

February 2021

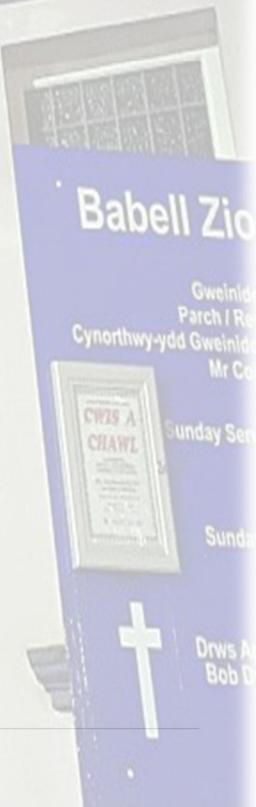
Chwefror

Cylchlythyr/Newsletter

Rhif/Issue 32

BABELL ZION NEWYDD

Rhiw Babel Pensarn Caerfyrddin SA31 2DJ



This newsletter has been digitised as part of a project to archive material relating to Llangunnor so that a record exists for future generations

Thanks to Babel Zion Newydd Chapel for permission to do this

Llangunnor Network
*Preserving and Promoting
Llangunnor*

A message from Corey

Dear friends

If this pandemic has reminded us of anything, it is of our fragility and vulnerability in this life. Despite the relative comfort provided by modern medicine, social security, and the generous health provision by our wonderful NHS, we are becoming more aware that 'we do not know what will happen tomorrow' (Jm. 4:14). As part of my ministerial training, I've taken part in several funeral services over the past few months, which has constantly reminded me that we are 'frail children of dust' (Ps. 104:27), who aren't immune from affliction. And the authors of Scripture do not make light of this reality, but, rather, calls us to hope in the God of our salvation in the midst of affliction, the one who offers us life in its fullness (Jhn 10:10) and overcomes death in his resurrection (2 Tim. 1:10). Thus, we can live with confidence that, in this life, we are called to flourish in loving obedience to the one who loves us and has called us his beloved, and also die with confidence in the the one who will raise us in glory (1 Cor. 15:43).

Psalm 90:12 offers a simple prayer to God, which petitions him to 'teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' In other words, to help us to recognise our fragility and the reality that 'we are but a mist that appears for a little while' (Jm. 4:14), because doing so teaches us to take nothing for granted, but to savour the blessings that God has given us, and above all else, to grow in our relationship with Jesus and his bride, the Church.

Friends, I pray that you aren't overwhelmed during these difficult times, but that you are strengthened in Christ and grow to know him more and more each day. Remember that 'God raises us up with Christ and seats us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2:6-7). You are empowered by God's Spirit to make the most of the time afforded you, that you might love others as you're loved in Christ.

This month, we remember those in our church family who have lost loved ones, including the Johnson family, as Ken's sister Yvonne passed away in Brynderwen on February 1st, and the Shephard family, as Gwen's sister Margaret passed away at the end of January. Our prayers are with them during this difficult time.

Cofiwch cysylltu os gallai fod o gymorth i chi. Dw i wastad ar gael am sgwrs.

Remember to connect with me any time. I'd love to hear from you.

Siaradwn yn fuan, | Speak soon,

Corey Hampton

Down memory lane

Parti Canu'r Babell tu allan i VIJI -Cartref preswyl ger Rhydaman. Edrychwn ymlaen at amser pan fyddwn yn gallu dod nôl at ein gilydd eto, dechrau côr a diddanu. Gwnaethom ymweld â sawl man yn y gorffennol ac un côf arbennig sydd



gen i yw mynd i Ysbyty'r Prior ryw Nadolig i ganu carolau. Gwnai fyth anghofio'r achlysur hwnnw. Yna mynd i Argel gyda phlant yr Ysgol Sul a chartref yng Nghastell Newydd Emlyn i enwi ond dau. Mae hynny'n mynd nôl sawl blwyddyn ond mi adawodd y cyfan argraff ddofn arnai ac roedd rhannu doniau a'r cymdeithasu yn bwysig. Diolch i Nelda am rannu'r llun gyda ni.

Thank you to Mrs Jackie Evans for sending us this poem which looks forward to Spring



Awakening

Days slowly lengthening, warmer,
Snowdrops peeping precious and pure,
Daffodils shooting bright greetings,
First sign of Spring.

Walks in the woodland,
With wagging dogs waiting
For sticks thrown again;
Fir cones in plenty and pockets bulging,
Church in the distance, striking the hour.

