

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Spring 2014

In this Issue

News in Brief	2
Message from the Superintendent	3
Easter Offering	4
Night Shelter/Alone on the Streets	5
Photos from Brunswick	6
Life's Scoring System	7
The Bookbus in Zambia	8
Greenfields Africa	9
Sentinel of Conscience	10
Clydach/Tools with a Mission	11
Holy Communion	12
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	13
Aldersgate Sunday	14
Aldersgate Sunday (continued)	15
Action for Children	16
Noah's Ark	17
Bookshelf	18
Circuit Plan	19
Churches in the Circuit	20

NIGHT SHELTER A Ray of Hope

For the past three months Swansea churches of different denominations have teamed up to provide a night shelter for the homeless during the cold winter nights. The Swansea Night Shelter project organised by Swansea Hope (a network of local churches) has been delivered in partnership with a number of local homelessness organisations and charities.

Rev Howard Long, co-ordinator of the Methodist response said, *'The Methodist Church has been pleased and privileged to play its part in this wonderful project because it makes such a difference to people's lives. Every Saturday we have had three teams of volunteers each with its own team leader. The kitchen teams have provided hot evening meals and breakfasts and the minibus drivers have transported guests and bedding between the different venues. My thanks go to the 50 Methodist volunteers who have helped make it all happen this year.'*

Mandy Harvey, the Night Shelter project leader, said *'The Churches feel that the problem of homelessness is something that we can and should be helping with. We believe we can make a positive difference to the lives of rough sleepers by offering them shelter, food, and most importantly, hope.'*

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 2nd June 2014

Editor

Mrs. Myra Maddock
Tel: 207484
email: myra43@virginmedia.com



Preparing for the evening meal in the Victoria Hall

I do not want merely to possess faith; I want a faith that possesses me.

Charles Kingsley



Message from the Superintendent



The American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr said these words about the church in a sermon he preached 1967,

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather its conscience. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.

King's words are as relevant today as they have ever been and they immediately came to mind when I heard that 27 Anglican bishops as well as many Methodist Chairs of District had written a letter to the Prime Minister condemning the government's welfare reform policies that have left many of the poorest in our society facing increased hardship.

The letter asks a question of the government that we would all do well to consider. Why is it that increasing numbers of British citizens are being forced to use foodbanks to feed themselves and their families when the United Kingdom is the seventh largest economy in the world?

That is not an easy question to answer but it is clear that we are experiencing a perfect storm made up of a number of factors including rising costs of living, static incomes, changes to benefits, underemployment and unemployment. All these factors put together have left increasing numbers of people in a crisis.

It is a startling fact that here in Wales 35,919 people received a minimum of three days emergency food from Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2012-13, compared to 16,204 in 2011-12. Throughout the UK the figure of those using foodbanks in 2012-13 is a startling 346,992 and of those helped, 126,889 were children.

The standard answer from politicians is that we have to make cuts to the welfare budget in order to get our financial house in order. Everyone understands this line because we all have to live within our means and work within budgets be it at work or at home but the real injustice is that at the same time as making cuts to welfare the governments gives tax cuts to the rich. We have a system of corporation tax in this country that enables huge companies to trade and make millions but avoid paying their fair share of tax and it's all perfectly legal.

Where is the justice in that?

Niall Cooper, the National Coordinator of Church Action on Poverty has said that every pound avoided in tax is a pound less to spend on childcare, social care, health or education. At a time when spending cuts are having a real and damaging impact on the lives of some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the country, it is morally indefensible for some of Britain's richest companies to be avoiding paying their fair share of UK taxes.

The President of the Methodist Conference Rev Ruth Gee said recently

I see the failure of those in power to acknowledge the facts. We are trampling the heads of the poor into the dust of the earth and pushing the afflicted out of the way (Amos 2 v7) It isn't acceptable, it is iniquitous and we will continue to challenge political leaders, whatever their party allegiance because that is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus was anointed to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim the release of captives and to let the oppressed go free (Luke 4 18)

For once the church is on the right agenda and the Bishops and the Methodist Chairs of District have every justification to point out the facts to the Prime Minister and to make it clear that he has an 'acute moral imperative to act' on these matters.

Howard

Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit



MINISTERS

Superintendent: Rev.Howard Long
12 Worcester Drive, Langland,
Swansea SA3 4HL
Tel: 366712
email: hdlong@btinternet.com

Rev.Pamela M.Cram BA, MA,
DipCouns
86 Pontardawe Road, Clydach,
Swansea SA6 8PA
Tel: 845942
email: pcram@headweb.co.uk

Rev.Andrew Walker BTh, BA
28 Linkside Drive, Southgate,
Swansea SA3 2BR
Tel: 232867
email: andrew.walker@methodist.org.uk

Leslie J.Noon
47 Sketty Park Road, Sketty,
Swansea SA2 9AS
Tel: 203938
email: leslienoan@hotmail.com

Siperire Mugadzaweta BA,MNSc (Zimbabwe)
5 Channel View, Sketty,
Swansea SA2 8LY
Tel: 206793
email: siperiremugadzaweta@yahoo.co.uk

