

# MAGAZINE OF UNITING CHURCH SKETTY OCTOBER 2025



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025

**‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile,  
neither slave nor free, nor is there  
(*division between*) male and  
female, for you are all one in Christ  
Jesus.’**

**Uniting together - Caring for all -  
Seeking God**



**Minister:** The Revd Louise Gough

**Senior Elder:** Pat D

**Senior Steward:** Maggie C

**Church Related Community Worker:**

Adella P(Swansea Region of URC Churches)

**NOVEMBER 2025 MAGAZINE:** All items for inclusion in the November 2025 edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D by 14<sup>th</sup> October at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> October.



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



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

---

## LETTER FROM THE MANSE

### Dear friends

I'm writing in mid-September and listening to the wind rattling the manse – thankfully it's a sturdy old place that has seen quite a bit of home improvement since I moved in just over two years ago. The manse and I have experienced some major work, inside and out – the walls have been tied (the old cavity ties had perished), the front bay has been reinforced (the wall cracks inside were enormous!); there has been some work on the drainage; an entire new roof, the decimation of the bamboo (which was having a bit too much fun in the back garden), a new front window, and work to stop the subsidence, which led to the discovery that the front half of the kitchen wasn't securely connected to the back – during this the entire kitchen was removed and stripped back to the bricks before being reinstalled (not quite correctly I assume, since I've got some left over bits in the garage!). At the same time there was work to bind the landing wall which was also cracked, plus external brickwork and lintel repairs, some retiling and redecoration (kitchen, hall and landing and living room), and a bit damp proofing I believe. I'm sure there's more, and I'm grateful that all this has been done, although a lot of it was not fun at the time. The sound of tiles being swept off the roof overhead before half seven in the morning was rather disconcerting, but it was better than having a living room full of building materials, microwaving ready meals in the study, eating them in my bedroom and washing up in the bath (I am aware it was still a privilege to have these problems!).

However, the latest (and hopefully last) trade visit, back in August this year, has brought me much joy – a new kitchen window to replace the one that was fogged. I knew the manse had a lovely aspect, but it was gladdening to stand in the kitchen and see, for the first time in that spot, such an expanse of sky. I've always been a fan of the wide-open Swansea skies, and I love seeing the greenery



and a little bit of a garden from my kitchen window (even though the garden is not as tidy as it could be!). The new window made my heart thrill – and now it takes me a bit longer to do the dishes, because I linger to enjoy the sights!

My beautiful view is framed by a rather small window surrounded with tiles by the sink. I am aware that although I can see so much



through the window, I am not seeing the whole picture, but just a fraction of what is there.

It is a reminder to me that none of us see the whole picture. What we see can seem like everything to us, but in reality we are all looking through small windows.

Whatever we think we know, however far we can see or understand, there is always more – our view is always partial. But it's so easy to forget that, and think what we know is everything there is to know. It probably sounds simplistic, but I'm sure part of the world's problems today are caused by the natural human tendency to forget that we are only ever seeing through very small windows – and that there is much much more out there, many other points of view and alternative, equally valid ways to understand things. (As long as the points of view do not advocate division, hatred and dehumanisation.) None of us understand everything, and our limited perceptions can never be the whole truth – rather like the story of the people touching an elephant without seeing it: the one who touches the elephant's side says it's like a wall; the one who touches the trunk thinks it's like a snake; the one who touches the leg says it's like a pillar etc. They then realise that to comprehend the whole, they must listen to each other's descriptions.

None of us see the whole picture through our small windows. None of us know the entire truth about life, the world, God. That's fine, and as it should be – as long as we remember it, and don't think that our truth is the whole truth; as long as we are open to learning

how things look from another's (and another's...) point of view, and even then remembering that there is more.

The beautiful passage from 1 Corinthians 13 says that what we see now is like a dim image in a mirror (a bit like looking through my fogged kitchen window) – we can make out parts of it, and understand it partially – but one day we will know God's love fully and be fully known.

I pray that in the interim, as individuals, as a church, and as one human race, we will be open to standing with others in front of their own small windows, and trying to see things as they do, realising that even if we are fond of our view, it is incomplete and part of a much more glorious whole.

