



**MAGAZINE OF
UNITING CHURCH
SKETTY
MAY 2024**



Support more families like Aline's to push back against the inhumanity of poverty.
Donate today.

Join us this Christian Aid Week **12-18 May**
Please donate at CAWeek.org

**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
(Swansea Region of URC Churches)

JUNE 2024 MAGAZINE: All items for inclusion in the June 2024 edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D by 14 May at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, 26 May.

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 know. 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

The building development was funded by the following

The **Methodist Church**



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Assembly Government



ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED

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

LETTER FROM THE MANSE

Dear friends

I had a new experience last Friday – shopping for floor tiles! My life in manses has meant that I usually inherit floor coverings, but insurance work to take place at some point in the present manse means that the kitchen floor will be removed and repaired (there is a large crack underneath caused by historic movement of the house).



Unfortunately, the shiny fancy tiles with sparkly bits were too expensive, and the subtle pink ones (to tone with the rest of the house) had awful blue and yellow flecks on them (apologies if these sound horribly familiar to you because you have laid them in your house!), and I didn't warm to the beige, so I was pleased to find very nice grey tiles with a gentle pebble effect. I thought they would remind me of my happy walks on the beautiful Swansea beaches!

The helpful assistant at the tile shop advised that this style in particular should be laid end to end, in a very straight-forward 'grid' – as any brick or diagonal effect would not look good (again, apologies if I have trampled on your personal design scheme!). It seems as though I will have a very orderly new kitchen floor!

In May we will be celebrating Pentecost – the day the Holy Spirit came and disturbed orderliness by turning everything upside-down! Before that, Jesus' disciples had remained quiet, almost in hiding after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, although they were following his instructions to 'wait'. When the day came, they were almost blown off their feet by gusts of the Spirit, the divine breath, who fired their hearts to such an extent that all they could do was proclaim the good news of Jesus' love so loudly that thousands heard them!

The Holy Spirit had a transforming effect on Jesus' followers, and that day, the church was born!

It's remarkable that through that tiny group of people who had often misunderstood and let Jesus (and themselves) down, the Spirit was able to create a movement that has changed the world.

So we have hope! Part of the glory of God's church is that God can work through ordinary people, even small numbers, to incredible effect!

When I was growing up, our family took great pleasure in the crazy paving in the back garden – the random pattern of broken slabs that to my mind was vastly superior to square and boring slabs (though I won't be trying to recreate it with my new floor tiles!).

Somehow, my dad and the next door neighbour managed to put together a motley assortment of broken pieces to create what to me was a work of art! In crazy paving, every piece finds a home; every piece is given its place to shine,



its own space, contained and surrounded, but part of the whole.

(Like rocks and stones on a beach?

ed.) Similarly, Pentecost reminds us that there is room for everyone – everyone is welcome – and that God surrounds each one with love, and can work through us all, no matter how odd or irregular! As the church, we form a community of people who know we are in need of

God and are loved by God – how can we encourage others to feel welcome and to know God's love too?

In this, in every aspect of our lives, Pentecost reveals that we are patterned by the Holy Spirit, who will always find ways to keep us moving so that we can learn more of God's love and share it – God's people are never glued and grouted into a fixed position!

I pray that as we continue to worship and work together, we will be open to the dynamic Spirit of God, who will enable us to be and do so much more than we could ever think of or imagine.

Every blessing

Louise

WORSHIP SERVICES IN UCS IN MAY

(All services are at 10.30am)

May 5	Revd Louise Gough (Communion)
12	Revd John Atkinson (Christian Aid Week)
19	Revd Louise Gough (Pentecost Sunday: The service will be a joint service with the Asian Christian Fellowship and led jointly with the Revd Irfan John)
23	Revd Louise Gough (Thursday Communion)
26	Revd Pamela Cram

FOR YOUR DIARY

The Methodist Church

On **Saturday 11th May 2024, 10am-12.30pm**, an Open Day will be held at Penlan Methodist Church, home of the Methodist Circuit Project, Ogof Adullam. This will include plant sales and other stalls. The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton, and the Vice President, Deaconess Kerry Scarlett, and one of the Wales Synod Cymru Chairs, the Revd Andrew Charlesworth, will be attending.



The President and Vice-President will also be attending a special service to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Wesley Church in Eaton Road, Brynhyfryd, on Sunday afternoon, May 12th. We send our greetings and good wishes to our friends in Eaton Road and pray God's blessing on their life, witness and service in the future.

