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Cylchlythyr/Newsletter

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BABELL ZION NEWYDD

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"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the Government will be upon His shoulders. And His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9 verse 6

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Submitted by Owen Jones on behalf of his Son

Israel, a land steeped in history and spirituality, had been on my travel bucket list for as long as I could remember. Finally, an opportunity to explore this fascinating country arose in early September this year, so my partner and I travelled to some of its most iconic sites.

Tel-Aviv:



Tel Aviv's coastline is a haven for beach fanatics, and our first day was spent basking in the sun on the pristine shores of the Mediterranean. As we explored the city, it became apparent that the food scene had something for everyone's taste. Whether you wanted to try traditional Middle Eastern cuisine or explore the countless international restaurants, Tel Aviv is a must for any food enthusiast. I couldn't resist indulging in local specialties like falafel, shawarma, and creamy hummus.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre:

Located within the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is considered one of the holiest sites in Christianity. We travelled to Jerusalem on a well organised bus tour that picked us up a short distance away from our hotel in Tel Aviv. As I entered the church, the bustling crowds began to calm, and the aroma of incense filled the air.

The church houses the sites of Jesus' crucifixion and burial, and I was moved by the sight of the Stone of Unction, where Christ's body was prepared for burial. It was a profound and humbling experience, reminding me of the deep spiritual significance of this place for Christians around the world.



Church of the Nativity:

Our next stop took us to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, and the Church of the Nativity. Bethlehem is a Palestinian town to the south of Jerusalem located in the West Bank. I was quite apprehensive when crossing the border between Israel and the West Bank, as these states are separated by a 9-meter high concrete wall with heavily armed military personnel.



When we arrived at the Church of the Nativity, this ancient basilica has a low entrance which required us to bend down to enter, symbolising humility. Inside, we found ourselves in the Grotto of the Nativity, the very spot where tradition holds that Jesus was born. The feeling of standing in the place where the Saviour of Christianity was born was surreal. The simplicity of the surroundings and the warm glow of the silver star marking the exact spot filled me with awe.

Masada:

Leaving the religious sites behind, we ventured into the desert to explore Masada, an ancient fortress perched high on a plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. The site is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a symbol of Jewish heroism and resistance.

The cable car ride to the top offered breathtaking views of the surrounding desert landscape. Former military camps of the Roman Empire, visible as squares on the desert floor, can still be seen to this day from 1,300 feet up. Exploring the well-preserved ruins of Herod the Great's palace complex, I marvelled at the ingenuity and determination of the people who once called this place home. The story of the Jewish Zealots' last stand against the Roman Empire resonated with me as I walked through the ancient ruins.



Dead Sea:



On a clear day, the Masada fortress gives you an amazing view of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth. Floating effortlessly on its hypersaline waters was an experience like no other. The sensation of buoyancy was surreal, and I couldn't resist coating myself in the famous Dead Sea mud, which is believed to have therapeutic properties.

Our holiday in Israel was an immersive journey that blended the spiritual and historical treasures of Jerusalem, the tranquil and culturally rich streets of Tel Aviv, the ancient allure of Bethlehem, and the awe-inspiring natural wonders surrounding the Dead Sea and Masada. Furthermore, two days before we were scheduled to fly home another special memory was made... I proposed to my partner Rebecca, and she said yes! Our holiday to Israel was an adventure we will never forget, and I hope one day you can experience this amazing country too.

By Benjamin Jones & Rebecca Hill



Please keep Mrs Nesta Wyn Davies in your thoughts and prayers as we sympathise with her on the loss of her sister who lived in Clos Sticle.



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Molly Thomas' comments on two Poems:

In last month's newsletter there was a poem by RS Thomas. I happened to be reading his life story at the time and learnt much about him. He is regarded as the greatest British poet of his time. He was also a clergyman who spent his working life in small churches in rural areas of mid Wales. He has had numerous books of his works published over the years and became famous all over the world. His very first book was published by a small company in a room above a chip shop in Lammas Street. That is now known as the West End Chip Shop.

I also learnt from the book that the East window in Llanpumsaint church is the work of his wife who was a well known artist. His story by Byron Rogers is well worth reading in order to learn more about this amazing person who was a "one-off". Byron Rogers is a well known author who has written many books about this area as he was born in Bancyfelin and moved to Carmarthen when he was seven years old. His book about RS Thomas is titled: "The Man who went into the West."

