



# MAGAZINE OF UNITING CHURCH SKETTY

April 2025



O sacred head, sore wounded,  
with grief and pain weighed down.  
How scornfully surrounded,  
With thorns thy only crown...

*Paul Gerhardt*



Christ is risen. Christ is present,  
Making us what he has been –  
Evidence of transformation  
In which God is known and seen.

*John Bell and Graham Moule*



## 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)

**MAY 2025 MAGAZINE:** All items for inclusion in the May 2025 edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D at by 15<sup>th</sup> April at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> April.

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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 MINISTRY TEAM

### *Dear Friends*

This isn't our official title, and it hasn't had Circuit or URC approval, but we quite like it! John, Linda and I like to think that we work together well as a team and that, for this short period of three months, while Revd. Louise is on sabbatical, we will be partners in ministry. Adella will continue with her church-related community work ministry in the URC region and will also write the July/August letter for the magazine. As you know, between us we have long and very varied experience, and we should be able to cope! So if you need us for any reason please be in touch. We will lead various services, including the services during Holy Week and Easter Sunday. We will also lead Thursday Communions, and the Evening Prayers on Zoom in turn. We will generally use the framework that Revd Louise has been using, but I'm sure we will bring our own experience and approaches to our prayers and worship together. If there are pastoral issues, then be in touch first with Gwen D., and she will contact us as appropriate. We had a positive and encouraging time together when we were without a minister, and we hope that the next three months will be equally encouraging and blessed.

As I look through the April magazine at this early stage in its production (one week before the deadline for material), I'm struck by the interplay of articles about what we believe and how we celebrate our faith, and the challenging and, sometimes, frightening, issues that confront us at this time. There is a poem about the passion flower as a reminder of the passion of Jesus, an article about the date of Easter, a poem by Mary Lowe Dickinson and a final reflection on Holy Week and Easter. As Christians of all times and places, we have a shared faith in the hope and joy of the resurrection of Jesus. Whatever divides us – and there is much that does divide – we are nevertheless united in our faith in our one Lord Jesus Christ, who died and was raised again to life for us. But I am

powerfully reminded too that, faced with the challenges of the conflict between aid to the poorest in our world and the perceived need for ensuring our future security, it is often very difficult to hold on to hope. Easter offers us the only true message of hope: **Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!** Sometimes, of course, it is difficult to really believe this. But this is our faith and this we must believe. If we do not, the worst the world has to throw at us will win the day. So as we continue our journeys through Lent, into Holy Week and towards Easter morning, let us continue to encourage one another.

During our first Lenten Faith and Fellowship session, we talked about what it means to say: 'We believe'. Some key reminders emerged from our conversation:

- It's 'We believe' and not 'I believe'. We're on our faith journeys together; we're at different stages, we encounter different obstacles but we encourage and support each other along the way.
- Our life together within the church community – there are stories about this dotted through this magazine too – is to be a mirror of what we believe: what we believe about God as love and compassion, forgiveness and grace, has to be mirrored in the life of our church fellowship.
- In passing, during the discussion, I mentioned the term 'original sin' – the traditional belief that we are all tainted from our first beginnings! But Louise countered with a different and more encouraging and empowering phrase: 'original grace'. Whatever the world, and our lives and experiences, has to throw at us, we are embraced from the beginning, and to the end, by God's 'original grace' in Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord.

**This is the Easter message: 'Your grace is sufficient for me!'**

*With love and peace*

*Noel*

## WORSHIP SERVICES IN APRIL

<b>April 6</b>	Revd Linda Woollacott	(Communion)
<b>13</b>	Mrs Adella Pritchard	(Palm Sunday)
<b>17</b>	<b>7.00pm (NB)</b> Revd Noel Davies	(Maundy Thursday Communion based on Jesus' Last Supper & Passover)
<b>18</b>	<b>2.30pm</b> Revd Linda Woollacott	(Good Friday)
<b>20</b>	Revd John Atkinson	(Easter Sunday)
<b>27</b>	Revd Simon Walkling	

All services are at 10.30am unless otherwise indicated.

Evening Prayer will continue to be held on Zoom every Sunday evening from 7.00pm to 7.30pm, using the UCS link (see Weekly Notices). Prayers will be led in turn by the Revds John Atkinson, Noel Davies and Linda Woollacott. Everyone welcome.

