

# CONNECT



The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Spring 2020

## In this issue

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| God In Love Unites Us                 | 1  |
| News in brief                         | 2  |
| Superintendent's Message              | 3  |
| News from UCS                         | 4  |
| Visit of President & Vice President   | 5  |
| Visit continued                       | 6  |
| Zimbabwe/Swansea & Gower              | 7  |
| Talking Magazine                      |    |
| Page 1 (continued)/Into All The World | 8  |
| Big Day Out                           | 9  |
| Multicultural Christmas               | 10 |
| Mumbles Messy Church                  | 11 |
| Worship Through Art                   | 12 |
| An Extraordinary Call                 | 13 |
| Creation-Wise                         | 14 |
| Plan                                  | 15 |
| Map of Churches                       | 16 |

## Tell us all your news

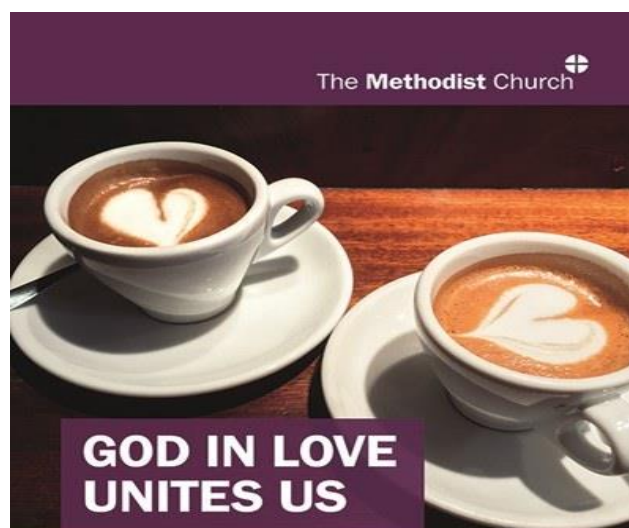
Keep us informed with news of people, activities and special events by sending your contribution to the Editor or sending her an email.

**Deadline for the next issue is  
25<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

## Editor

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## GOD IN LOVE UNITES US



Last Summer, the Methodist Conference discussed the Report on Marriage and Relationships called 'God in Love unites us'. This is the latest in a long line of reports stretching back to 1979, on different aspects of marriage and divorce, relationships, singleness, and family life.

The latest report is a response to questions raised by the Conference in relation to the changes in marriage law in Scotland, England and Wales, and the changing pattern of relationships that we have witnessed since the last official Statement on Marriage in 1992. The working party set up to look at these came up with a set of recommendations for the Conference to consider including attitudes to cohabitation (people living together either before or after marriage), the marriages of people of the same sex, and how we live with Christians who profoundly disagree with us.

(continued on page 5)

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**[www.methodist.org](http://www.methodist.org)**

**[www.swanseamethodist.org.uk](http://www.swanseamethodist.org.uk)**

*The Swansea and Gower Methodist  
Circuit is a Registered Charity  
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**news in brief**

**Uniting Church Sketty**

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April – Coffee morning for Pettifor Trust 10 am - 12 noon

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May – Coffee morning for Christian Aid 10 am -12 noon

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May to Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May Madcaps present 'Not a Panto'. Ticket price tbc

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June - Coffee morning for Marie Curie 10 am - 12 noon

**Brunswick**

Coffee mornings on the last Saturday of every month  
Bible Study every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 11 am in the Welcome Room

Prison Fellowship every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. Now meets in Capel Gomer.

**Mumbles**

Theo's Coffee Shop – open daily 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.  
Wednesday Lunchtime Worship – 12.15 p.m.

**Wesley**

Bible Study every Tuesday 9.30 a.m.

Lite Bites – every Thursday 12 noon – 2.00 p.m.

**Clydach**

8<sup>th</sup> April and 13<sup>th</sup> May Tea and Hymns 2.15 p.m. Capel y Nant

28<sup>th</sup> April Exploring our Faith 11.00 a.m.

7<sup>th</sup> May Christian Aid Service 7.00 p.m. St.Mary's

**Murton**

Tuesdays – weekly – Prayer Meeting 10.00 a.m. – 10.30 a.m. (Vestry); Coffee morning 10.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. (Wesley Room). Everyone welcome.

Thursdays – fortnightly – Murton Luncheon Club 12.30 p.m.