PASTORAL UPDATE (from Gwen D):

We give thanks for the life, ministry and faith of our friend Ivor following his death and send our love and prayers to his family. Our thoughts are also with Paul and his family following the sudden death of Nicola.

Jeff has had his operation and is recovering well in hospital. We send him our greetings. Graham has now left hospital and is convalescing in Bonynmaen House. We remember them both in our prayers, along with all our friends who have current or ongoing health concerns.

UCS GETS MESSY: Saturday, April 13th

The theme for our monthly session of **UCS Gets Messy** was 'Spring and Growing'.

Numbers attending were very low but those who came had good fun and experienced a variety of activities. Our story for the session focussed on the Mustard Seed. We saw how tiny the seeds are, but pictures showed how big yellow mustard flowers can grow and how even larger mustard trees can become. The moral being: "Little things can make a difference."

We planted mustard and cress seeds in eggshells to take home. We decorated fibre pots before planting a sunflower seed in them to take home to plant in the ground.

We used a sunflower measuring chart to see how tall we stand.

We enjoyed mixing cornflakes and chocolate sauce before adding chocolate eggs to make birds' nests cakes. Best of all we enjoyed eating them at snack time!

We made tissue paper flowers and lastly practised our cutting skills in making a display of flowers.

What a lot of items we had to take home!!

Next Session of **UCS Gets Messy** is booked for May 11th, with the theme of the Prodigal Son. We hope to see more children then. The session is planned to end with a feast in which we invite parents/carers to share with us.



MARCH FOR WOMEN

Yes, March is THE month for women, and they can also, certainly, march! There are two important worldwide groups that celebrate every March.



The first group is a Christian group that keeps the first Friday of March every year as a special worldwide day of prayer. Nowadays, it is for everyone, but it was first started by a number of American women and was known for many decades as The Women's World Day of Prayer. The liturgy for the day is still prepared by women, each year from a

different nation. The music and hymns can be different but the liturgy itself is the same worldwide. It is prepared well in advance so that it can be translated into many languages and made available locally. Some of the gifts unique to the preparing nation are often displayed for thanksgiving. The photo shows the display prepared by the churches in Clydach in Capel y Nant for this year's Day of Prayer, which was especially moving as the liturgy was prepared by a group of women from Palestine.



The second global group is political and encourages people around the world to keep March 17th every year as International Women's Day. It is intended to emphasize the importance of education and human rights for women and girls, especially in those regions where their status is poor. The photos, taken a few years ago now, show the celebration of tribal women in the Himalayan foothills of North West India at which I was present. They came in buses and



lorries with enthusiasm and joy to a central town, celebrating with music and dancing, and the portrayal of charades and homemade plays. The day was filled with laughter and fun and some bawdy humour! A few brave young husbands came as well. They sat at the back, often looking a bit sheepish at the honest portrayal of family antics. There was no doubting the enthusiasm and sincerity of these uneducated Christian women, who were – and are – often neglected and so much in need of support from their more privileged sisters (and brothers).

Yes indeed, March is the month of women!

Alice R

COMMUNION COLLECTION



As May includes Christian Aid week, Christian Aid will receive our communion collection this month. Christian Aid aims to bring food security, better health, safer homes and resilience around the world. They provide aid to all the major disasters such as the Turkey-Syria earthquake where they are now focusing on protecting children and rebuilding communities. Christian Aid is also working in Ukraine and Gaza where it's managing to give some aid through partners in the region – though this is currently fraught with difficulty.

Christian Aid also urges people to pray and campaign for justice. You can find resources on the website: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns> (see more information later in this Magazine. ed.)

Susan G

THREE EASTER BONNET THANK YOUS (from Jan C.)



Firstly, a thank you to Dorothy for making such a delightful bonnet.

Secondly, a thank you to Louise for being such a good sport and offering to wear the bonnet on Easter Sunday morning (see Janet's photo!).

Thirdly, a thank you to everyone who sponsored Louise and thus contributed to the grand total of £220 raised for church funds.

REMEMBERING KATH D

On Friday 22nd March, a thanksgiving service was held at UCS for our dear friend, Kath D. This was preceded by a service at Llanelli Crematorium, during which two special poems and family memories of Kath were shared. At UCS, there was a wonderful poem written by Ali in tribute to her mum, and 'windows on Kath's life', shared by Bill, who talked through a series of photos as he told the story of Kath's life. Details from the various talks are here combined as a short tribute to Kath:

Kath grew up in Oldham. She enjoyed school but missed many exams through illness. Despite this, her determination saw her qualify to go to Newcastle University to do her teacher training.