## COFFEE MORNINGS

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April:** 10-12 – Coffee Morning. Profits for Dementia charities.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May:** 10-12 – Coffee Morning. Profits for Christian Aid.

## EASTER FLOWERS



We would like to decorate the church with daffodils for Easter Sunday and we invite you to bring a bunch of daffodils to church on Easter Saturday, 19th April at 10am, when I will be there to receive them.

If you have some jam jars to spare, we would appreciate them before Easter Saturday so that we can decorate them in readiness for the daffodils. The flowers can then be distributed on Easter Sunday in their own vase!

If you would like to give flowers and are unable to get them, please contact me and I will be happy to get them for you.

Many thanks,  
Rosemary

## **A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER**

### **Funds raised since December 2024/January 2025 Edition:**

Tŷ Olwen	£378.30	Communion Collection
All We Can	£338.95	Communion Collection
Pettifor Trust	£560.00	March 2025 Coffee Morning
Tanzania Coffee Morning	£535.85	Shared between Moses/ Heshima (see article on p22)
Pancake Party	£225.00	Towards church funds

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

- We remember with thanks our friends, Anne, Hazel, Joan and Richard, who we have recently lost and send our love to their families and friends.
- We also send our love and prayers to Joyce, who is continuing her recovery in hospital, and to all our friends who are unable to be at church in person but remain strong in their faith.
- We pray
  - For those who have suffered injuries. We wish them a speedy recovery.
  - For those who are awaiting surgery or other procedures, test results and/or diagnosis. We pray that their outcome will be the best it can be and will give them peace of mind.

Prayer unites us with one another across boundaries of time and place and sets us, and those for whom we pray, within the embrace of God's love.

## **CUTTING AID TO THE POOREST TO PAY FOR DEFENCE**

President Trump has declared that America is no longer prepared to guarantee the security of Europe against the Russian threat. As a result, European countries want to strengthen their armed forces. In Britain, H.M. Government has decided to pay for the cost of this increase by cutting a large proportion of the money being spent on international development through the Overseas Aid budget. Many aid and development charities have responded with alarm, claiming that this will have a devastating effect on the world's poorest people, thus increasing the potential for conflict and war.

### **The financial details**

At present, the UK spends £60bn on defence, which works out at about £1000 for every person living in Britain, or 2.3% of our Gross Domestic Product. The Government wants to increase this to 2.5%, and to 3% within 5 years. They intend to find the extra money by cutting the Aid budget from 0.5% to 0.3%. It was at 0.7% (the international development goal) until it was 'temporarily' reduced in 2020, with a promise that it would be increased to 0.7% 'when funding allowed'.

### **Why spend on Overseas Aid?**

This is the explanation offered on the UK Government website: 'Spending a small proportion of our income on international development is wise, as well as being the right thing to do. Since 2015, we have helped almost 20 million children, half of them girls, to have a good education. Since 2011, we have helped 100 million people to tackle the effects of climate change on their lives. This Aid is more essential than ever. Most of the world's poorest people live in the least developed countries, many of them very fragile states politically and economically or countries that are caught up in conflict, living with fraud and corruption, or suffering from ethnic or political divisions.'

But by now it's clear that this spending is no longer 'more essential than ever' in the Government's view.

## The response from charities

Many charities have responded with horror and disappointment at the plan to cut Overseas Aid. Here are some examples:



“Overseas Aid is such an important means for us to support people who face some of the most intense crises in today’s world. When Labour came to power in Westminster there was the promise of re-setting the UK’s place globally as a respected partner with developing countries. But this announcement contradicts that promise.’ (Mari McNeil, Head of Christian Aid in Wales)

“We have been astonished by this decision to cut the aid budget in order to increase the defence budget. It betrays the world’s most vulnerable children and the international welfare of the UK. It is a sign of withdrawal from efforts to get to grips with the effects of climate change, global poverty, conflict and humanitarian need.’ (Moazzam Malik, Save the Children)



**Article translated from Y TYST, the newspaper of the Union of Welsh Independents (Yr Annibynwyr), 6 March 2025**

## Speaking at the House of Lords, the Chair of Christian Aid, Bishop



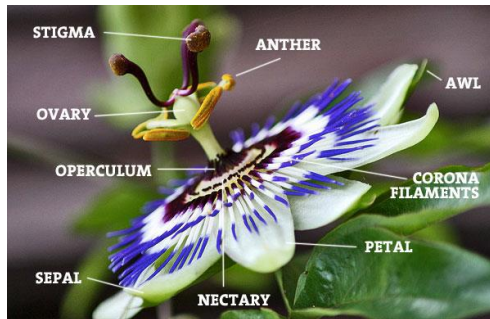
**Sarah Mullally, said:** “We must reject the false choice between defence and development... Properly used, development funding helps prevent conflict, tackles instability and builds a safer, more just world. Cutting aid in this way risks exacerbating the very crisis that leads to insecurity and conflict.”