Light Lunch (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday) – Marg.Probert Tel: 234342

Full Lunch (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday) – Bev Poiner – Tel: 234045.

*Everyone welcome, but dates can vary. Please check and book ahead.*

**Reynoldston**

Prayer & Praise. Every Thursday. 10.00 a.m. for Prayer & Praise; 11 am for Coffee & Fellowship.

**Horton**

Prayer Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> May 12.45p.m

**Pitton**

Bible Group and Soup Lunch at Rhossili Village Hall (Middleton). Thursdays: 26<sup>th</sup> March, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 28<sup>th</sup> May(TBC) Details from Carolyn Jenkins.



## Message from the Superintendent



As I write these words the world finds itself in the grip of a pandemic caused by coronavirus (COVID 19). I must confess, probably along with the vast majority of other people, to knowing nothing about coronavirus just a few months ago but suddenly the news is full of nothing else and it's the topic of every conversation. This virus has managed to press the pause button on our lives as large gatherings are banned and important events cancelled.

A few days ago, following a Government announcement advising against non-essential contact and after receiving further guidance from the Methodist connexion, the decision was taken to suspend all worship and church activities throughout our circuit as well as all face to face pastoral visiting. We have since been told by the Government that we should stay at home which is not easy but essential if we are to stop this virus spreading.

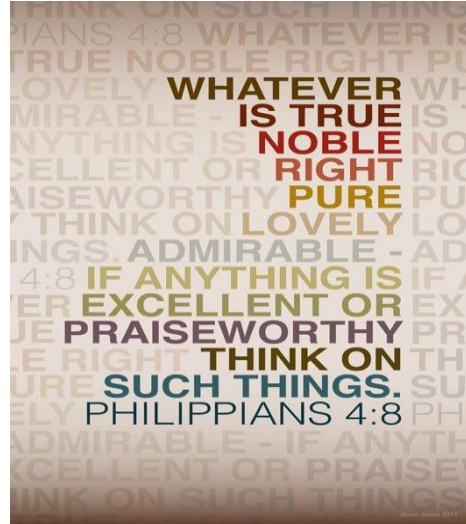
We are in uncharted territory that none of us have ever experienced before but now is the time it seems to me when the people of faith can demonstrate what having a faith in God means.

I am taking great comfort at the moment from St Paul's words in the book of Philippians chapter 4 verses 4-9.

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Can we be like Paul and rejoice in the Lord even in the face of adversity?

I was interested to read that in 1636 during the Thirty Years War, a German pastor called Martin Rinkart buried thousands of his parishioners in just one year after his parish had been ravaged by war and disease. The amazing thing is that in the middle of such a dreadful situation Pastor Rinkart sat down and wrote these words that later became a hymn.



Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices  
Who wondrous things have done in whom his world rejoices  
Who, from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way.  
With countless gifts of love and still is ours today.

### Singing the Faith 81

At the heart of praise is the conviction that God is good, that he can be trusted, that he is in control and deserves our devotion. It may just be that through these current events unbelieving hearts are going to be opened to this truth.

Paul goes on to urge the Philippian church to display their gentleness which was really asking something in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman world when only the strongest survived and brute force was the only thing that kept control.

Sadly, this pandemic has seen some people emptying supermarket shelves and stockpiling supplies. The picture of an old man stood in a supermarket aisle looking at his shopping list with nothing on the shelves will not be one that I forget easily.

(continued on page 12)

## Zimbabwe Voices



This year the World Day of Prayer service which many of us attended on March 6<sup>th</sup> was prepared by the women of Zimbabwe. As we have some friends in our Circuit who are from Zimbabwe, this seemed an excellent opportunity to look a bit deeper.

So on Saturday Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> over thirty people gathered in Capel y Nant in Clydach to share something of the culture and current realities of life in that troubled land. There were many visual aids around the hall as people arrived – a Powerpoint presentation showing some of the contrasts of wealth and poverty, beauty and drought; a display of beautiful coloured images provided by the World Day of Prayer office; and a table full of craft items and fabrics.

Rev. Pam Cram introduced the day, explaining her involvement with a group of Zimbabwean refugees back in 2002. She then interviewed one of that group of unaccompanied young women, Grace Coleman, who is now settled amongst us and actively involved in church and Circuit life. Grace spoke of her memories of Zimbabwe when she was growing up, the beauty of the nation, its prosperity and productivity, and then of the fact that she cannot return to visit her family.

