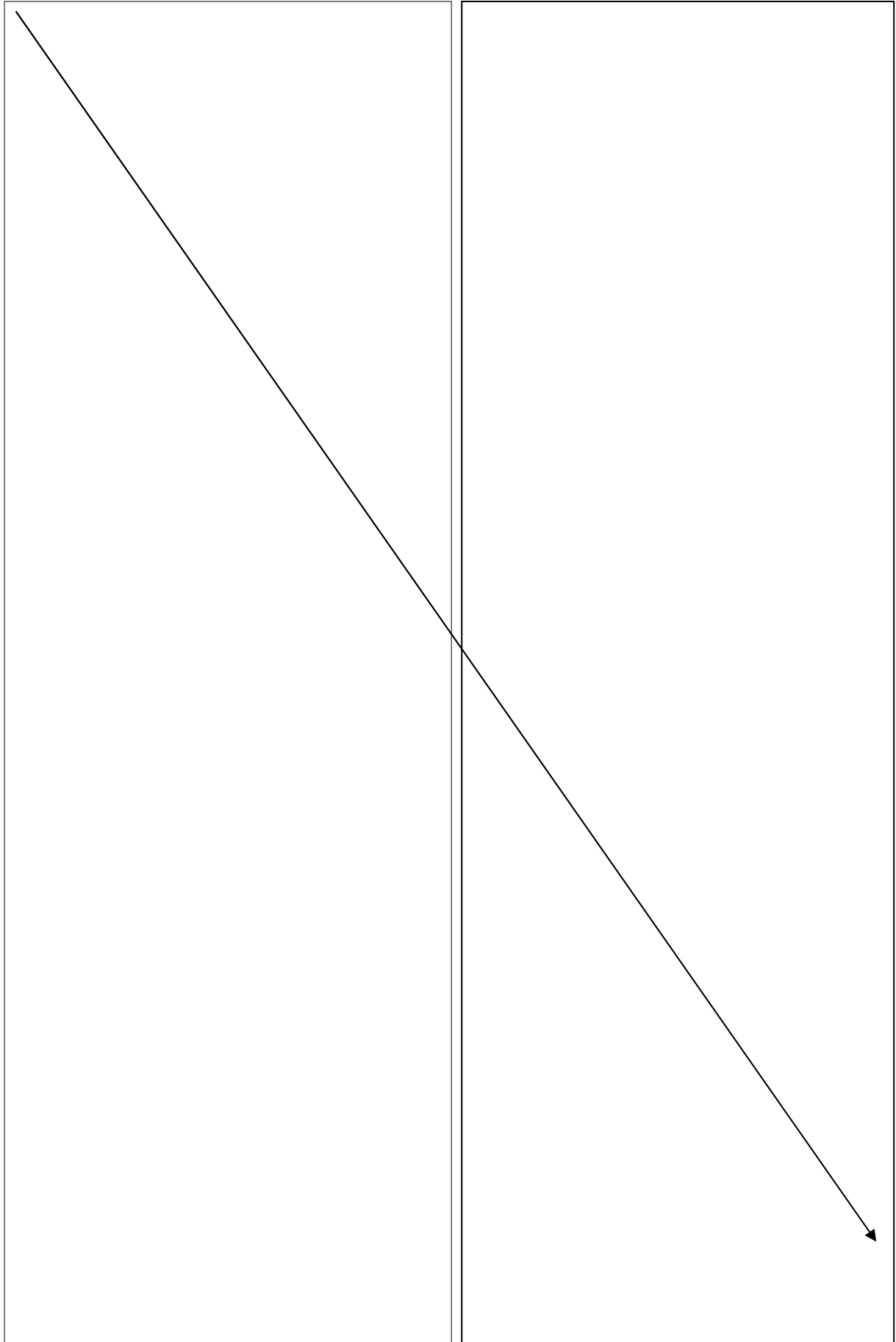


Our Murton Summer Coffee mornings are back once again this year! A gentle outreach to the community and a chance to gather with friends old and new. Freshly made tea and coffee and hot cakes to order from the bakestone. Every Thursday morning from around 10:30 a.m. at the front of Murton Church, from Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July through to the end of August. Also featuring a book stall and other items for sale, and a chance to pop into the Church, to chat and to pray, to be among friends. **Murton Chapel. Thursday Mornings from 11<sup>th</sup> July!**

In June at UCS, four of our young people were received into membership and three more "mature" adults had their membership transferred. We welcome them all, very warmly, to our church and fellowship.



