

# CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Winter 2016

## THE METHODIST CHURCH

### MISSION in BRITAIN Fund supports Ogof Adullam Project

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#### **Tell us all your news**

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

**Deadline for the next issue is  
Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017**



The Ogof Adullam Project supporting the homeless in Swansea has received grant support from the Methodist Church Mission in Britain Fund. This, alongside support from the Wales Synod and the Swansea and Gower Circuit means that the project co-ordinator and assistant are now part-time funded posts rather than voluntary and secures the work of Ogof Adullam for the next five years.

The project, which is based at Brunswick Methodist Church, is being used to promote the Mission in Britain Advent offering this

year with a feature article in the One Mission Matters magazine which is distributed throughout the Methodist connexion.

Rev Howard Long, Circuit Superintendent, said, 'We are delighted to have received this grant from The Mission in Britain Fund and the Methodist Synod. Huw and Cerys Davies were the real visionaries behind the project and we are pleased to have appointed them to the posts. Through their sheer hard work and the support of the Methodist circuit we have got the project to where it is today but who knows where God will lead it the future.'

*(continued on page 4)*

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**news in brief**

**Uniting Church Sketty**

Saturday Coffee Mornings 10.00a.m to 12 noon  
17<sup>th</sup> January to 4<sup>th</sup> February. All proceeds to charity  
Pantomime 'Follow the Coastal Path'  
9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
Times TBC; Proceeds to Circuit Charity ZRJ Trust

**Carols at Penlan Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 6.00 p.m.**

Service led by the Superintendent Minister and the Phoenix  
Choir, followed by coffee and mince pies

**Brunswick**

Bible Study 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 11 a.m.  
FAN 'Friends and Neighbours' every Wednesday at  
10.30 a.m.  
Intercessory Prayer Meeting every Wednesday at 4.00 p.m  
Coffee mornings on the last Saturday of the every month

**Mumbles**

Theo's Coffee Shop - open daily 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.  
Wednesday Lunchtime Worship 12.15 p.m.  
Christmas Evening 'Results of £10 challenge' Thursday  
15<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00p.m. Carols and Mince Pies. All are  
welcome

**Wesley**

Bible Study every Tuesday 10a.m  
Lite Bites – Every Thursday 12-2p.m

**Penlan**

**Christianity Explored Course** every Sunday morning at  
10.30 a.m. from 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017 led by Ken Allison  
**Special services** will take place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>  
December, 22<sup>nd</sup> January & 19<sup>th</sup> February all at 6.00 p.m.

**Murton**

Tuesday Coffee Mornings 10.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.  
Christmas Messy Church – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December in the  
Church Hall 3.00 p.m.- 4.30 p.m.

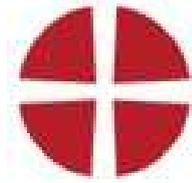
**Swansea Hope - Carols at the Square.** Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>  
December at 7.00p.m Castle Square, Swansea. Carols,  
live performances and a short message

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## Message from the Superintendent



When Jesus was born at Bethlehem there was no royal fanfare and no palace announcement. Outside the stable where he was born the crowds went about their business unaware that anything momentous was happening. The only important thing on their minds was the census that had brought them to Bethlehem in the first place.

We are told that heaven was celebrating. The Gospel record tells us that a great army of heaven's angels appeared singing praises to God.

*'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests'*

The only ones to whom this was communicated was the shepherds. The angel said to them, *'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'*

Shepherds in Jesus' day were considered to be the lowest of the low. Society had pushed them down to one of the lowest rungs on the social ladder and yet it was to them that the message came.

Modern theologians may dismiss and make light of the shepherds but for me they symbolise the poor and more importantly the humble and those who have the capacity to

respond to the call of God and seek and find him even in mundane circumstances.

The shepherds after hearing the news hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. We, like the shepherds should be humble enough to seek Jesus and kneel before the manger. They did not come to him bearing expensive gifts but they brought the best gift of all – themselves.

There is a short poem by Cecily Taylor called the Shepherds Journey

*For us it was but a short journey down our familiar hill, past landmarks we had always known.*

*We should not have been surprised by the angels. We had always sensed their presence:*

*Known especially at lambing and when the snow melts up in the hills and new blades of grass thrust upward. God is born in every living thing. This special baby was something we understood. That God should choose this way.*

*He lit up the dark with His glory – The silence of the stars was shattered with His Praise - What was it – Peace and Goodwill? Yes for us it was a simple journey; only the wise have far to travel.*