Rev. Siperire Mugadzaweta then described her own story of movement between the UK and Zimbabwe over the years, and about her project there. She also told us something about the crafts and culture of Zimbabwe. We heard the national anthem and joined in some Zimbabwean songs. Finally, Siperire described the traditional food of Zimbabwe and we shared a meal prepared by Siperire, Grace, Sarah and Irene.

Hopefully those present will now enter into the World Day of Prayer service far better informed, and that the service will come alive for us all as a result.

**Rev.Pam Cram**

## Swansea and Gower Talking Magazine



This is a charity run entirely by volunteers and based at UCS. It serves some 170 visually impaired listeners, mainly in the Swansea and Gower area but with a few further afield. We produce a monthly Talking Magazine and recordings of Local History Books (there would be no sense in us producing novels and nationally published materials because the National Organisations do this). Could you consider volunteering to help with this work. We need Office Staff who are prepared to come in once a week to spend an hour or so handling the post. We need people who are prepared to read the Local History Books – this is usually done from home, reading the book into an easy to operate voice recorder. Usually a book is shared between a few readers so that the listener has some variation in the voice. Once a month we record the monthly magazine itself. We do this sitting round a table together and passing the microphone around which can also be a bit of a social occasion. You probably would not be needed every month but sometimes we need people to come in at short notice. This is always done on the afternoon of the last Tuesday of the previous month. Please contact Les Want at UCS if you are interested. (contact details in the Circuit Directory)



(continued from front page)

The vote at Conference was provisional which means the Synods now have a chance to discuss, change and vote on the proposals and advise the Conference who must vote again in July this year. Even if the proposals go through, it will still be up to each local Church's managing trustees to decide whether their building should be registered for the marriages of same-sex couples. It will be entirely up to the members of the church council whether or not to do this and it will not affect the church's standing with the rest of the Connexion, no matter what is decided.

The proposals recognise that, despite four decades of discussions, Methodists still hold different views on the subject of marriage. The proposed new rules on marriage affirm that belief in marriage between one man and one woman only, remains perfectly acceptable. Alongside that, those who affirm marriage as open to any couple are also affirmed. This model has been called the 'Mixed Economy' and seeks to allow everyone to follow their consciences, whilst respecting those who do not share their views.

The report can be downloaded from [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

Conversations have been taking place throughout the circuit with one further event to take place on April 1<sup>st</sup> at UCS at 7p.m to which all are welcome. The Wales Spring Synod that will meet on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020 will vote on the proposals as will every other District in the Methodist Connexion before coming to the Methodist Conference in July.



Howard

## Into All the World



This is the theme of our Easter Offering this year. You will be invited to make donations to the World Church Fund of the Methodist Church during the Easter period, and then at the end of May we come together in our Circuit Easter Offering service. This year we've chosen to hold it on Aldersgate Sunday, when we also remember the life and work of the Wesley brothers, and John Wesley's declaration that the world was his parish.

At the Circuit meeting I will distribute information for each church about that service in May, requesting that you provide a reader or readers for a part of the service, but also drawing your attention to the additional resources and ideas available for use in fellowships – or individually. If you're interested then make sure you find out who has received that information.

This year the stories we will hear are about journeys: the Mayflower (it's the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September); Rev. Thomas Coke who took the Gospel to the Antigua, marking the start of Methodist Mission overseas; Dorothy Ripley who travelled to the U.S.A. in 1801 to preach against slavery and minister to slaves; Tommy and Mabel, a couple in Zimbabwe, who were economic migrants within their country; and Angleena Keizer, our mission partner in Jerusalem and working for peace and justice. You might like to do some research on any one of these and you're welcome to bring anything that illustrates their journeys, or the Wesley's journey of faith, for us to display on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Rev.Pam Cram**

## An Extraordinary Call – Methodist Conference 2019

On Friday 8 November 2019 we all met at Oxford University. Closest I'll ever get to Uni! It was quite daunting.

The first talk was given by Dr. Jill Barber entitled 'I am a preacher woman'. Pioneer preachers of Welsh Methodism. She talked of Elizabeth Thomas of Blaenporth near Aberporth being one of the very early preachers in 1741! Someone who visited the society there recorded 'I find some do meet – but the men being not gifted, a poor, humble broken soul of a woman got up to speak'. But she was confined to speaking privately to the society.

