



# MAGAZINE OF UNITING CHURCH SKETTY MARCH 2024

After darkness, light;  
after winter, spring;  
after dying, life;  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Through Lent...



*Lent in Ukraine*



...to cross

and resurrection



Come whatever may,  
God will have God's way;  
Welcome, Easter Day!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

*Fred Pratt Green*

## Uniting together - Caring for all - Seeking God

**Minister:** The Revd Louise Gough

**Senior Elder:** Pat D

**Senior Steward:** Jan C

**Church Related Community Worker:** Adella P

**APRIL 2024 MAGAZINE:** All items for inclusion in the April 2024 edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D by 12 March at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, 24 March.

*NB We have stopped producing audio recordings of this church magazine due to a lack of demand. This is under continuous appraisal and if you think such recordings could benefit you, please let Les W. If you would like to receive the weekly notices and/or monthly magazine via email (.pdf file) please contact Lynne W.*

**Contacting us:** Uniting Church Sketty, Dillwyn Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9AH. Website: [www.unitingchurchsketty.org.uk](http://www.unitingchurchsketty.org.uk)

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The building development was funded by the following



The refurbished hall was funded from the sale of the Bethel building

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## LETTER FROM THE MANSE

### Dear Friends

*In order to picture the following scenes, you may need to know that as a result of my misspent youth, I know my way around a ballroom floor. Several times when I lived in Stockport, I caught the train to Blackpool North and had a happy day in the Blackpool Tower Ballroom... alas, now a long way from Swansea (but Swansea has plenty of compensations!).*

It's a wet Sunday afternoon. No 3pm service at Clydach for me today, so I'm in front of my computer, faced with a mountain of admin, some of which I really ought to have done last week (don't tell Howard). I'd love to have a snooze, but there's a lot to do, and I might not wake up in time for my evening zoom...

All of a sudden, inspiration strikes, and I open the "Spotify" music programme. I do a search for "Phil Kelsall". The next moment the Wurlitzer organ is ringing with some glorious melody and I'm in Blackpool Tower Ballroom – the happiest place in the world, hearing the happiest sound in the world. In front of me, dads hold



children balanced on their toes, trying to ignore the pain; couples who have danced together for years glide past in routines perfected by time; competition dancers stride out across those famous sprung boards, swinging and swaying, then stopping to dispute a wrong move; and old friends take hold and shuffle through a sequence. Soon, among them is a desperate partner-less person, who couldn't sit still any longer and was compelled to join in (that's me). But it's okay – someone kind has come to my rescue. And all of a sudden, I'm being twirled round that incredible bouncing floor, with a huge smile on my face, feeling like the best dancing minister in the world, as the ornate gold surroundings flash past and make me dizzy. I am so happy! I



love this place – it is timeless, innocent, completely free of worries, full of dance and joy – and later I look forward to a bracing blow on the seafront and a bag of chips (from Harry Ramsdens, if I'm feeling flush).

I never fail to be amazed at the power of human imagination.

Imagination lets us go anywhere, experience anything! It can brighten up a soggy afternoon, inspire us to make a change or plan a trip, and cheer our spirits no end. Where will your imagination take you, next time it rains? (Oh – this is Swansea; it is raining!)

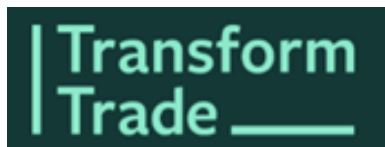
Using the imagination in scripture is an ancient way of prayer. Ignatius (1491-1556), a priest and theologian and co-founder of the Society of Jesus/The Jesuits, taught that God can speak to us through our imaginations. In his Spiritual Exercises, he encourages us to enter imaginatively into the Gospel stories of Jesus, by visualising each moment and finding ourselves in the unfolding events. Rather than it simply being a matter of going back in time, Jesus somehow comes forward and meets us in the present in a meaningful way. Sometimes our imaginations take us way beyond the Gospel text, but through it, God communicates with us, deeply and personally. The passage comes alive, and we encounter Jesus. Using the imagination in prayer is very powerful.