Howard



**True friends visit us in prosperity only when invited, but in adversity they come without invitation.**

Theophrastus

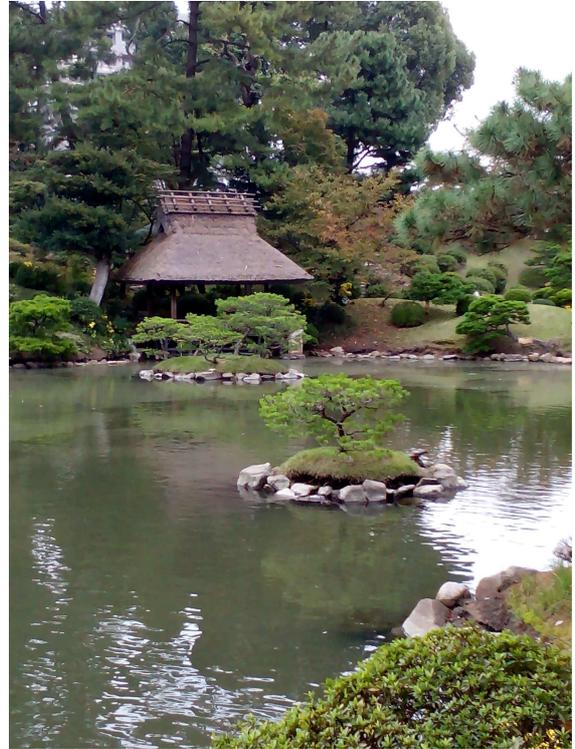
### A Christian in Japan

I recently went to visit our daughter in Japan, which is always a time of great joy and excitement. In the past Andy and I have been able to attend an English-speaking Sunday service. We were fortunate enough to have had a lift from some friends living near our daughter and sometimes cycled there. Cycling was the longer option! This time I went on my own and, because my daughter had planned trips on the Sundays I was unable to attend the church and told our friend of this. However, the friend contacted me and told me that once a month he runs a Bible Study class at Hiroshima YMCA and asked if I would like to attend that as it was during the week. I was delighted and we cycled there together. Of course we stopped for a coffee on the way but when we arrived most of the people attending had already arrived.

A number of those in the class had only joined because of the English; some because they wanted to know what the Bible was about and some because they were young in the faith but had nowhere to find out more about the Bible. During the introductions I discovered that I had met, but not spoken to, at least 2 other people in the meeting. They were from Ushita Asahi, the area where my daughter lives and remembered seeing Andy and myself with Lorna when we last visited together. One had actually talked to Lorna for a short while. What a memory! Three of the ladies were members of the Ushita Methodist Church and they invited me to go to lunch with them afterwards in a nearby restaurant – apparently they do this every month when they meet for the Bible Study. I was able to tell them that in Britain the Methodist Church prints the Methodist Prayer Handbook, which they don't seem to have heard about. I told them that during each month we pray for the Church in Japan, which they also didn't know about. I will send out my copy so that they can explore it together.

It was a great privilege to come into contact with fellow Christians in a foreign land and especially to find out that they too are eager to find out more about the Bible and what it teaches about our Lord Jesus Christ. Although there is no great persecution in Japan, when one lady told her daughters about her new found faith, they were surprised and told her that they thought she was happy. Her husband now attends the Bible Study to find out what

has made the big difference to his wife, and the daughters and now looking into this Christianity. Let's keep on praying for Christians in other lands where their faith is in the minority.



*Shukkeien Gardens in Hiroshima*

**Chris Capel**

### An Invitation



The Local Preachers would like to invite all those who are interested to come and hear Julia Edwards, a mission partner on leave from Fiji, on Monday February 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 7.30 p.m. at Murton Methodist Church.

**God's goodness hath been great to thee; let never day nor night unhallowed pass, but still remember what the Lord hath done.**

**William Shakespeare**

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Prayers should not exceed 120 words or 12 lines and must be your copyright. Shorter prayers and prayers for specific themes or countries are more likely to be used.

You can submit prayers by emailing [prayerhandbook@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:prayerhandbook@methodistchurch.org.uk). Please include your full name, postal address and how you would like to be described (eg Jane Jones, local preacher, Townton). The deadline for submission is 12 January 2017.

### Methodist App

A brand new app from the Methodist Church in Britain is now available on all mobile devices. The app offers users a daily Bible study, as well as all the latest news, audio and video from the Church.

Features include:

- Daily Bible studies, featuring a different author each week
- Prayer of the Day from the Methodist Prayer Handbook
- Lectionary readings and suggested hymns
- The latest news stories from the Methodist Church in Britain
- Topical podcasts from Methodist Web Radio
- Resources for Christian discipleship
- Blogs from the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Methodist Youth President and World Church Relationships team
- View videos through the Church's YouTube channel
- Interact on Facebook and Twitter
- Information about the latest campaigns
- Find your nearest church

"With the rise of the smartphone, we're more connected than ever before, and that's something to celebrate," said David Webster, the Church's Internet Communications Coordinator. "We want people to be able to make use of our resources across a wide range of platforms. Our goal is to support Methodists and other Christians as we make our way as disciples of Jesus in the modern world."

### Charity Fundraising at Murton Methodist Church



The Ladies Tuesday Guild at Murton Methodist Church has been busy fundraising for their charity, Swansea Bay Carers Trust. Monies are raised by holding regular sales tables at their meetings and the ladies also collect 5 pence pieces.

A cheque for £400 was presented to the Swansea Bay Carers Trust; £300 from the Guild and £100 from the Mother & Toddlers Group. Swansea Bay Carers provide respite care for young carers, who in turn provide care for elderly, frail, ill or disabled friends or relatives.

**Teresa Lewis**

### The Coastal Path

Do you want to follow the coastal path? Oh yes you do ! (Oh no I don't) Well come and decide at Uniting Church, Skettys MADCAPs pantomime from Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February to Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017. All proceeds are for our circuit project. We can promise you all the fun of the traditional family panto and you can see all your favourite characters with a few "Sketty " style ones to keep you on your toes. So, come and join us and then, with the support of you, our sister churches, we will all be able to make a huge contribution to Zambuko Ra Jehovah

**All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.  
Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## Miracle Encounter

I've always loved books, and have a vivid memory, during my "growing up years", of my Mum often saying, in her good "Scottish brogue", "will you pit that book doon and come fur yir dinner"? She, too, loved reading, especially the Bible, which she always called the "Good Book"!