CIRCUIT TREASURER

Mr.Bernard Gwyther
104 Rhyd-y-Defaid Drive, Derwen Fawr,
Swansea. SA2 8AW
Tel: 207190
email: bernardgwyther@virginmedia.com

CIRCUIT STEWARDS

Mrs.Gwen Dumelow
Tel: 539328
e.mail: g.dumelow@ntlworld.com
Mr.Derek Norton
Tel: 402338
e.mail: nortonderek84@hotmail.com
Mrs.Heather Coleman
Tel: 290214
e.mail: hacoleman@ntlworld.com

news in brief

Sketty
Friday Night at the Movies
April 11th @ 7.30 pm – “Chocolat”

May 9th @ 7.30pm – “Singing in the rain”

Coffee Morning and Cake Stall
Saturday 7th June 10 a.m.-12 noon
Proceeds In Aid Of Share Tawe

Morrison
Quiz Night at 7.00 p.m. on
Monday April 7th – bring a team or
come along to join others to make
up a team.

Clydach
Coffee Mornings on April 3rd; May
8th; and June 5th.

Bible study ‘Build on the Rock’
with monthly sessions on March
20th; April 17th; May 22nd; June
19th and July 17th.

Reynoldston
Prayer and Praise with a
wonderful welcome every
Thursday at 10.00 a.m. and
on Sunday evenings at
6.00 p.m.

Penlan
Bible Fellowship every
Tuesday at 7.30 p.m.

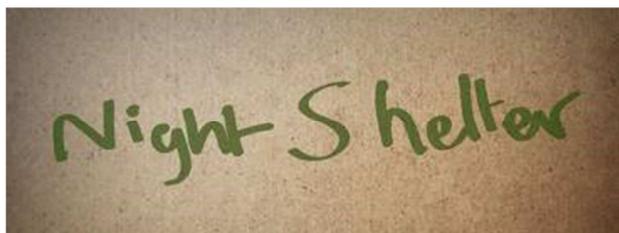
Wesley
Lite Bites and Fellowship
every Thursday at 12 noon.
Bible Study every week –
contact church steward for
details/venue



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)

Alpha www.alpha.org. The next Alpha course in Mumbles will
take place in September 2014.

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



The Night Shelter for the homeless closes at the end of March. Every night for the past three months a different church in Swansea has opened its doors at 7pm to up to 12 homeless people who had been referred by various agencies.

The Methodist Church has been responsible for Saturday nights with the shelter based at our Mumbles church. The guests, mainly men, have varied in age from 20 to mid-60's and were homeless for all sorts of reasons: relationship break-up; loss of work and then home; drink and drug addiction and so on. Many of the younger ones were from chaotic family backgrounds.

Rules are few in the night shelter, but strictly adhered to for the sake of all guests and the volunteers. If the guests arrive after 8pm, they are not allowed entry, and guests must not bring in alcohol or drugs.

Following a 2-course hot evening meal, there is time for conversation, watching a DVD, or playing cards. The guests are provided with an inflatable mattress and bedding, and can go to bed at any time, although "lights out" is at 11pm. The guests are given breakfast, before being driven to Zac's Place (a drop-in centre off St Helen's Rd where they can get medical help) at around 8am. Meanwhile their bedding is transported to the next night's centre.

The volunteers come mainly, but not exclusively, from the churches of Swansea, with Methodists well represented! They work in three shifts: 6-10pm, 10pm-6am, and 6am-9am, and apart from providing food, offer company and a listening ear. The volunteers are never judgemental: "there but for the grace of God....."!

As a result of their contact with the Night Shelter, around 20 guests to date have been found permanent accommodation, either in hostels or in flats, and several have managed to turn their lives around. One of them said last week that if it wasn't for the Night Shelter, he would still be "knocking back the booze". Instead, he has been "dry" for a week and his relationship with family members is being restored.

Alone On The Streets

She carried the whole world slung on her back
Some threadbare clothes in a rotten old sack.

Heavy lines etched on her weary face,
For her lot in life she had lost the race.

She once had a home with a respectable mother,
Now hard life on the street, she knows of no other.

Her misfortune now plain for all people to see,
A good outcome all lost and never to be.

She spends all her days alone on the streets,
Not a friend in the world only beggars she meets.

How will it all end, does anyone care?
Will anyone help, will someone be there?

If it was your daughter what would you do?
For solutions to her life are all but too few.

David Wood





METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN – EASTER OFFERING

The Methodist Church in Britain is undergoing a period of transition, where the Methodist Missionary Society is finishing its task and the ethos of “One Mission”, whether at “home” or “overseas” is being embedded throughout the Church. The money raised through Easter Offering will go, in its entirety, to the World Mission Fund, which remains a distinct fund within Methodism.

The dedication of the Easter Offering is one of the longest-standing acts in the Methodist Church in Britain, with its roots going back to the collection, in Manchester, of “Christmas pennies” for overseas missions in 1883.

Your giving to the Methodist Church World Mission Fund helps to support mission partners working overseas, nationals in mission appointments and overseas students in ministry training. It also allows the Church to make grants to Partner Churches for special projects.

The new logo for Methodist Women in Britain is based on the butterfly, a vulnerable yet resilient creature, which undergoes a number of risky transformations in its lifespan.