We are now in the season of Lent – a time to engage in some further spiritual discipline, prayer, and reading, or a study group, so that we can deepen our faith and strengthen ourselves for Holy Week and Easter. Perhaps this Lent, we can try some imaginative prayer... We could start by sitting down quietly and asking God to speak to us through the Bible reading and prayer time. We could then read a short portion of the Gospel, using the accounts of Jesus' journey to the cross in the Gospels. (The narratives are amazing, and there is such richness in these texts – it's hard to do justice to them in our Holy Week services alone – they bear infinitely more reflection.) Having read the Scripture, we could imagine ourselves in the scene, taking in the details, visualising, and letting the story play in our heads, wherever our imagination takes us. We might then want to speak to Jesus, and afterwards jot down

what has happened in the prayer time. This is an excellent way to get to know Jesus better, and to journey with him to the cross and the tomb and the garden. If we ask, give him time, and really enter into the process, God will speak to us in a new way, and the meaning of the cross will speak as never before.

However you spend Lent, Holy Week and Easter, I pray that God will nourish your faith and enrich you, and encourage you in your discipleship in the world.

God bless  
Louise



**OUR COMMUNION COLLECTION FOR MARCH** will be for Transform Trade. This was formerly part of TraidCraft (as Traidcraft Exchange) and exists to promote

Fair Trade. It campaigns particularly on the areas of fashion, business and climate. Transform Trade works in partnership with workers, farmers and social entrepreneurs in South Asia and East Africa to transform trade so that everyone benefits.

Susan

## WORSHIP SERVICES IN MARCH

*(All services at 10.30am unless otherwise indicated)*

March 3	Revd Louise Gough (C)
March 10	Revd Betty McNivan
March 17	Revd Simon Walkling ( <i>NB Change to Plan</i> )
March 21	Revd Louise Gough (Thursday Communion)
March 24	Revd Louise Gough (Palm Sunday)
March 28 (7.00pm)	Revd Louise Gough (C) (Maundy Thursday)
March 29 (2.30pm)	Revd Louise Gough (Good Friday)
March 31	Revd Louise Gough (C) (Easter Sunday)



**THE BIG PLASTIC COUNT** this year takes place from 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March. The



count includes some plastic that often goes into your bin (black bag) and some that can be recycled.

Please bring your soft plastic to church on 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March (only).

**GREENPEACE · EVERYDAY PLASTIC**

- CLEAN IT – first rinse your packaging
- SCRUNCH IT – scrunch it tightly. If it pings back, it is a useful indicator that it is soft plastic
- POP IT INTO another bag and bring it to church
- If you wish to continue doing this after 17<sup>th</sup> March, you can take it to several supermarkets (e.g. Co-op), if you are able to, otherwise a friendly neighbour or relative may be able to take it for you.

**DO NOT COUNT** – plasters, medication packaging, nappies, plastic cutlery, drink cartons

**WHAT TO COUNT** – (some examples)

- ✓ Soft food and drink packaging e.g. sliced bread bags
- ✓ Fruit, vegetable and salad bags
- ✓ Peelable film lids
- ✓ Snack bags, packets and wrappers
- ✓ Pet food pouches
- ✓ Bubble wrap

When taking part in **THE BIG PLASTIC COUNT** you may feel as if the plastic crisis is your fault. It's NOT. Only government, brands and supermarkets have the means to provide accessible alternatives. YOUR evidence, MY evidence, OUR evidence will persuade them to do that.

Thank you (in advance) for taking part.

**Janet N**

## WALKING GROUP

On our walk last month, from Limeslade to Rotherslade, we were able to see the start of some of the changes which have become necessary, possibly due to climate change and/or a change in weather patterns in this area. In January a “robotic machine” was cutting down the broom in an area where, in the near future, there will have to be big changes. This preparation was being done before



the birds started nesting. Along this path there has been a great deal of coastal erosion. Consequently, a new path will have to be constructed further inland.



Our walk in March will be on Thursday, 14th March at 2pm. It will be a walk and talk led by Barbara Parry (CVCP). We will meet at the end of Clyne Valley Road (off Gower Rd) which is just below St Hilary's Church. There is parking available at the church. The walk will be muddy and is uneven in places.