*Murton Messy Church*





## News from Clydach

As usual, Christian Aid Week involved numerous willing volunteers from several of the churches in Clydach spending an hour or two collecting for Christian Aid in the foyer of the Co-op. As a result, we were able to collect over a period of 4 days, and raised the magnificent sum of £420. In the previous week we held our ecumenical Christian Aid service, which was addressed this year by Mari McNeil, head of Christian Aid in Wales, who told us about the background to this year's campaign: "Every Mum should live". Mari reminded us that Sierra Leone is the most dangerous country in the world to give birth, and Christian Aid, through its partner in Sierra Leone, is providing education and pre and post-natal health care by training local people and setting up village clinics.



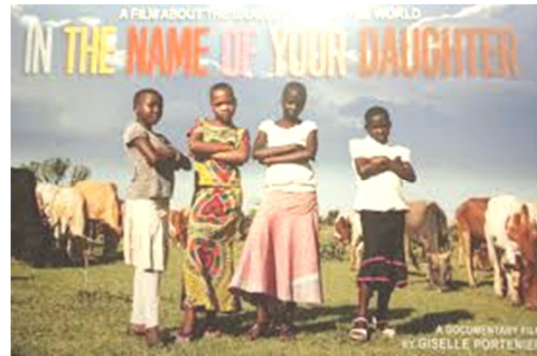
*The congregation at the Christian Aid Service, with Mari McNeil front row, second from right*

Incidentally, Clydach Christians raise around £4000 for Christian Aid every year! But that's not all.....

Our Clydach Church still has an active Wesley Guild. As well as meeting weekly, the Guild raises huge amounts of money for various charities. In April the Guild held a jumble sale which raised £450 for our ecumenical community project, Ty Croeso, based in the High St. And just a few weeks later, the Guild organised an Afternoon Tea which also raised nearly £450 for the Mr X appeal, enabling the Guild to provide 100+ Christmas presents for children who would otherwise go without.

And finally.....Clydach Church also welcomed recently Julian and Ann Marcus who came to show us the award-winning film "In the name of your children". This film highlights the work of a remarkable Tanzanian, Mama Rhobi, who has set up a safe-house for girls who want to escape "the cut" (FGM), which is, sadly, still widely

practised in Tanzania (although illegal). Her aim is ultimately to educate the parents to enable the girls to be reunited with them and to return home, without fear of being cut. Julian and Ann then did a repeat performance at Uniting Church Sketty in the evening. Nearly £500 was raised at the two venues for Mama Rhobi's work.



**Alan Cram**

## Meet Bill and Ben



Bill and Ben were rescued from the tip after being thrown away and are now enjoying their new home in Penlan's garden.

Do you enjoy gardening? Come along to Penlan and enjoy the fun. Contact Kathy on 208154

We hope to have coffee mornings in August selling locally grown produce.



Some Connect readers may remember that about 10 years ago our Circuit project was in support of 'Bright Stars of Bethlehem', a children's project run by Rev. Mitri Raheb, whom I had met on my visit to 'the Land of the Holy One' with the Riding Lights Theatre group. We shared an evening with members of the Christmas Lutheran Church, which included performances by Riding Lights and some of the local children.

In the intervening years the Bright Stars project, as well as developing their education activities for younger children, has also established the Dar al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture on a hillside overlooking the 'City of David'. It offers courses in fine arts, performing arts, and tourism.

In May this year one of their graduates gained 3rd prize at the Cannes Film Festival, the first time anyone from Palestine had entered. Wissam al Jafari grew up in the Deheisha Refugee Camp in Bethlehem and his film 'Ambience' is based on the sounds experienced in that camp. Bright Stars of Bethlehem was established 15 years ago, and this is a great way for them to celebrate that milestone. Mitri Raheb says: "Our aim is that our people, who admire stars, will dare to look up and dream, to believe in goals to strive for, and develop a new sense of hope, community, beauty and faith."

**Rev.Pam Cram**

We are invited to Capel y Nant, Clydach on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July at 7.00 p.m. to hear Rev. John Howard, former mission partner in Israel/Palestine, speaking on his 'Letters from Bethlehem'

### **Pentecost In The Park**

It might have been a cold start to June, but members of Clydach churches were out in the park on June 9th, celebrating Pentecost with a short service and bring and share picnic.