Please ensure that our Easter Offering envelopes are given out during Lent and Holy Week in all our churches. Church treasurers are asked to send all cheques (made payable to WORLD MISSION FUND) and GIFT AID ENVELOPES to Janet Neilson 19 Gabalfa Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 8NF (email = iverbrustad@btinternet.com).

Cheques and Gift Aid envelopes may be brought to the Circuit Service. If you are bringing your church's cheque and gift aid envelopes to the service please inform Janet beforehand and of the amount collected by your church.

Janet Neilson (Circuit Contact for MWiB)

RISK THE PATH HE TROD

EASTER OFFERING 2014



The Easter Offering Service will take place at Sketty Methodist Church on Sunday 15th June at 6.30 p.m. The theme for this year is ‘Risk The Path He Trod’.



Doreen Leighton

Doreen has recently moved to a Methodist Home in Exmouth, near one of her daughters, from her home in Rhossili.

She was born and brought up in Rhossili and after school in Gowerton she went to Aberystwyth University and then went on to teach in Clacton on Sea where she lived for the next 40 years.

She met her husband, Arthur, in the Methodist Church there and after their marriage in Pitton Chapel she returned to Clacton, where she held most offices in the church at some time or other, until she and Arthur moved back to Rhossili in 1985.



Members at Clydach had three opportunities to sing the traditional carols. Early in Advent the new traditional bilingual service shared with Capel y Nant was held in the main chapel, with Bible and contemporary readings, and a collection for Water Aid. On the Sunday before Christmas, Alan Cram co-ordinated a service in which Wesley Guild members chose the carols. Marilyn Harry, Secretary of the Guild, dug out an old candle tree that used to be used in Sunday School at the old church on Clydach Road - the photo shows all those at the service, with the tree and Advent ring.

Finally, some of us went carol-singing as part of the CYTUN programme in the village. After half an hour in the foyer of the Co-op, we tried a new venture of singing in The Village Tavern, with permission of the landlord, and some 'interesting' reactions from some of his customers. Thanks to the generosity of shoppers, those at the pub, and a generous individual donation, we raised £70 for Shelter Cymru. It's been suggested that next year we might take in a couple of other hostelryes as well, and take along a big banner saying who we are.

Questions about the Christian Faith?



rejesus.co.uk is a website ideal for those who have little previous knowledge of Jesus or the Christian faith

Tools with a Mission

In early February CYTUN Clydach welcomed a speaker from Tools with a Mission (TWAM), who collect a wide variety of tools, machines and equipment, repair and refurbish them, and then ship them, mainly to sub Saharan Africa, but sometimes to disaster zones such as Haiti.

It was a very rough night, and perhaps for that reason only a few 'stalwarts' attended representing 4 of our 12 member congregations. After an interesting illustrated talk we agreed to arrange a collection of old tools and equipment for collection on March 1st.

Notices went out to all the churches and a time arranged when the collection point at Capel y Nant would be open. About eight people brought a wide variety of items, including a sewing machine and sewing threads, spades, saws, and a variety of interesting old tools. For one person this was very timely as she was just clearing out her parents' home in the village, while others took the opportunity for a much needed clear-out of a shed or spare room. Capel y Nant cleared out some old water boilers and we had a call about a treadle sewing machine that needed collecting direct.

Andy Bowdler, Wales co-ordinator for TWAM, and his son, felt it was a very worthwhile effort and left with their two vehicles heavily laden (see photo below). Andy will be providing us with lots more sets of leaflets about TWAM to encourage other places of worship around the area to organise similar collections. If you have a group who would be interested in having a speaker Andy can be contacted on twamcymru@twam.co.uk or 07814 573696



Rev.Pam Cram

Volunteering on the Bookbus in Zambia



Last year I spent 3 weeks volunteering in Zambia. I joined 7 other volunteers in the South Luangwa District, north of Lusaka, on The Bookbus, a UK-based educational charity. The Bookbus charity aims to encourage and hopefully inspire pupils to the pleasure of reading by providing colourful and easy-to-read books. The books are printed in English as this is still the business and education language in Zambia, although children speak their tribal language until about 7 years when they start to learn English. The Bus visits the same schools for 2 years running, during the dry season, for continuity, and visits a different school each day of the week.

My main worries were a) the climate b) the camping (ie insects and animals) and c) the other volunteers- would we all get on? I needn't have worried – the Bus only operates during the milder dry season, because roads are impassable in the wet season; the camp was well equipped with shower blocks, BBQ area and a small café/bar although we were self-catering, but we did have a couple of hairy escapes from monitor lizards, millipedes and snakes; and the other volunteers were fabulous. I was the oldest – the youngest being Honor, aged 26, (a nurse from Bath), but we all got on famously.

We set off about 7.30am each morning in the Bus, which stores reading books suitable for all ages, and art equipment - the children have often not had any experience of painting, gluing and glitter – and we certainly had fun. Sometimes the journey took

up to 2 hours over very rough roads, and we often came across bush fires and roads blocked by vegetation.