Anyhow, I always love to visit "Book Fairs", and especially the one twice-yearly held under the auspices of The Methodist Church at Mumbles! Around Easter 2015, I wandered from stall to stall, down at Mumbles Book Fair, which naturally contained hundreds of books. Suddenly I spotted one book in particular, with the title "**A Tide that Sings**", written by someone by the name of "Sister Agnes", about her early life, and 20 years as an Anglican Franciscan nun in Devon, and how she came to begin a new religious life as a solitary on the remote island of Fetlar In Shetland in 1984, to live a "life of prayer". Because my husband Doug and I had been to the beautiful Shetland Isles in June 2014, I was very interested in this book, and you can just imagine how I "devoured" it, and couldn't wait to get my hands on the 2<sup>nd</sup> one, written by the same author, namely "**The Song of the Lark**"!...Eventually I read her 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> books too, called "**Island Song**" and "**For Love Alone**"! Fantastic! I very highly recommend all 4 books!



*The chapel of Christ the Encompasser and All His Holy Angels on the Isles of Fetlar and Unst, Shetland*

Meanwhile, I was very anxious to "get in touch" with this fascinating and very Spiritual person whom I had just read about, and am happy to say that I was able to contact the Warden of Fetlar, who very kindly passed on a letter from me to the lady in question. I would like to mention here that the origins of "The Society of

Our Lady of the Isles" go back to 1984 (as quoted above), when Rev.Mother Mary Agnes (as is her status now), was joined by others in the interim 4 years, and therefore the Society was founded in 1988. She was installed as Mother Guardian in 1993, and ordained a priest of the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney in 1998.

I've been delighted to correspond with Rev. Mother Mary Agnes since around August 2015. The outcome of all this was that Doug and I had the privilege and pleasure of meeting her on Unst (where she moved to last year from Fetlar), when we were on holiday on Shetland in June of this year! I cannot describe how lovely in Spirit and demeanour she was, (with a wonderful sense of humour, I may add), and we spent the whole of an afternoon with her, having lunch at "The Final Checkout", visiting "The Most Northerly Church in Britain" (The Methodist Church), and having tea at her wee house at Uyeasound, Unst. Also, she took us to see the "site" where her new "Community Complex" is going to be built, overlooking the vast Atlantic Ocean, on the West Side of Unst. Needless to say, Doug and I can't wait to see the "finished product" which is due for completion in 2017. We will hopefully return to Shetland during 2018, D.V. and until then, will continue to "keep-in-touch" with Rev.Mother Mary Agnes., our "new friend"! I don't think she'll ever "retire" as such. I'm sure that word "retirement" isn't in her vocabulary!



*Pope Francis with Mother Mary Agnes*

So, next time any of you "out there" are "browsing" around at a "Book Fair", or any other bookshop, you just never know what interesting book you may come across, and what the outcome may be! I'm so glad I'm a bit of a "book worm"! Look where it got me!

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**The secret of my success? It is simple. It is found in the Bible: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."**

**George Washington Carver**

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**N.B.** Some of you may know of Deacon Harriet Bacon, who has now “retired” to live in Barbados near her family. When I mentioned to Harriet that I’d been in touch with “Sister Agnes”, she immediately told me that she knew her personally, having been over on Unst in the early 1990s, when the Methodist Church there had to be rebuilt, owing to a fire causing devastation to the building, and that she’d met Sister Agnes on Fetlar at that time. Not only that, but Harriet further mentioned that Rev. Phillip Bacon, her “late” husband, actually grew up in the same village as Sister Agnes in Nottinghamshire, and had known her very well indeed! So how’s that for a real “miracle coincidence”? Miracles still happen, don’t they?

**Mrs.Irene Dendle  
Morrison Methodist Church**

### A Place of Welcome



Ty Croeso continues to offer an open door for any who care to call by for the various activities we offer. We have just been accepted as the first Welsh venue in the ‘Places of Welcome’ network. These are simply places where anyone, no matter their background, can drop in, have a free cuppa and a friendly non-judgemental welcome. The network started in the Midlands and is spreading rapidly, with a website to indicate where the Places of Welcome are.

Another new venture is ‘Tea and Hymns’ organised jointly with the Clydach Wesley Guild and held in Capel y Nant hall. The first took place on November 30th, with a Christmas theme. A group came from a care home in Alltwen, as well as two residents from Glais House with their carers. They had a good sing and enjoyed being waited on with lots of delicious goodies. By popular request ‘Tea and Hymns’ will be back again, maybe in March with an Easter theme and then every few months.

Recently we had a stall at the Community Council’s Christmas fair, selling bric a brac and spreading the word about our services. Sadly, we still find there are people in the area who don’t know we’re here, so these events are very helpful and worth the effort even if we don’t sell much.

We’re always on the look out for new ways of using the Ty Croeso premises, and have been exploring possible lettings to a mental health agency and a seated exercise trainer. Our other regular activities continue, not maybe with large numbers, but greatly appreciated by those who come.

Thanks to our treasurer, Eurig, we’ve recently been very successful in fund-raising, receiving two significant grants totalling £3,000. We received an amazing £1,500 from Capel y Nant from their charity fund-raising last year. We continue to be supported financially by INCO (the nickel works), and by local regular giving. All this not only keeps the roof over our heads, but also affirms us in what we are trying to do in service to our community.

