

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Summer 2015

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Uniting Church Sketty

A Journey with God



Tell us all your news

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

Deadline for the next issue is 1st September 2015

Editor

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A Journey with God was the title and theme of our celebration weekend as Bethel URC and Sketty Methodist formally became Uniting Church Sketty. After many years of working closely together and after one year of worshipping together, the weekend celebrated the formal coming together of what we have been in our hearts for some time and launched Uniting Church Sketty.

(continued on page 4)

We shouldn't attempt to change God's message which we read in the scriptures; it's His message that should change us.



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to a new edition of the Connect magazine which is full of interesting articles concerning the work of the Methodist Church here in Swansea and the wider Methodist Connexion. It has certainly been an eventful few months in the circuit since our last publication

Holy Week and Easter was a blessed time in our churches with large congregations attending services especially on Easter morning. One of the highlights for me was the performance of 'Impossible God' by Mark Topping at Sketty on Passion Sunday. I first read this book, written by Mark's father Frank, in 1985 and to see it come to life on stage was very moving indeed.

I was also impressed by the support received by our Morriston church for their Spring Fayre. It was so good to see their renovated ground floor premises full of people and a wonderful amount of money being raised for the next stage of their building scheme.

It was also a real privilege to attend the official launch of the Uniting Church Sketty at the end of May and I would like to congratulate my colleague Leslie and the folk at Sketty for all their hard work in making the Uniting Church happen. Many of our churches in the circuit are planning for the future either with renovations to their premises or exciting new mission initiatives and we look forward to seeing these come to fruition.

I am also delighted to see more people responding to God's call to preach. Jean Lang, Huw Davies and Cery Davies have recently received notes to preach and I wish them well with their studies. This takes the number of our active local preachers to 19 with 6 in training. Congratulations to Selina Taylor who has recently completed her local preacher studies and whose accreditation service will take place in our Pitton chapel on Thursday 20th August.

I also would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Myra Maddock, who edits this magazine to a very high standard. Myra's hard

work and enthusiasm was recognised last month by the National Association of Church Magazine Editors who, at their annual meeting at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, presented Myra with an award for Connect and the 'Clarity of the Christian Message'. Well done Myra and to all who contribute articles to this magazine.

As I think about and thank God for all the good work taking place in our circuit I am reminded of a story that was first told by the late Leotina Kelly who in 1984 became the first black woman bishop in the American United Methodist Church. She told of the time when she was a young girl and her father who was also a minister was sent to be the pastor of a large church in Cincinnati, Ohio. She recalled that it was a beautiful church with Gothic architecture, magnificent stained glass windows and lots of activities taking place.

Bishop Kelly said that as a child she used to play in the manse cellar with her brother and one day they found a tunnel that was dark and dingy and full of cobwebs. The tunnel led to a huge basement with a further tunnel leading to the church itself.

When the children told their father what they had found he sat them down and told them that they had stumbled on a station of the underground railroad. It was a railroad with no tracks that had once helped help poor frightened slaves escape to freedom in Canada. He told the children that the greatness of their church was not the Gothic architecture, stained windows or beautiful singing but in the fact that as Jesus' followers they were bound together in faith with men and women who dared risk all in the mission of helping poor frightened slaves escape to freedom.

The greatness of any church is not measured by its bricks and mortar or even its worship, but in how much we are bound together in faith and in the mission to tell people the good news of Jesus, to bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, to lift up the downtrodden and to set the captives free.

Howard

I make it a rule of Christian duty never to go to a place where there is not room for my Master as well as myself.

John Newton

Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit



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news in brief

Sketty

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

Brunswick

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

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

11.30 a.m. Intercessory Prayer Meeting.

Mumbles

Lunchtime Worship every Wednesday at 12.15 p.m.

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

Wesley

Lite Bites & Fellowship every Thursday at 12 noon.

Bible Study every Tuesday at 10.00 a.m.

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

Murton

Coffee mornings and Book Sales from Thursday 9th July between 10.30 a.m. and noon - weather permitting outside the church

Reynoldston

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



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

The Alpha www.alpha.org

Swansea Samaritans are available 24 hours a day providing confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts. Their phone number: 01792 655999

Rev Andy Walker explains about his forthcoming Sabbatical...

“... and in the eleventh year God rested!”

Well not quite! But the term ‘Sabbatical’ does of course have its roots in the Biblical word Sabbath, the day of rest. A Sabbatical is a gift from the Church to its Ministers (Presbyters and Deacons) once they have served ten years. So the eleventh year becomes one in which a continuous break of three months may be taken; although the timing can be flexible according to circumstances. Further Sabbaticals can be taken each subsequent seventh year of service, but again with flexibility.

I will complete my tenth year this summer, having commenced full-time ministry in Newport in September 2005. My Sabbatical will run for the whole of August, September and October.