We then heard from Rev. Dr. Tim Macquiban on early Primitive Methodist women preachers.

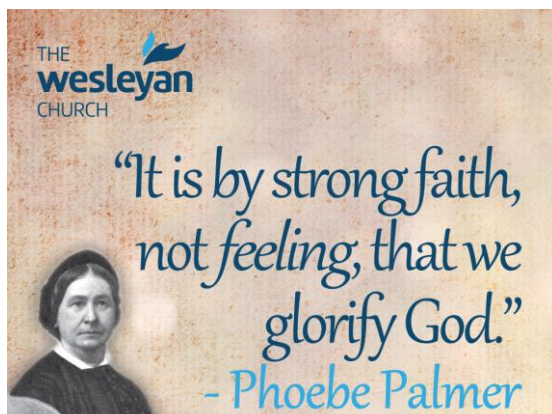
John Lenton, Librarian of the Wesley Historical Society, Oxford talked on 'What was the calling of the Early Methodist Women Preachers 1760-1820?

This was followed by Rev. Colin Short on 'The female travelling preachers of the Bible Christian Itinerancy: their status and their work'.

Dr Jill Barber talked on 'Survival of the Fittest': 'What led to the 'Extinction' of female preaching in the 19th century?'

Dr. Janice Holmes, historian, spoke on 'Joyful News Evangelists, professionalism and the definition of women's public ministry in British Methodism, c1880-1910'.

Rev. Dr. Tim Woolley then spoke on 'Promised Ground': Phoebe Palmer's British Visit 1859-1863.



The outstanding speaker was Revd. Michaela Youngson, President of Conference 2018, who spoke on 'Called to Lead – Reflections on women's leadership in the Methodist Church today'.



*Revd. Michaela Youngson*

We then heard from Rev Dr Christina Le Moignan President of Conference 2001, on 'What's Extraordinary about this call? The Ministry of ordained women in the 1970s and 80s'.

Dr. David Bundy - Associate Director, Manchester Wesley Research Centre; gave us information on Catherine Stephens Smith (1813-1884): 'From Wesleyan Methodist Minister's wife to Radical Holiness Preacher'.

Rev. Bonni-Belle Pickard spoke on 'Daughters of Charles: Methodist Women who preach through Hymn writing'.

So, as this went on over 2 days it is difficult to summarise it. If you want to hear any of it you can put into You Tube 'An extraordinary call Methodist Conference 2019'. That is if you have around 5 hours to spare.

So did I enjoy my trip? Well, I enjoyed seeing some of the Methodist Church's finest speakers – but there was a lot of it.

**Caroline Buckler**

## Creation-Wise

By the time you read this we'll be nearly half-way through the year of our environment project, Creation-Wise! There's still plenty of time to get involved.

Congratulations to those churches that have signed up to the Eco-Church scheme and maybe have applied for the bronze award already.

A few individuals turned up to the open morning at the Environment Centre. This project that started 25 years ago, and was the chosen charity of Prince Charles in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of his Investiture as Prince of Wales. It's at the old Telephone Exchange in Pier Street, and some of the features of the Exchange are still there, including some amusing 'gargoyle' type carvings in the main entrance hall! Remember you can go in at any time between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm Mondays to Fridays. There's often an exhibition on in the upper hall, and the cafe/shop is a place to pause for a cuppa and to browse the various foods, household items, gifts etc. - organic, Fair Trade, palm oil free, low or no plastic, vegan/veggie etc.



Unfortunately, Gemma, who spoke at our launch, is no longer working at St. Madoc's Centre and arranging a visit there is proving rather difficult. However, I hope that part of what you'll be doing for the project – and your own health – is getting out into the natural world. Just sitting or ambling in green spaces for around two hours in a week has been shown to be good for mental and physical health. Why not practice some 'mindfulness' in a green space near you – i.e. pay attention to your own body and to the plants and creatures around you – very calming. In the spring you could also take a trip to view the National Trust's restored strip cultivation site, The Vile, at Rhossili, where

in just two years the bumblebee population has gone from around 2,000 to an estimated 250,000 on the sunflower beds alone!