Season of promise,
Season of pleasure,
Nature's renewal from her repose.

Diolch yn fawr i bawb a gyfrannodd i'r cylchlythyr mis hwn

A message from Rev Mike Shephard

Dear Friends

EMBRACING CHANGE

One of the greatest challenges facing any organisation is to persuade members that change is a necessary and, indeed, an essential part of life. Many people resent any kind of disturbance and simply want to do things in the way in which they have always been done.

I was a church minister for many years and this trait was a source of great frustration. I recall, on one occasion, wanting to convert a vestry into a 'Drop-In-Centre' catering for the needs of people in the wider community. The plans involved making a serving hatch in the kitchen wall and should not have constituted a major problem. It would, though, involve removing a piano and situating it elsewhere in the building. No big deal there, one would have assumed. There followed a discussion with an elderly lady whose mother's grandmother, apparently, had bequeathed the instrument to the church in her will. I remember our conversation quite vividly and could tell from the tone of her voice and body language that she was on the warpath. I am in no doubt that if looks could have killed I would not be sitting here, now, penning this article. To say that her lips 'dripped acid' would be an understatement. I remember every word as if spoken yesterday.

Mr Shephard! How dare you suggest moving that piano! You are new to this church and do not understand its history. That piano has stood there for the past sixty years and you will move it over my dead body! Why do we need a serving hatch? What need is there for a 'Drop-In' Centre? It will encourage all sorts of people to come here – the sort we can do without. You will kindly leave the piano where it has always been"

You couldn't make it up! What a fuss! And all over a piano!

I was, though, not to be beaten. There is more than one way of cracking a nut and a sledge hammer is not the only tool available. As Baldrick often says, in *Blackadder*, *I had a cunning plan*. I would move the piano one foot a week and would do it so slowly that she wouldn't even notice the change occurring. It took thirty weeks! But, as anticipated, she never realised what had happened and, later on, the work was completed without further ado. I had won!!!!

Yes! But at what cost! Thirty weeks had been wasted and an enterprise that could have been 'up and running' had been delayed by the best part of a year. And all over a blessed piano!

That story is, of course, a parable and has a much deeper meaning. Why is it that people, from all kinds of background and in all sorts of situation are so afraid of approaching things in a novel way and of doing things differently? Why are we resentful of change?

These questions have great relevance for our post - Covid - World as so much has changed – not all of it welcome. Social distancing, self-isolating, the wearing of masks

and lack of physical contact – are changes which could well have repercussions for everyone’s mental health, particularly those who are especially vulnerable. We may not like these rules but the world has changed and we must comply.

Some changes though could well have positive outcomes and should be embraced with enthusiasm

There clearly needs to be a universal approach to preventing future pandemics, with the way in which we treat the animal population being incredibly important. All nations need to examine if they be culpable in this regard and must permit their practises to be challenged. There must be openness to external scrutiny – a change that is now a necessity.

Clearly all countries must cooperate and work together in developing workable vaccines and knowledge must be shared. This is not a question of ‘us first’ as the future of all humankind could be at stake. Nor is there place now for blaming or scapegoating. The need is to see ourselves as a global village where each person is interdependent. If the pandemic has helped defeat all manner of racism then it has hastened a much needed change of outlook.

In similar vein we must continue to take responsibility for our immediate neighbourhood as no person can be an island oblivious of those around them. Selfishness and individualism have no part in this changed world as we sink or swim together. Covid 19 has demonstrated that we all need each other if light at the end of the tunnel is become a reality.

I once read of a man who, when exasperated, would say ‘I like the human race. All my family belong to it and some of my wife’s family do as well!’ it’s fair enough as an affectionate gibe at one’s mother-in-law, but not when it denotes an attitude which is at the root of many of our political and religious problems.

“All my fellow-whites belong to the Chosen People, and some Black and Yellow People do as well.”

“I, and others who agree with me, possess ‘The Truth,’ whereas those who differ from us are in the darkness still.” How sad! How tragic!

The kind of world in which I want my grandchildren and their children to live must change if it is to survive. If it is to be a safe place in which to grow up all people must see themselves as members of the human race and must learn to live according to that dictate. If Covid 19 has hastened that process then something good has come out of something so incredibly bad. We are talking about something more important than moving pianos around. We really do not have time to waste on folly.