It was here that she met Bill, at a rugby club dance in 1967, and then on the way home to residences in Whitely Bay, where a rather drunk Bill said he would call the next day. She obviously thought he'd forget, because when he turned up, she was washing her hair! This was the start of a 57 year friendship. Kath and Bill were married at the Methodist Church in Oldham on 29th May 1971, and the move to Swansea followed a few years later in 1976.

Kath's teaching career was characterised by her constant care for her students. She was often the 'emotional coach' for troubled teenagers, and the one they would turn to in a crisis. In general, one of Kath's best gifts was her empathy and the way she always made time and was available for people. She had a very caring personality.

Kath is also known for her creativity and her extraordinary way with fabric and threads. Her work with the craft group (to whom she gave much encouragement) is displayed in the glorious banners around the church building. Some of her beautiful and unique creations, including her design books (because everything was painstakingly planned), were brought to UCS on the day of the funeral. She was famously a perfectionist, meticulously unpicking and re-stitching until it was just right, and it shows!

Kath was never one for sitting still, and she loved dancing (line-dancing at Blackpill), walking, swimming, travelling and holidays (including skiing), raising money for Marie Curie, animals, gardening (while supervising Bill!), Cliff Richard concerts(!), and her involvement at UCS – throughout her life, faith was very important to her.

However, Kath's greatest joy was her family – and her life was enriched upon discovering her sisters, Maggie and Linda, and getting to know their families too.

In summary, Kath lived life to the full – she loved people and she loved life. She is greatly missed but held in God's eternal care.



The closing prayer at the funeral included these words:

***God of nature and art,
music and dancing,
fabrics and adventures:
your glorious colours of love
are carefully stitched
through each moment of our lives –
planned to perfection -
with the golden threads
of relationship,***

*laughter
and love
joining us to you
and to all we love
for eternity.*

Revd Louise

The 3-D shell collage hangs on Bill and Kath's lounge wall. It represents wonderfully '...the golden threads of relationship, laughter and love...'

Bill adds:

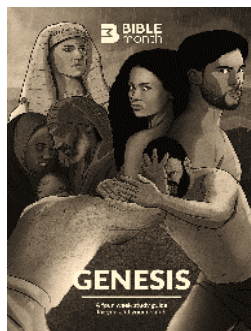
I would like to extend my thanks to all the people who attended Kath's memorial service for making it such a lovely tribute to her life. Those who so kindly decorated the church with flowers and banners, our organist Alan, our minister, Louise, those who plied us with tea, coffee and food and those who so generously said so many nice things about Kath and her life. It was, after all, about Kath and the love simply oozed from all directions.

So God Bless for making a sad occasion so memorable.

Bill

METHODIST BIBLE MONTH 2024

This year, Bible Month will focus on The Book of Genesis. So from the last book of the Bible last year to the first book this year! In UCS, we anticipate that the Sunday Worship services will focus on Genesis. But we also plan to hold five Faith and Fellowship Sessions. On this occasion, these will be led by me, the Revd Noel Davies. The dates and themes are as follows (all in the Wesley Room from 10.00am until 11.30am):



- June 4: What is Genesis about?
- June 11: Creation and Covenant (Gen 1-11)
- June 18: Abraham and Sarah: Call and Promise (Gen 12-25)
- June 25: Isaac, Esau and Jacob: Rift and Reconciliation (Gen 25-36)
- July 2: Joseph: God at work, in the public arena and in individual lives (Gen 37-50)

These will be face to face sessions. If you're interested in joining the course on zoom, please let me know, and if there's adequate demand, we might be able to arrange additional sessions.

Study notes will be available nearer the time. In the meantime, our homework is to read through Genesis. A Reading Guide has been prepared by the Methodist Church and is available on-line as follows:

[3769-bible-month-2024_genesis-web.pdf \(d1yuutt686hfi0.cloudfront.net\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/3769-bible-month-2024_genesis-web.pdf(d1yuutt686hfi0.cloudfront.net))

I will try to obtain printed copies for distribution in the next couple of weeks. If you have any questions, contact me (i.e. Noel!)