Every blessing

Louise



*I occasionally use this view as my zoom background during evening prayer, and people ask me what it is. So, since Louise is writing about wide views, I thought I'd share this one. It is, of course, Eryri (Snowdonia) (ed)*

## WORSHIP IN OCTOBER

|         |    |                                                                         |
|---------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OCTOBER | 5  | Revd Louise Gough (Harvest & Communion)                                 |
|         | 12 | Revd Noel Davies<br>4.30 in Murton: Circuit Mission Service (see below) |
|         | 16 | Thursday Communion: Revd Louise Gough                                   |
|         | 19 | Revd Louise Gough                                                       |
|         | 26 | Jeff Coleman                                                            |

## SWANSEA AND GOWER METHODIST CIRCUIT MISSION SERVICE



The Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit Mission Service for 2025 is to be held on Sunday 12th October at Murton Methodist Church Hall. The service will begin at 4.30pm and will be led by the Superintendent and members of the Mission team. The Methodist Church is committed to becoming a truly inclusive church where all are welcome and

can participate fully in the life of the Church. The support of people living with disability has been one of the central pillars of the Methodist diversity strategy, 'Justice, Dignity and Solidarity'.

With this in mind we have chosen to focus the mission service this year around the theme of disability awareness looking in particular at the theme 'Made in God's Image' set by the UK-based Christian charity Through the Roof. The theme reminds us that God's image is in every person!

The guest speaker will be Katie Budd from Through the Roof. Katie is The Roofbreaker Team Leader and Coordinator for Wales, West and South West England. She will give an overview of her work looking particularly at The Roofbreaker project.

We will also hear from Lee Ellery, the only Roofbreaker currently within our circuit. Lee will talk of his journey through life whilst living with his disability and how at the age of 41 he came to faith in God. He will talk about his journey to becoming a member of the Methodist Church and what he says were his first three encounters with Jesus.

**Rev Howard Long**

---

## FINAL NOTICE! FOR THIS SUNDAY!!

THE NICENE CREED, 325-2025: WE BELIEVE...

AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND COMMITMENT

---



A service to mark this 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be held in Swansea in September. It will bring together Welsh and English churches, as well as some of the international Christian communities and congregations that worship and witness in the Swansea area. **It will be held at Swansea Minster (formerly St Mary's)**

**on Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 3.00pm. All will be very welcome.**

The preacher will be The Revd Dr Susan Durber (a United Reformed Church minister who has retired to live in Pembrokeshire) who is currently President from Europe for the World Council of Churches.

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October 10am-12noon - Coffee Morning proceeds for Save the Children**

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 10am-12noon - Coffee Morning proceeds for Muscular Dystrophy**

Commitment  
for Life

Our communion charity this month is Commitment for Life, the United Reformed Church world justice programme, which operates as part of Christian Aid. Churches are

asked to pray, advocate and take action for the most vulnerable communities around the world. Projects include supporting farmers to improve harvests, helping communities to adapt to climate disruption and empowering women to participate in decision-making.

**Susan**

## TRIBUTE TO OUR COMPANION IN THE FAITH, JIM H

It was with deep sadness we received the unexpected news of the death of Jim H, one of our faithful Zoom congregation. Jim and Muriel H, whose home is in Wokingham, Berkshire, have been joining us in live streamed worship and prayer for the past 4 years. I know how precious this experience has been for them. Those who have come to know them via Zoom have expressed their shock and sadness to me; best summed up by the words of one correspondent: “... *It was really like losing an old friend even though we've never met him. They have become such a key part of our life in UCS over recent years.*”

Jim was a Londoner who worked in administration in Rail companies and was an active member of the British Transport Christian Fellowship. A man of deep faith, he was a Local Preacher, Church Steward (on several occasions), helped establish new church communities in Winnersh and then in Woosehill (on the outskirts of Wokingham), Bible Study leader, a church administrator, lay worker and school governor.

Jim was hopeless at DIY, but was always happy to tinker with layouts, buildings and décor for his model railway. He loved growing things, had a well-tended garden as well as a productive allotment. In recent years Jim became a poet and writer, some of his poems having appeared in the UCS magazine.

Jim was a warm hearted, hospitable, gentle man, interested in people and their stories, a great encourager. We met in August 1973, when I first attended Rose Street Methodist Church. I was a newly trained teacher finding my feet in a new place. Jim was the steward on duty that day, his smile and genuine, warm welcome was just the beginning of so much in my Christian journey, including becoming a Local Preacher and thence an ordained minister.