The Bookbus has been active in Zambia for 5 years and has worked in a variety of schools, from preschools to high schools, government funded to volunteer run, from 35 pupils to 1800 but one thing is always common- the eagerness of the children to learn. During holidays and through teachers' strikes the kids turn up at school just to see if anyone will teach them, and nearly all prefer term-time to the three, one month, slots of holidays they get!! Everywhere we arrived we were greeted by staff and children with curiosity, enthusiasm, open arms and big smiles. The children would cheer and crowd round the bus when we were getting off, and loved the stickers we gave them before we left.

We spent about 5 hours at each school, sitting on rattan mats under trees in the playground areas and taking small groups from the main classes, which were sometimes as big as 100 pupils. I read to children from as young as 3 up to 16. It isn't unusual here to find children of a big age range in one class; this is because they may have started school late, had to drop out for some time to work on their farm or take care of a sick family member. So having a sixteen year old sitting next to an eleven year old is common place and the children all take it in their stride.



After school the Bus stopped in the local village to buy our food for the day as we were self-catering, staying in tents and huts. The poverty of the area was more evident in the village than the schools, with very little variety in the food we could buy, and then after eating lunch and resting we had to prepare lessons for the next day – often during power cuts in the early evening, when we used torches, not knowing exactly which age groups we would be given Monday to Friday each week was very tiring but the weekends were free time.

The secret of happiness lies in liking what you do and not in doing what you like.

Volunteering on the Bookbus in Zambia (continued)

We took advantage of our location and free time by going on safari. I had never been to Africa before, or on safari, but I loved seeing the animals in their natural habitat. However, the main memories of my time in Zambia are of great fun making butterflies after reading "The Hungry Caterpillar", with the children running around flying their "butterflies", or marching in the playground with up to 50 children following me reciting "We're Going on a Lion Hunt", or with glitter on their faces after making animal masks for "Handa's Surprise". I would love to go again in the future to contribute to the difference the Bus is making to these children's enjoyment of books.



Sandra Cuthill
Sketty Methodist Church

Questions about the Christian Faith?

Christianity

christianity.org.uk looks at common questions about the Christian faith, and opportunities to ask follow up questions.



GREENFIELDS AFRICA
transforming communities
-changing lives

Doreen Barge from our Brunswick Church is supporting the Greenfields Africa charity that exists to 'transform African communities by promoting self-reliance through healthcare, welfare and education'.

The mothers of babies born into poverty have a tough time. Incomes are so low that there is often nothing more than a scrap of cloth or old towel to wrap a new baby in.

Greenfields Africa has teams of knitters throughout the UK and in neighbouring EU countries, who knit baby clothes and cot blankets which are then sent to Uganda and Kenya.

Some supporters generously donate babygrows and cardigans which they buy from car boot sales and charity shops.

These feed into the Mama bag project -a mama bag contains a cotton vest, a knitted cardigan, a beanie and booties, a babygrow, and a blanket, plus locally bought soap, vaseline etc. To qualify for a mama bag, the mum is required to attend 3 ante-natal clinics during the pregnancy

This project not only gives the babies dignity and comfort, it also ensures that pregnant women are tested for AIDS and diabetes and have access to childcare information.

If you would like to support this great cause please contact Doreen direct Tel: 01792 207811 e-mail doreenbarga@yahoo.co.uk

For more information about Greenfields Africa please visit www.gfafrica.com

Life's Scoring System ?

Swansea	4	Liverpool	1
Tottenham	4	West Ham	1
Manchester City	4	Manchester United	1
Newcastle	4	Sunderland	1
Chelsea	4	Arsenal	4

"All for one OR one for All ?"

I doubt if our Superintendant likes the Liverpool score.

The first thing we ask about any game is "What's the score?"

The rules of scoring any game tell the players which achievements count and what to do in order to be a winner. The object of most games is to score as high as possible, though in golf it is the opposite. Strange how we all tend to be natural scorekeepers and crave feedback on our performances. When we're young we try to please the scorekeepers, our parents, teachers, and coaches looking for their smiles, attention or approval.

It is no different in the Bible. Cain was angry because his offering didn't score as well as Abel's, Joseph's brothers kept score on the basis of the affection of their father, and the Rich Fool scored by money and possessions.

Are you happy with your scoring system in life?

There are different assessments used by people:

1. Comparison. Do you compare yourself with others? You could use upward, lateral or downward comparison and each has their problems as the first encourages envy, the second competition and the third arrogance. It's funny how we change the comparator dependant on the situation. With affluence we tend to take a slightly upward comparator hoping to attain that and when it comes to ethical behaviour we look downwards to feel good about ourselves

2. Competing. Perhaps we don't like comparators and prefer competition for scoring and try always to be the best. This is excellent for striving for new levels of performance but it can create envy and jealousy, perhaps encouraging cheating since winning becomes more important than the battle. Even authors and pop stars use sales lists to assess their importance and popularity.

3. Climbing the Ladder. Climbing above everyone in the ladder becomes the most important scoring system Surprising when you climb the ladder you always look up and never notice those below you. You are so concerned about having the most expensive holiday or the best car and as a consequence you don't think that perhaps the most important thing is having enough money to pay for the bus trip. Strange how when you are climbing the ladder you don't notice that Jesus was passing you on the way down.