Janet N

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**NB Check in the Weekly Notices for information about the March ECO COFFEE AND CHAT**

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**THE LENT FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP SESSIONS CONTINUE DURING MARCH...**

**MARCH 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in the Wesley Room from 10.00 until 11.30am, following Lenten themes, led by Revd Louise. All are welcome!**





**WE PRAY.....**for Bangladesh...where water taps and hygienic sanitation are needed in all areas of the country. We pray that by the encouragement of charities working in the country, the people of Bangladesh can be helped to alleviate their poverty by using environmentally and economically stable ways of agriculture, giving people a healthier lifestyle. (*See back page*)

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER. AMEN.

**Janet N**

## **COVER TO COVER**

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The reading group meets every first Thursday of the month at 10am. We read a wide variety of different books chosen by members of the group and are always interested to hear of new suggestions. Our meetings are hybrid using the usual church link for those who wish to join on zoom.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> we will be discussing "I capture the Castle" by Dodie Smith and this will be led by Pegi Llewelyn Jones who,

with David, joins us on zoom from London.

On April 4<sup>th</sup> the book to be discussed is "The turn of the screw" by Henry James, which I will lead.

It would be good to have more members and more ideas. Please consider joining us. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided!

**Pat D**

## **PASTORAL UPDATE (from Gwen D)**

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- Each of Clare and Nigel's daughters has given birth to a baby boy in the last few weeks. We send our love and congratulations to Clare, Nigel and their family. What fun it will be when their 4 Grandsons get together.
- Our friend, John N, has now moved to Three Cliffs Nursing Home in Penmaen. We send our love and prayers to John.
- We continue to welcome new friends to our church and it's good to have the opportunity to get to know them. If you are an established member of UCS, please do make yourself known to our new friends and help them to feel at home.



## EASTER SPONSORSHIP FOR LOUISE

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Those of you who are regular attenders at our coffee mornings will know Trevor (*who is recovering slowly from recent surgery. ed.*) who is always accompanied by his guide dog, Ash, and increasingly often by his wonderful neighbour and friend Dorothy. What you may not know is that Dorothy is well known for designing and making wonderful Easter bonnets. This year she has generously offered to make us a bonnet to raise money for church funds.

Lovely Louise, otherwise known as the Rev. Louise Gough, with only a very tiny bit of arm twisting, offered to wear the bonnet on Easter Sunday Morning, BUT, and there's always a but, only if people are willing to sponsor her. So, folks, if you would like to see Louise



"In her Easter bonnet, with all the frills upon it,  
She'll be the smartest lady in an Easter pulpit."

Please sign a sponsorship form available from the Leadership Team.

**Thank you, Jan C** (*with help from Chris H*)

### FEBRUARY COFFEE MORNING

We are very grateful to all those who attended our special coffee morning. A special thank you to all who helped, served, and donated goods, cakes, or money. It raised more than £650 for Alzheimer's Research UK. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us celebrate our Golden Wedding anniversary in this way. Thank you also for all the cards and good wishes. It was a lovely occasion.

*Lynne & Les*



## WAR MEMORIALS AND ROLLS OF HONOUR

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A few months ago, I attended a talk on war memorials and rolls of honour. Until then I hadn't realized the difference between them.

A war memorial at Uniting Church Sketty (previously Sketty Methodist Church) shows only the names of the servicemen who died during WW1 (see photo).

In 2014 it was decided to remove the war memorial and have it thoroughly cleaned by an expert. The outcome can be seen in photo. An excellent job was made of cleaning, re-painting and replacing the war memorial.

Research was undertaken by Bob Cuthill, Janet Neilson and Jeff Coleman into how and where the soldiers died and how they had come to be living in Sketty.

A roll of honour lists everyone connected with a church or chapel who went to war or was involved in the war effort. War memorials and rolls of honour in churches and chapels are only pertinent to WW1.

When Bethel United Reformed Church, Sketty Green, closed they brought their roll of honour to UCS, where it sits on the opposite wall to the WW1 memorial.