## THE PASSION FLOWER



The beauty of this Passion Flower  
hides a contradiction:  
For every fragile part reminds us of  
our Saviour's crucifixion.



The ovary depicts the uprights of the cross,  
to signal death is near:  
The anthers are the wounds that bled  
from nails and from the spear.  
The stigmas are those nails; the stamens hammers  
that drove them deep and wide:  
The leaf suggests the spear's curvaceous shape  
that plunged and ripped into his side.  
The tendrils are the whips and chords  
that lashed him as he stumbled to his fate:

The center threads the crown of thorns  
to mock his weakened fragile state.

The calyx is his halo  
when for our sins he paid the price;

The flowers paint a holy heaven  
promised by his sacrifice.

The three-day lifespan of the flower  
reflects his lingering pain:  
before lying dead 'til Easter morn  
when wonderfully he rose again.

**Brian Vincent**

(sent in by Liz R and used with permission)

## **ANNE V AND SAVE THE CHILDREN**

Noel wrote of some wonderful memories of Anne and her various commitments and interests in the February magazine. I would like to add a personal tribute to her long commitment to Save the Children. I was newly married and had come to live in Swansea when a friend invited me to a meeting of Save the Children. In those days, meetings were held in an upstairs room of St. Andrew's Church. Anne and Shirley were members of the church and Save the Children. Shirley had been in from the beginning, 1957/8. Anne joined a couple of years later on returning to Swansea from the Midlands.

Anne was a loyal member, always present at events, making cakes, knitting and sewing items for sale. She would look after a stall at fetes, and events such as the Gower Show. In later years, she would sell raffle tickets so she could sit down but still take part.



Although a quiet lady she was full of ideas and made her feelings known if she thought something wouldn't work!

Last year we organised a day out to celebrate the twins' 90th birthday. We took the train to Llandrindod Wells. I went to help Anne on the train but as there were handrails either side of the door; she assured me she could manage. Ever independent!

We talked and laughed so much on the journey that

we had to scramble off at our destination. The weather was dreadful, but it did not dampen a lovely day which finished with an afternoon tea in the Metropole Hotel.

Shirley and Anne entertained us with stories of their childhood.

Anne will be sorely missed by all at Save the Children for her hard work and friendship. Rest in peace dear friend.

**Chris L**

## **A COMMON DATE FOR EASTER**

*Did you know that Western Christians (Catholic and Protestant) do not normally celebrate Easter on the same date as Eastern Christians (Eastern and Oriental Orthodox)? They can be as much as four weeks apart. This year, however, all traditions of the Christian global family will celebrate Easter on the same Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> April.*

### **Why the different date?**

*The differences revolve around the use of different calendars (the Gregorian and the Julian) to calculate the date of Easter and the difficulty of untangling ourselves from these ancient traditions. Occasionally, as this year, the two calendars give us the same date for Easter.*

### **Does it matter?**

*Yes! Here are some thoughts from Professor Gerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Pope Francis:*



“This year, 2025, will be one of the few years when Christians of all traditions will celebrate Easter on the same date – 20 April. This occasion should renew the search for a common Easter date as a sign of our unity in faith. A common Easter date shows that Christians celebrate their festivals

together and not against each other... A shared celebration of Easter can

unite Christians worldwide in their common faith in the resurrected Christ.

“In an ecumenical statement in 1997, the churches from the Middle East highlighted how important they thought it was for minority churches in a non-Christian environment to celebrate Easter on a common date... so that Christians make a common witness to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the central mystery of the Christian faith.”