If Jim was a stick of rock the words in the centre would be Christ and Family. He had a long and happy marriage to Muriel, was devoted to daughters Sue and Wendy, and grand daughter Jennifer and her growing family. We uphold them all in our love and prayers as we give thanks for Jim: “*Thou good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your master.*” Matt 25:23

**Linda W**

## **EVENING PRAYER AT UCS – A GUIDE TO THE WHYS, WHEREFORES AND HOWS!**

*“You should pray and meditate every day, so you know that you are loved, so you feel the presence of God’s love in your life. That is the only way you can truly help others.”*

So said Mother Theresa.

There are so many incredible things said and written about prayer, and so many ways to pray. But the most important thing is that we pray. In prayer we can come to God as we are – in silence or with words (or art, music, creativity, gardening, a walk - consciously in God’s presence...). God already knows us and knows what is on our hearts and minds – but sometimes it helps us to verbalise these things. One of the spiritual practices and recognised prayer methods is “the prayer of a child” – simply talking to God about anything and everything until one has poured one’s heart out to God.

One of the ways we pray at UCS is to gather every Sunday evening at 7pm on zoom (via the usual church log-in that appears on the notices).

Evening Prayer at UCS typically goes like this:

At 7pm, those gathered on zoom share any prayer requests with Louise.

Prayers can be for anyone or anything – but it’s good to have the person’s permission first, so that they know we are praying and are happy about it. The prayer requests should be kept in confidence by those attending.

After that, Louise does all the speaking(!). This is because at UCS, we are nearly always on the go, doing lots of things. Evening Prayer was designed as something to be received – with no demands except a willingness to be open to God and to be prayerful in attitude.

The time begins with a prayer of adoration – which opens our hearts in worship and reminds us of something of the mystery and magnificence of God. We then hear a Bible reading or two – often the set readings for the day which may have been featured in morning worship. If so, this is an opportunity to visit them again, and perhaps internally reflect on what might have been said earlier in the day. No comment is made on these readings – we simply receive the gift of the Word/words. This also keeps the focus on prayer, since Evening Prayer is not intended as a mini-version of a service.

The readings are followed by prayers for others. This is the main point of Evening Prayer – an opportunity to pray for the people who are on our minds and hearts; the opportunity to pray for the life of our church, its

people, work and various activities. We also pray for the URC Swansea Region and the Swansea and Gower Methodist Churches, and Noel helpfully produced a table during my sabbatical so that we can pray specifically for two churches each week. We also pray for our world, closing with the Lord's Prayer.

This has usually been followed with traditional Night Prayer, from the Book of Common Prayer. These are classic and timeless prayers which I find help to engender a sense of peace, as they reflect God's eternal faithfulness. Unusually for me, I don't vary these prayers very much – as repeated prayer and liturgy somehow take root deep within us, and become part of our internalised faith and prayer-language. Sometimes, liturgies from Iona or other traditions are used as an alternative.

We finish with the grace, and a quick check-in with one another before we say goodbye, promptly at 7.30pm. We never over-run, so we can all be sure that our commitment is for 30 minutes only.

Over the years (since beginning it in my previous church during the Pandemic) Evening Prayer has become a crucially important part of my week, and I am glad that we have a specific time each week to pray for our church and our world. I am so pleased that people regularly log in so we can pray together. I hope hearing something more about Evening Prayer makes you feel that you might want to join in too. Feel free to message me with any prayer requests, or for more information, or simply log in (also, keep an eye on the notices, as very occasionally, we miss a week).

All are welcome!

**Louise**

## **CHRISTIAN AID 80TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE, WALES**



On September 17<sup>th</sup>, Christian Aid Wales celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a service in Tabernacl Baptist church, The Hayes, Cardiff. It was attended by Christian Aid's Directors and Board of Trustees, with addresses by Patrick Watt, Christian Aid CEO, Bishop Sarah Mullally, Christian Aid

Chair and Bishop of London, and Jane Hutt MS, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice. We share this prayer from the Celebration service in Westminster Abbey:



**‘We pray for all those who are wounded by conflict, injustice and poverty; for all who are at risk or in distress this day and who are unable to live full and flourishing lives. We pray for that day when peace will reign over the earth, and all people will be known, loved and valued as God’s children. Amen.’**

## **ADVANCE NOTICE ABOUT UCS CHRISTMAS PROJECT 2025**

### **Bags for our local refugees and asylum seekers**

I apologise for mentioning Christmas when it is only October but I am going to need everyone’s help again!