During the Sabbatical it is expected that there is ‘no contact whatsoever’ between the Minister and the Churches for which they have Pastoral charge. Both the Minister and the Congregations are asked to respect this completely in order for the Sabbatical period to work as it is designed to; as a ‘complete break’ from all the duties of ministry. In my absence, the Church Stewards will have all the necessary contact details for those colleagues who are providing cover.

Like every person entitled to take a Sabbatical, I have to submit a ‘plan of action’. Sabbaticals should not be seen as an opportunity to ‘switch off and do nothing’, but more along the lines of ‘switch over and do something else’. In that sense they are rooted in the creation narrative; they are designed as an opportunity for recreation, but just as important, for ‘re-creation’.

I look to be ‘re-created’ and become more deeply rooted and nourished by God’s presence and immerse myself in his purposes for my life and ministry. This time is also a precious gift to my family, to Emily and the boys to baby Christopher.

Did You Know

That you can sign up for a number of e-newsletters from the Methodist church. Just visit the website www.methodist.org.uk



Andy enjoying time on the cliffs with the boys and the dog

So my ‘plan of action’ therefore is as follows

- Two weeks at Spring Harvest Holidays in France with the family.
- A two week trip to Scotland including a Retreat to Iona Abbey.
- Write up the ‘Am I Bovered?’ resources with Theological Reflection on the Spirituality of Young People.
- Attend some lectures at the newly opened South Wales Bible College.
- Devote extended time to reading and to prayer
- Relax with some canoeing and cycling, and National Trust visits, and work on the Model Railway!



I thank my Circuit colleagues, Supernumerary Ministers, Church Stewards and my Congregations for supporting me through this privileged time. I pray that I will come back refreshed and equipped for all the work and ministry that God has for us to share in the years ahead.

Rev. Andy Walker

“IMPOSSIBLE GOD”



We were privileged, as a circuit, to welcome Mark Topping to Sketty on March 22nd. We watched, amazed, as he transformed himself from character to character, with simple changes of clothes. So, that's how a one-man Passion play is performed! Remarkable!

“An Impossible God” was written by Rev Frank Topping, Mark's father. Through a series of meditations and reflections, we are able to enter in to the bewildering experience of a handful of trembling disciples, Jesus' mother and her companions as they journey with Jesus through his last days and agonising last hours.....the Stations of the Cross.

Then the play moved to the Stations Beyond the Cross.....when we saw the shock and disorientation of Jesus' disciples. The resurrection shatters the boundaries of all they understood until then.

They are transformed from ordinary people, to individuals who would change the world.

Janet Neilson

“Risen Lord,
I have heard Your call to follow You
And I have followed at a distance,
Half-heartedly, unsure
This very day I hear Your call,
“Follow me”,
And I will, imperfectly,
Easily distracted, lagging behind when the road is hard.
Lord, forgive me, reach out to me with Your guiding hand,
That I might follow you more nearly.....
Day by day.

(St. Richard)

MUMBLES METHODIST CHURCH

is holding a

GRAND BOOK SALE

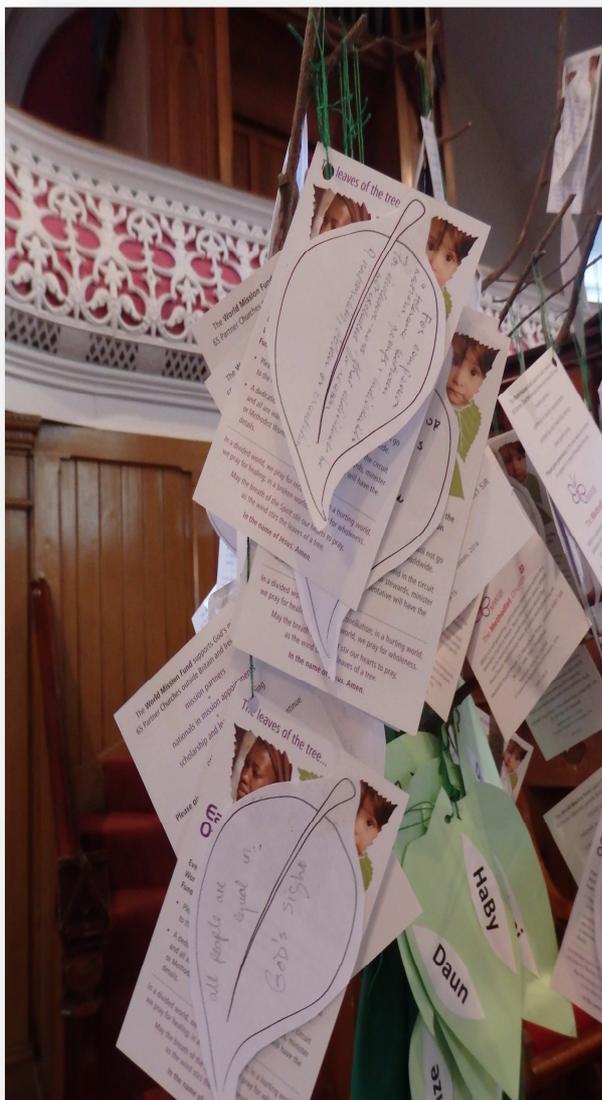
**from Monday 17th August
to Saturday 22nd August**

(10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. daily)

**Donations of good quality books
(especially children's books)
always welcome**

**For further information contact:
Di Norton on 01792 402338**

EASTER OFFERING SERVICE



Our annual Easter Offering service was held at Brunswick on April 19th. The service was entitled “The leaves of the tree.....”. Thanks to all those who took part in the service. It was good to hear a variety of voices and accents, even though there was nearly a Scottish takeover! Thanks to Brunswick for hosting the service and to Howard Cooke for playing the organ.