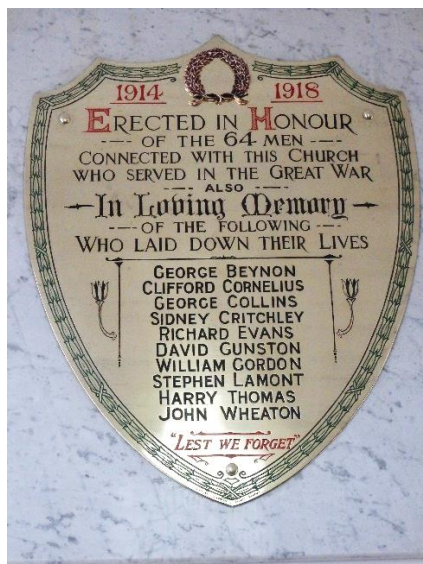
One major difference between the war memorial and the roll of honour, shown here, is that one is metal and the other is paper/parchment in a wooden frame.

I often wondered how one chapel could have lost so many members/adherents during WW1. The talk which I heard explained that.

If you look at the roll of honour from a certain angle in a certain light, which a few of us did recently, we all noticed that there were five faded stars alongside five names. This was also explained during the talk which I attended. The stars marked the names of those who had died. All the other names are those who survived.



*The Bethel URC, then the Congregational Church, memorial*



*The Sketty Methodist Church – now UCS – memorial*

The war memorial in Sketty Methodist Church was unveiled and dedicated on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1921. In the order of service are the names of the surviving service personnel. Ten men died and thirty-four returned, including two women.

The Bethel roll of honour includes fifty people who survived, including one woman, Gwladys May Thomas. The men who died were – Stanley Oswald JOHN, William TUCKER, William Henry REES, Robert SWEET and David JOHN.

Research has led to this information about the men who died :

- S O JOHN was a Serjeant (S4/232706) in the Army Service Corps. He died on 5/10/1917 aged 28. He is buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery 111.1.26, Belgium. He was the son of George and Margaret JOHN, The Woods, Sketty.
- W TUCKER (27172) was in the Hampshire Regiment, 15<sup>th</sup> (Hants Yeomanry Brigade). He died on 4/9/1918. He is buried in Voormezele, Enclosure No 3, XVI.J.21, Belgium. TUCKER was born in 1888, lived at 4 Margaret Terrace and was a market gardener.
- W H REES was a corporal (43759) in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Own Yorks Light Infantry. He died on 3/10/1917, aged 21. He is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery XXIV.E.9, Belgium. He was the son of William and Mary REES, Plasmarl.
- R SWEET was a private (6889) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Bn Australian Infantry. He died on 1/9/1918. He is buried at Hem Farm Military Cemetery Hem-Monacu II.J.5, France.
- D JOHN was in the Royal Marines RM Div (Engineers RNDIV). He died on 20/10/1915, aged 20. He is buried at Englerbelmar Communal Cemetery, Ext A.16, France. His parents lived in Kimberely Road.

**Janet N**

#### **COFFEE MORNINGS**

- **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**, 10am-12noon. Proceeds for Pettifor Trust.
- **Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> April**, 10am-12noon, Mike & I will run a coffee morning to mark our 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary, in support of the Old Mill, The Holistic Cancer Support Centre. The Old Mill has no charitable status and last December the organiser was 'scratching' around for this year's funding. For more information, see December magazine. (Anne W)

## MEMORIES OF MY SUNDAY SCHOOL DAYS

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Who remembers this small tin church on the corner of Broadway (where the traffic lights at the junction for Cwmgwyn and Town Hill are now), or Broadway Presbyterian Church, to give it its full title?



The girl in the photo reminds me of my young self as, on a Sunday afternoon from the age of eight, I walked from Cockett to attend Sunday School there, in later years with my young brother in tow. The temptation to divert into Cockett Park and the swings was very real on a sunny day.

The inside of the church was very spartan with no pews just wooden chairs, and a very wheezy organ which needed to be pumped manually, a task my father recalled performing in his youth. It was well attended and there were a number of classes with concerts and plays performed – for some reason singing the hymn “Dear Lord and Father of mankind” solo and reluctantly, sticks in my mind. Scripture exams were taken every year - a bit like Faith and Fellowship groups but with an exam at the end! I think I must have been a serious child as I admit I enjoyed those, even gaining Honours one year. I still have the certificates and book prizes in my possession.

At sixteen, schoolwork and O levels took priority and I “graduated” to attending church with my grandparents in Walter Road Congregational Church with the Revd Brynmor Jones and his decidedly classic sermons. So another step was made in my rather ecumenical journey of faith.