Last year UCS provided bags full of goodies for 100 adults and 100 bags for children. A wonderful total! The bags were very much appreciated by their recipients.

Already this year many bags are sewn and ready to be distributed for filling in November- full details in next month’s magazine. However, I will be very

grateful for any sewers who might wish to join the bag making team as more bags are still required. Materials can be provided. Please see me for details.

I hope to have details of the numbers of each category bag required this year and will pass on this information to you through our weekly notices. When shopping you may wish to start purchasing items to include in your bag but, naturally, I will be very happy to receive donations of money to bulk-buy items for those unable to do their own shopping.

## Bag contents

For those new to the project and wishing to know more about the sorts of items suggested to go in the bags I am happy to provide ideas but socks, toiletries and treats of edible items are always

appreciated. The bags do not need to be fully filled but provide a gesture of our love and welcome.

Please pray for a successful outcome that, with the help of everyone in UCS alongside the UID and SASS teams, we will rise to the task and achieve our target of ensuring a bag for those refugee and asylum seekers living in Swansea.

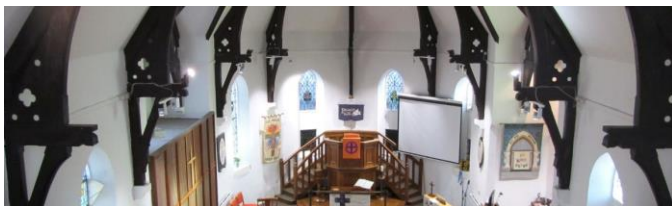
Many thanks

**Linda J**



## PASTORAL UPDATE OCTOBER 2025 (from Gwen D.)

- We remember the family of Jim H, one of our faithful Zoom congregation, following his unexpected death; we give thanks for his long life and faithful service. Our thoughts, prayers and love go to Muriel, and the wider family.
- Una G has now moved to Hillside Care Home; we hope she will soon feel settled and we send her our love.
- Claire S and Gabriella S are both recovering from planned surgery; we send them our love and best wishes for a good outcome.
- Congratulations to Gary and Jackie C who have both retired. We wish them well and hope they will have a long and happy retirement.
- Best wishes also to Amy and Dave C following their move to Sketty. We hope they will soon feel settled and be very happy in their new home.



## *The prayer room has had its zhuzh! \**



We hope that the prayer room is a space that reflects God's welcome, care and love to everyone. We imagined it to be a place that would bring comfort, in an ordinary way, to anyone who comes into our building. The room is intentionally very visual, so that people will have the freedom to take whatever they need from the images. Thank you very much to anyone who helped us in this process.

The prayer room sits in a visible way, against a backdrop of quiet and invisible actions taken by many, where we as a church say 'Welcome to All.'

**Ann and Chris**

*\* To make something more stylish, lively, or attractive! (a new word to me! ed.)*

## **SAVE THE CHILDREN AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS.**



**Save the Children**

Save the Children has been in existence for 106 years. Over this time the fund

has faced many crises throughout the world, famine, war, displacement etc. but the biggest crisis we will ever fight is climate change. People ask 'What can I do, this problem is huge?' But we can all do our best and UCS tries, as a church and individually, to do our bit to help.

We have all seen disasters unfold on our television screens. A third of



Pakistan is under water at this moment.

By contrast Somalia has had a drought for three years. Somalia has one of the lowest carbon footprints in the world yet suffers badly from others' selfishness.

Save the Children has a climate change department with a climate and environment hub manager. Children are invited on to the board to give their opinions and they are listened to. They should have a say in their future and their ideas are valid. They see things simply and don't cloud the issues. If adults say 'We can't do that', they ask 'Why not?'

The charity is aiming to cut its carbon footprint by half by 2040. Air travel was reduced by 70% by 2024. It is necessary to have field managers and workers in other countries but travel has been cut to a minimum, using local volunteers and staff where possible. Working from home, coming out of Covid, reduces emissions. The HQ in London has reduced the floor space it uses and uses green electricity. Information collected at children's hearings across the world was reported on at Cop 27.

Governments and companies are encouraged to have children contribute to their panel meetings.