During the service we were asked to write prayers for reconciliation, healing and wholeness in our divided world. These are some of the concerns that we prayed for – compassion and tolerance between nations, groups and individuals, that everyone may feel included. We pray for healing for the elderly, infirm and those who have suffered abuse. We pray that politicians may have integrity and honesty.

We pray for the work of the Amelia Farm Trust.

We pray for the members and the ongoing and new work at our churches at Penlan, Morrision, Eaton Road and Brunswick.

Prayers were also written to remember the unemployed, homeless, addicts, the incarcerated and asylum seekers in Swansea.

We pray for the difficult situations around the world in the Middle East, Syria, Croatia, south Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and for healing in the conflict between Christians and Islamist extremists.

We pray for nurses, medics, education, farming, the eradication of Ebola and the work of Fair Trade.

Come, Lord Jesus, come. **Amen**

The amount raised by our circuit was £2,153.32 (that includes gift aid). Last year we raised £2,231.69 (plus about £219 in gift aid). Many thanks to all those who contributed to our Easter Offering collection. Since 1995 (the records I have started then), we have raised £30,590.98 in our circuit!

Janet Neilson

Justice Mail



I'm sure many of you who are on the internet get campaigning emails, some of which you may support, others of which you ignore. At some time you may have written letters to prisoners of conscience or responded to the action alerts in the Methodist Recorder, though these have become less frequent.

Recently my attention was drawn to an article in the Methodist Recorder about 'Justice Mail', a specifically Christian organisation that provides campaign and action information to local group organisers, who then select a particular topic and action for their local group, sending a group email out with all the information. Although many of the actions are email based, very often a postal address is included too. There's background information and often some ideas about what to write. Justice Mail is linked to a number of organisations, such as Amnesty, Church Action on Poverty, Campaign against the Arms Trade, Christian Aid, and Labour Behind the Label.

Currently only Anglican Churches are involved, and only in England. Isn't it time for a non-conformist group in Wales! I'm considering setting up a group, if the Circuit Meeting and/or Capel y Nant Partnership agree to back the idea. If you're interested send me an email. The recommended frequency of messages is fortnightly, but we can run the local group as we like. In your email maybe you could tell me how often you think we should ask people to take action, and what your particular areas of interest are.

Founder of Justice Mail, John Hull writes: "The Fourth Mark of Mission, agreed by the Church of England, the Methodist Church and other denominations, is 'To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation'. The churches attached to Justice Mail find that this simple tool increases the number of well-informed and active members in their congregation, and, step by step, may bring about a change of culture towards church growth and Christian mission".

To get an idea of how it works, take a look at www.justicemail.org.uk and if there's anyone who's more computer savvy than me who'd be interested in being the moderator of the group, just let me know as I'm going to need help in getting going!!

Pam Cram



Linda Crossley (Connexional President MWiB) spoke recently about her visits to India. She gave us some frightening facts about Dalits (formerly called untouchables). Out of a population of 1.2 billion, about 200 million Dalits live in India. Every week there are 13 murders, 21 women are raped, 5 homes are burned and 6 are kidnapped or abducted in the Dalit community. These crimes are rarely investigated. Although caste discrimination is illegal in India, the law is not enforced.

People often deliberately foul the Dalits water systems. In villages where there are wells, there is one for the Dalits and another for the non Dalits, as they are not allowed to share the same water supply. One of the jobs which Dalits are allowed to do is to empty toilets (by hand), even though this is now against the law.

In the Church of North India, about 92% are Dalits, but there is even a problem with caste discrimination within the Christian church. If a couple enter in to an inter-caste marriage, their children automatically become Dalits.

MWiB has produced a pack – Dalit Solidarity, which is available via the MWiB website, if you wish to learn more about Dalits.

Linda also spoke about the difficulties of helping family members, and others, with dementia. MWiB will also be producing a pack to help people to learn more about the heartache of dementia for sufferers and their families.

Janet Neilson

Easter Morning Early breakfast after 8.00 a.m. Service with Holy Communion at Brunswick.



People had good time of sharing Mary's assignment to go and tell. It is everyone's assignment to go and tell the Good news of the risen Lord.