This year the service was led by members of Capel y Nant, the Welsh Independent congregation with which we're in partnership. Five other local congregations were represented.

Thanks to Lighthouse Church we had a sound system, so drew some attention from local dog walkers and families out enjoying the park. As well as the wonderful spread out on the picnic table, teas were available from the Clydach Heritage Centre.

Some were sorry to see the old 'Pentecost Walk' go, but our Pentecost in the Park event is now established and possibly more effective!



**Rev.Pam Cram**

## First Methodist Church receives Gold Eco Church Award

Stratford-Upon-Avon Methodist Church has become the first Methodist Church in the country to receive a Gold Eco Church award.



The award recognises the top level of achievement as part of environmental charity A Rocha's Eco Church scheme, which encourages churches to make changes to improve their climate impact and take action for the environment.

Stratford Methodist Church building was refurbished in 2014 which has significantly reduced its gas consumption, successfully reducing the carbon footprint of the church premises from 40 tonnes to 16 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

The church has also installed solar panels and a ground source heat pump, and started using rainwater to flush the toilets. This has allowed the church to invite more community groups to use the building while continuing to reduce the environmental impact. Members of the church who worked on the award said they were most proud of their wildflower garden which they developed on a small strip of land behind the church to encourage biodiversity.

A Rocha, who organised the scheme, commented:

"We are delighted that Stratford Methodist Church has recently become the first Methodist church to achieve a Gold Eco Church award. It's reflective of years of hard work and investment to put caring for creation front and centre of every aspect of their church life.

"There has never been a more critical time than now for Christians to be caring for the

whole of the earth in the way that God intended. With 176 other Methodist churches registered for Eco Church, it's also reflective of the Methodist Church's commitment to seeing 'all of God's created Kingdom not just survive but thrive'".

## Gods work in curing illnesses verses the Devils work

In Luke 4:23. Jesus says "Physician, heal thyself": whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here' There are numerous examples in the Gospels, of Jesus by his divine presence, curing & healing people of their sicknesses. Indeed the story of the healing of the woman who touched Jesus' cloak is found in (Matthew 9:20– Mark 5:25, Luke 8:43) and although it is only one of the miracles of Jesus, it is one worth looking up.

Today modern medicine can seemingly work miracles. Indeed I underwent a triple heart by-pass in 2007 but to be exactly precise, it wasn't a cure, I have been given a repair, and I now must look after myself but I shall always be forever grateful for the skill of the surgeon and the care of the Nurses.

Similarly the recent case of Corinne Hutton, illustrates how much we have to be grateful for. She sadly had both hands amputated, after suffering from sepsis, but was recently given a double hand transplant, which has transformed her life. (Google her name for more details) (n.b my wife Marions sister, Muriel, caught sepsis in hospital and sadly died in less than 18hrs, so it is deadly stuff)

So there is much good work done to help people overcome illness or Cosmetic Surgery to overcome disfigurements or evil criminal acts and Gods hand can clearly be seen in this work!

However in the case of Cosmetic Surgery (including enhancements) for no good end, as favoured by certain 'Personalities' (some with seemingly little or no talent) It is surely vanity (i.e one of the 7 deadly sins). Indeed in the world of Cosmetic Surgery for no good end, there are now some horrendous treatments available, too awful to be mentioned here, and they can only be described as the Devil's work.