All existing Save the Children programmes will include climate specific planning. A green climate fund will provide £33 million by 2028.

Money is used practically and to educate. In Somalia early warning systems have been set up to enable people to prepare for drought conditions. In Cambodia people are being encouraged to reduce their reliability on fishing and to grow more. Over fishing and frequent storms are causing food shortages.

The fund has a donation acceptance/refusal policy. There are no go areas from which donations will not be accepted. These are pornography, tobacco and interestingly fossil fuels. Some years ago an energy company offered 1 million dollars to the fund. The board of trustees decided to be true to the strategy of balancing rewards against risk. To accept the money would fail to uphold Children's Rights. The money could not be accepted whilst the fund has a climate and environment department. The company concerned contacted the press but the fund stuck to its decision. Principles versus finances is difficult for a charity but we must give children the future they deserve.

**Christine L (on behalf of Green Friends)**

## God's Wonderful World

(The new display in the foyer)



In the autumn the leaves fall from the trees in their millions. They are all different in size, shape, colour and the families that they belong to.

They are affected by the environment, the conditions they need to survive and flourish, very much like ourselves.

So let's celebrate our 'differences', support each other, enlighten each other and maybe even make each other laugh out loud!

If you have a short quote that would do any of the above, please write it on the cards provided and we will print it out and hang it on our 'Tree of Autumn Blessings'. Thank you.

**Chris H**

### Message from Pauline



My daughter Jenny successfully completed the Great North Run in Newcastle on 7<sup>th</sup> September in 2.27 mins - which she was very chuffed about! It was a half marathon (13.2k) and there were 60,000 runners!

For all of you who donated, sponsoring her for the Motor Neuron Disease charity, I'm so thrilled to say that we made £325, plus another amount she collected totalling £623 in all. Jenny and myself thank you all for your generosity, which is always more than I can ever say.

P.S. Jenny says she won't be entering next year, because it goes so far!!!

# POWER IN PROTEST



**ALTHERIA JONES-LECOITE**

Scientist and leader in the British Black Panthers whose organising and intellect built community programmes, defended Black Britons, and inspired a generation with the language of resistance



**CLAUDIA JONES**

Journalist, organiser, and visionary who founded the West Indian Gazette and launched Britain's first Caribbean Carnival, blending culture with protest to empower communities. e language of resistance



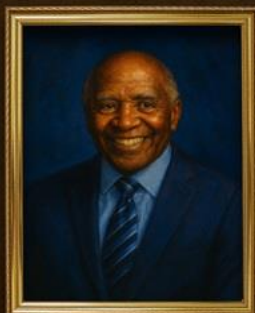
**MAVIS BEST**

Grassroots leader who spearheaded the Scrap the Sus campaign, uniting communities to end racist stop-and-search laws and proving ordinary people could force national change.



**OLIVE MORRIS**

Radical organiser and member of the British Black Panther Movement who fought tirelessly for housing rights, women's liberation, and racial equality.



**PAUL STEPHENSON**

Leader of the 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott, a landmark protest that challenged colour bars and helped pave the way for race relations legislation.



**ROY HACKETT**

Civil rights leader whose direct action in Bristol transformed the city's transport policy and became a catalyst for national change.

Across Britain's modern history, Black activists have spoken out, stood firm, and demanded change. They organised boycotts, led campaigns, built networks, and challenged systems that denied justice. Their courage shifted opinion, reshaped laws, and inspired new generations to act. The six people remembered here are part of a longer tradition — one that shows protest is not only resistance, but power to remake the nation.

[blackhistorymonth.org.uk](http://blackhistorymonth.org.uk)

## **THE THEME FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH UK 2025 IS “STANDING FIRM IN POWER AND PRIDE,”**

a powerful tribute to the resilience, strength, and unwavering commitment to progress that defines the Black community across the globe. This year, the theme highlights the profound contributions made by Black people, be they leaders, activists, or pioneers who have shaped history, while also looking towards a future of continued empowerment, unity, and growth.

The theme focuses on two core values: power and pride.

Power represents the influence, leadership, and capacity to effect positive change. It acknowledges the visionaries who have led political, civil rights, and social movements, as well as those who have broken barriers in business, education, and the arts. Their legacies remind us that true power is not about titles but about the collective strength, courage, and unity used to forge a more equitable future for all.

