

UNITING CHURCH SKETTY

OCTOBER 2026



*Anniversary Celebrations of the Wesley
Chapel, 1876-2026*

Dear friends

Sometimes, we are surprised by joy! Sometimes, everything works out and things go right! Sometimes we find ourselves alive with wonder, uplifted, and thankful!

My heart is still full following our celebration of 150 years of the church building we call home. I am profoundly thankful to God, and to all of you, for a wonderful weekend, during which we worshipped, welcomed so many visitors through our doors, and expressed our faith and the story of Uniting Church Sketty with so much creativity. It is an experience that will always stay with me – and I've seen a few church anniversaries! This one was exceptional.

Thank you to all who made this possible, and who demonstrated God's love and grace through every moment and every contribution. I am struck again by your characteristic generosity, and the way you worked together and used your incredible gifts. The whole church building was buzzing, and it was a delight to see so many visitors, and so many members and friends sharing in the occasion, and so obviously happy to be present! You offered such a welcome and warm hospitality, and I know it made a big impression. I am left feeling inspired, encouraged, and full of gratitude and hope.

The entire building looked beautiful, dressed for the anniversary, but was particularly enriched by the new banner (and the matching pulpit fall – see cover), prepared by the craft group, and skilfully incorporating all the fabric leaves that were decorated by members and friends. The leaves represent activities past and present, loved ones remembered and treasured, and all manner of meaningful personal things, including words, displayed on a central leaf, from a hymn by John Bell and Graham Maule: "For all the saints you showed your love". It is very significant that we all had a hand in contributing to the banner.

The banner was dedicated in the anniversary morning service, and I included a reflection, which I hope shows how inspiring I find the banner. It is shared here.

Creator God
of all that is,
your eternal love
surrounds us;
the depths of suffering love
sound through the cross of rough wood,
rooted low in the soil of life,
connecting us
to your presence,
directing us to new life,
to hope.

Jesus spoke of seeds
falling to the ground,
dying,
to bring forth fruit.

Grafted to the vine of Christ -
the Living Tree -
we flourish,
bound together,
enriching one another

with our uniqueness –
colours,
creativity,
patterns,
purpose,
displaying your glory
as we catch your light,
greater together than apart.

Released by the breeze of your Spirit,
leaves flutter and fall –
even more beautiful
in their flight.

Leaves are a gift.
Green, they breathe,
supporting life,
cleansing air.
"Leaves for the healing of
the nations" –
so say the Biblical
prophets.



Fallen,
from the ground
they enable existence,
fortifying and nourishing;
providing winter shelter,
food, fertilization -
allowing themselves
to fold,
to breakdown,
self-giving
to birth new life.



So it is with us
in the story of our lives
in your church –
flourishing on the branch,
sent out in your service.

May this banner
remind us
of our connectedness to Christ
and to each other;
may it remind us
that from self-giving
comes renewal and resurrection.
May it remind us
of love and service -
hands and hearts
pouring out in love

the love and the gifts
you have given to us -
one vibrant mosaic of praise.

**All that we have done,
all that we do,
all whom we remember,
all our memories,
all our experience,
all that we treasure -
in thanksgiving
we give ourselves
in your service.**

“For all the saints
who show your love”,
past, present, future,
we give thanks.

For the fruit
of your love in us
we give thanks.

For the faith, hope and love,
gifted to all
we give thanks.

**We go forth in your name
trusting in your love,
which is ours for eternity.
Amen.**

I give thanks for God’s love and grace, for our wonderful weekend, and for all of you.

With love
Louise





‘THESE 150 YEARS...!’ And we still hope to be a presence in the community, seeking to serve, through care, worship, celebration and witness. Inside and outside, the church was a real feast of celebration. The new banner reminded us that at the heart of who we are as a people of God is the cross of Jesus. The leaves gathering around the foot of the cross celebrate those who have been – and seek to be still – witnesses to the Gospel in this place.

‘These 150 years...!’ is an echo of words from Deuteronomy, where the authors look back over the story of Israel, through Exodus from slavery in Egypt (the 40 year journey to Canaan), threats from aggressive neighbours, and Exile to Babylon. Throughout ‘these 40 years’, says Deuteronomy, God has been journeying with them. It encouraged me to ask, ‘What have God’s people worshipping in this place over ‘these 150 years’ encountered and what has sustained and inspired them over the years?’