**Robert Allender**



## 111 Miles cycled and £550 raised for Christian Aid!

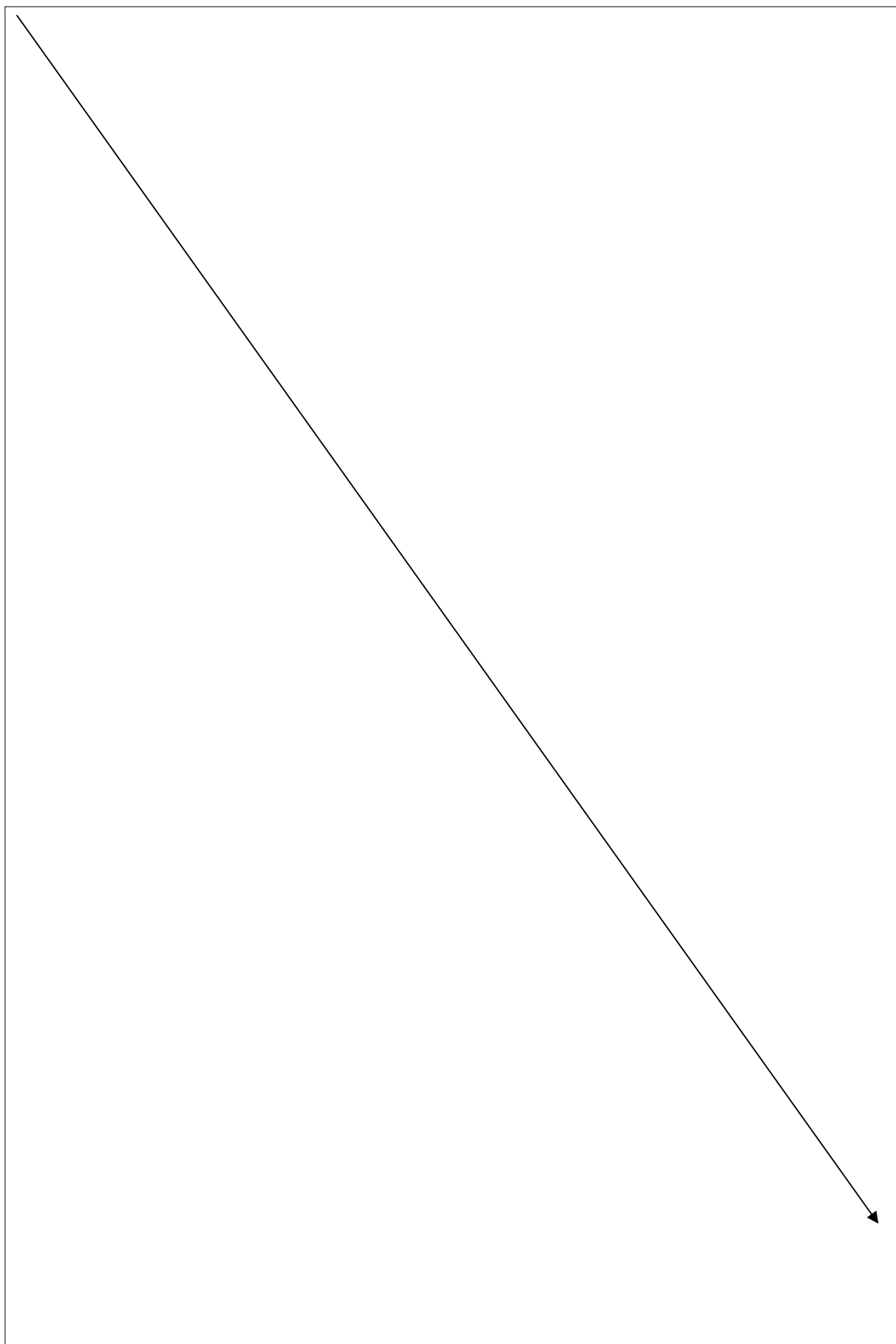
MAY I EXPRESS SINCERE THANKS to all who supported me with generous contributions and prayerful encouragement as I embarked upon three days of cycling in mid-May. I was able to enjoy a combination of different 'off road' routes in Somerset, Bristol & Bath, Surrey and West Sussex as well as the sweep of our own wonderful Swansea Bay!