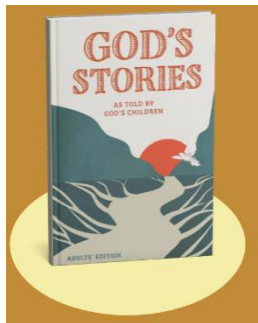
Pride reflects cultural identity, heritage, and the celebration of Black excellence. From the art and music to the stories passed through generations, pride is the heartbeat of Black communities worldwide. It's about knowing where we come from, embracing our history, and walking boldly into the future without compromise or apology. Pride is a declaration of the beauty, the resilience, and the unmatched contributions of Black culture to the world.

Black History Month 2025 will honour key anniversaries, including the 60th anniversary of the Race Relations Act, the death of Malcolm X, and the Bristol Bus Boycott, led by the late Paul Stephenson. These milestones serve as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice, and the tireless efforts of those who have fought for the rights of Black people and communities.

This year's theme is not only about remembrance but a call to action. It invites individuals and communities to stand firm in their power with pride, and to actively shape a world where Black voices are heard, valued, and celebrated. Black History Month 2025 will challenge us to break down barriers, continue pushing for progress, own our spaces and walk confidently into the future.

Join us in honouring Black history, recognising the visionaries, and working together to build a brighter future. Black History Month 2025 will be a celebration of power and pride, inviting everyone to stand firm in both and continue the work of shaping an inclusive world.

## GOD'S STORIES



Recently, Win H drew the attention of the Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' meeting to the book, *God's Stories*. Co-ordinated by a group calling itself *The Bible for Normal People*, it was originally planned as a version of Bible stories and writings told for and by children, with suitable illustrations. But so many adults responded positively to the book as 'the Bible story book we never had as children', that an adult version has now been published without the illustrations ('so

that nobody needs to know that you're reading a children's Bible!'). The list of authors is very impressive indeed. Most of them are Biblical scholars in universities and theological colleges around the world. Many of them have tested out what they've written with their children and grandchildren.

The authors describe their project as an attempt to:

- **Honour and illuminate** the ancient contexts of the Bible.
- **Listen for the conversations taking place** in the biblical texts and invite children to participate in them.
- **Encourage questions**, acknowledging we may not have all the answers, and that's okay!
- **Meet children where they are** through engaging storytelling and accessible background information.
- **Model curiosity and delight** when encountering the elements within the text that we might find strange today.
- **Mirror the different voices** we find in the biblical texts themselves.

I've downloaded a copy (as have 19 million others around the globe!) and have been browsing through it. I've been very impressed. The language and style are helpful, of course, but I also liked its honesty. One example: you'll probably remember the account in Genesis, chapter 24, of Abraham sending a servant back to where they'd come from to find a wife for his son, Isaac. When he gets there, he sees this young woman at the well (who turns out to be Rebekah who would become Isaac's wife). The story tells us that she gave Abraham's servant some water from the well and also gave his camels water. 'Which is weird', the author in *God's Stories* says, 'because camels weren't domesticated in the Middle East

until at least 200 years after this event is meant to have taken place. It's weird, but let's not worry about it!

The project is described in these terms: 'At *The Bible for Normal People*, we know that how the Bible works is just as important as what the Bible says. And we think kids should know this, too. So, we created an illustrated storybook Bible informed by biblical scholarship just for them. A storybook Bible that welcomes their questions, and views the Bible as the beginning of a conversation, not the end of one; that illuminates the Bible's historical contexts, embraces its weird bits, and celebrates its many storytellers.'

Look out for it (or the adult version without pictures!) and see what you think.

**Noel**

## **THE DUCHESS OF KENT AND ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

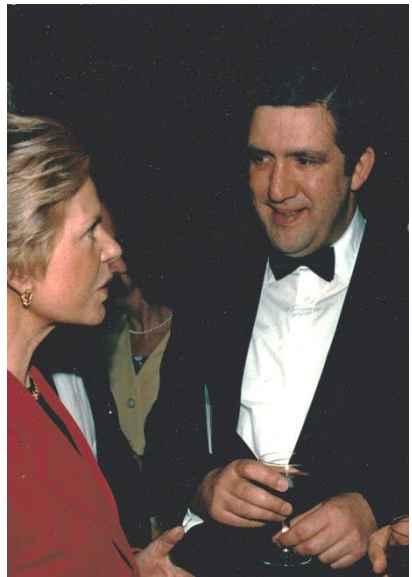
Amongst the patronages of the late Duchess of Kent (1933-2025) she was President of NCH Action for Children (as it was then known).