The Late Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote about Genesis in The Jewish Chronicle: The journey described in Genesis turns out to be unexpectedly complicated and fraught with setbacks. In a sense, it continues till today. This is part of what makes Genesis so vivid. (As Jews) we can relate to its characters and their dilemmas. We are part of their world, as they are of ours. No other ancient literature has so contemporary a feel. This is our story; this is where we came from; this is our journey.

For reflection: As Christians can we share this view?

RECENT BENEVOLENCE PAYMENTS (from Jon Dyer)

Macmillan's Cancer Support	£100.00	Donation in lieu of daffodil sales
Transform Trade	£266.07	Communion Collection

Extracts from Thank You/Acknowledgement letters:

**ALZHEIMER'S
RESEARCH UK**

**FOR A
CURE**

Coffee morning to mark Les and Lynne's Wedding Anniversary which raised £752.55

We are truly grateful for your support and your dedication to research into dementia. You are making such a difference in dementia research and for communities across Swansea, Wales and the UK. With your support we are revolutionising the way we treat, diagnose and prevent dementia which will bring us closer to a cure.

Lucy Squance – Director of Support-led Fundraising

Stepping Stones Children's Centre

Communion Collection

Thank you so much for your kindness and the generous gift of £445.60 which will be spent on new Sensory Equipment for our children with complex needs.



Best Wishes from Stepping Stones

Dear ABC Supporters



Thank you very much for the donation of postage stamps which you have sent to our charity. The stamps will be sent off for recycling and the funds raised will help towards our research into

secondary spread breast cancer.

Stamps are sold by weight. As a general guideline we can expect to receive around £20 for one kilogram of stamps, so please do encourage your friends and family, at home and abroad to save their stamps for us.

Thanks again for your support.

Kind regards

Debbie Hounslow. Against Breast Cancer

(Sent in by Liz R)

Gower Chorale June Concert

Saturday, June 29th at 7pm
At All Saints Church, Oystermouth

Opera Favourites

Soloists

Soprano: Joelene Griffiths

Tenor: Ceri Davies

Pianist Chris Samuel

Musical Director Dr William Reynolds

Tickets: £15. Available from choir members

Children under 15yrs: Free Admission

LET JUSTICE ROLL

Easter Offering 2024



A REMINDER:

The Circuit **EASTER OFFERING SERVICE** will be held at Mumbles Methodist Church at 6.00pm on **Sunday, April 28th**. This will be a chance to celebrate with the world church.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT BT and EE

If you have a telephone landline, some of you may have received a letter from BT/EE. The UK government has decided that the UK's entire phone network is to undergo a major revamp.

If your landline is your only or main source of contacting people or if you have a Lifeline phone, you don't need to worry. Your landline will not become redundant, even if you don't have broadband. Each household will receive a conversion kit. If you are unable to install it yourself, an engineer will do it for you. You won't need to change your landline number or your phone. You will be contacted by BT/EE when it's time to switch.

Janet N

ECO (EARTH CRIES OUT) MATTERS

Eco Friends met for their latest Coffee & Chat on Saturday, 23rd March. The purpose of the meeting was to add comments to a new plan of action, prayer and commitment to ensure that UCS continues to be a church that focusses on green issues.

The meeting opened with a prayer from the Green Christian Prayer Diary.

Here is a summary of our discussions:

- Used stamps that are being donated are being sent to the charity “Against Breast Cancer”
- The church recycling containers are used for recycling batteries, spectacles (but NO cases), DVDs and CDs, toothpaste tubes and printer cartridges.
- NB – soft plastic can be recycled at Co-op and Tesco; medicine blister packs can be recycled at Superdrug.

We agreed that the following activities will take place:

- To encourage people to partake in NO MOW MAY (see below)
- What we could do to be part of the Great Big Green Week in June

People shared their concerns about the new recycling for businesses and the extra recycling generated, and wondered if the Council will be able to cope. Fairtrade products were available at the meeting and Jackie took requests from people for products that they would like to see on the UCS Fairtrade stall.



NO MOW MAY is to encourage gardeners to leave mowers in the shed and transform lawns (for that month) into havens for biodiversity. May is the window to summer and the time when grass starts to shoot up in earnest.

Most gardeners are desperate to ‘get mowing’, but please think again this year. 97% of British wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1930s. Between 1980 and 2013 every square kilometre in the UK lost an average of 11 species of bees.

You don't have to stop mowing completely. Some species, such as daisies are adapted to growing in shorter swathes. Cutting flowers from these plants once a month stimulates them to produce more blooms.