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta

The Importance of Hospitality at Penlan



The great commission in Matthew 28 tells us to go and make disciples. It doesn't tell us to build buildings and let them out to various groups! So we must be clear that the primary focus of a church's mission must not be to become landlords – doing so means we become building focussed at the expense of mission.

Having said that however, there is a clear strand running through both the Old and the New Testaments of hospitality. In particular, the lovely

story of Abraham and Sarah offering hospitality to three strangers in Genesis 18 and the injunction in Hebrews 13:2 *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

This is the situation that our church in Penlan finds itself. We have an excellent building which is now extremely well used throughout the week – most days, morning, afternoon and evening! There are the standard groups such as Weightwatchers. We are also home to Phoenix Choir, with whom we have an extremely positive relationship – they have even offered the church proceeds from one of their concerts. For 18 months or so now we have been delighted to be the home for First Steps Forward, a group for disabled adults – the atmosphere on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when First Steps meet is so good – they are fun, friendly and welcoming! They have also shared in some services with us.

Most recently we are delighted to welcome Action for Children, who now use the premises two days a week. The church undertook a big clear out to make room for toys and other equipment and they now run toddler groups and parenting groups as part of their Swansea Young Families project. The staff at Action for Children have said how delighted they are with their new home – with the well-kept premises and are looking forward to making the most of the garden area as the weather turns warmer.

So whilst we are not called to be landlords, we are delighted that we are able to offer hospitality to so many groups – and, who knows, maybe we are 'entertaining angels unawares'.

Rev.Leslie Noon



Doing All We Can



Rahel Hiltework from the Adheno Project in Ethiopia who spoke at the All We Can conference.

At the end of April, the Methodist Relief and Development charity 'All We Can' held an excellent 24 hour conference, with the aim of informing Co-ordinators and others about the work they do, and the principles and practices that had been decided on when the charity was re-named a year ago.

The event turned out to be particularly topical because on the way there we heard about the devastating earthquake in Nepal, one of the eight countries All We Can will continue to work in. Overnight the charity's staff decided an appeal for Nepal would be launched and £5,000 would be sent immediately to support the specially trained trauma management team from partner organisation Kopila, the only team of its kind in that country.

Although part of All We Can's work is to respond to emergencies like this, they emphasise the importance of building long-term relationships and building up communities, listening to their local partners' agenda rather than imposing ideas. The decision to concentrate on eight nations enables that more focussed way of working.

Speaking at the Conference was a visitor from Ethiopia, who showed us pictures to illustrate how work to rebuild an Orthodox Church had then led to projects to build up the community, helping people to grow healthy vegetables and fruits, which thrive in the soil there but were not normally eaten by the people. Reforestation is also helping to prevent erosion and reduce the risk of drought.

We were introduced to this year's harvest theme, 'Create a Buzz', focussing on developments in bee-keeping in Ethiopia. (This is a theme that provides plenty of potential for creative ideas in harvest decoration, so why not take a look at the resources!)

Another nation spoken of a lot at the Conference was Burundi, again very topical with political unrest threatening the proposed elections at the end of June. All We Can's partners there had asked for prayer, knowing that the situation was fragile and fearing a new Civil War. This is also one of many nations already being affected by climate change, with unpredictable weather and flooding making things worse for an already impoverished nation. All We Can is one of a large coalition of organisations lobbying MPs on June 17th.

For more information on all these issues, and updates about Nepal, take a look at the website: www.allwecan.org.uk and/or ask your Circuit representatives about the resources they should have received at the Circuit meeting.

Alan is now an 'All We Can' speaker, available to give talks in worship or other events. He visited an All We Can partner in Tanzania earlier this year.

Pam and Alan Cram

Families Anonymous



Does someone you care about use drugs? Do you know a family where there are drug users? Help and support is available in local support groups. An established group meets at Cefn Coed Hospital, and a new group is now starting at Ty Croeso in Clydach. More information about F.A. is available on 0845 1200 660 or www.famon.org.uk and about the Clydach group from 01792 845942 or 01792 845942

Pitton and Horton

Mini Market and Coffee evening on Thursday
6th August at 7.30 p.m.

Morrison Spring Fair

It was a lovely day out at Morrison, The weather was beautiful and many people came to the fair. For that we want to thank God. We were well supported by our Circuit Superintendent, Rev.Howard Long (at the far left back), Carolyn Harris a Member of Parliament (in front with hands folded next to Rev.Siperire) and Mike Hedges a member of the Welsh House of Assembly (behind Carolyn). We are grateful for their support.



On sale were a good variety of plants and flowers outside. Inside were lovely cakes, Fair Trade goods, bric a brac, pictures and Bible verses in frames and raffle tickets for special goods.



The Mission of this fair was to raise money for church funds. We raised well over £700. This is fantastic. Thank you for a job well done.

A verse framed which I bought from this fair said, "I will always be with you" You know even in fundraising God will always be with us. A special thank you to Heather Coleman from the Forward Planning group for assisting.