In 1994, she attended a fundraising performance of Handel's "Messiah" at Westminster Abbey, as part of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of NCH Action for Children.

Later that year a CD of the performance, featuring the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Choral Society (conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes, who was a Vice President of NCH), was sold to raise funds for NCH Action for Children.

In 1995, NCH Action for Children announced that the Duchess would replace Viscount Tonypany (George Thomas) as the new president of NCH Action for Children.

The performance of the "Messiah" and the sale of the CD was the first event in the new fundraising project "Music in Action for Children", to support the



work of 16,000 children and families in more than 200 projects. This project was particularly pertinent to HRH Duchess of Kent, as, when she stepped down from her public role as a member of the royal family in 1996, she taught music in a school in Hull, which has a progressive programme for the inclusion of children with learning difficulties. She was known in the school as Mrs Kent, but only the headteacher knew who she really was!

**Clive Williams and Janet N**

*[Image: Clive Williams with the Duchess of Kent]*

## **CIRCUIT NEWS**

- At the recent Circuit meeting, it was agreed to extend the Revd Howard Long's appointment as Circuit Superintendent for a further five years from September 2026. We wish Howard and Alison well as they continue their life and service among us and look forward to his next visit to UCS.
- At the Circuit meeting there was an inspiring report from Wesley (Eaton Road, Brynhyfryd) about their over-subscribed holiday club on the theme of 'Deep Sea Divers', where 25 young people had lots of opportunities to be creative, try some Tai Chi, saw dramatic presentations of Bible characters, and witnessed water themed science experiments (not always 100% successful!) *(from the Clydach and Morriston Newsletter)*.
- Circuit Mission Service in Murton at 4.30 on October 12<sup>th</sup> – see details above

## **WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS IMAGE ON THE COVER OF THE SEPTEMBER REFORM, THE URC MAGAZINE?**



Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles...(2 *Corinthians 1:3-4*)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (*Ephesians 4:3*)

## WHO ARE THE FOOLS TODAY?

Recently, as you may remember, the parable of the rich man who built bigger barns to preserve his successful harvest (Luke 12.16-21), was the Gospel reading in the lectionary. Reading the parable again reminded me of Martin Luther King's (MLK) powerful sermon on the exact story in Detroit about a year before he was assassinated. You will remember that Jesus, in the parable, referred to the rich man who wanted to build bigger barns as a 'fool' because he believed that his eternal destiny was secure while his barns were full, not remembering that "tonight your life will be demanded back from you, and who then will have the things you have gathered?" I began to wonder if MLK's insightful comments were still relevant, nearly sixty years later.

At the start of his sermon, he analyses the state of US society (and British society too, of course) in the '60s. This is what he said:

"...Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided (man). Like the rich man of old, we have foolishly minimized the internal in our lives and maximized the external. We have absorbed life into livelihood. We will not find peace in our generation until we learn anew that "man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses" but in those inner treasures of the spirit which "no thief approaches, neither moth corrupteth".

The language is old-fashioned (especially his use of non-inclusive language) and his examples of technological developments seem rather primitive. But there are truths here that we still need to consider and adopt as a permanent foundation for the Christian values that should be the basis of our lives.

It makes three points (of course!).

***First, he believed that the rich man was a fool because he allowed the means by which he lived to absorb the ends for which he lived.*** MLK's

main concern was technology: Technology was becoming an end in itself for many people. So, today, how can we as churches make more effective use of the social media that have become so essential to the lives of so many people (including artificial intelligence), so that they can become, not things for us to constantly complain about, but ways in which each generation can discover new meaning, a new sense that the destiny of our lives and our relationship with others here and across the world is bound up with Jesus.

***MLK also believed that the rich man was a fool because he failed to realise his dependence on others.*** We could not go about living our daily lives without our ability in an interconnected world to benefit the time and labour of others, some near, some far away. We realize this, of course, and in our best moments we remember it and give thanks. But how do we celebrate and nurture an interdependent world? The Christian calling is to remind ourselves and the wider society that building a more just, generous and kind international order is part of the challenge of witnessing to the kingdom of God in our time.