**Pam Cram (Chair)**

#### The spirit is willing, but .....

How often, Lord, when weary, do we sigh ‘The spirit is willing, but the body is weak?’ How often when we pray our thoughts are distracted by sounds or circumstances, or prayers are diverted by trivial concerns – baggage carried with us rather than left at your feet.

How often do we find ourselves apologising to you for our abbreviated prayer life? And yet you draw us still to be in your presence, as you did the disciples at Gethsemane. You want us to play our part and share in your life.

You told your disciples to watch and pray, so that they might not fall into temptation. Do you ask the same of us? And do we also fail you each time we whisper ‘The spirit is willing, but the body is weak?’

Grant us the strength, Lord, of body and spirit, to offer you the sacrifice of our lives.

Amen

**The most important thought I ever had was that of my individual responsibility to God.**

**Daniel Webster**

(continued from front page)

A big thank you to our circuit steward Heather Coleman for all her hard work in putting the grant applications together and overseeing the recruitment process.'

The Mission in Britain Fund currently supports: ministry and mission with all ages, Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice chaplaincy placements and the use of our heritage and property resources to share the gospel.

### Silent Stars



This was the title for Greenbelt 2016, the third to be held in the beautiful grounds of Boughton House in Northamptonshire. Since moving from Cheltenham the festival has become smaller and there have been financial problems, but festival goers still have a huge choice of activities – talks, forums, gigs, poetry, theatre, worship, comedy, clowning, acrobatics, stalls. Where else could you get so much within just a few acres over 4 days? Looking back over the programme we realise just how much we missed, just because there's so much going on.

One thing we've learned over the years is to prioritise visual things. There are recordings available afterwards of talks and forums, but you need to be there to really experience some of the more dramatic events. This year we saw an amazing group of acrobats (Bromance) expressing aspects of "male companionship and its limits"; and a Palestinian youth theatre group (Alrowwad) enacting their experience of occupation, as well as showcasing their culture in dance and costume.

Terry Waite was one of the keynote speakers, reflecting on his experience of being a hostage 25 years on from the events. John Bell of the Iona Community was his usual controversial

and humorous self, talking, amongst other things, about 'missing women' in the Bible; and Archbishop Justin rose to the challenge of being interviewed by children during the Sunday Communion service. In fact the whole of that major worship event was led by children and was possibly the best Greenbelt Communion ever – a hard act for anyone to follow next year.

Greenbelt is fundamentally and deeply a Christian Festival but festival goers are people of several faiths and none. Some of the speakers are Muslims or Jews. Talks cover a range of moral, religious and topical issues. We have a number of CDs of the talks, should anyone be interested in borrowing them – one of them, with short talks on topics relating to Islam, would be good for a discussion group.

If Northamptonshire is too far for you but you'd like to sample the festival's atmosphere, stop press news is that there will be a Welsh sister festival, 'CODA', in July 2018. It will take place in mid Wales, and with Pam on the organising group expect to hear more about it as the time gets nearer!

**Pam and Alan Cram**

### Pause to Ponder

Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the making of action in spite of fear, the moving against the resistance engendered by fear into the unknown and into the future. On some level spiritual growth, and therefore love, always requires courage and involves risk.

**M.Scott Peck**

Half an hour's listening is essential except when you are very busy. Then a full hour is needed.

**St.Francis de Sales**

**Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally justice triumphs**

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

## 40 Years of preaching – Jeff Coleman



*(left to right - Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, chair of Wales Synod, Mr Jeff Coleman and Rev Howard Long, Superintendent minister)*

The following is Jeff's testimony that he gave at the service.

I did not come from a churchgoing family. At High School previous choices I had made meant that for my last 'O' level choice I was left with a choice of either Welsh or Scripture. I chose Scripture, and embarked on study of the 8th century prophets, Amos, Hosea and Isaiah and their historical context. Maybe not a lot of people have come into the Church via the Old Testament teaching on social justice. Someone else in the class, who I used to walk with to catch the bus home, invited me first to the youth club at St Andrew's Methodist in Cardiff, and later to attend Church. By the age of 17 I felt sufficiently committed to Christianity to wear a Christian CND badge with a cross superimposed on the nuclear disarmament symbol, and sufficiently committed to Methodism to become a teetotaler, which I have been ever since. However it was about 6 or 7 years of regular churchgoing before anyone thought to invite me to consider Church membership.

It was somewhere around the end of May 1970 that I received what I interpreted as a call to Christian ministry, as a result of about 5 separate promptings from different directions over a few days either side of the MAYC weekend. At the time I was a chemistry research student at the University of Sussex in Brighton, and was helping to run the youth club at Woodingdean Methodist Church. We took a small group to MAYC for the day.

In Methodism then the only route into the Ministry was through becoming a Local Preacher, which at the time, apart from the pattern of taking services which were reported on, involved taking four separate exams (in Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Doctrine and Worship and Preaching). The exam structure would have been fine for someone in a 9-to-5 job staying in one

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**US Presidential Election: letter from The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference..**



The United States has chosen Donald Trump as its new President. Viewed from the United Kingdom, the campaign appeared more hard fought, bitter and divisive than ever before. The result will undoubtedly cause both great pain and great celebration throughout the United States and the wider world.

Many of the statements made by President-Elect Trump during the campaign will prompt grave concern. Much of what was said was profoundly at odds with the beliefs and values of our Church.