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta



Congratulations to Marilyn Harry on her invitation to a Buckingham Palace garden party in recognition of her charitable work over many decades. Marilyn was a member at Morrison when younger, helping with Sunday School. Now she is secretary of the Wesley Guild at Clydach, and with them arranges a Macmillan coffee morning each year. She is also a volunteer with Age Cymru. For over thirty years Marilyn has made up children's Christmas gifts for the Mr X appeal, supported by her family, friends, and the Guild. A recent fund-raiser for Mr X held at Capel y Nant raised over £400.



Congratulations to the Forget Me Not Dementia Day Clubs which has been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

A Forget Me Not dementia day club meets every Monday in Victoria Hall, Mumbles.

For information call Chris Capel on 01792 366095.

Sorrow looks back, Worry looks around, Faith looks up.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Harriet's Leaving Do!

Yes, I know – many of us went to Harriet's departure from our Circuit at Penlan chapel in 2011. But here was another one – but this time in Stonebroom, Derbyshire where she has been living before her departure for Barbados to be at home with her family.

Jean Powell and I started out in good time on Friday 24th April and headed off for a bed and breakfast in Tewkesbury. A little daunting as there was an external staircase to manoeuvre. But we coped. We had a good meal in a local hostelry, complete with hen party! The next morning we headed off for Stonebroom, stopping for lunch at a local pub. We asked the pub owner, who looked a little strange and large hairy dog (even stranger), if she could do sandwiches and coffee. She said she did 'instant' and could rustle up a ham sandwich. Having taken another look at the dog, we declined the sandwich and settled for the 'instant'! The previous week she told us she had held a St George's Day party with bangers, mash and hairy dog – actually she didn't mention the dog!

We then headed off for a very good lunch at a pub with restaurant.

We arrived at Stonebroom Methodist chapel - giving Harriet a complete surprise. We spent an afternoon socialising with tea and cake – and even more cake - and then started the service, in a packed chapel.

It was very memorable with everything chosen by Harriet. Two choirs, wonderful singing and a special message on 'confidence' by fellow Barbadian, Rev Dr Calvin Samuel, Head of Wesley College at Durham University.



So a wonderful 2 hour service, enjoyed by all. The service included "I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus, the Nazarene, and wonder how he could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean."

*How marvellous, how wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
How marvellous, how wonderful
is my Saviour's love for me!*

which we had also sung when Harriet left Penlan. We ended with 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah' – what else from someone who loved Wales?

We then headed off and stayed at Tamworth Travel Lodge – with more stairs!

On the way home we looked for coffee after a long trip. We ended up going around Usk, twice – no we didn't end up in the prison but rather a smart pub opposite and a very good coffee – no instant in sight.

We then found the Bagle Brook at Baglan where I have been several times with the church walking group. We had an excellent lunch, even arriving after 2pm.

So an extraordinary 460 mile trip, very emotional, very exhausting that I really wouldn't have missed.

Good luck Harriet – we'll miss you.



Caroline Buckler



The presentation by Sketty Madcaps of the cheque for £1,500 to Rebecca Chick, Business and Community Fundraiser for Ty Hafan.

In February Sketty Madcaps performed their 12th annual pantomime, on this occasion "Peter Pan, Sketty Madcaps Style".

Every panto has been written and produced by Jan Chaplin. This was the first time our cast was made up of Methodists and Bethel URC members. With a cast of 24 adults and 15 juniors and a large production team the panto provided a wonderful opportunity for us all to get to know each other better.

One must also mention the wonderful backdrops painted for us by Lynne Want. Each one is a work of art deserving of being hung permanently in an art gallery.

On April 22nd Rebecca Chick came to Madcaps to receive a cheque for £1,500 on behalf of Ty Hafan. She reported how the money would enable the centre to continue the work for children from all areas of Wales.

We extend our thanks to everyone who assisted in our panto in any way, from the cast, front of house, lighting, bringing children to rehearsals and a wonderful DVD producer but most of all to our audiences who bought tickets and joined in the fun. It was with their help that we were able to pass £500 to

our church and the money for Ty Hafan.

Most importantly, it seemed a very good time was had by all. Oh yes it was!!

Please try to support our next year's panto, still as yet only in a draft form but based roughly on a Sleeping Beauty idea.

Linda Jones

Swansea Hope Worship Celebration

Sunday, 28th June at 11.00 a.m. at St Helen's. Join with many other Christians from different churches throughout our city for this special open air service of praise.

Crossroads For Human Development

Open Day at the home of Rev Gill Evans, Riverside, Middleton, Rhosilli, Swansea, SA3 1PJ on Saturday 20th June. Come for Coffee/Lunch/ Afternoon Tea.

All proceeds towards CRHD

Tel: 390527 for further details

In the Spirit of Pentecost at Sketty



We read recently in our Pentecost celebrations how the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” One of the things I love about this account is that it reminds us that the Spirit is the ‘go-between God’. It reminds us that it wasn’t some homogenous language such as Esperanto that the disciples were speaking – but the languages of other nations, so that all people were able to worship God in their mother tongue.