God's scoring system is based on service, and humility; hence Jesus insisting on washing his disciples feet, leaving them speechless and with their head's hanging.

As we approach Easter we find that at the Last Supper in spite of knowing of Judas' betrayal he still included him, and the cross was his ultimate service/sacrifice on behalf of everyone.

Definitely "One for ALL" rather than "all for one(self)"

People who embrace their smallness and serve grow bigger in God's eyes.

Sketty Methodist Church

A Concert with The Gwalia Singers

Saturday 10th May at 7.00 p.m.

In Aid of the "End Polio Now" Campaign,
hosted by The Rotary Club Of Swansea.

This is the main overseas project of Rotary International, with the aim of global eradication of this terrible disease. The endemic wild strain of Polio is now only found in 3 countries, Afghanistan, Nigeria & Pakistan, so we are getting closer to our target.

With your support we can achieve our aim.

Don't pray for an easier life – pray to be a stronger person. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers – pray for power equal to the task.

Home away from home



These are some of the students who worship at Brunswick. We made them feel at home as they are all away from home for Christmas. We brought them to the manse for Christmas. They all cooked their special meals and we all shared it as our Christmas meal just after the Christmas Service.



From left to right standing:

Amber Wheatly, Margaret Ankutunde, Raymond Ankutunde, Vash Wheatly Lambert Essiaw and Stacy Essiaw. Reverend Siperire and Julius Mugadzaweta sitting.

A Follow up to Surfers not Street Children:

We came across an item in the Independent sport section about street children taking to the boards on South Africa 's foaming surf during a celebration of 'Reconciliation Day' before a crowd of 15,000. The Kusyay'igagasi (hit the waves) Surf Contest, held in Durban, was won by Ntando Msibi, aged 16, who represented the Surfers Not Street Children team, mentored by Tom Hewitt (who visited our Mumbles Church earlier this year with three other young surfers). The event took place just after the death of Nelson Mandela, who apparently had a surf board amongst the inventory of his property when he left Victor Verster Prison in 1990.

Rev.Pam Cram

Pitton Methodist Church

Coffee Morning with
Floral Arrangement Demonstration
by Daphne Furneaux
(Gold and Best in Show RHS Gardener's World Live)

Tuesday 13th May 2014

10.30 a.m.

at

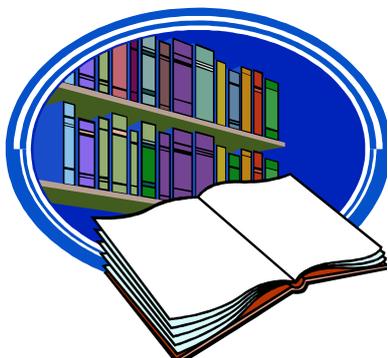
Rhossili Village Hall

Entry £3.00 inc. Coffee and Biscuits
Bacon Baps £3.00 available following Demo.
Cake Stall and Raffle
in aid of Water Aid and Pitton Chapel

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

Bookshelf



1. The "No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" by Alexander McCall Smith.

Mma Precious Ramotswe is the founder of the No. 1 ladies' Detective Agency. She is a good and wise woman. Her faith in God sparkles in her thinking, words and deeds. The Africa of Mma Ramotswe is where children respect their elders and people live in hope of a better tomorrow. This is the first book in a popular series and can be read in conjunction with "Living Love" by John Inge. These books could be used by a fellowship/house group to generate discussion about topics such as suffering and evil; forgiveness and reconciliation, and friendship.

2. "The Nations Favourite Poems" (BBC Books – foreword by Griff Rhys Jones)

It was published as a result of a nationwide poll to discover Britain's favourite poems. It includes – "If" by Kipling; "Fern Hill" (Dylan Thomas); "Journey of the Magi" (Eliot) and many more.

3. "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society" by Shaffer & Barrows.

This book tells the story of life in Guernsey under the German Occupation in letters written by members of this extraordinary society.

4. "The Word of the Wives" by Abby Guinness.

Behind every great man there is a woman who has to put up with him. In this book, the unheard women of the Bible speak out in an imaginative collection of monologues, setting the story straight from their unique perspective.

5. "The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler" by Gene Kemp (age 11-13).

Wherever best friends Tyke Tiler and Danny Price are, there is usually trouble – stolen money, a sheep's skeleton, fights in class – and it's mostly trouble that Tyke has to sort out. There is a real twist in the tale to this story!

Janet Neilson

Time for a Smile

While waiting for the morning service to start a woman was bragging to her neighbour about her son, a college student: "He's so clever! Every time we get a letter from him we have to go to the dictionary." "You're lucky," the neighbour said. "Every time we get a letter from ours, we have to go to the bank."

By the time Ted arrived at the football match, the game was well under way. "Why are you so late?" his friend asked. "Well, I had to toss a coin to decide between going to church and coming to the game." His friend asked why it had taken so long. "Because I had to toss it ten times."

It was common for the preacher to invite the children to the front of the church for a short talk before they left for their lessons. On one occasion, the visual aid was a smoke detector. He asked the children if anyone knew what it meant when an alarm sounded from the smoke detector. Young Johnny raised his hand and said, "It means Daddy's cooking dinner."