This is not the place for a detailed history lesson! But think of it. Two world wars, when millions lost their lives and many from the two churches that now worship here, and from the wider community. were wounded or, indeed, lost their lives. And in 1944, Swansea was bombed, including churches. Nazism in Germany over almost two decades, and most especially the holocaust, was a threat to European civilization and to a sense of freedom, justice and peace for all peoples, irrespective of their cultural, religious or ethnic origins.

We were reminded in a recent local preachers meeting, that the Confessing Church in Germany made a costly stand during those years for uncompromising compassion and generosity in the name of our only Lord, Jesus Christ. In-between the two world wars, the economic situation was often challenging, not least as a result of the General Strike of 1926 (100 years ago!).

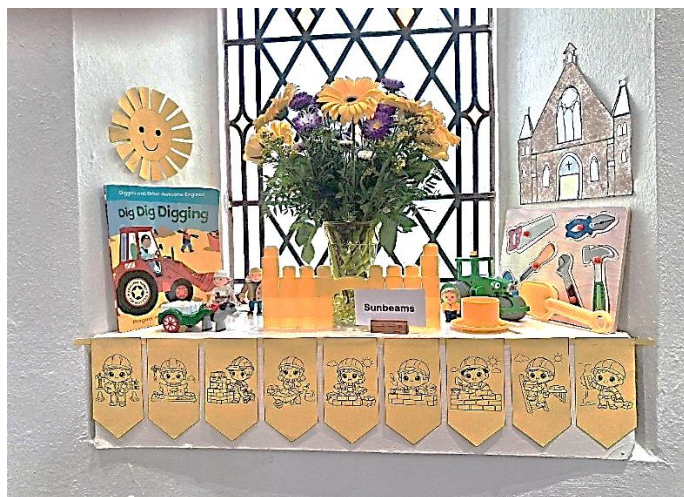
Later decades of the 20th century saw the cold war, questions about immigration and the Windrush generation, the development and challenges of the NHS and our welfare system. Joining and leaving the European community. And now questions about the cost of living and threats to peace in a dangerous world.

So here we are, in 2026, confronting many of the same issues, with some urgency and anxiety. We need to ask the same question as the authors of Deuteronomy asked 1500 years ago: Where is God in all this? Those who have worshipped in this Chapel over ‘these 150 years’ have tried to be faithful to the God who had faith in them.

They have tried to be witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as they understood it. They have given their time, talents and energy to serve one another and their local community. And all this because they believed that God still calls, still promises, is still faithful in love, compassion and forgiveness, in Jesus. May we too be faithful to our calling in our day, by God’s grace. *Noel*



Rosemary and John B reminded us how most people who came to Wesley Chapel in 1876 would have dressed!



WINDOW DISPLAYS (L to R from the top):
Adventurers, Sunbeams, Green Friends, Craft
Group, Clothing Bank, and Wesley Group
[Anniversary Celebrations photos by Revd
Louise, Linda J. and the Editor]





The beautiful flower arrangement at the front of the church, the foyer display and the anniversary cake.

There were activities in the Hall for children, organised by Linda J and her colleagues



Linda J writes "I was kept very busy by 3 girls (plus 1 more, almost at finishing time) who stayed the whole two and a half hours. Activities included decorating Lynne's drawing of our church, decorating bookmarks and making bracelets and necklaces. All finished items were taken home."

There were also displays from Gower Society Folk Dancing, Madcaps and Bags for Christmas.



*Wesley Chapel in party mode
Anniversary Tea
Anniversary Service
The Gymanfa Ganu*



A HYMN FOR THESE TIMES

During a recent meeting of local preachers and worship leaders, Dr Alan C drew our attention to a session at the recent Greenbelt Festival that focussed on issues of belonging, migration and nationalism. The Greenbelt website includes the following hymn by Steve Tinning, who participates in Greenbelt, that echoes Amos 5 ('There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!' vv 7 & 24) and Micah 6 ('He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God', v8.) 'The hymn asks what faithful worship looks like at a time when hardship and insecurity are shaping the lives of many across the UK. It acknowledges the genuine pain that can lie beneath people's anger, while challenging those who seek power by directing that anger towards strangers and neighbours. It calls the Church to respond with attentive listening, active compassion and an uncompromising commitment to the values of God's kingdom.' I include it here so that we, too, can reflect on Jesus' call to discipleship in these times.