Some parts of your sward can be left unmown to encourage a greater diversity of flowers which offer important sources of nectar in May.

Over the past three summers, by not mowing my lawn, the number of wildflowers has increased considerably.

At the end of April, I mow curved paths in my lawn, to make a kind of labyrinth. I can then walk around my lawn, using it as a way of meditating on God's creation, also looking for new plant growth and many different insects. It is particularly peaceful in the evening sunshine.

Please consider taking part in **NO MOW MAY**, as we continue our Eco journey as a congregation.



Go green in May, go green,
Don't cut your grass, it's mean,
Think of each butterfly and bee,
As honey-making time comes near.

So let your grass grow tall in May,
It's only once a year,
And you will see the difference made
As grass grows day by day.

Janet N and Adella P

WALKING GROUP: Thursday, 9th May at 2pm to walk around Clyne Gardens, in all their glory (hopefully). Meet at the main entrance near Clyne Chapel on the path which leads from the car park.

June's walk will be to Penllergaer Valley Woods to investigate the new coffee shop – after our walk.



Janet N



Dementia Friendly Swansea set up the Dementia Hwb in The Quadrant, Swansea in January 2022 and since opening have welcomed over 4850 visitors.

The Swansea Dementia Hwb is a one-stop information centre anchored in the heart of the community for all things dementia related. Whether it be carers, individuals with a diagnosis, professional health workers, or those who want to educate themselves on the topic, we can signpost to information and services to support each visitor. Often people are unaware of the process of diagnosis or that support is available to them. Following the success of the Swansea Hwb, a second Dementia Hwb was opened in Aberafan Shopping Centre in January 2024 to provide a replication of the service to Neath Port Talbot.

As well as this, we now have 16 Mobile Hwb locations in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot that appear in regular spots each week, with a regular member of staff being situated in community embedded areas, such as cafes, libraries, and community halls. The aim of the Mobile Hwb system is to provide much needed support, advice, and information to those who are unable to access this from the Dementia Hwb located in Swansea Quadrant or Port Talbot-Aberafan shopping centres. This will particularly assist carers and vulnerable people who would be more comfortable in accessing advice and information in their own communities if they are unable or reluctant to travel into the city centre, or unable to leave the person they care for, for a longer period of time.

We endeavour to continue breaking down the stigma and barriers faced by those affected by dementia and show that for those who feel lost, 'You are not alone'.

For information on any of our Dementia Hwb centres, call us on 01792 304519, or send an email to support@dementiafriendlyswansea.org.

Jess Bresnan

Mobile Hwb Support Worker – Dementia Hwb

Tel: 01792 304519 / 075 1087 1002

Email: Jessica.Bresnan@dementiafriendlyswansea.org

<https://www.dementiafriendlyswansea.org/>

12–18 May 2024: Christian Aid Week

Will you help someone push back against poverty?

Fundraise with us

From community events to individual challenges, Christian Aid Week is seven days of fundraising fun – your way to fund lasting change.

Take part and fundraise as part of our new '70K in May' challenge or choose your own event. However you fundraise, together we can beat extreme poverty.

Campaign with us

Act on poverty this Christian Aid Week. As the General Election approaches, the people hoping to represent you in the next UK Parliament will be vying for your vote.

Tell your candidates about Aline's inspiring story. Show them that you

care about poverty and tell them that you expect them to act on poverty too, if they're elected.

Worship with us

Christian Aid Week is the perfect time for your church to come together in celebration and reflection.

Pray this Christian Aid Week that people pushed to the brink of poverty find the strength and opportunity to push back harder and fulfil their hopes and ambitions.

How your support makes a difference

With your support, more families can build reliable and diverse incomes that bring them food security, better health, safer homes, increased resilience and hope.

7 days, so many ways

With your help, we can work towards a world where families can escape the trap of poverty and fulfil their ambitions.

Seven days – so many ways to fund lasting change.



Poverty pushed Aline to the brink of survival.

Aline felt the full force of extreme poverty when an early marriage ended in abuse and violence.

Separated from her six children, she was forced to sleep on the streets of Burundi. No home. No healthcare. No security.

But Aline was determined to push back against the inhumanity of poverty, driven by hope, faith and the love of her children. She transformed her life with a little help from Christian Aid.



'We are a global movement of people, churches and local organisations. We are the changemakers, the peacemakers, the mighty of heart.'