Also in the newsletter we have another poem by a well known poet who is also a clergyman. This poem is about the ladies who have fallen in various ways recently and serves as a warning to us all to mind our step. The title is "Fallen Women" by Rev Mike Shephard. It is a brilliant piece of work and, despite the subject, brings a smile and a chuckle to the reader.

Mike and RS seem to be two made from the same mould. Both have the same way of looking at life but in their own particular way.

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What Christmas is All About

Christmas will always be for us
A time to reflect on Christ,
The gift God gave to all the world
Was the gift of His life.

We know Christmas is not about tinsel,
Nor fancy Christmas wreaths,
Nor is it about all the decorations
That adorn our Christmas trees.

And it's not about Holly or Mistletoe
Hanging from our doors,
Nor is it about the gifts that are left
By the jolly Santa Claus.

Christmas is more than all of this,
And the only reason why,
We celebrate Christ's birth together,
And the wonder of His life.

So remember as you celebrate,
Just what it's all about,
And invite the Lord to join with you,
Instead of leaving Him out.

For He will always be the reason
We celebrate this day,
No substitute the world may offer
Can take that meaning away.

By M S Lowndes

The Four Sundays and Themes of Advent

- First candle / Sunday: HOPE (The Prophecy Candle)
- Second candle / Sunday: PEACE (The Bethlehem Candle)
- Third candle / Sunday: JOY (The Shepherd's Candle)
- Fourth candle / Sunday: LOVE (The Angel's Candle)

Advent wreaths are circular, representing God's infinite love, and are usually made of evergreen leaves, which "represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus Christ". The four candles of the Advent wreath specifically symbolize the Christian concepts of hope, peace, joy and love, with these candles being lit subsequently throughout each week of the Advent season. Many Advent wreaths also have a white candle in the centre to symbolize the arrival of Christmastide, which is known as the 'Christ candle'.



Bringing evergreen trees indoors has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals — both by Pagans and Christians — for thousands of years. Pagans would decorate their homes during the winter solstice with tree branches, as a symbol of spring that was just around the corner. Fir trees were also used by the Romans to decorate their temples at the festival of Saturnalia, while Christians used it as a sign of everlasting life with God. The Christmas tree is symbolic of the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The tree's branches and shrubs are viewed as an emblem of immortality and are said to symbolize the crown of thorns worn by Christ on the cross.

Germany is also heavily credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition, as many Christians began decorating trees brought in from outside. Those who didn't have trees — or couldn't afford them — would make clever alternatives using wooden pyramids instead.



Joy to the World

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



ADVENT	INFANT	MYRRH
ANGEL	JESUS	NATIVITY
BETHLEHEM	JOSEPH	REJOICE
BIRTH	MAGI	STABLE
BLESSINGS	MANGER	STAR
CAMELS	MARY	THREE KINGS
FRANKINCENSE	MIRACLE	WISE MEN

Dates for the Diary

Plygain Merched y Wawr: Sunday 3rd Dec, Tabernacle Carmarthen, 7:30 pm

Singalong Tuesday Dates: December 12th, January 16th

We will also be singing in Towy Castle on Tuesday 19th at 2pm. All are welcome to join us.

From the New Year, the Singalong sessions will be held on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

Children's Christmas Party: Saturday December 16th at 3pm.

Chapel Dinner: Sunday 14th January at 1pm in the Falcon Hotel.

Sunday Services/Gwasanaethau ar y Sul

Mr Hugh Waddell	2 pm	03/12/23
Community Carol Service	2 pm	10/12/23
Children's Christmas Service	10 am	17/12/23
Christmas Eve Service	11:15pm	24/12/23
No Service		31/12/23
Service led by Chapel Members	10 am	07/01/24

Friendship Centre Rota

07/12/23	Maisie & Rosemary
14/12/23	Pat and Molly
21/12/23	Tina, Nan & Kevin
The Friendship Centre will be closed over the Christmas period and will re-open on January 11th	
11/01/24	Sian & Helen
18/01/24	Maisie & Rosemary

	Flowers/Blodau	Cleaning/Glanhau	Announcing and Communion/Cyhoeddi a Pharatoi'r Cymun
January	Helen Gibbon	Pat/Molly/Charmaine/Doreen	Sian Cassell
February	Doreen Davies	Helen & Gwyn	Pat Morgan
March	Carole Rees	Jackie/Maisie/Rosemary	Lynn Davies

Have you any news or items for the newsletter? Please forward to Carole at
carolerees4@gmail.com
or Helen at helengibbon1@btinternet.com

Wishing you All a Happy and Blessed Christmas