From a church notice sheet: Visitors who find any of our church members unfriendly ought to see the minister.

God so loved the world that he did not send a Committee.

Sentinel of Conscience

From the first prayers,
And dreams of my journey,
A silent voice
Has stood sentinel
Within my soul.

No answers given,
No miracles offered.
No blinding light
To penetrate the darkness.
No dogma or creed,
No sectarian vision,
Only silent prayer,
Through times of joy and pain.

This silent voice,
This sentinel of conscience,
Has been my shadow,
Has shared my life,
Has given reason enough
To continue my journey
Through the darkness,
And on, into the light.

Chris Roe

This poem by Chris Roe is taken from "In Search of Silence", which is a collection of inspirational poems of love, peace, hope and faith. Also included are 7 watercolour landscape prints by his brother, Paul.

In this collection of work, Chris takes us on a personal Christian journey in search of spiritual peace. We travel with Chris, from dawn to dusk, through the seasons of the year and through his life from youth to adulthood.

A collection of Chris's work is available from his website at: www.silentflightpublications.co.uk

At Christmas one of my presents was the Compendium of Collective Nouns. In it I discovered that a number of Catholics are called a 'mass of Catholics', and of Baptists an 'immersion of Baptists', but there's no term given for a group of Methodists. Any ideas?

If you have any thoughts, let me know – I might even find a prize for the best idea, and maybe we could submit it to the authors of the book!

Pam Cram

Quotes from Nelson Mandela

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. (1964)

No-one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. (1995)

When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace. I believe I have made that effort and that is, therefore, why I will sleep for eternity. (1996)

Circuit Aldersgate Service

Sunday 18th May

at

Brunswick Methodist Church

at 6.30 p.m.

Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.

Nelson Mandela

When is Holy Communion NOT Holy Communion?

When is communion not holy communion? When it's a Share Tawe meal. Bethel URC and Sketty Methodists have between them hosted meals for destitute asylum seekers over the last few years – but this was my first experience. And what an experience.

Coming out of the City of Sanctuary movement, Share Tawe aims to help people share homes and meals with destitute asylum seekers – those with no recourse to any help, but whose lives would be in danger if they were to return to their homeland.

So one evening, early in December I went over to Sketty Methodist Church, not really knowing what to expect. Anne and Gwen had been busy in the kitchen all day cooking up some wonderful food. Others had come along to help set up and to act as hosts to our guests. And then the guests arrived – about 15 people from a wide range of countries around the world. We invited them in, and I welcomed them and said grace. I said that although we were people of different faiths, by sharing a meal together we were doing something quite sacred, and for those of us who were Christians, it was almost a holy communion experience. Everyone, of whatever faith, resounded with the 'amen' at the end of the prayer – and then we helped ourselves to food. And as we relaxed and got to know each other, there was a great deal of laughter.



It was a moving and special experience to transcend language and ethnic barriers and to begin a relationship with people we might never meet again – but people who are fellow human beings. At the end of the meal, as we said goodbye to one another, I recognised that something quite extraordinary happens in situations such as these. We are reminded of our common humanity and that despite our many differences, we share one Father in heaven with our brothers and sisters – whoever they are, and wherever they are from.

And so the whole experience was deeply moving – a strong echo of holy communion. And I'm looking forward to the next occasion!

Rev. Leslie Noon

Christian Aid Week

Brunswick Methodist Church
Is holding a Fundraising concert on
Friday 16th May at 7.30 pm. given by
Humbrella Community Choir



The choir will perform songs from around the world, from spine-tingling Georgian harmonies to pulsating African rhythms

Free entry and tea or coffee, biscuits etc.

**Donations for Christian Aid welcomed
Please give generously**

CONNECT Spring 2014

Refuges and Asylum Seekers drop in at Brunswick Methodist Church



They find comfort and care here

Mumbles Methodist Church Book Sale

From Monday 21st April
to
Saturday 26th April inclusive

Your support will be welcomed.

Pause to Ponder

Christian work is constantly crippled by clinging to blessings and traditions of the past. God is not the God of yesterday. He is the God of tomorrow. Heaven forbid that we should go on playing religious games in one corner when the cloud and fire of God's presence have moved to another.

David Watson

The lure of power can separate the most resolute of Christians from the true nature of Christian leadership, which is service to others. It's difficult to stand on a pedestal and wash the feet of those below.

Charles W. Colson

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

William Temple

Who on earth is God?

A report by Ofsted, the schools inspectorate, has found that a third of primary school children had an 'inadequate' understanding of Christianity. Inspectors, who visited 185 secondary schools and more than 30 primary schools, said teachers were fearful of 'saying the wrong thing' in classes. Michael Cladingbowl, Ofsted schools director, said: 'Inspectors found that very few children were being taught in school to get to grips with religion. They had little understanding of why religion is important or of how different religions could help them make sense of their own lives.'

Time for a Smile

A woman was seated next to a clergyman on an aeroplane during a period of terrible turbulence. She asked, "Can't you do something about this awful storm?" The minister replied, "Sorry madam, I'm in sales, not management."

Christianity helps us face the music, even when we don't like the tune.