Our understanding of God's purpose is that all people are valued and should be treated with dignity and respect. This value is incompatible with the "off the cuff" comments made about women or in support of torture and mistreatment of prisoners; nor can it be reconciled with the more considered rhetoric directed at immigrants and people of different faiths.

The Churches view climate change as one of the greatest challenges facing humankind. Our brothers and sisters in Pacific Islands are already experiencing its consequences. We know that, even with the plans agreed at the Paris COP21 last year, many more people and species will be threatened. It is of profound concern that Mr Trump has indicated that he wishes to ignore the world's scientists and leaders, dismiss the threat of climate change and refuse to implement the Paris targets.

In a democratic society, votes bestow a right, and a responsibility, to govern. We respect and honour this, and recognise that we are all facing a new political landscape. The Methodist Church must always stand with our sisters and brothers in partner Churches as they seek to promote truth and justice, holding

the new administration to account when necessary.

President-Elect Trump says that he will seek the common ground. We will pray for him and all who have the responsibility of leadership. We hope and desire that the United States will travel a peaceful, generous, faithful and just path.

***God of truth and justice, We give you thanks for the peoples of the United States Of America; and pray for Donald Trump, the Senate and Congress at a time of change and transition.***

***Grant to its leaders, vision, wisdom and compassion.***

***To its people, listening ears, generous hearts and a spirit of unity, to the world, a compelling vision of your kingdom that excites our imagination, deepens our love, and inspires us to build in every place communities of welcome that cast out division.***

***In Christ's name, Amen.***

**WANTED!....for Tanzania**



Garden tools and DIY tools, including nails, screws etc. Any condition! These will be donated to "Twls Cymru" in Brecon, who will then send them to their projects in Tanzania.

Also required: lap-tops (in working order!). Alan Cram will take these out to students, also in Tanzania.

NB If you would like me to come and speak to your group about the projects I support and visit in Tanzania, then please contact me!

**Alan Cram (01792 845942)  
acram@headweb.co.uk**

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place, but as I tried to fit it in around finishing research, teacher training and starting teaching jobs, it took me 6 years, by which time I was in my third teaching job, my fifth Methodist Circuit, and was married to Heather. I never made it to being an ordained Minister, but have sought to exercise a ministry as a lay person particularly in conducting worship. I don't know whether I would have actually expected to remain in the same Church and Circuit as a Local Preacher for 40 years, but that is how it turned out.

I remember on one occasion the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference was a head teacher from Cornwall who wanted to meet Methodists working in Education in South Wales, and invited us all to a meeting at Trinity, Penarth. I remember asking a question contrasting my taking 1 hour services in chapels with 12 to 20 people, mostly elderly, and most of whom had been attending all their lives, and taking 15-minute Assemblies in school for year-groups of 300 of disparate religious backgrounds, very few of whom had any Church connection. 'Don't give up the assemblies', he said.

Over the years many things have changed – 3 different official Methodist Hymn Books for a start – but there are parts of the message that I felt led to preach that remain the same – 4 things come to mind.

1. The Gospel, the Good News of Jesus is for all people, not just a selected or predestined few, or those who accept particular dogmas, or who happen to 'fit in' to accepted patterns on established Churches. 'The Love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind'.

2. The Christian life needs to be lived together in community, as members of the body of Christ working together to share God's work for the world- not isolated – not rigidly sectarian putting up barriers or assuming that our denomination is the only part of that body of believers that matters. It is enormously difficult to be and especially to develop and grow as a Christian on your own, without sharing in worship and in other aspects of Christian life and work. You need to join in, and there need to be things that we as Christian fellowships provide for people to join in.

3. While declaring and seeking to make real the love of God to others, we need also to heed warnings – such as warnings of the prophets about religiosity without compassion or justice, in Ezekiel 18 about a good man turning bad, in James chapter 2 about Faith without works, and

in Jesus' words about those who say 'Lord, Lord' but to whom he says 'I never knew you'.

I don't think I had ever heard anyone preach on Matthew 23, where Jesus calls the Pharisees whitewashed tombs, voyaging over land and sea to get new converts and make them twice as fit for hell as they were themselves, until I heard the impassioned rendering of that passage in a tape of 'Godspell'. I remember where I was when I heard it in a way that stuck in my mind. Could it be addressed to us? We need a good deal of humility when we seek to do God's will in spreading the Good News, whether through actions or words.

4. We never know who will walk in through the door of our church services and events, who God will send us, or what their needs will be – so each and every service should provide somehow in the combination of words, prayers, singing and general ambience a complete opportunity for anyone at all to experience worship and to realise that whoever they are, wherever they come from, whatever they have done and whatever they are going through in their lives, they matter to God, God loves them, and God's people are ready to offer a hand of friendship and welcome. Amen – let it be so.

Jeff Coleman

### Pause to Ponder

"For you, I am bishop", said St. Augustine to his people, "but with you, I am a Christian. The first is an office accepted, the second a grace received; one a danger, the other safety. If then I am gladder by far to be redeemed with you than I am to be placed over you, I shall, as the Lord commanded, be more completely your servant".

St. Augustine of Hippo

You cannot glorify God better than by a calm and joyous life.