COFFEE MORNING: Saturday 4th May 2024 10am – 12noon. Proceeds for Christian Aid.

IN MEMORIAM: THE REVD IVOR THOMAS REES

As we give thanks to God for the life and ministry of Ivor Rees, who died peacefully on Easter Monday in his 93rd year, we remember his long ministry, his loyal friendship, his endless storytelling and, especially, his love for family. Pat and I will remember him and Delyth for our long friendship over many decades (including sharing many, many meals in each others' homes!) and for his life-long, unwavering faithfulness to the ecumenical vision, to the worldwide church and to nurturing their links with friends around the world, not least in Israel/Palestine. He was also the author of a number of books – historical, biographical and books of seasonal reflections. Ivor was brought up in Carmel Welsh Congregational Church in Treherbert, at the head of the Rhondda Valley, under the ministry of the Revd Emrys Jones. He never forgot the church, the minister or the community that nurtured him in those early years. He felt called to ministry. So after doing a humanities degree here in Swansea University, he was trained for ministry in the Congregational College in Brecon. He would tell you many tales about those years: staff he deeply valued and fellow-students who became life-long friends – and the students' strike! Throughout the following years, his Christian ministry was always biblically founded, theologically informed, ecumenically inspired, globally aware, justice seeking, community rooted, pastorally caring and liturgically shaped.

But I thought it would be good, as we recall his lifelong Christian discipleship, to be reminded of what Ivor himself wrote in the May 2020 Magazine (when I asked the retired ministers in our church to write about what they valued about being part of Uniting Church Sketty), so that we can be inspired again by the vision that gave his ministry energy and commitment. Ivor wrote:

BELONGING IN THE UNITING CHURCH

An octogenarian's answer (*this was 2020! ed*) to a question about today always involves looking back. It's just like stepping back to kick a goal. I was infected with ecumenism as a student at Swansea University and it has never left me. I still look forward to the visible union of Christ's Church on earth. Those days before councils of churches existed were exciting. The Ecumenical Society of Wales was a voice crying in the wilderness, led by the Blaendulais Ecumenical Centre. It became the Friends of the Council when the Council of Churches of Wales was formed in 1956.

Port Talbot was a wonderful place for a minister in the fifties and sixties, especially a new one. The churches shared in the prosperity of the boom town. In 1956 there was no unity among either Free Churches or Anglicans (a new deanery was created). That changed radically. Later, the fraternal contained eighteen Free Church ministers and ten Anglicans. I was charged with contacting all churches on the matter of forming a council of churches and drawing up a constitution, then becoming the secretary. We were told that this was the most active and 'successful' council of churches in Wales. In Clapham, Ewell, Manselton and Bamford I performed similar roles, though, each time, in different local circumstances. When at Manselton, I was privileged to be Ecumenical Adviser to the Bishop's College of Saint Mary to encourage mission in Swansea. Early on in my ministry, I served on the Board of the London Missionary Society for some ten years and for eight on its India Committee, which experience further fed my ecumenical zeal.

Sadly, most of that ecumenical sharing is no more. There were two particular disappointments, in my first pastorate and my second. The detailed plan for a united Welsh Congregational/Methodist church on Baglan Moors, with two worship areas and a communal place for coffee did not come to fruition.

At Clapham, the Methodist minister retired a year after I arrived. The church was moved to the Wandsworth Circuit. His successor told me that Wandsworth was his priority. So I led major festivals, midweek services and four months of evening services. The Methodists said they did not want union.

All of this helps me see how wonderful it is now to belong to a uniting church. More than a paper union, I believe Sketty has a genuine uniting of people in sharing, loving commitment – to Christ, his mission and each other. I thank God.

So we give thanks to God for all Ivor was by nature and by God's grace, and pray God's peace and blessing on Lythan and Phil, both URC ministers, and their family, and his son, Dafydd, and his family. 'May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in God, so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15.13)

***Crist a gyfodwyd! Efe a gyfodwyd yn wir! Halelwia!
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Halleluia!***

Noel

MIRTH AND MERRIMENT FROM MADCAPS (from Jan C.)

A naughty but nevertheless true story from the Bristol Evening Post: Outside Bristol Zoo is a car park with spaces for 150 cars and 8 coaches. For the past 23 years, it has been staffed 6 days a week by the same charming, polite attendant with a small ticket machine. The charges were always £1 per car and £5 per coach. One Monday morning the attendant failed to appear, so the Zoo phoned the city council to explain and ask for a replacement. They were politely told that the car park was the responsibility of the Zoo. The Zoo then explained that they thought the attendant was employed by the council. The reply from the council was, “What attendant?”