Phillip Brooks

ALDERSGATE SUNDAY – 18th May 2014



Aldersgate is one of the 25 wards at the heart of the City of London and is an important landmark in Methodist history because it was there that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism underwent a profound experience of the Holy Spirit. It was a conversion that would change John's life and set the nation aflame with revival.

Aldersgate was one of London's four original gates and was located close to where the Museum of London now stands. Apart from its Methodist connection it has other historical links. In 1603, it was through Aldersgate that King James I entered London (his arms were later placed over the gate), and just 14 years later, in 1617, the entire gate was rebuilt. Repaired in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London in 1666 (it's final form was said to feature, as well as the arms of King James I, statues of the Biblical figures Jeremiah and Samuel), it was finally demolished in 1761 to improve the flow of traffic.



Aldersgate Street today. To the right of the picture is the Church of St Botolph without Aldgate

In 1737 John Wesley returned to England from a failed missionary visit to Savannah, Georgia. He returned a troubled man depressed over his lack

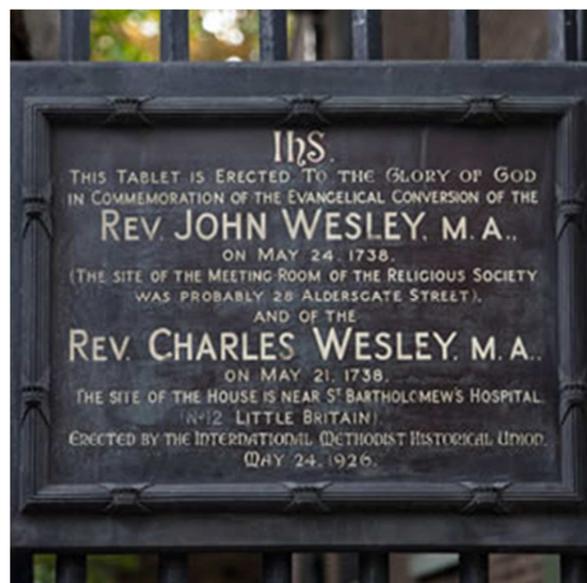
of faith. At the time, Wesley wrote in his journal, "I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God". He met a Moravian pastor called Peter Böhler and the two began an extensive and very personal discourse on the nature of faith. Böhler's counsel on the nature of grace and "heart religion" was instrumental in John's conversion.

Influenced by Böhler and other Moravian Christians John and his brother Charles joined in a 'Religious Society' that met in Aldersgate Street. This is a record of what happened as recorded in John's journal – 24th May 1738

In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther and preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Three days earlier, following his own 'conversion', Charles had written a hymn, 'Where shall my wondering soul begin, how shall I all to heaven aspire?'

It was the moment for both men when heaven touched the soul and brought an end to years of spiritual soul searching and unease. In both cases – it was a heart warming experience of assurance in Christ.



Plaque on the gates of St Botolph reads : This tablet is erected to the glory of God in Commemoration of the evangelical conversion of Rev John Wesley M.A on May 24th 1738. The site of the meeting room of the Religious Society was probably 28 Aldersgate Street. And of the Rev Charles Wesley M.A on May 21st 1738. The site of the house is near St Bartholomew's Hospital (No 12 Little Britain) Erected by the International Methodist Historical Union May 24th 1926

(continued on page 15)

Aldersgate Sunday (continued from page 14)



At the approximate location of John Wesley's conversion on 24 May 1738, a modern bronze sculpture erected in 1981 commemorates the event and features text from Wesley's journal describing his conversion experience

Three days earlier, following his own 'conversion', Charles had written a hymn, 'Where shall my wondering soul begin, how shall I all to heaven aspire?'

It was the moment for both men when heaven touched the soul and brought an end to years of spiritual soul searching and unease. In both cases – it was a heart-warming experience of assurance in Christ.

Conversion for the Wesley's meant taking this exciting, life changing faith out into the world, a world that in many ways the church had forgotten. They saw the church with its wonderful ornate buildings, fine vestments, liturgies and traditions and knew that religion needed a heart like the kind Christ had demonstrated during his ministry when he touched the untouchables, healed the sick and bound up the wounds of the broken hearted.

Religion with a heart will work to bring Christ's love and compassion to people who need it in any age and tell from earth's far corners that no-one is beyond God's redemption. The great Methodist emphasis is that 'All people need to be saved. All people can be saved. All people can know they are saved. All people can be saved to the uttermost.' This was the message that God gave to the world through the Wesley's and still is the message of the church today.

The Methodist Church will be celebrating Aldersgate Sunday on May 18th this year. We will be meeting at our Brunswick church at 6.30 p.m. for praise, prayer and Holy Communion. Please come and join us.