Here in Sketty we rejoice that in our Bethel building we now have two congregations worshipping in their own language. For some time, Coptic Christians from Egypt and Ethiopia have been using the church for their services, speaking a mixture of Coptic and English. Their priest and some members of their congregation joined our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services this year, and some of us joined them for their Maundy Thursday services. We could do this because like other Orthodox traditions, the Coptic tradition calculates Easter using a slightly different calendar and so this year their Easter was a week after ours. But despite this difference, despite the obvious language difference and despite very different ways of worshipping, we are finding that there is something Spirit-filled in partnering brothers and sisters from the world-wide church. And we would like this relationship to flourish.

We are also delighted that, starting in May, an Asian Christian Fellowship has also begun in Sketty. Rev Irfan John, Methodist Synod Enabler for Ethnic Minority Congregations approached the Circuit to start such a group in Sketty. Again, the Bethel building was the best place to host this, and over 30 Asian Christians came to their first service in May.

Some of us from Sketty went over to see them after our evening service and were offered delicious curry and naan bread! Many of the members of the Asian Christian Fellowship attend local churches of different denominations, but being able to worship together in your own mother tongue is something special to them. And as with our brothers and sisters in the Coptic Church, we hope that over time the relationship with this congregation may flourish. We feel privileged to be able to host these two different groups and pray that the Spirit of Pentecost may burn brightly as a result.

Rev. Leslie Noon

Snippit from Clydach



The sun shone for members of CYTUN in Clydach when they met for the second ‘Pentecost Picnic in the Park’. After a dull morning and some drizzle, the clouds parted and we were soon sunbathing! Dorothy Lewis, trainee priest at St. Mary’s led a short time of worship. Though there were not so many people in the park as usual, our singing attracted some interest, and we all enjoyed the ‘children’s activity’ of waving cardboard flames over our heads and making the sound of wind. Unfortunately there were no children present (Bank Holiday and Eisteddfod week), so there were no games this year, but the adults enjoyed teas and ice-creams from the Clydach Heritage Centre and cakes provided by the Crams (one of whom had had a birthday!)

Rev. Pam Cram

Brunswick Organist Celebrates

We are sorry that this article was missed in our Spring edition of Connect.



In December 1964 Howard Cooke was officially appointed organist at Brunswick, a position he has now held for fifty years. As a talented musician and organist Howard has proved to be an inspiration to countless congregations and also a great help to every preacher taking the services. He has been so reliable, never missing a service unless he found a deputy, always playing with a musical and sympathetic ear, and making sure the singing and musical content of services was of a high standard. Added to this he has given many concerts, accompanied the choir and attended all their rehearsals.

Brunswick has certainly been blessed to have enjoyed his loyalty for such a long time. Long may it continue!

To recognise this achievement, on Sunday 21st December 2014 Howard was presented with a special certificate and a gift by the minister – Rev. Siperire Mugadzaweta.

Included in the photograph are David Taylor (Church Secretary) and Jennifer Taylor (Conductor of the Choir).

Circuit Project – The Amelia Farm Trust



During March, April and May, churches in our circuit have been busy raising money for our circuit project – the Amelia Farm Trust. So far £2137 has been banked. I was delighted to speak about the farm at Eaton Road Women's Group. They gave me a generous cheque. There was also a coffee morning at Murton, where I ran a powerpoint show about the farm and a good sum was raised. At Rhosilli Village Hall in May a sugar icing demonstration was held and over £500 was raised. I also showed pictures there and spoke briefly about the farm. Brunswick WF has adopted 2 animals for a year – a chipmunk and a goose! In Sketty there has been a communion collection, a donation from Friday Night @ the Movies and monthly quizzes have, so far, raised over £30. This means that the unofficial total is now nearer £3000. Very many thanks to all those churches and their supporters who have contributed to this sum.

On May 20th I met the new director of the Amelia Farm Trust, Karen Turnbull. The topic of our conversation was the prayer labyrinth. We decided that help was needed looking after the labyrinth as far as maintenance was concerned, i.e. removing weeds and cutting grass at regular intervals. Karen is looking for more volunteers to help with the visitors' centre, so she will also appeal for help with gardening at the same time.

We hope that Karen will come to Swansea to receive the cheque when all the money has been received and banked.

Janet Neilson

Uniting Church Sketty was packed!

(continued from front page)

The flower festival, with different scenes from the Bible allowed people to reflect on their own journey with God. Hundreds of visitors came and gazed at the beautiful displays, drank tea and coffee and partook of delicious home-made cakes. Each one passed through the display at the entrance to the church – an archway with carnations going up one side, roses going up the other to symbolise the two churches – and meeting in the middle in a heart shape with the flowers now intermingled. A moving and symbolic arrangement saying all that needed to be said.