Mike Shephard

[On another humorous note Mike did send an addendum to say the winds of change are on the way and Babell Zion Newydd may eventually have baubles on the Christmas Tree. If anyone has any idea as to why he should say this please let the editor know!]

Part 2: The poetry of George Herbert

Mrs Pat Morgan continues with her thoughts on the poetry of George Herbert.

I love the imagery of 'Love III', a poem in which Herbert pictures the soul's welcome to Communion. He sees God as a loving host at a banquet but the soul is unsure, feels unworthy, out of place and dares not look upon the Host. It opens, '*Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back*'. The '*quick-ey'd*' love sees the hesitation and asked '*sweetly*', '*If I lacked anything?*' This always makes me smile—a hint of God as an attentive head waiter. The soul feels '*unkinde*' and '*ungratefull*' but cannot look upon the Host. The next part almost brings tears to my eyes;

*'Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?'*

The soul feels he has '*marr'd*' God's creation.

'Know ye not, says Love, who bore the blame?

My deare, then I will serve.

You must sit down, says Love and taste my meat:

So I did sit and eat.'

I like to think God, the loving Host, takes our hands today, calls us "*My deare*" and offers us His peace.

I wondered whether Mondays were washing days in your house too. The next poem is called 'The Pulley' and it takes me back about 68 years. Fire lit and tended; water heated; clothes dunked and rubbed and scrubbed; heavy items mangled (mind your fingers!) and then came the glorious pegging out. I 'helped' (note the inverted commas—probably 'hindered' was the truth). I was in charge of the pulley—pull the rope—slacken the rope—lower the line—watch freshly laundered clothes dance an inch or two above the garden soil. Then on tiptoes, heave, grunt and strain as the line rose proudly carrying its load. In this poem I imagine Our Lord in charge of the pulley.

The poem begins

*'When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by;'*

*'So strength first made a way;
Then beautie flow'd, then wisdom, honour and pleasure.'*

In other words God dispensed his gifts but He did not want mankind to adore Nature and its beauty more than the God of Nature. God also planted a '*restlessness*' in man – a desire to search out the Father. Herbert has a little joke at mankind's expense. God says "*If goodness leade him not, yet wearinesse may tosse him to my breast.*"

I see us worn down by pressures, sadness, and uncertainties, yet our Creator is waiting and watching, until the pulley flings us safely to be caught and held in the Father's arms.

Another poem which reassures us of the Father's faithful care is 'The Collar'. The poem's conclusion offers comfort but it's a rocky road as the man fights against the constraints and demands of life and against Divine Will. Metaphysical poetry was intellectual, demanding, thoughtful study. It traced an argument, often had a dramatic opening and satisfying resolution. These opening lines are famous, *'I struck the board and cry'd, No more I will abroad.'*

You can just imagine an individual thumping the table and shouting, "That's it, I can't take anymore, I'm off." The person rushes to take off, *'free as the rode'* and *'loose as the wind'*. A situation, a calling or occupation seems pointless. The person thinks freedom will be the answer. But his harvest is but a thorn that makes him bleed, the wine is dried up by his sighs, the corn was ruined by tears of frustration. Nature offers no pleasure.

*'No flowers, no garlands gay?
All blasted.'*

The individual is in a cage of *'pettie thoughts'*, *caught by a 'rope of sands'*, lost in despair yet he feels he *'deserves his load.'*

You feel fractured poetry echoes the fractured mind- he's on the edge.

*'But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word*

Me thoughts I heard one calling Childe

And I reply'd, My Lord'

Another restless soul, reconciled to God the Father.

I'll conclude with a brief nod in the direction of two poems full of hope and light. In 'The Flower' the poet comments on the apparent dying off, during winter of the garden flowers and plants. But many plants, although *"Dead to the world, keep house unknown,"* they are gathering strength to bloom anew. So is an individual who turns to God.

'I bud again.'

'I once more smell the dew and rain.'

'These are thy wonders, Lord of love

To make us see, we are but flowers that glide

Thou hast a garden for us where to bide.'

In these strange times we've all sensed the *'dead to the world'* atmosphere.

We're a bit lost, we're searching. I'll end with the lovely words from the poem 'Mattens'

"Teach me thy love to know

That this new light, which now I see

May both the work and workman show

Then by a sunne-beam I will climbe to Thee.

MIKE SHEPHARD, Y CWTCH, BOLAHAUL ROAD, CWMFFRWD, CARMS SA31
2LW

Email: shephard49@btinternet.com Tel 01267 234759

Please forgive an impersonal letter.