Charles H. Spurgeon

## Sign up for Regular e-Newsletters

If you have access to a computer you can receive the following e-newsletters from the Methodist Church. Visit <http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/sign-up-for-e-newsletters> and get connected

- Chaplaincy Everywhere:** News, stories and resources for everyone interested in chaplaincy (approx 6 per year)
- World Church Bulletin:** News from partner churches, mission partners and more (1 per month)
- Property Matters:** News, information and tips about looking after church property (4 per year)
- Local Preachers' News:** Get free news and resources for Local Preachers
- Methodist Publishing:** The latest information about new resources plus special offers, extracts and more (4 per year)
- Research Matters:** Updates on Methodist research, conferences, opportunities for study
- Heritage News:** News about Methodist heritage across the Connexion (2 per year)
- The Week Ahead:** Weekly news and information digest (every Thursday)
- Official Press Releases:** From the Media Office (approx 1 per week)
- The Well:** News for children, youth, schools and family workers (approx 3 per month)
- Singing the Faith Plus news:** The new Methodist Hymnbook and more (approx 6 per year)
- The Buzz:** Good news stories from local churches (1 per month)
- E-news:** General news, events and resources (1 per month)

## Christmas Services 2016

Church	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day
Uniting Church Sketty	Rev Leslie Noon 3.00 p.m & 11.30 p.m. S	Rev Leslie Noon 10.00 a.m.
Brunswick	Rev Siperire Mugadzaweta 7.00 p.m. S	Rev Siperire Mugadzaweta 10.30 a.m.
Pitton	at Murton	Mr Ken Allison 10.30 a.m.
Mumbles	Rev Howard Long 6.00 p.m. S	Rev Howard Long 10.00 a.m.
Wesley	Rev Howard Long 4.00 p.m. S	at Christwell URC 10.30 a.m.
Murton	Rev Andrew Walker 11.30 p.m. S	Rev Andrew Walker 9.30 a.m.
Reynoldston	At Murton	Mr. Quentin Hawkins 10.30 a.m.

Carefully avoid in yourself those things which disturb you in others.

Thomas á Kempis

## The World Federation of Methodist Church and Uniting Church Women in Houston Texas

There were two major Methodist meetings taking place at the same time at the Houston Americas Hotel in August. One was the World Methodist Church Conference. This was attended mainly by Ministers and the theme was "One God, One Faith, One People and One Mission. The second one was the 13th World Methodist Church Assembly 2016 and its theme was: "Chosen People Called to Proclaim."

It was indeed a wonderful experience for me to meet so many people from all over the world. I gathered there were over 3,000 people from well over 80 different countries and all gathered in one accord "the Love for Christ Jesus, our Saviour."

Each day after breakfast there was a time of praise and worship. One particular session was led by The North American Women's group who said that it was necessary that all people should be able to share the Good News of Jesus' life, His death and His resurrection and that people should be able to share the story of God's Love in all their lives.

Following worship there were other sessions for Area Reports and Cultural Presentations. The areas involved were Europe, Britain & Ireland, East Asia, Latin America, North America, South Asia, South Pacific, Southern & East Africa, and West Africa. Each of the



nominated areas displayed their traditional dress/culture which was spectacular. We in Britain wore our Fairtrade T-shirts on and MWIB scarves. The Irish group had their usual green colour code wear.



Presentations were made on the care of the elderly, water and sanitation, feeding schemes, care of the homeless and drug addicts and alcoholism, care of street kids and human trafficking etc.

There were many workshops to attend. The list included such topics as Relationships, Friendship, Evangelism, Worship, Liturgy, Theology, Good Governance, South Africa Case Study, Healing, music etc. I attended the Healing workshop. This was approached from two different angles. One was presented from a Medical point of view where the talk was about germs and bacteria and how they cause diseases and how use of medicines brings about the healing. The other talk was about faith, prayer, fasting and how Healing from illness can be brought about through faith. It was emphasised that No one heals except God and that God does it at His on good time.

*(continued on page 17)*

**Never part without loving words to think of during your absence. It may be that you will not meet again in life.**

**John Paul Richter**

## The Methodist Church Zimbabwe Fellowship Annual Conference at Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

This year Rev. Siperire Mugadzaweta attended two Methodist conferences, one in the U.K. and one in Houston, Texas.



The Methodist Church Zimbabwe Fellowship met at the Yarnfield Park Conference Centre in the Midlands from the 11th to the 13th August. The Theme of the conference was, "God is with us all the time" (Exodus 33: 7-35, Deuteronomy 31v 6).

The new Zimbabwe Methodist Church Fellowship Chaplain, Reverend Cleopas Sibanda and the Executive Team planned the Conference in such an inclusive way that everyone present was very impressed.

The President of the British Methodist Conference, the Rev Dr. Rodger Walton was the guest speaker and I was honoured to give him a vote of thanks. Also in attendance was the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, the Reverend Dr. Solomon Zwana who led the Dedication Service. I had the privilege to give a talk to the Zimbabwe Methodist Fellowship youth about God given talents. I ended up judging the children after their talent show and handing them presents. I was so pleased to see so many young people present and being so enthusiastic about what goes on in the Methodist Church. The theme of the conference continues to give me courage even today. That God is with us all the time no matter who we are and where we are. Dr. Walton talked about seven important activities we as Christians need to follow in our daily life. These include the need to live a holy life, praying all the time, receiving the elements of the Holy Sacrament, attending Fellowship groups, attending Scripture study groups,

loving and caring for each other and reading our Bibles daily.

The Conference was a time of learning and fellowship and I want to thank God for affording me the opportunity to attend and to meet and share God's Love.