A WCC conference in Egypt in October will address the question ‘Where Now for Visible Unity?’ By addressing this core question of the ecumenical movement, Pillay writes, “we seek to advance the pursuit of the common date of Easter as a crucial and visible sign of Christian unity. We hope that the year of the anniversary of Nicaea will help create a momentum so that in the future all Christians can celebrate Easter together.”

*(from the WCC website, February 2025)*



As Easter 2025 approaches, the coincidence of Easter on both calendars provides a unique opportunity for progress. By highlighting this moment, Pope Francis is urging Christian leaders to seize the occasion as a meaningful step toward greater unity. His invitation for an agreed Easter date underscores the importance of collaboration, emphasizing that unity should not be an abstract ideal but a tangible commitment among Christian churches.

Ultimately, the Pope’s appeal (during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025) reinforces a central tenet of the Christian faith – one that transcends denominational differences: “The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a unifying cornerstone for all Christian believers, making Easter one of the most significant celebrations in Christianity.” By advocating for a shared date, Pope Francis is emphasizing the importance of visibly demonstrating unity in faith, a unity that he hopes will serve as a witness to the world.

*(from the Universal News Network)*

## Thine Easter Day

by Mary Lowe Dickinson (an American poet, 1839-1914)

Within thy heart is there an opened tomb?  
Have God's strong angels rolled the stone away?  
Rises thy dead self from its bonds of clay?  
Breaks Heaven's sweet light across the dark and gloom?  
Then is this day in truth thine Easter day!

If broken down are stony gates of pride,  
If shrouding bands of earth are torn away,  
If sin and wrath and scorn in thee have died,  
Mourn not the past. The folded shroud beside  
Angels will watch; — it is thine Easter day.

Rise, new-born soul, and put thine armour on;  
Clasp round thy breast the garment of the light;  
Gird up thy loins for battle. In the fight  
He leads who upward from our sight has gone;  
It is His day; there's no more death nor night,

No dark, no hurt, no more sharp shame nor loss;  
All buried, hidden 'neath the grave's dark sod;  
All ways forgotten, save the road He trod;  
All burdens naught in sight of His — the cross;  
All joy, alive and safe with Christ in God!

Speaking to an ecumenical gathering in Rome in September last year, the Pope emphasized that, “Easter occurred because God ‘so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life’... Easter belongs to Christ!” he noted. “Moreover, it is good for us to ask for the grace to be ever more His disciples, allowing Him to be the one to show us the way we should follow.” *(from Vatican News)*

## WESLEY CLUB NOSON LAWEN 2025

What is a Noson Lawen? Literally it means a “merry or joyful night” – a celebration which can include music, singing, dancing and storytelling. So, is that how Wesley Club celebrated St David’s Day? Not exactly. Our “take” on a Noson Lawen, which was arranged by Janet N, included a quiz, readings, singing and a “fashion parade” by Rosemary in a beautiful authentic Welsh costume. Other members wore red, including rugby shirts.



The quiz showed the extensive knowledge that Wesley Club members have about Welsh beaches, rivers, sport, famous people and music. Joan sang “Dafydd y Garreg Wen”, which was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Our readers – Liz, Carole, Jan and Lynne – who readily agreed to read – treated us to renditions of “The Hunchback in the Park”; the story of St David; Gower Methodism and a shortened version of the story of Petty Officer Edgar Evans (a Gower boy), who lost his life during the 1912 expedition of the first people to reach the South Pole. Of course, we know that the British party was beaten to this “first” by Roald Amundsen’s Norwegian party. However, this does not

detract from the amazing feat of the British group, which included scientific research, meteorology experiments, endurance and fortitude. Edgar Evans was a true local hero. It’s worth visiting Rhosilli Church to see the beautiful stained glass window in his memory.

The winning team was “Oggy, Oggy, Oggy”, which entitled them to serve our refreshments – tea, coffee, daffodil biscuits and bara brith.

Why not join us next year for another Noson Lawen?



**Janet N**

*(Yes, thanks to Janet's careful research and planning, we did indeed have a "merry AND joyful night". So, a huge "thank you" Janet, for giving us an evening where everyone left with smiles on their faces and friendship in their hearts. Jan C.)*

## **SHROVE TUESDAY – Pancake Party**

Once again, we held a very enjoyable Pancake Party, organised by Gaynor and Ian B, with help from several other people. Ian showed his mastery as he expertly made, flipped and tossed pancake after pancake. A quiz was included with questions to test people's knowledge of the season of Lent and fun facts all about....guess what?....Yes, you are correct....PANCAKES! To date £250 has been raised for church funds.



