January 2021 Ionawr

Cylchlythyr/Newsletter

Rhif/Issue 31



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Thanks to Babell Zion Newydd Chapel for permission to do this

Llangunnor Network Preserving and Promoting Llangunnor

A message from Corey

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul gives us a beautiful metaphor of the Church as the 'body' of Christ. Christ is the head, the one who calls us and directs us, and we are all unified in his goodness as members of his body. In this, we all have different 'gifts of grace,' which have been given freely to us by the Holy Spirit to serve the mission of Christ in the world (to be 'his hands and feet'). The Apostle gives us a detailed picture of what this means in practice, which I'd encourage you to read and meditate upon this week. But the heart of Paul's message is that, in Christ, the many individual members become one body, and all share equal worth and value before God and one another. And as one body, we are called to love and honour one another sincerely (v.9), live in peace harmony together (v.16), and stir one another up in zeal for the Lord in the ministries of prayer and hospitality (vv.10-13).

Yn Rhufeiniaid 12, mae'r Apostol Paul yn rhoi darlun hyfryd i ni o'r Eglwys fel Corff Crist. Crist yw pen yr eglwys, yr un sydd yn ein galw ac yn ein cyfarwyddo ac ryn ni gyd yn cael ein huno yn ei ddaioni fel aelodau o'i gorff. Ryn ni gyd wedi ein breintio â gwahanol rhoddion gras yn rhad ac am ddim gan yr Ysbryd Glân er mwyn gwasanaethu cenhadaeth Crist [bod yn ddwylo a'i draed]. Mae'r Apostol yn rhoi i ni ddarlun manwl o'r hyn mae'n golygu i fod yn aelod o gorff Crist ac mi fyddwn yn eich annog i ddarllen a myfyrio ar hyn yn ystod yr wythnos. Ond calon neges Paul yw bod yr aelodau unigol yn Nghrist yn un corff ac mae i bob un ei werth a'i bwysigrwydd cyfartal o flaen Duw ac o flaen ein gilydd. Ac fel un corff cawn ein galw i garu ac i anrhydeddu ein gilydd yn [ad 9] byw mewn heddwch â'n gilydd [adn16] ac ennyn yn ein gilydd brwdfrydedd dros yr Arglwydd yn ein gweddiau a'n cymwynasgarwch. (adn.10-13).

As we begin a new year together, it's vitally important that we remember our calling as Christ's body, so that our lives together are shaped by our glorious purpose in him. But it's also important for us reflect on the year we're leaving behind. In the same passage, the Apostle calls us to '*rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn*.' In this calling, we're reminded of the ache we've all felt as we've had to face the acute challenge of Covid-19, which has caused us to be physically apart for many months. We're also reminded of the beloved members and friends of our church who have died over the past year. We remember Gareth Davies and Roy Evans and all those who mourn loved ones. Yet, we also recount the many things in which we rejoice, including the work done to our building, the

continued fellowship we share online, the births of our son, Peris James, and Lynn and Janet's great nephew, Jesse Rhys to name but a few. And, as I've shared before, I rejoice greatly in the privilege of membership in Christ's body with each and every one of you. It is a joy to see so many of you humbly serving Christ Jesus with the 'grace gifts' that you've been given, as you reflect Christ's love to one another day in and day out.

Wrth i ni ddechrau blwyddyn newydd gyda'n gilydd mae'n hanfodol ein bod yn cofio ein galwad fel corff Crist fel bod ein bywydau yn adlewyrchu ei bwrpas ef ynom ni. Ond mae hefyd yn bwysig ein bod yn edrych yn ôl ar y flwyddyn ryn ni wedi ei gadael a myfyrio arni. Yn yr un bennod mae'r Apostol yn galw arnom fel hyn: "Llawenhewch gyda'r rhai sy'n llawenhau ac wylwch gyda'r rhai sy'n wylo." Yn yr adnod hon cawn ein hatgoffa am y boen ryn ni'n ei deimlo wrth i ni orfod wynebu her Covid-19, sydd wedi ein gorfodi i fod ar wahan mor hir. Cawn ein hatgoffa hefyd am y rhai annwyl a gollwyd yn ystod y flwyddyn, Gareth Davies ym Mehefin a Roy Evans yn yr Hydref. Hefyd cofiwn am y rhai sy'n galaru wedi colli anwyliaid.