Remember as well that the Eco Church scheme isn't just about the environment. It's also about Fairtrade, wellbeing and community (locally and internationally). So you might decide as a church to commit (or commit more!) to Fairtrade, to look into 'toilet-twinning' (a donation of £60 links your toilet to one in the southern hemisphere!), or to link with a local community project such as a 'Man Shed', Community Garden, Repair Cafe, recycling scheme, litter pick, or conservation project.

**And if you're not able to be active, you can become informed about all these issues and encourage, and pray for, those who are involved in them. No excuses!!**

Rev.Pam Cram

## COFFEE MORNING AND NEEDLE FELTING DEMO & WORKSHOP

CAKE STALL

RAFFLE

at RHOSSILI VILLAGE HALL

Wed. 29<sup>th</sup> Apr. 2020 at 10:30am

"Come and learn the art of Needle Felting  
and make your own brooch to take home"

Entry £6 (incl. coffee and biscuits)

Proceeds to:

Tŷ Ogof Recovery House

[tyogof.org.uk](http://tyogof.org.uk)



BACON BAPS (or veggie alternative)

with tea/coffee, for sale after the workshop



## Celebrating Multicultural Christmas in Swansea

Led by Rev. Irfan John on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the Swansea Urdu/Hindi Fellowship which meets on every first and third Sunday of the month at Wesley Methodist Church, Brynhyfryd celebrated their 5<sup>th</sup> Christmas together in a spirit filled fellowship with praise and worship and a family Christmas carol night. The evening began filled of the Christmas spirit as a member of each family present was seen dressed up as a character in the Nativity. The service began with Rev. Howard Long Superintendent of Swansea and Gower Circuit lighting the advent candles and Rev. Dr. Stephen Wigley sharing the word of God. All families part of the fellowship also took part in the service by coming up to the front and leading the congregation in Christmas carols before the night ended off with a Nativity quiz for the children which included prizes followed by a cake cutting. For further information about the fellowship, please contact Rev Irfan John by mobile at 07796494035 or email at [Irfan.john@methodistwales.org.uk](mailto:Irfan.john@methodistwales.org.uk).





## Worship through Art

An ecumenical study day led by Sarah Middleton

Saturday 16 May 2020, 10 - 4 pm

Murton Methodist Church, Swansea SA3 3AR



**For clergy,  
preachers,  
worship leaders,  
Messy Church  
leaders and  
those leading  
Bible study and  
house groups**

'The Supper at Emmaus', by Ceri Richards.  
1958. From the Methodist Modern Art  
Collection, used with permission. © TMCP.  
[www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection](http://www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection)

Sarah is a Local Preacher in the Cardiff Methodist Circuit and an experienced art educator who has worked for many years with the prestigious Methodist Modern Art Collection.

To book, contact Alice Rutter **by 18 April 2020** on tel 01792 298167 or email [w.rutter@btopenworld.com](mailto:w.rutter@btopenworld.com). Maximum capacity: 60. Please bring packed lunch. There will be a small fee (max. £5) payable on the day to cover drinks and hire of the hall.

## Visit of the President and Vice President of Conference to Wales 7th-9th February 2020



We were delighted to welcome Barbara Glasson and Clive & Jill Marsh to Wales on a weekend which just happened to coincide with the slightly less welcome arrival of storm Ciara. Reflecting both the geography and the working together of the 2 Synods across Wales, the visit took part in two stages, with the President visiting north Wales and the Vice President south Wales over the Friday/Saturday, before joining together in Aberystwyth on Sunday for a bi-lingual service of Holy Communion at which the President presided and the Vice-President preached.

Barbara's train arrived into Welshpool on Friday afternoon, in good time for her first engagement with us that evening. This took the form of an informal gathering at the Synod Cymru manse, where a group of minsters, officers and partners enjoyed the opportunity to meet the President. Stories were shared and pizza was eaten, and Barbara learnt more of what it means to be Welsh and Methodist. The group valued hearing of her experience of her Presidential year so far in a relaxed atmosphere of laughter and fellowship.

Come Saturday morning, the President was on the road to St David's Methodist Church, Craig-y-Don, Llandudno, where about 60 people gathered from both Synods for a session on this year's presidential theme. "So, what's the story..?" asked Barbara, enabling those present to answer the question for themselves. This took place first of all through a five minute listening exercise in pairs before moving to a more complicated activity – at least for some! Barbara encouraged us to fold a pyramid-shaped 'snap dragon' from a square of paper onto which we were invited to write facts about ourselves as significant elements of our story. Once again, learning took place through laughter and fun, while not avoiding the more challenging aspects of life as well. The afternoon gave the chance for Barbara to share in the Momentwm North Wales 'Big Day Out' youth evening at Trinity Methodist Church, Prestatyn. Here she led a similar session to the morning, skilfully tailored to a group of 18 young people. It was a much appreciated element of their day.