***Finally, he believed that the rich man was a fool because he failed to realise his dependence on God.*** But what do we mean by 'God'? Do we still think of God as an old man in the clouds!? If so, it isn't surprising that most people in our society can't cope with such an idea. Or do we think of God as a transcendent energy of love, meaning and mercy which, in Jesus, penetrates deeply into the life of the universe and shapes human life? If so, that might make a lot more sense to many people today. If that is our understanding of God, then our lives, the future of the global community and the future of this planet depend on seeing something of this 'spiritual' wonder and richness in Jesus through the Spirit. We are all dependent on this energy of love that we call God.

During Black History Month 2025, may Martin Luther King still speak to us of the values of the Kingdom that has come and still comes in Jesus.

**Noel**



## CELEBRATING BRIAN WREN



On October 11<sup>th</sup>, there will be a celebration of Brian Wren's extensive worldwide contribution to contemporary hymns over the last 50 years. His hymns appear in *Rejoice and Sing* and *Singing the Faith*, and in many other hymnbooks. We've sung many of them over the years and they have deeply enriched our worship, Brian married Pat and I in 1968.

'Brian Wren writes that hymns should help people to "know and understand the meaning of God's creating, self-disclosing and liberating activity centred and uniquely focused in Jesus Christ." He has also been determined to make hymns less male-orientated, removing words like "he" in order to make them more inclusive for women. Many churches have adopted this mindset as a result.' His hymns include the following

- *Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing* - written for Easter Sunday in 1968 (for use in Hockley, Essex, where Pat and I got married) two weeks after the death of Martin Luther King, Junior. Brian Wren wished the hymn to express God's triumph over tragedy, both in the Bible and in the world.
- *Here Hangs a Man Discarded* - very modern in terms of language with words such as "scarecrow" and "clown".
- *I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord* - initially written as a Communion hymn, Brian Wren summarises the Lord's Supper and suggests it is sung specifically as a post-sermon hymn to illustrate Christ's presence in Communion meals.
- *Lord Christ, the Father's Mighty Son* - based on John 17:20-23
- *There's a Spirit in the Air*
- *This We Can Do For Justice and For Peace* - loosely based on Colossians 2:14-15
- *We Are Not Our Own. Earth Forms Us*

(From *The Hymns of Brian A. Wren* - GANTS HILL URC)



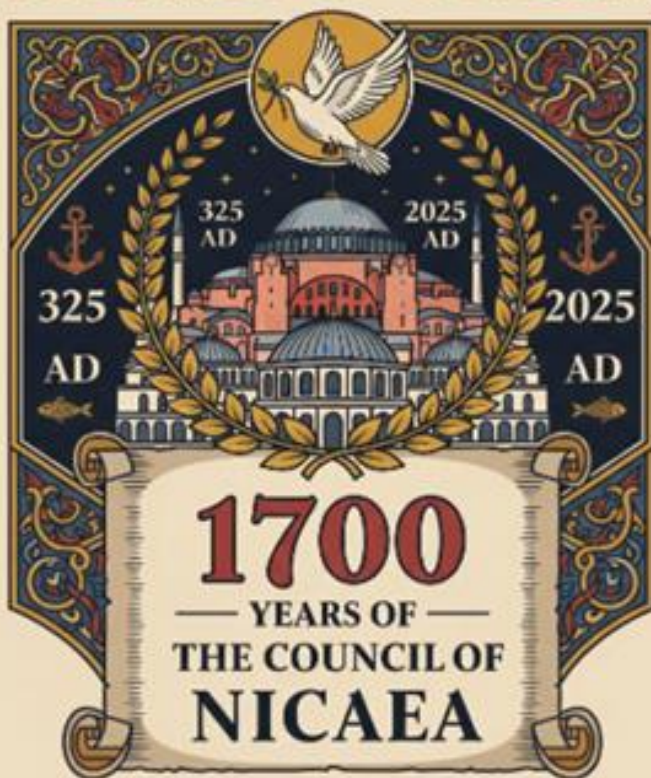
MYSTWYR  
ABERTAWE



SWANSEA  
MINSTER



# Seeing afresh the faith which holds us together **A service to Celebrate**



**Sunday 28th September 3pm**

**SWANSEA MINSTER, FORMERLY ST MARY'S**

**Preacher: The Revd Dr Susan Durber**

**European President for the World Council of Churches**