Rydym hefyd yn medru cofio am y pethau y gallwn llawenhau ynddynt gan gynnwys y gwaith ar yr adeilad, y cyfeillgarwch ar lein, genedigaeth ein mab Peris James a genedigaeth Jesse Rhys gor nai i Lynn a Janet, i enwi ond rhai. Ac fel yr wyf wedi rhannu gyda chi o'r blaen, rwyf fi yn llawnhau ym mraint aelodaeth o gorff Crist gyda bob yr un ohonoch. Y mae'n destun llawenydd i dystio i'ch gwasanaeth gostyngedig yn yr Arglwydd Iesu Grist drwy gyfrwng y rhoddion gras yr ydych wedi eu derbyn wrth i chi adlewyrchu cariad Crist at eich gilydd o ddydd i ddydd. As we begin this new year together, I pray that we would continue grow deeper in our service to Christ as his body and reflect his love more beautifully than ever before. May we, in the words of the Apostle Paul, '*be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer*'(v.12) this 2021. As always, please contact me or another member of Babell Zion Newydd if we can serve you in any way.

Gobeithio siarad gyda chi yn fuan, // I hope to speak with you soon,

Corey

The Congregation/Y Gynulleidfa

Cydymdeimlad

Estynnwn ein cydymdeimlad â Mrs Esme Phillips ar farwolaeth ei brawd Mr Wynford Lewis Pontiets. Cynhaliwyd yr angladd ddydd Mawrth Ionawr 12fed yn Amlosgfa Arberth ac fy gymerodd Parch Mike Shpehard ran yn y gwasanaeth. Gyda'r cyfyngiadau presennol dim ond 10 oedd yn medru bod yn bresennol. Bu farw Cymro, ci Esme hefyd yr un wythnos ac mae'n siwr bod nifer ohonom yn deall y teimlad o golli anifail anwes.

Rev Mike Shephard

Dear Friends

THE REBIRTH OF HOPE

I hesitate to wish you a Happy New Year for fear that I will put the 'mockers' on it. What a dreadful year we have had. Who could possibly have thought, in January 2020, that events would have unfolded in such a way? From a personal point of view the year has proved to be something of a disaster with three hospital admissions in as many months culminating, in April 2020, in what turned out to be life-saving surgery. One is so grateful to the NHS for care given at so difficult a time.

I think all of us have had a difficult time in the past year with lockdowns being particularly onerous. Many people have not seen loved ones for months on end; others have been isolated in their homes. Some have lost loved ones. Others face an uncertain future with loss of employment threatening the financial security of their families. "Cheer up," they said, "It could be worse." So I cheered up and, sure enough, it got worse

You may be aware, from my tone thus far, that I am writing these words in the month of November which, in my view, is one of the most dismal, depressing months of the year. It is a month that has nothing going for it and should surely be banned.

I keep vowing to be less depressed in the winter months as my low mood, I know, can be quite contagious. It is a vow, sadly, that I struggle to keep with 'the path to hell being paved with good intentions'. I often end up making other people as melancholic as myself. How many of you are more depressed now than you were before reading this contribution to your newsletter? Is there really nothing to cheer us? Can I say nothing to lift our spirits? I believe there is. Look again at the photograph of the cross which accompanies this article. One need not be religious to find a meaning in it – as this story makes clear.

My son and his wife live in Leicester and have had their fair share of lockdowns in the past year. They work in the field of mental health and occupational therapy respectively, covering city and county areas which have had an above average incident of Covid 19. Three of their four children are working or are at University and have had to be furloughed or isolated. The younger child, at twelve years of age has been at home and has seen little of his friends. All in all it has been a bad year for all concerned.

However, during the autumn months, Yvette joined their very good friends, in planting crocus bulbs – some seven hundred bulbs in total – in the grounds of the local children's park near to where they live. As a family they always do their bit in making the village of Countesthorpe a lovelier place.