The church was packed with church family, with friends from around the Methodist Circuit and the URC region, with past ministers from both churches and with clergy from other churches in Sketty. Rev. Stephen Wigley represented the Methodist denomination and Rev. Sally Thomas represented the URC denomination. We gave thanks for all that is past, as we reflected on the origins of both churches and we put our trust in God for all that is to come, as we shared the new vision statement of the church, developed in the Lent Faith and Fellowship groups – *Uniting together, Caring for all, Seeking God.*



The congregation was then treated to something a bit different: our very own 'Happy' video which used the music from the very popular Pharrell Williams song *Happy*, and video clips of the church congregation and all the different groups that use the church. It reminded us how happy we are to come together.

Then, before the Constitution was officially signed, the congregation took part in an Act of Commitment as we each committed ourselves to journey into the future with God.



Flower display representing Baptism/ commissioning

The celebrations continued all day Sunday as well. The morning service included cutting a celebration cake (which we shared after the service), making a gigantic jigsaw of our new Uniting Church Sketty logo and sharing communion together. It culminated in writing our names on a friendship bracelet each and then exchanging these with others in the service. Although the 130 friendship bracelets wasn't quite enough for the whole congregation, nevertheless wonderful chaos ensued as we swapped our bracelets in the last hymn. Each person went home with another's bracelet and committed to pray for that person – reminding us finally that we are all one in Christ.

We thank God for the wonderful weekend and trust that it is in fact, only the beginning!

Rev. Leslie Noon

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- Utilising part of this area to relocate our disabled toilet facilities.
- The remaining area to be used for much needed storage space.

The project is estimated to cost in the region of £53000. With local fundraising and grants from our Circuit, Synod and local benefactors we are just over halfway to our target £26,500.

Thank you to all our friends in the circuit who continue to support our fundraising efforts. With your help we can achieve our target.

Paul Kent - Building Project Treasurer Tel: 529551

www.wesleymethodistchurch.org.uk

Elizabeth Bevan



Brunswick FAN group had a lovely meeting after Easter when members of the Mother group from Cardiff visited. We shared a many stories and everyone present had a lovely time.

Come and join us this summer time. Everyone is welcome.



It was with much sadness on Thursday 2nd April our very dear friend Elizabeth Bevan, a long-standing member of Murton Methodist Church, passed away peacefully.

I am sure all of us will have our own very special memories of Elizabeth, who was our church organist for over 60 years.

In addition to playing the organ, Elizabeth was involved in all the other activities which took place at Murton church. She was a member of the Ladies Guild, where she played the piano for many years; she also enjoyed attending our Tuesday coffee morning, where she had her own chair to sit on. It was known as Elizabeth's chair!

Elizabeth was a lovely, kind, caring lady and will be dearly missed by her family, her close friends and all her friends at church.

We thank God for her service and dedication to Murton Methodist Church.