**Janet N**

## **GREEN FRIENDS NOTES: THE NICKEL PROJECT**

Firstly, a reminder that we are supporting **No Mow May** – a chance to do something good by doing nothing! Join us in letting things flower and seed and be rewarded by the joy of buttercups, daisies, clover and all that humming life that feeds on them.

Secondly, we would like to introduce **'The Nickel Project'** which we have identified as an opportunity to improve the supply of an essential material for the energy transition.

*[Note: One of the major Nickel processing refineries still operates in Clydach (known locally as 'The Mond'), where I was minister for 5 years and where Revd Louise is minister now. ed.]*

Nickel is regarded as a Critical or Strategic Material with rapidly growing demand, most prominently driven by the growth in demand for Lithium



Ion Batteries (LIB) for electric vehicles (EV), although in 2024 65% of the 3.5 Million Tonnes of Primary Nickel production was still used to make stainless steels. In 2023 and 2024 there has been a surplus in Primary Nickel supply over demand, resulting in the market price settling around \$15k per Tonne and the closure of some high cost mines.

Historically, shortages of Nickel have driven the market price to \$30k or even \$50k/Tonne.

Projected increasing demand is expected to lead to a shortfall of supply, despite the development of some large new mining and extraction projects. Both studies show a need for the investment of tens of billions of dollars in new primary production of nickel, and also in plants for recycling LIBs to produce secondary Nickel and other metals. We believe that a better solution is to reduce the amount of Nickel used in stainless steels by a combination of choosing different grades of stainless steels and increased recycling.

I have written an article titled “Nickel Demand Mitigation: a \$100Bn per Year Issue?”, proposing co-ordinated action to achieve this. You can read it now at <https://nidemand.wordpress.com> .

The good news is that what we are proposing is cheaper than ‘business as usual’.

Now I need to ask for your help in



raising public awareness of this issue around the world. There are a few dozen Nickel mining and refining companies but millions of companies processing the material and billions of users of stainless steel products. We can communicate with the miners and refiners, but we need to create a pull for change from the processors





and end users. Can you help us spread the word via networking, social media, and environmental campaign groups?

**Roger T – member of Green Friends**

*(Photos of the Mond Nickel Works in Clydach, founded in 1902, by the Canadian, Ludwig Mond. Statue in Clydach of Sir Alfred Mond, MP for Swansea and the Vale 1910-1918)*

## **MADCAPS REMEMBERS - WITH PRIDE**

Remember when little Rachel H appeared in our many church and Madcaps productions?

See her here as lovely Meribel the Mermaid in our pantomime, “Cockles and Mussels Alive Alive Oh”, in 2010.



We are delighted to know that when she moved to York, she continued her love of the bright lights and through her membership of the amateur theatre groups she has recently starred as Beth in “Little Women”. Before that she appeared as the Scarecrow in “The Wizard of Oz”.

The photograph shows her receiving an Award for “Best Supporting Performer in a Female Role” in a production of “Songs for a New World”.

Rachel is now a secondary school music teacher and so is involved with numerous school productions and concerts. With the latter, she remembers her Welsh roots as she has her school choir singing music by Karl Jenkins. We are all so proud of you Rachel and send love and hugs both from your friends in Madcaps and of course your church family.



A more recent addition to our church stage was Evie , (Liz R's granddaughter). We remember seeing her as our pretty Care Bear Princess in Madcaps production of “Not a Panto, A Show”. We also loved her in several other appearances in our hall and sanctuary.



However, recently Evie moved to a larger stage and her second photograph shows her as Oz in Harry's Youth Theatre Production at Swansea Grand Theatre of "We will Rock You" and Oh boy! Did Evie rock it! She wowed the audience (I may be considered biased if I said "she stole the show") with her acting, dancing and singing.



Madcap friends were on our feet very enthusiastically applauding the whole production but with extra applause for you, Evie.

**Jan C**

### **MARCH COFFEE MORNING FOR THE PETTIFOR TRUST**

Many thanks to all those who attended and supported the Coffee Morning on St Davids Day, which raised £560.

The volunteers and staff of the Trust always enjoy their visits to UCS and are so appreciative of the welcome they receive, and the generosity of those attending the morning.