Gone missing from home is the person who had regularly and politely been taking about £400 per day parking fees!

A VISIT TO THE THEATRE



This year the Abbey Players are performing the Disney musical ‘Beauty and the Beast’ at the Taliesin Theatre from Wednesday, November 19th to Saturday, November 23rd.

I have made a block booking for the Saturday matinee. If you would like to attend this performance or any of the evening performances, please add your name to the list in the Church foyer. Tickets are £16 each. For further information, please telephone me or email me

Liz R

PENTECOST – PROPHET-MAKING! (May 19th)



Image by J Norton from Wiki Commons

“In those days, I will pour out my Spirit on all people and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2.18)

Twenty centuries after that first Pentecost, what does it mean today that the Holy Spirit inspires and encourages prophets?

Firstly, it’s a call to all of us, young and old alike, whatever our gifts, abilities and experience. The prophetic Spirit is for all. We are all called to ‘dream dreams’, to imagine and bring into being a new world. God is at work. Things can change. A better world is possible. ‘Go, tell everyone!’

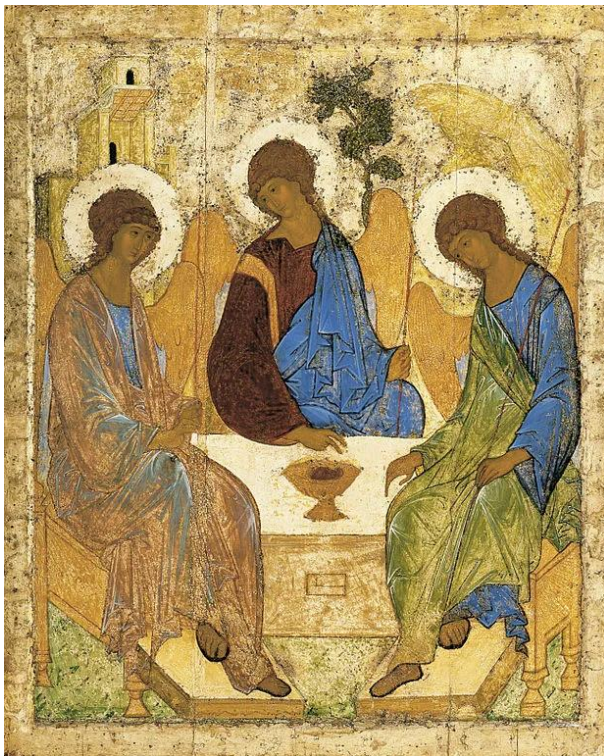
Another aspect of prophecy is proclaiming the truth, challenging those in authority, ‘speaking truth to power’. We’ve heard a lot about ‘fake news’ in recent years. God calls us to speak ‘truth’: to one another, within the church and in the public sphere, locally, nationally and globally, for all powers and authorities are, in the end, answerable and subject to the truth of God. This is why Christian Aid puts a lot of energy into campaigning for justice.

It was Peter who spoke the words at the beginning of this reflection, in his Pentecost sermon in Jerusalem. Peter also saw later on, in his dream in Joppa, a vision which is a fundamental prophetic truth about human belonging: we are all one. Difference should not divide but enrich the human family. In Paul’s words, ‘For God has made of one blood all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth’ (Acts 17.26). We are meant for togetherness.

It is difficult to think of a time when the prayer and longing of Moses were more relevant: “Oh that all God’s people were prophets! I would love it if the Lord would put his Spirit on them all!” (Numbers 11.29). This is a prayer that we should offer again this Pentecost. May we be inspired by the Holy Spirit to live lives of prophetic witness and loving service in a world where truth is often at a premium and compassion is often hidden by hatred, violence and conflict.

Noel

THE SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST IS TRINITY SUNDAY (MAY 26TH)



From Wiki Commons

This Icon of the Trinity by the 15th century iconographer, Andrei Rublev, is based on the story of three men visiting Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre:

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. He said, "If I have found favour in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." (Genesis 18.1-5)

The Trinity as Welcome, Hospitality and Generosity; the Trinity as Love. In the icon, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are gathered around the communion table or altar, in mutual harmony, with a symbolic oak in the background.