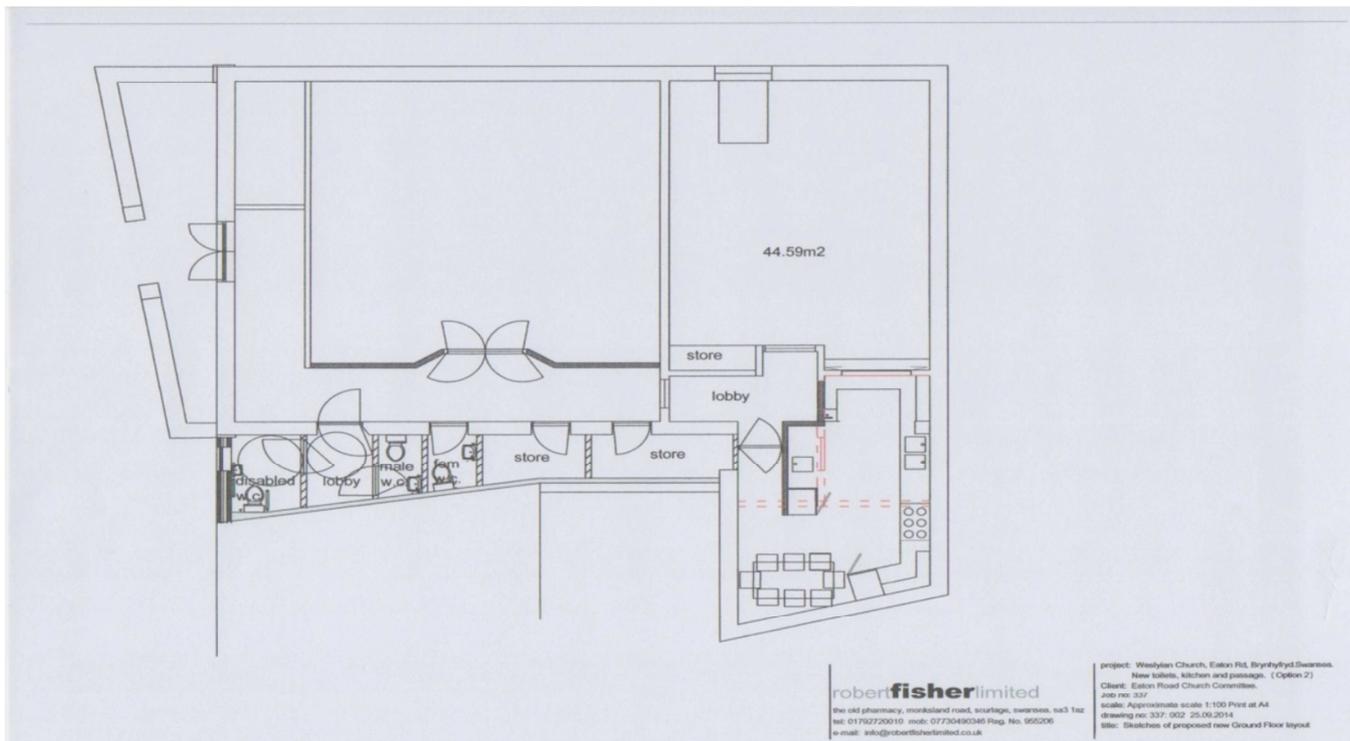
Bev Poyner

If I might be the means of saving one soul I should prefer it to all the riches and honour in the world.

Asahel Nettleton

CONNECT Summer 2015

Proposed Alterations to Wesley Methodist Church - Brynhyfryd



Wesley Methodist Church – Brynhyfryd



BUILDING OUR VISION

There has been a Methodist Church in Brynhyfryd proclaiming the message of Jesus and serving the community for many years. Even though today the church is a small fellowship we are a welcome and very active one! As well as the Sunday services the premises are used extensively by church and community groups including Brownies, Rainbows, Lite Bites lunch club and Prayer and Bible Study. When the need arises we even become the local polling station for voting purposes.

Our "vision" is as a result of our success since our major refurbishment of the church in 2001. Since having the

"luxury" of a kitchen facility, the church members have provided a weekly "Lite Bites" lunch every Thursday which has embraced many people from outside the church, within the Brynhyfryd community and further afield.

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

In respect of this specific problem, broader issues of the building have been considered (bearing in mind that we have no additional land to expand on to) and briefly, the improvements would be as follows:

- Increase in the size of kitchen and more immediate access to the serving area
- Blocking off our side entrance which is attached to an adjacent private dwelling thus eradicating a constant maintenance and security problem, and also improving our energy consumption.

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Safeguarding Apology

At the end of May the Methodist Church published a report of an independent review of past safeguarding cases related to the Church from 1950 to 2014.

Speaking on behalf of the Church, the Secretary of the Methodist Conference and General Secretary the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins issued a full and unreserved apology to survivors and victims of abuse in response to the report:

“On behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain I want to express an unreserved apology for the failure of its current and earlier processes fully to protect children, young people and adults from physical and sexual abuse inflicted by some ministers in Full Connexion and members of the Methodist Church. That abuse has been inflicted by some Methodists on children, young people and adults is and will remain a deep source of grief and shame to the Church.

“We have not always listened properly to those abused or cared for them, and this is deeply regrettable. In respect of these things we have, as a Christian Church, clearly failed to live in ways that glorify God and honour Christ.

“I am certain that the Methodist Conference will want to resolve to do all in its power to improve its systems to protect children, young people and adults from abuse within the life of the Church and on Church premises, and to review them diligently on a regular basis.”

The review, which has taken three years, was led by former Deputy Chief Executive of Barnardo's Jane Stacey, who has had a long career in senior management of organisations in the child welfare field.

“It was a courageous act for the Methodist Church to launch such a comprehensive Past Cases Review. Even more courageous was the response from the survivors or victims who relived very difficult experiences to contribute to the review, either directly or through a third party. However thorough the review has been, there are undoubtedly cases that have not been reported and the Church would encourage survivors and victims and those with any information to contact the Safeguarding Team. They will be listened to and support will be offered.

“There are many lessons to be learnt, but the most challenging are those that require a significant culture change throughout the church, and particularly for ministers and church leaders. The Church will need further courage to implement the review's recommendations, which are far-reaching and call for major changes in both practice and culture. The Methodist Church has already taken measures to improve safeguarding across the Connexion and implementing the learning from this review will be the next step to ensuring that the Church can be a safe place for all.”

The Methodist Conference, meeting in Southport from 25 June to 2 July, will discuss the findings of the Past Cases Review and will be invited to establish an implementation group to take forward the report's 23 recommendations.

If you wish to read the report in full it can be found on the Methodist Church website www.methodist.org.uk

Thank You



I was invited to attend a meeting of The Association of Church Editors on 9th March to accept an award. My only thought was I hope I don't have to make a speech!

The award was one of six presented annually to church magazines throughout the country from all denominations. Connect was awarded the winning entry in the category “Clarity of the Christian Message”.

Without articles from our Ministers and church members there would not be a magazine to edit. I just want to say a thank you to all those who have contributed and those who will do so in the future.

Myra Maddock