Jesus, you have shown a welcome
vaster than we comprehend;
teach us to make room for others,
stranger, neighbour, foe and friend.
Jesus, draw us all together
in this place where all belong.
Peace and justice, love and mercy
be our prayer and be our song.

You despise our feasts, our singing
when we turn from neighbours' need;
may our worship here be different,
as we move from word to deed.
May our music stir compassion;
may our actions match our prayer.
Let your justice roll like waters,
flowing through each act of care.

When our neighbours cry in anger,
feeling no one knows their pain,
even when they point their fingers
at the ones they should not blame,

help us listen without mocking;
help us see them as you do,
help us practise loving patience
as we seek to follow you.

When the cross is claimed by those who
trade in hate to gain control;
they distort Christ's words of welcome,
making faith serve their own goal.
We will choose a better story:
love and welcome be our song;
following the way of Jesus,
we will show that all belong.

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee;
you have shown us what is good:
acting justly, loving mercy,
living as your people should.
Lead us down a humble path of
costly kindness, arms held wide;
may we walk this road together,
with your Spirit as our guide.

*Lyrics by Steve Tinning and are free to use.
The hymn is set to ODE TO JOY, by
Beethoven.*

WORSHIP SERVICES AT UCS IN OCTOBER

October 4th Revd Louise Gough Holy Communion (Homeless Sunday)

October 11th Revd Louise Gough Harvest Festival
6.00pm Circuit Service at Wesley Church, Eaton Road

October 15th Thursday Communion Revd Louise Gough

October 18th Revd Simon Walkling
3.00pm Ecumenical Service at Swansea Minster (Seasons of Creation)

October 25th Jeff Coleman (Bible Sunday)

Evening Prayers are held on Sunday evenings from 7.00pm until 7.30pm on Zoom unless indicated otherwise. See Weekly Notices for the Zoom link.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT



Fairtrade fortnight this year is 21st September until 4th October. We have already had our September stall, and our next stall is not until 18th October. However, during this time we plan to highlight two aspects of the fairtrade movement that is encouraging us to think about what we buy. Firstly, there is an emphasis on making sure our tea is fairtrade as Kenyan farmers have written an open letter highlighting the challenges they face both with climate issues and a fair price for their tea. Fair trade tea, wherever you purchase it, enables this support to happen and helps farmers deal with climate issues as best as they can. Many church friends already buy fairtrade tea. If you want to purchase any tea during this time from the cupboard, please let me know, but many shops now sell fairtrade tea. You will be making a difference.



In addition, Transform Trade is highlighting the wider issue of workers across the world being exploited. Their campaign No Profit from Harm aims to ask the government to pass a law that requires companies to ensure that no harm is being done in terms of exploitation, abuse and environmental harm on items that are being made for them. There will be more details to follow as to how we can get involved in this as a church, but you can also sign up individually. As one of our posters says, **Fairtrade isn't just something you buy (although that is important). It's something you are part of.**

If you need any more information. Please let me know.

Jackie C



Our communion collection for October will be for Tools for Self Reliance Cymru. The charity aims to relieve poverty in the under-developed areas of the world by provision of hand and other tools, equipment and training allowing people to earn a living. The sorting and packing of the tools is done by volunteers in Crickhowell. *Susan G*

PASTORAL CONCERNS:

- We remember those who are in hospital, in care homes and nursing homes, those who are being cared for at home, those who are awaiting treatment and those who are convalescing. We pray that they will know God's strength and peace, and be able to trust in God's presence with them.
- We pray for those who are recently bereaved. May they know 'the peace of God that passes all understanding', through Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.

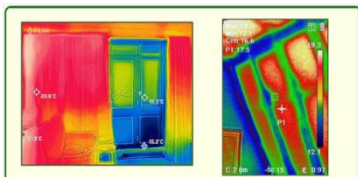
Congratulations and best wishes to:

- Gareth H who is celebrating a milestone birthday, and Sandra and Jon H who are celebrating their Ruby Wedding Anniversary.
- Ian C (Jackie and Gary's son), who became engaged to Sarah H in July; Ian and Sarah plan to marry in July 2027.
- Pete C, (Jackie and Gary's son), who has just received confirmation that he has gained his Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Staffordshire.
- Annalene M, who has recently celebrated a milestone birthday.