Jon D, on behalf of the Pettifor Trust



### **OUR COMMUNION COLLECTION FOR APRIL**

will be for the Methodist World Mission fund as Methodists traditionally make an Easter offering at this time. The fund supports partner churches and organisations in mission appointments and offers project grants. For example, Osire Refugee Camp in Namibia receives funds. It receives asylum seekers

and refugees from countries across Africa and further afield. A lot are from war zones in Angola and Congo. Grants have also gone to Yulia Starodubets, a pastor with the United Methodist Church in Ukraine who operates two shelters for internally displaced people. If you would like to pray for other countries, the Methodist Prayer Handbook provides helpful material.

**Susan G**

## **IN MEMORIAM: RICHARD P**

Richard was born in Cardiff – and would always point out landmarks to the family when driving past, especially the place his father was born. He was educated at primary school in Rhiwbina, and then went to Whitchurch High School – the same school as Gareth Bale and Sam Warburton, as he'd be quick to point out – though he wasn't there at the same time.

Richard and Ceri met when they were both students at Swansea University, both in the same hall of residence. Richard played for the Hall's football team. He also enjoyed a game of badminton, but when he played doubles with Ceri, he grumbled that she wasn't taking it seriously enough!

When he started his teacher training, Richard intended to become a secondary school history teacher. But early on in the course he realised that his heart was in primary school teaching.

Richard and Ceri got married in Rogerstone, Newport – on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1982 – and they honeymooned in the Lake District. Having started their life together in London, eventually, Richard and Ceri had enough of London, so they moved to Somerset. Over the years, Richard taught in several schools in Somerset. He became a deputy head, and then a head. His first headship was in Curry Mallet, a school and an experience very close to his heart. Richard's final school was in East Coker. Primary School teaching was a huge part of Richard's life. I get the impression he put his heart and soul into it.

His life after retirement – in Swansea now – shows where his life's commitments were: volunteering in the Waterfront Museum and at Oxfam (he loved looking after the books there). He and Ceri were members of CND, he was a member of Amnesty and was politically aware – issues of justice for all being his passion. And he volunteered at local elections, something he enjoyed, even though it meant spending all day in a portacabin.

He was a very clever man – very modest, but very clever – and he had a very quick mind. He could recite huge chunks of scripts from Monty Python episodes, which he loved – he had a phenomenal memory and a great ear for music.

His family was everything – and their pets, who he pretended not to like! (*His funeral leaflet had a wonderful photo of him with Billy, their labrador, who loved Richard especially.*)

What a man – and what a loss. Richard was never maudlin about what was happening to him when he was ill. Since he spent his life developing people’s potential, I’m sure he’d want you to make the most of the life that you have – and enjoy it to the full.

So today we celebrate Richard, and we give thanks, and are uplifted by the memories. We also feel the loss, and will do, always. Because now, after an incredible and glorious journey, he’s crossed the bar (*see below*). Now he sees his pilot face to face, and he’s surrounded by all the love he’s ever known, and more. We entrust him to God’s loving and faithful care, to wholeness, to completeness – to that place of justice where all that harms has been removed and where the tears are wiped away. May you know comfort, strength and peace in your sorrow, and the knowledge that real love never ends. Amen.

***Extracts from Revd Louise’s tribute to Richard, based on what Richard’s family wished to remember and celebrate***

## **CROSSING THE BAR**

**By Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)**

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have cross'd the bar.

***This poem was read in Richard's funeral and sung by the men's choir of which Richard was a member, The Singing Armadillos!***



**Christian Aid at 80 – 1945 to 2025**

Christian Aid Week 11-17 May

Last year, thanks to incredible supporters like you, we raised over £5 million to help tackle poverty and injustice worldwide.

**THIS CHRISTIAN AID WEEK ,11-17 MAY**

**2025**), as Christian Aid turns 80, let's build on that success and make an even greater impact!

As always, there's something for everyone - dance, quiz, run, collect - all to bring hope where it's needed most. Will you be part of the movement to change lives?

There are so many ways to make a difference:

- **70k in May** – Walk, run, cycle, or swim 70km throughout May and raise vital funds.
- **Fundraise your way** – Organise a bake sale, quiz night, or sponsored challenge to support Christian Aid.
- **Digital Envelopes** – a twist on the classic way to raise life-changing funds.