**Rev. Siperire Mugadzaweta**

## Penlan

Penlan is an estate of some 1,700 homes. There is a real spiritual need for the Good News of Jesus Christ in Penlan. The Penlan Methodist Church has been active there for 65 years, but now we have a church building without an active congregation. We do have a building in good condition which is active with a range of activities during the week.

As a church circuit we are faced with a stark choice – do we give up in Penlan or can we grow a new congregation there?

Howard will be leading a Christmas Carol Evening Service at 6.00 p.m. on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December in Penlan Methodist Church. The singing will be led by Phoenix Choir. Please support Penlan by coming along if you can.

In January, Ken and Julia Allison will run a Christianity Explored Course in Penlan on Sunday mornings.

Christianity Explored is a course in the fundamentals of the Christian faith based on Mark's gospel.

This will run for seven weeks commencing Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

We are offering a free breakfast at 10.30 a.m. each Sunday morning followed by the Course running from 11.00 a.m. to 12.15 p.m.

Could you help with meeting new people or preparing breakfast?

Could it be part of your Christian mission to support this?

If you are interested or would like to know more, please get in touch with Ken or Julia on (01792) 401620.

**How precious it is, Lord, to realise that you are thinking about me constantly..**

**Psalms 139:17**

(continued from page 16)

We were also afforded an opportunity to go for an outing to either go shopping or to go to the NASA Space Centre. This was something great for me because I am a follower of the events of the NASA Space Centre. I entered the Apollo Space Craft, touched some of those fancy buttons I had seen on the TV years ago. This was an achievement for me. I praise God for having afforded me this opportunity. There is so much to see and learn at NASA. I learnt that going to outer space and knowing about aerodynamics had helped a lot with the Medical technology advancement such as keyhole surgery. Also the use of computers, internet, cell phone, new banking systems etc are some of the achievements that have come about by going to space.

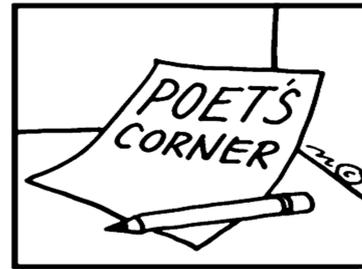


This World Assembly had so much to offer and I am very grateful that I was part of it.

I shall try and add more information in my next paper to the Connect Magazine.

Enjoy the pictures from NASA and the different costumes worn as cultural and traditional dresses by some of the people who attended this conference.

**Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta**



### I Remember

Snow to build igloos,  
freezing hands inside wet, woollen gloves;  
buses that argued with steep hills,  
disgorging their passengers  
to walk home  
through a blanket of soft stars  
that fell like goose down onto the waiting  
earth –  
Such mirth! – anticipation of tomorrow's fun,  
to run and slide along the footpaths,  
build a snowman  
to stand with pride in the little garden;  
A carrot nose and button eyes,  
two rows of coal black teeth  
to clench the twig pipe;  
a wig of straw beneath the hat,  
a striped scarf to keep his fat body warm.

What fun to stamp life into our feet  
and meet friends in our street,  
To roll a tiny pebble of snow  
Into a great, white, iced ball.  
What joy to fall onto a mattress of sparkling,  
crisp, new snow.

Oh, let it stay  
'till Christmas day  
to magic all our cares away.

**Diane Norton © 2007**

## News from around the Methodist Connexion

### 3Generate 2016



The national children's and young people's event took place at the end of November with more people than ever taking part. 3Generate has more than doubled in size over the last two years with close to 700 young Methodists and youth leaders gathered for fellowship and fun at the PGL Adventure Centre in Swindon.

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Young people aged 8 to 23 came from across the UK to mix worship and activities with discussion and debate. Presentations and talks on topics for older groups included well-being and social justice, while younger groups considered what church could look like if they were in charge.

This year particular attention was paid to ensuring the event was accessible as possible. Specialist volunteers provided additional support to those with learning difficulties, physical limitations or in need of additional emotional help.

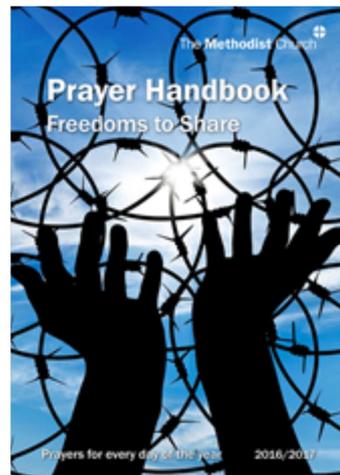
While there was a lot of fun, faith and fellowship with adventurous outdoor activities

and silent discos, there was also an emphasis placed on worship and debate. A range of opportunities was available for young people to choose how they wished to worship with art through to late night communion.

Discussions were held in all age groups to ensure that children were heard.

The Youth President Tim Annan said, "We come together to worship God and discuss the issues important to us as young Christians ... Refugees, prayer, relationships are just some of the topics we tackled."