For those interested in singing in the circuit choir for this special service there will be a rehearsal on Wednesday 14th May at Brunswick Methodist Church. For further details please contact Jennifer Taylor. Tel: 206671



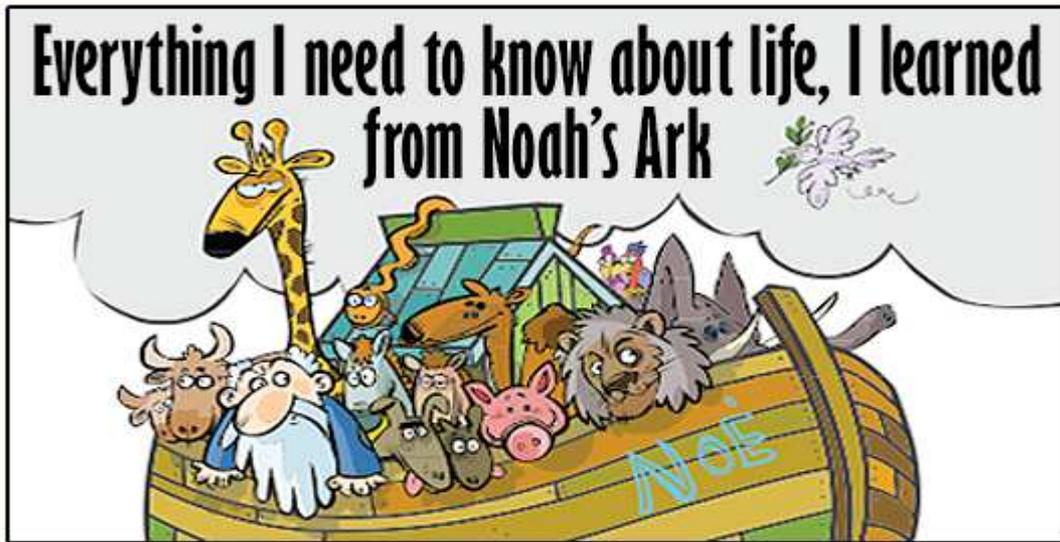
Street Child World Cup takes place from March 28th to April 6th, and there will be information, and a daily film clip on the website www.streetchildworldcup.org.

It's the second ever tournament and conference for children who live and work on the streets, and this time there will be girls and boys teams, with 19 countries represented. Unfortunately Ukraine has had to drop out because of the political turmoil there, leaving England as the only European nation represented. A group of girls who've experienced homelessness will go from London, having been trained partly by Chelsea Women's Football Team. They will meet teams largely from the 'Third World', including Kenya, Zimbabwe, Philippines, and Argentina.

Nigel Cram will be one of the volunteers at the event, and will speak about the experience at an evening event in Capel y Nant, Clydach on May 6th.



Pam Cram



- 1 Don't miss the boat.
- 2 Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- 3 Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
- 4 Stay fit. When you're really old, someone may ask you to do some thing really big.
- 5 Don't listen to the critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- 6 Build your future on high ground.
- 7 For safety sake, travel in pairs.
- 8 Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs
- 9 When you're stressed, float a while
- 10 Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- 11 No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting..

© MYBIBLE.COM



Work has begun to turn a deconsecrated church in North Wales into a new £1 million visitor centre. Mary Jones World will be based at St Beuno's Church, in Llanycil, Bala. In 1800, Mary Jones, aged 15, walked 25 miles from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, across the Welsh mountains, to Bala to get a Bible from Revd Thomas Charles. Mary had saved for six years to purchase one and Thomas Charles was so touched by her determination that he helped establish the Bible Society. The new centre will tell their story and give visitors the chance to learn about the Bible's impact in Wales and the rest of the world.



Action for Children is the childcare arm of the Methodist church with a passionate commitment to improving the lives of children and young people. After working for many years at our Stepping Stones Children's Centre in Killay, Alison Long has a new role within the charity. Here she shares something about her new position

It has been a privilege to work with and meet so many wonderful children and their families at Stepping Stones but after 17 years I decided to move and take on a new role within Action for Children.



*Little Steps
Big Steps
One step at a time*

After much prayer for guidance as to where I should go next I secured the role of manager of a new project funded by the Big Lottery called 'Big Steps Little Steps'. This project is part of the Action for Children Swansea Young Families Scheme that provides free crèche facilities to parents who attend their parenting groups and tenancy support for families who need help to run and retain their homes.

Little Steps Big Steps is an exciting new project based on research into the needs of young parents in Swansea. Our team of 'Life Coaches' support and advise young parents between the age of 14 and 25 from pregnancy and beyond. The team help young parents to think about their aspirations and family needs and guide them towards the services that are available across the county. Little Steps also advises organisations in Swansea on the support that is available to the young people that they work with. We will be working with Swansea Prison, Teenstart and many other agencies.

Many thanks on behalf of Action for Children to all the Methodist Churches that support projects across Swansea. I would like you to know from personal experience that your prayers, time and financial generosity really do change the lives of others for the better.



Alison Long

alison.long@actionforchildren.org.uk

To find out more about the work that we do at Action for Children please visit the websites below.

www.actionforchildren.org.uk
www.littlestepsbigsteps.org.uk

Coffee Morning at Morriston

We recently held a successful coffee morning. This wasn't a fund-raising coffee morning. The emphasis was on coming together, with the hope we might get a few in from the community. Generally the 'newcomers' were parents/grandparents of children who were singing, but one said she might come again. We did invite donations and raised £25. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.



The choir from Pentre'r Graig school singing 'He's got the whole world in his hands' in Welsh.