**Every step, every event, every envelope makes a real difference. Together, we can bring hope and lasting change to communities in need.**

**Jay Senior**, Community Fundraising and Volunteering Lead,  
Christian Aid Week

## THE LATEST FROM TANZANIA

For the past 13 years or so I have been involved with a couple of projects near Arusha, Tanzania. This is a brief update.



### **The textile project at Heshima**

([www.heshima.org.uk](http://www.heshima.org.uk)) is thriving, with 6 new trainees attending every morning, and 3 fully trained ladies in the afternoon, making items to order. The whole project continues to be supervised by local ladies Adelfina, who was one of the first to be trained, and

Mwamvita. The carpentry training centre building is, at last, almost complete and tools have been sourced from Tools with a Mission and Tools for Self Reliance Cymru, for whom I've been collecting unwanted tools from people here in Wales for many years: thank you to those of you who have donated! The project also offers free Saturday afternoon support for older primary school children, attracting up to 60 children.



In Government schools, teaching is through the medium of Swahili, but in Secondary schools teaching is in English. For many children, the transition from primary to secondary is therefore very difficult. The photo shows an outdoor English lesson for primary children, led by Mwamvita and the Heshima caretaker Kasioki. Following an hour or so of interactive teaching, the children are then let loose in the grounds to play a variety of games: something that is as important as the English

lesson, since many children do not have the opportunity to play—in their “spare time” many boys will be expected to herd the family’s goats and sheep, and the girls expected to help at home, including collecting water. Mwamvita and Kasioki also continue to run the daily nursery class, with around 15 children on the books.

**Moses' School** ([www.majengohighland.com](http://www.majengohighland.com)) which provides good quality primary education through the medium of English (without belittling



Swahili or other native languages) continues to develop. His school started off in a one-room rented building near his home. Over the years, money was raised to purchase a plot of land “in the bush”, surrounded by Maasai villages, and the school now

consists of 5 classrooms, a library, a kitchen, a toilet block and a small shop selling essentials to local people.



Moses is also cultivating a garden, growing bananas and other fruit, and keeping chickens: the intention is to produce much of the food used in the cooked lunch, and to train the children in horticulture. Thanks to generous donations and fund-raising there is now a water supply, mains electricity, a bank

of 5 laptops, and a full complement of the latest text-books. A large school bus and 3 minibuses have also been purchased. There are currently 95 children in the school, and Moses' first cohort of children have just sat and passed Class 4 national examinations.



Each year, a new cohort of children enrol, requiring an extra classroom plus all the necessary additional resources. The fundraising continues! To this end, I have just established a registered charity (Friends of Education Tanzania, reg. no. 1212110) which will facilitate access to grant awarding bodies in the UK.

However, in the meantime, thank you to all who have supported either Heshima or Moses' school. The recent coffee morning at UCS raised a magnificent £536, split between the two projects. I also sold all the

Heshima aprons that I'd brought back from Tanzania, raising another £95.  
Diolch yn fawr iawn!

**Alan C**

## **URC SPRING SYNOD MEETING**

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, Pat and I attended the URC Synod of Wales Spring Meeting. It was a hybrid meeting – in Christ Church URC, Rhyl and on Zoom. We were on Zoom. It was intended as a short meeting – 10.00 until 12.30 (in theory – but in fact too much was packed into the time, and we finished a little before 1.00! Four topics may be of interest:

**Church Life Review:** Like most of the denominations in the UK, the URC has been declining in numbers over recent years, a decline that's been accelerated for many reasons since the pandemic. The Church Life Review (CLR) is intended to recommend ways in which the URC can respond to this decline: 'Carrying on as we are, is not an option'. So CLR is looking at church organisation, finance, the requirements of mission and patterns of ministry and discipleship. The aim is to develop a vision for tomorrow of a flourishing church, less burdened and better enabled to discern where God is working and calling us to follow.

**North Wales Worship Hub:** We heard a presentation from North Wales churches who work together to share experience, resources and ideas so that they help each other to develop their skills and thus enrich the churches' worship. Could the churches in the Swansea Region, form a worship hub so that we can share ideas and develop shared resources? It may be worth thinking about.