**Jeanette S**

## THE CREED OF NICEA 325AD

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On February 8<sup>th</sup>, I participated in a webinar run by the World Council of Churches to get us all thinking about the Nicene Creed. This ecumenical creed was agreed in the Council of Nicea in 325AD. So next year, 2025, will mark its 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is one of the most ancient creeds of the Christian Church and is recognized by nearly all churches and denominations as an ecumenical statement of the fundamental faith that is the foundation of the Church. We do not use the creeds on a regular basis in UCS, but you will be familiar with some of its basic statements of belief:

- ‘We believe in God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen...’
- ‘We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God...’
- ‘We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life...’
- ‘We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church...’



What is particularly astounding, it seems to me, is that around 300 bishops (together with two priests and deacons from their churches) from around the Roman Empire at that time were able to come together in Council, at the invitation of the Emperor, Constantine, to agree a shared

understanding of the faith and thus seek to ensure peace and harmony within the Empire. The key question that challenged these Christian leaders was, ‘Who is Jesus Christ and how do we understand him?’. (By the way, in this icon of the Council, the person prostrate on the ground is Arius, one of the Church Fathers, whose understanding of Jesus as NOT ‘begotten of the Father before all time’, was rejected as heresy by the Council. Who do you agree with? Arius or the Council of Nicea? That’s a discussion for another time!) So there were political as well as theological reasons behind this attempt to agree a statement of faith in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Would they have imagined, in their wildest dreams, that in 2025, 1700 year later, Christians



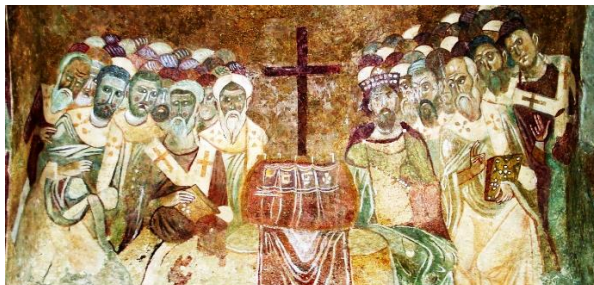
around the world would be celebrating and reflecting on ‘their’ creed and its significance and meaning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The webinar was entitled, ‘From Nicea, walking together towards unity: the beginning of a new beginning’. I picked up a few interesting thoughts that I considered worth sharing:

- This was the first confession of faith to be agreed by the one Church after the New Testament period.
- It was a kind of *magna carta*, a shared response to Jesus’ question, ‘Who do you say that I am?’
- This creed is an important part, along with the Bible – which is the ultimate authority of our faith, of course – of our shared Christian heritage across the centuries.
- The Council of Nicea used the language of its day to express a shared faith. What language could we use to express our faith meaningfully in our context and setting today?
- How can we be open to and learn from each other’s different understandings of the faith as expressed in this creed?
- One speaker described 2025 as *The Year of the Holy Spirit*, a time when we need, as Christians around the world, to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing, strengthening and inspiring us to deeper unity, harmony and partnership in worship, witness and service.

Could this be an opportunity for us in UCS to think about our shared faith, using some resources for worship, study and prayer that will be available? It could be a very stimulating exercise for us. How about it?

**Noel**





## OUR JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK TO EASTER

Holy Week, the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Day, prepares us for Good Friday, 'When we survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died'. We follow Jesus and those first confused and frightened disciples on our journey of faith and discovery.



**March 24                      Revd Louise Gough (Palm Sunday)**

**March 28 (7.00pm) Revd Louise Gough (C) (Maundy Thursday)**

**March 29 (2.30pm) Revd Louise Gough (Good Friday)**



Then, 'on the third day', '... the green blade rises from the buried grain... Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green'.

**Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed!  
Alleluia!**

**March 31                      Revd Louise Gough (C) (Easter Sunday)**



Many thanks to Chris H. for creating this wonderful display in the entrance hall to the church. It highlights the work being done in Bangladesh, the country focus for our ecumenical support this year for URC and Methodist work there. Please make time to look at it and learn more about our shared commitment to our brothers and sisters in Bangladesh.