For the past year or so I have been voluntary Lead Chaplain to the Welsh Ambulance Service. It is a busy role but very fulfilling. I say 'lead chaplain' but, at present, there is only me! I am covering the whole of Wales albeit my telephone, email and, more recently, via Zoom. It is hoped to recruit chaplains for every area in the near future but Covid has delayed the process.

One of my tasks is to write a weekly article for the staff newsletter and fifty or so have now been compiled. The task is time consuming but very stimulating and it has revitalised my retirement.

The Ambulance Service has suggested that all the articles be published in book form with all proceeds (each book will cost £12) donated to ambulance charities. The books will be published in English and Welsh. The articles are likely to be of interest, not simply to ambulance staff but to a wider audience. The book will be called 'The Worst of Time and the Best of Times.' Please send no money at this stage.

I am writing to ask if you would consider pre-ordering a book so that we will have some idea of how many to order in the first run-off. I would also appreciate it if you could let others know of what is happening so ensuring a good response for a worthy cause.

I do hope that you will feel able to help in this way. Please ring, write, or email me. Details are above. I can email some of the articles, beforehand, if you so wish.

With many thanks

Kind Regards

Mike

Blunders: Church notices or announcements

Thank you Meurig for drawing attention to these

The rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing "Break forth into joy."

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They will need all the help they can get.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, there is a nursery downstairs.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale, it's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Thoughts on the way forward

Mr Emyr Williams has sent out a letter together with a questionnaire on how we envisage the future of the Church in the light of last year and COVID19. Please see below a resume of the letter and the questions which follow. We shall hold a meeting very soon to discuss.



February 2021

Greetings from Henaduriaeth Myrddin

It's the beginning of February and there are definite signs that Spring is on its way. After such a year we are all ready to see new beginnings. And with the vaccinations being carried out there is hope that 2021 will bring new opportunities for us all.

As we look forward with anticipation we must also look back. We have received countless blessings and we have learnt a lot about each other, the church and the community in which we live and serve each other. Having proved the generosity of our neighbours, we have come to learn what being a good neighbour is all about, to care and support one another.

Diolch i Dduw am yr holl bethau newydd ryn ni wedi profi yn ystod yr amser yma. Pwy fyddai wedi meddwl y byddem wedi gallu gwneud gymaint fel aelodau o eglwys Crist mewn amser mor rhyfedd.

Diolch am gyfryngau fel Zoom a Youtube, y rhai sydd wedi paratoi oedfaon a myfyrdodau ac wedi rhoi modd i ni gysylltu a chyd-addoli. Ryn ni'n diolch i'r rhai sydd wedi codi ffôn a dangos consérn ac wedi mynd i siopa a hól neges. Ryn ni wedi profi bendithion o gael myfyrdodau ysgrifenedig a thrwy e-byst.

Although the chapel doors have been closed we have proved that it is not the building that is the church but the people and the community. We thank God for our members who have kept the unity of the church in these difficult times. Thank you everyone for keeping the flame of hope alight during these difficult times.

Of course we haven't seen the end of Covid yet but we trust that we shall see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel and a gradual return to normal. The question is what will the 'new normal' look like? What have we learnt over the past year which will determine the way we see the future of the church?

What have we seen which is beneficial in the way we have done things and which we could keep for the future? What have we been doing in the past which we would not want to continue with in the future?

Perhaps we have been excited by new ways of worship? Or perhaps we have seen a need in our community for a new way of carrying out our mission? What about children, young people and families, craft clubs, sisterhood or men's groups? What is the need of our local communities and what can we do about this?

Over the years we have looked at the buildings, fire equipment, insurance, asbestos, health and safety etc and this has been good in order to protect our members and resources.

One important aspect highlighted during this time has been the importance of spiritual care and support. While buildings have been locked the church is still alive. God is at work in our communities although the buildings are silent.

This is the time to look back and to ponder the future. What have we learnt or realised about our mission and what will our future look like? We don't have to think in terms of our present buildings nor the people we have [we have heard far too often "we are too old" and yet much good work is being realised. And "We can't do that in our building!" and yet witness continues.]

This is an opportunity to be creative. Without considering finances, nor resources in people or buildings, what is the need and how can we achieve this? If there is a vision based on the need in your locality we can work with you to help to take that vision further. It is you who know your locality and it is you who can make a difference.