**Ecumenism in Wales: 50 years of the Covenant:** I had been asked to make a presentation on the Covenant for Unity in Wales (of which the URC has been a member from its beginning in 1975). However, time got the better of us and I only spoke for less than 5 mins! The key issue was a paper by the Bishop of St Asaph suggesting that our unity as churches could be deepened by what he calls 'supplemental ordination'. All ministers of Word and Sacrament in all the Covenanted Churches would receive supplemental ordination with laying on of hands and a prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that we can all be equipped more fully by God's grace for wider ministry in a Uniting Church in Wales. Bishop Gregory wants to be in the front of the queue! So do I! The Synod will



encourage local congregations to discuss the proposal over the next few months. Hopefully, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Covenant may encourage us to work with other ecumenical partners in Sketty. At the moment, there's very little local collaboration!

**LYCIG:** No, I didn't know what it meant either! It's '**Leading Your Church into Growth**'. Jason Askew introduced this programme, to encourage us to grow in depth of discipleship, reach people of all generations so they come to faith, and make a difference in the wider community. It's based on four P's: Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion. We're encouraged to be involved by using the resources in local groups etc. and developing local ideas. So perhaps there will be a chance for UCS to think about LYCIG in the coming months.

Thinking about the future of the church, sharing ideas about worship, developing a new and deeper commitment to unity locally and nationally, and enabling the growth of our churches. An agenda for us? I would have thought so.

**Noel**

## WALKING THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO



Margaret H's family is walking the 75 miles of the Camino de Santiago in Spain from 29<sup>th</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> April in aid of Alzheimer's Research UK. If you would like to give them some much needed support, they have set up a JustGiving page:



<https://www.justgiving.com/page/caminowalkforalzheimers?utmmedium=fR&utmsource=WA>

Many thanks  
Margaret

## WESLEY CLUB

At a recent Wesley Club meeting, we welcomed one of our favourite speakers, Gareth Richards. Each of his talks has made us aware of marine problems at sea and on shore, which is vital for us to know as we are an ECO CHURCH.

We were the first group to hear Gareth's latest talk, about his (and others') training and volunteering work, helping sick seals, porpoises, dolphins etc.

As we know, from last summer, one of the dangers are flying ring frisbees. Last year CKs refused to stop selling these, even though



Swansea City Council promoted that they should be withdrawn from sale. Many other outlets agreed to withdraw them. Within the next few weeks (we will furnish you with the details as soon as we know), a petition will be available online and on paper, which Green Friends would encourage you to sign.

Obviously, Gareth's talk, and he is passionate about this, had sad and happy parts. For instance, a seal is an inquisitive creature – he starts playing with a flying frisbee; it gets stuck around his neck, but, of course, he cannot remove it.

Gradually as he grows, the ring begins to dig into the fat around his neck. Then this happens -

But Gareth also told us encouraging stories when seals, porpoises etc are saved, recuperate and return to sea.

Gareth is now a qualified Marine Mammal Medic with the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR). You can learn more on Gower Seals Group Facebook page.



**Janet N**

## A REFLECTION AS WE APPROACH HOLY WEEK

“Today and tomorrow, I will cast out demons and on the third day I will reach my goal... And Jesus set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem...”

God, our source and our fulfilment,  
our origin and our journey’s end,  
empower us through your Spirit,  
and give us courage to follow Jesus along the way of the cross:  
through the humility of the Prince of peace  
and the ‘Hosannas!’ of the crowds;  
through the anguish of the Garden  
and the exhaustion and fear of disciples,  
in a world where faith can still be costly;  
through the challenges of those in power, now as then,  
and the courageous defiance of Jesus;  
along the *via dolorosa*,  
as Jesus treads the painful road that many travel still;  
through the forsaking of the cross  
and the cry of death and dereliction.



“When I survey the wondrous cross  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down”



But, look, Easter has dawned!  
The sun has arisen, we are bathed in light,  
And hope dawns on a despairing world:

God, enable us to grasp hope  
and cling in faith to the Risen Lord,  
raised for us and for all!

**Christ is risen!**

**He is risen indeed!**

**Hallelujah!**

**Noel**

**AND SO...**

The cross, **we will take it.**

The bread, **we will break it.**

The pain, **we will bear it.**

The joy, **we will share it.**

The Gospel, **we will live it.**

The love, **we will give it.**

The light, **we will cherish it.**

The darkness, **God shall perish it!**

*(A benediction from the Iona Community)*