Amazingly, given the forecast of what was to come, the weather on Friday afternoon was bright and clear as Clive & Jill arrived in South Wales. We took the opportunity to visit 2 key mission projects, the Amelia Methodist Trust Farm in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Clive was able to hear from the Director Karen Turnbull of the pioneering work with young people carried out on the Farm for nearly 30 years now, before going on to the Trinity Centre in Cardiff, to hear from the Synod Enabler Irfan John of its work both with culturally diverse congregations and also with asylum seekers and refugees. Friday evening finished off with a visit to the Cardiff University Chaplaincy, where we met with the Chaplain Delyth Liddell and Clive led a lively conversation with students on the subject of 'Faith and Film'.

*(continued on page 6)*

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Greeted by sunshine on Saturday morning, we travelled to Jersey Marine where Clive led a session of the Presidential theme, 'So what's the story?' to an engaged audience before travelling on to Taibach, Port Talbot where the 'Big Day Out' was taking place with some 40 young people and their leaders, organised by Momentwm on behalf of the 2 Synods. Some good conversations took place over lunch, although we declined the opportunity to take part in some of the physical exercises accompanying the spiritual ones. Then on the way back to Cardiff we visited Cardiff Bay and the new Senedd building in Cardiff, where the Vice President was able to see a model for parliamentary engagement somewhat different to Westminster.



Sunday morning dawned with the expected winds and waves in Aberystwyth, but wonderfully both President and Vice President had arrived safely and were able to lead us in a service of Holy Communion. This was followed by a time of refreshment over a shared lunch before people made their separate ways home, in the President's case by a longer car journey than expected given that the rail network had by then large closed down. So we give thanks for Barbara and Clive's visit to Wales and their ministry among us, and trust that some of their experiences over the weekend can only add to our stories, to share and to treasure.

**Jennie Hurd and Stephen Wigley.**



*(carried forward from page 3)*

Now is the time when Christian kindness to others will be the antidote to the damaging virus of selfishness that so often comes to the fore at times like this. We must take time to support our families, friends and neighbours especially those who are elderly and isolated. A phone call asking, 'How are you'? and 'Do you need anything from the shops? can mean so much.

Paul then urges the Philippians to pray. We may not be able to meet together for worship at the moment but all of us from the youngest to the oldest can pray wherever we are. It's going to take some time for this pandemic to be over, but we must not allow it to cripple us with anxiety and fear. We cannot control this situation but we can choose how we will respond to it and if we respond with hope and faith in God then it will make all the difference.

To end I share with you these words written by Corrie ten Boom 'When a train goes through a tunnel and its gets dark, you don't throw away your ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer'.

Keep the faith and keep safe.

**Howard**

### **News from UCS**

After the Carol Service at UCS we, once again, enjoyed Just Desserts, which has become a welcome feature of our calendar. £1,001 was raised, over Christmas, for Ty Ogof and by distribution of Christmas cards



In February our monthly Coffee Morning (on the first Saturday of every month) was in aid of Muscular Dystrophy UK. It included a cakes and preserves stall, bric a brac and books. More than £715 was raised towards research and equipment for sufferers and their families.



In February, Wesley Club and friends welcomed the U3A ukulele band who brightened up the dark evening with some wonderful entertainment.



**Janet Neilson**



## Big Day Out

This year's Big Day Out took place on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February at Tai Bach Methodist Church. In the morning we looked at the theme 'Where is God in our journey?' using a variety of methods including art, song writing, exercise and discussions. Professor Clive Marsh, Vice President of Methodist Conference, also paid a visit to talk to the young people about his role. After lunch we all went to Limitless in Swansea for an afternoon of energetic fun.



Cerys Davies

## Mumbles Messy Church

During February half term we held another Messy Church at Mumbles in conjunction with our friends at Castleton Chapel. We looked at the story of Zacchaeus and focused on how much Jesus loves us. Lots of families came along and everybody had a great time. Thank you so much to all the volunteers who help out and enable Messy Church to happen.