A dywedodd wrthynt, "Ewch i'r holl fyd a phregethwch yr Efengyl i'r greadigaeth i gyd. (Marc 16:15)

And he said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation". (Mark 16:15)

It is always possible to return to the ways of 2019 but what have we learnt? How are we to step into the new tomorrow? Let us proceed in the name of Christ.

1. What important things have we learnt over the last months which need to be continued into the future?
2. Are there things which do not need to be carried into the new tomorrow?
3. If there is no change, describe the church in 5 years [2026]
4. What are the needs of your local area and membership?
5. What would be needed to better serve those needs?
6. Describe the ideal church for your locality.

Pob bendith emyr.williams@ebcpcw.cymru 01994 230066

Word Search

The words in bold are to be found in the Wordsearch below.

Peter and Dorcas Acts 9: 36-43

Dorcas, meaning 'gazelle' in Greek was sometimes called **Tabitha**. She spent her time caring for the **poor** in the town of **Joppa**. In those days according to the Law of Moses when a woman's husband died the land went to her **son**. In order to take care of the poor, Jewish farmers could not harvest the **edges** of their fields and they could not pick up the **grain** because it was left for widows.

Also every **third** year a **tenth** of the crop was given to the poor and every seventh year debts were forgiven. These laws are found in the Book of **Leviticus** and **Deuteronomy**.

Dorcas died suddenly which sent shock waves throughout Joppa. The widows heard that **Peter** was in Lydda and sent for him. When he arrived he was shown all the clothes that Dorcas had made for the poor. He knelt down and **prayed** and said "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes and when she saw Peter she sat up. Peter had performed another miracle. The news about this spread all over Joppa and many people came to **believe** in the **Lord**.

D	J	T	S	R	H	T	N	E	T
E	O	Z	B	E	L	I	E	V	E
U	P	R	Z	X	L	Y	D	D	A
T	P	X	C	D	E	Y	A	R	P
E	A	D	T	A	B	I	T	H	A
R	O	Y	D	R	S	P	H	Y	Y
O	B	E	L	O	K	G	I	B	G
N	A	S	L	O	R	D	R	Q	R
O	L	E	I	P	D	Y	D	S	A
M	N	G	H	E	C	Q	V	M	I
Y	P	D	J	R	B	T	S	O	N
U	L	E	V	I	T	I	C	U	S

Some more blunders

Newsletters are not being sent to absentees because of their weight.

The 'Over 60s Choir' will be disbanded for the summer with the thanks of the entire church.

Babell Zion Newydd
Rota Darllen a Gweddi 2021
Reading and Prayer Rota 2021

Gweddi/Prayer

Presbytery at 10am	14.2.21
Lynn D	21.2.21
Catrin H	28.2.21
Helen G	7.3.21
Pat M	14.3.21
Kevin B	21.3.21
Carole R	28.3.21
Rev Adelaide	4.4.21
Rosemary K	11.4.21

**Elders' Meeting/Cyfarfod
Blaenoriaid**

The next Elders' Meeting will be held on March 15th at 6pm via Zoom

Services/ Gwasanaethau

Zoom services continue every Sunday morning at 11am.

The details for the zoom links are as follows: Zoom

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87986477837>

Telephone: +44 203 481 5240

Meeting ID: 879 8647 7837

The Service on Sunday 14th of February will be an United service at 10 am via Zoom at the end of which there will be an election for the Ministry of Mr Emyr Williams for the Gwendraeth Pastorate. Catrin will provide an English translation throughout the service. Thank you Corey for sending the link via email. If you would like to join by telephone please let us know.

C - Cymraeg E - English

Readings/Darlleniadau

Rev Ian Sims	14.2.21
Kevin C Carole E	21.2.21
Vi C Owen E	28.2.21
Nan C Pat E	7.3.21
Helen C Ian E	14.3.21
Molly C Rosemary E	21.3.21
Catrin C	28.3.21
Rev Adelaide	4.4.21
Corey C Nelda E	11.4.21

Bydd Gwasanaeth Chwefror 14eg yn Oedfa ar y cyd i'r Henaduriaeth gyfan. Ar y diwedd gwhaoddir aelodau o Ofalaeth y Gwendraeth i bleidleisio dros Weinidogaeth Mr Emyr Williams.

10 o'r gloch dros Zoom. Diolch i Corey am anfon y cysylltiad i bawb. Os ydych am ffonio rhwch wybod.