### Can you write a prayer for next year's Prayer Handbook?



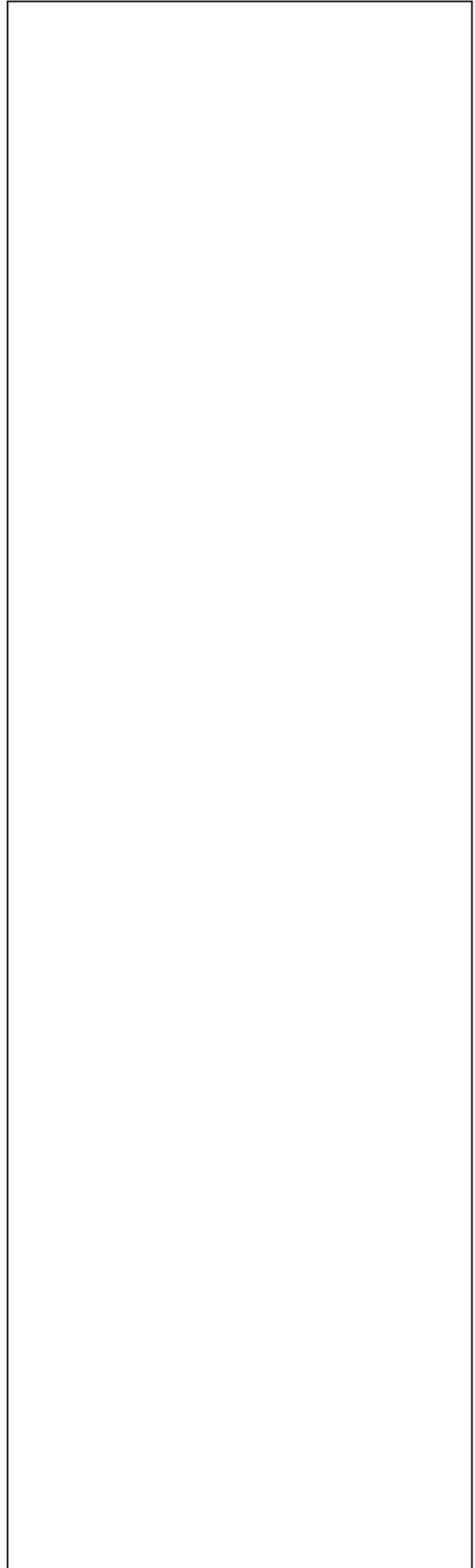
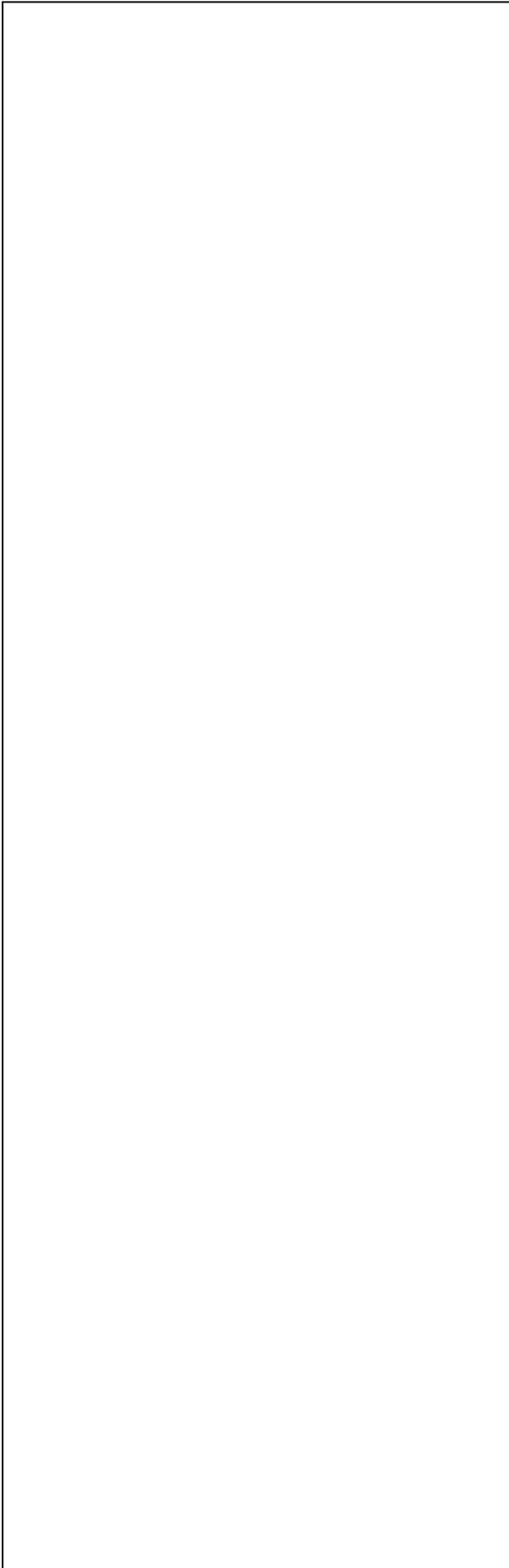
The 2017/2018 Methodist Prayer Handbook 'Jesus the First and Last' will celebrate the Jesus of history, the Christ of faith and our cosmic Lord; the first word and the last word, which has not yet been spoken. The title comes from two hymns, 'Jesus, the First and Last', by Charles Wesley (*Singing the Faith* 329) and 'This, this is the God we adore', by Joseph Hart (*Singing the Faith* 67).

The handbook will explore how the immensity of Jesus means that we need to experience him in many different ways and be open to the surprises he is yet to show us. It will also explore the depth and diversity of personal Christian faith and experience, and the different perceptions and experiences of Christ found within and across the Churches of the world.

(continued on page 7)

**You need not cry very loud; He is nearer to us than we think.**

**Brother Lawrence**



**If I feed my faith, my fears will starve to death.**

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