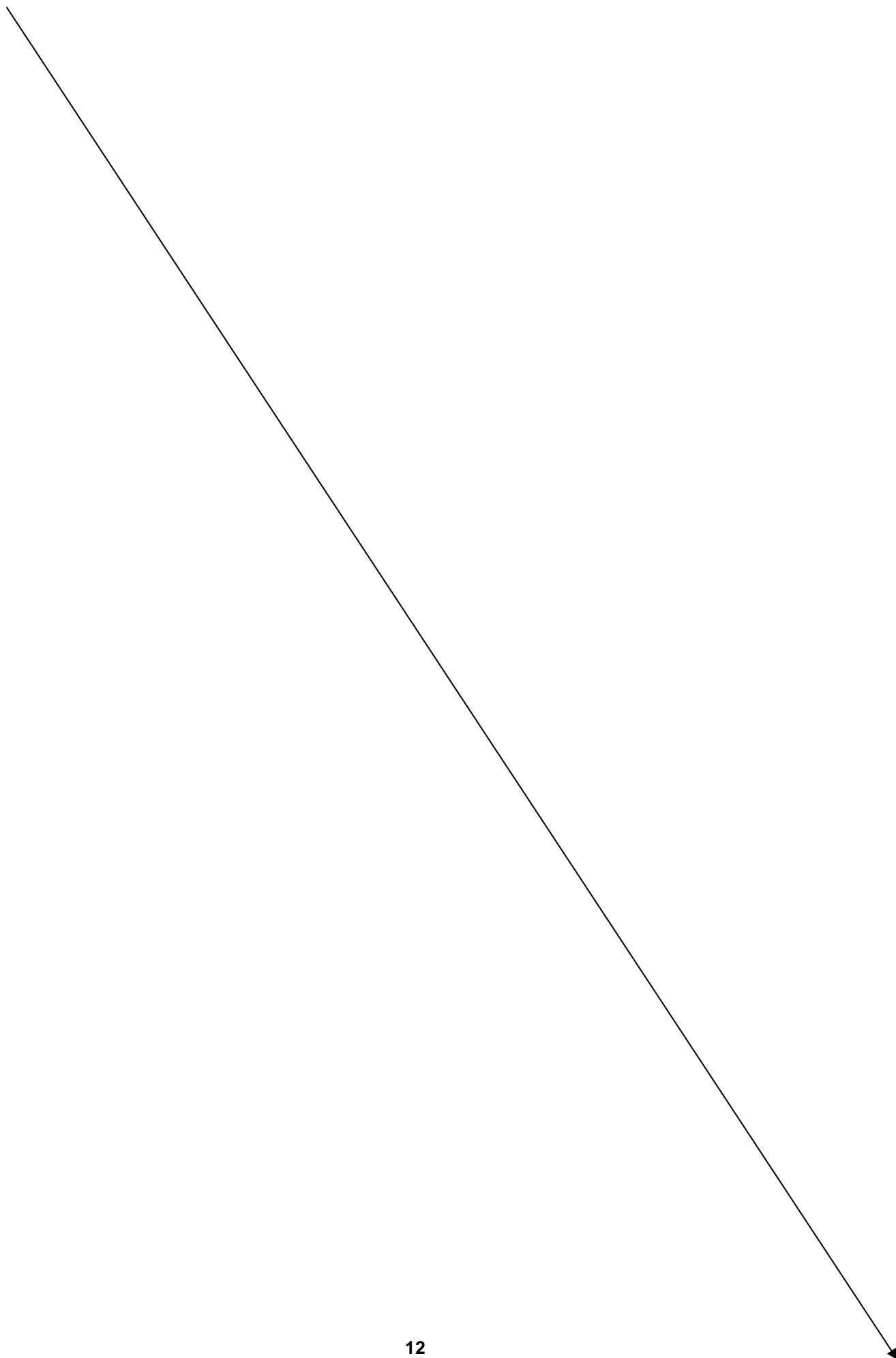
Despite a weather forecast which threatened much rain, I was blessed with sunshine or light cloud and a gentle breeze for the duration. My route took in the Taunton and Bridgewater canal, the coast between Burnham on Sea and Weston Super Mare and the Bristol to Bath Railway path – complete with tunnel! Then after meeting up with my Dad and my brother, we tackled the 'South Downs Link' Guildford to Shoreham route, finishing in Worthing. All this with the assistance of Great Western Railway and Southern Railway whose trains sped efficiently between the routes.

In 2017 I cycled Holyhead to Chester via the North Wales Coast for Christian Aid, and so will plan another ride for 2021 – possibly Dover to Portsmouth! Let me know if you want to pedal along! Thank you once again for all the encouragement, and the wonderful support for a very worthwhile cause!

**Rev. Andy Walker**









## Pennard Carnival

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July from 1 pm. Come along and see the floats, and the performers in the carnival ring. Browse the games, community stalls and side-shows; bounce and slide to your heart's content! Take in some street food from one of the vendors, or treat yourself to a W.I. Tea, served in china mugs and with home-made cakes in the marquee. Rock to the 'Mudskippers' live band well into the evening!

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July, at 10:30 am, join the Murton congregation, our friends from St Mary's Pennard and other local churches as we hold all age worship for the community in the carnival marquee. To round off the weekend, we are holding a festival of young musicians and performers on Sunday afternoon. Please let Rev Andy Walker if you want to know more – but please come along! It all happens on Pennard Park Field, Park Road, Pennard. We hope to see you there!

Rev.Andy Walker