Gwen D

A NOTE FROM GREEN FRIENDS (BY ROGER T)

When we have done all the sensible things to save energy and save money, how do we know where we are losing heat from our homes? We can feel for draughts and look for condensation and mould, and we can use a thermal imaging camera. These devices are designed to trace cold spots in homes by showing temperature differences as different colours in a photo, as shown in the example below. (Red shows heat being conserved; green shows heat escaping.)



I propose that we should hire a thermal imaging camera this winter and share it around to check our homes for cold spots. It is cheaper to do this as a group than to do short rentals individually. As a group it might cost about £25 each. If anybody is interested, please e-mail me.

THE EL NIÑO SERIES: THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE



Summarised from a Blog on the All We Can website of the Methodist Relief & Development Office, written by Backson Muchini, the All We Can Country Representative for Zimbabwe.

Backson tells us about how recent, devastating weather conditions brought on by El Niño mean that the country is preparing for this year's expected Super El Niño. Zimbabwe is facing renewed drought risk linked to the forecasted "Super El Niño" season.

Zimbabwe is especially vulnerable because millions of rural households depend on rain-fed agriculture. A poor rainy season could quickly worsen food insecurity, household income, livestock health, and water availability. Government preparedness measures are already underway, including strengthening grain reserves, expanding irrigation, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and encouraging drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum and millet.

Drought preparedness must become a permanent part of Zimbabwe's development planning and community resilience strategies, not just an emergency response.

Zimbabwe needs to prepare now, conserve resources, adopt agroecology and climate-resilient farming, and protect vulnerable communities before drought conditions arrive.



From Adella

Dear Editor,

Thank you for another excellent church magazine for July/August. I was especially impressed by your articles about gardens and Iona, which is "a thin place" for so many Christians and others.

At the end, you included a meditation by a friend of mine, Ruth B, which, when I read its title, sent shivers down my spine because of its title – "St Quernan's Well, Troqueer!"

What a coincidence that you chose this particular meditation, because one of my great grandfathers – James McKenzie – was born in the parish of Troqueer in 1839. Troqueer is now part of the town of Dumfries, but in the 1800s it was in the county of Kirkcudbrightshire. St Quernan's Well was an historic healing spring. He lived during the 6th century in Ireland. He was a carpenter's son. His feast day is on September 9th.

Legend says he loved nature and even had a tame fox that helped him carry his holy books!

Janet N



NEWS FROM METHODIST CYMRU SYNOD



At the Methodist Cymru Synod meeting in Aberystwyth on Saturday, 12th September, a proposal was brought for changes to Synod structures. There has been a concern that the current structures,

locally, regionally and at a Welsh national level, cannot be sustained, and are no longer appropriate for the work and mission of the Church in communities across Wales. As the paper presented to Synod recognises: 'Churches everywhere are finding it harder and harder to maintain their witness to the truth of the Gospel.' The following was brought to conference in the summer: '...we are concerned about the increasing burden of policies, procedures and compliance requirements placed upon our circuits, churches and ministers.' The paper notes specifically issues of the compliance burden, declining capacity and trustee responsibilities. Proposals were brought to Synod that seek to address these concerns.

During the coming months there will be a process of consultation about these matters. Local churches will have to consider these issues and bring their responses to their Circuit. Circuits will report to the Spring Synod in April 2027.

Following the feedback, if the Synod is mindful to continue with the restructuring proposal, then relevant resolutions will need to be passed at Circuit meetings before Spring Synod 2028.

The circuit leadership team will let churches know when the consultation process will begin.

In all this, churches such as ours will need to factor in our relationships with our ecumenical partners.

JOURNEYING TOGETHER : AN ILLUSTRATION

In August, I led worship around the story of the man called Legion. I then had an email from Janet G. Janet has strong links with UCS and worships with us both via the YouTube recording and in person. Janet commented that the reference to mental health and people's reactions to it reminded her of an incident in Tenby the previous week.

"We were sitting outside one of the cafes having brunch, actually on my granddaughter, Eva's birthday, when a group of adults with learning difficulties were being pushed by their carers down to the sea and went past us. One of the clients, a lady, was shouting loudly and screaming, she wasn't distressed but was making a lot of noise, which could be heard for quite a distance. Some people reacted but most just ignored it.

I felt sorry for her and her carer, when people were looking at her. The story of Legion reminded me of it. My daughter Julia lives and works in Dubai and she told me that in Dubai they don't use the word disabled, but people with disabilities are referred to as 'People of Determination'. This term was introduced to shift the focus from the negative connotation towards a more positive outlook of strength and resilience. I thought this was lovely."

Thank you, Janet, for this valuable lesson from Dubai.

Rev. Linda



UCS CHRISTMAS BAG PROJECT



At this time of the year, my thoughts turn to the project that UCS has been running for several years: providing a bag of goodies for local refugees and asylum seekers at Christmas. I have received assurance from UID (Unity in Diversity), who distribute our bags to recipients, that the project is one they are happy to continue to facilitate. At present, I have no idea of the number of adult or children's bags required but hope that might be clearer in the next few weeks. Bags will be ready for distribution at the end of October to those who are willing to fill them. The return date will be the end of November / beginning of December.

I rely on the help of the wonderful, generous friends at UCS to continue to make this project successful. More details will be given in UCS weekly notices over the next few weeks.

Linda J

COFFEE MORNING



**Our next Coffee Morning will be on
Saturday, October 1st
from 10.00am until 12.00noon.
Proceeds will be towards SAVE THE CHILDREN**



GWYN B IS NOW A NON-SERVING ELDER IN UCS, AND FOUNDING MEMBER OF OSPREY METALS LTD (NOW SANDVIK OSPREY)



We know Gwyn B as a faithful, long-serving elder in Bethel (who edited the Bethel Magazine for 17 years and was chair of Adella's Management Committee for a number of years). He is now a committed, generous and kind member of Uniting Church Sketty. Recently, Gwyn spoke to Wesley Club, where members discovered astonishing things about him. An article in SAIL, the Swansea University Alumni Magazine for 2026, extracts from which are included here with Gwyn's permission, gives us an idea of how his business began and developed, from his Engineering beginnings, researching for a MEng and a PhD in Swansea University

How a Pub Epiphany Sparked a Global Metal Revolution

For most, a trip to the local pub is a chance to switch off, but for Gwyn B and his colleagues, a pint at the Rhyddings in Swansea was where they hammered out the future of the Osprey Process.

'Alan said, 'I have an idea: what if we sprayed into a mould?'' Gwyn recalls. 'I said, 'where the hell did you get that idea?' And Alan replied, 'in the bath last night.' That 'bath-to-pub' brainstorm became the foundation of the Osprey Process, a technology that would eventually see the team building ...massive tubes for US submarines and producing 2,000 alloy variations of gas atomised metal powders in Neath. The first patent cost Gwyn £75 in 1971. 'My wife was furious,' he laughs. 'She said, "we could go on holiday for that!"'

Osprey's current dominance

Gwyn has now sold his share in Osprey Ltd., the Neath based company he founded with a colleague. But he knows that, interestingly, the company's current dominance in metal powders was almost an accident. After spray-forming components for a British customer, they collected the over-sprayed particles (i.e. droplets that had missed the shaped substrate) in the form of solid, spherical powder. They soon realised that producing and selling gas-atomised powders could become more profitable than selling manufacturing licences. Today, Osprey is the world's largest producer of gas-atomised powders. The dilapidated old site in Neath has been transformed into a high-tech facility employing around 200 people.

Gwyn points back to his alma mater. 'It would not have happened if we had not been at Swansea University. If it hadn't been for Swansea, I'd have been doing something ordinary somewhere else.' His advice for the next generation of innovators [*and the rest of us? ed.*]? Tenacity!

Taken from SAIL, the Swansea University Alumni Magazine 2026 and suggested by Jan C.

THE URC PRAYER HANDBOOK 2026 is now available, entitled "A Larger Belonging", edited by the Rev. Dr. Susan Durber and Jonnie Hill, with artwork by Rev Neil Thorogood, the Moderator of General Assembly, who will be taking worship at UCS on December 12th. The price is £6.99 plus p and p. If you would like a copy, please let me know as soon as possible. Pat D

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Editor: Noel D

PLEASE NOTE : Copy date for November issue : Tuesday, October 13th