Imagine Yvette's surprise, then, when digging an area to plant the bulbs and lifting the turf, she discovered a small metal cross some inches below the surface. She called her friends over, they had no idea why it was there but surmised that it had been there for some considerable time. They decided to plant bulbs around it, put the turf back in place and continued to dig in another area.



A cross, as some of us may be aware, is far more than a piece of jewellery. In reality, it is a symbol of pain and suffering; of unhappiness and loss. It stands for disappointment and heartbreak and speaks of shattered hopes and broken dreams. It represents the darker side of life – those experiences which have intruded into so many homes during the last year.

That, though, is only part of the story because, on this particular day, crocus bulbs were being planted which, as we all know, symbolise the coming of spring and of new life and of hope reborn. This pandemic will not have the last word. That cross, hidden beneath the turf, is not the end of the story. The rains of autumn and the cold winds of winter will give way to the spring and those of us who feel sad now will yet find cause, once again, to rejoice.

If we are conscious of a cross remember that the future belongs to the crocus bulb. I wish you a lovely spring and trust that such a prospect will lighten the darkest of winter days.

MIKE SHEPHARD

Rev Adelaide Wheeler Cocks

Mark 14:8 "She has done what she could"

Dear Friends

I long for the day when we can meet again, face to face, but in the meantime, I pray that you will all be safe and well through Jesus Christ Our Saviour and Lord. He loves us and He alone knows our destination. In the meantime we will try and take comfort from His Word and His compassion and bring kindness to others, the unselfish kindness of the doctors, nurses and carers and all who are working so hard to care for those who are affected by the Covid 19 virus. It came upon us all like a thief in the night but thankfully there are many great people researching and creating medicines to help with our plight, a world -wide plight.

I would like to say a few words about a woman born in Dublin at Eccles Street in 1818. A very famous hospital is there now created in 1860. It is Cecil Frances Alexander. Her maiden name was Humphries. She was the second daughter of Major John Humphries, Milltown House, County Tyrone. He was a wealthy landowner. They also lived in Redcross near Rathdrum and the meeting of the waters a stone's throw from Avoca in County Wicklow. I grew up eleven miles from Avoca. The whole area is called the Garde n of Ireland.



Cecil Frances Humphries/Alexander was a sincere Christian person. I really feel that the words in the Gospel of Mark Chapter 14 verse 8 fits her very well. The words: 'She has done what she could'. As a young woman growing up at that time in Ireland, in the Church of Ireland, there was very little she could do within the culture of the society to which she was born. However she loved God, He was all sufficient for her needs and she set about expressing her love and "call" to share His Holy Scriptures with children. It was originally with her godchildren, who expressed their lack of understanding of the statements in the creed. So she wrote 'There is a green hill far away.' She wrote this whilst she sat beside a very sick child at the bedside. She had been writing verses of Scriptural significance since she was very young but had to hide them under a carpet, as children were not encouraged to assert themselves in any way. Her father found these writings and thankfully provided a box for them. She was then allowed to read them aloud to the family on a Saturday evening.

The hymns which Cecil Frances Humphries /Alexander created were intended to help children develop in their faith and love of Jesus.

It can of course be said that they are rather simple. However I grew up with them and it never deterred me from keeping the Bible by my side and a dictionary and Frances Havergal's two little daily reading books, 'Morning Bells', and 'Little Pillows.' In fact it was nothing but a help to me to have sincere Christian people and my minister guide me to sit the Synod Examination of Ireland when I was 16 years old. I didn't grow up with any TV. Certainly, when Mrs Alexander, as she later became, grew up, the country of Ireland had immense poverty and the potato famine raged suddenly throughout Ireland as suddenly as the Covid 19 has raged throughout the world.

There are accounts of farmers being pleased with how the potatoes were growing one day, even delighted by their size, to find three days later a stench and a totally useless crop. This hit the very poor people very hard as they had only a small patch of ground to grow potatoes and they were working for landowners who very often couldn't or wouldn't help them. Then millions of Irish children and their parents and families died in desperate need of sustenance. The historic famine boats left for America and Canada, most people dying on route. Ireland mourns them still.

So I can understand why Mrs Alexander very simply wrote these eloquent scriptural hymns. She was by all accounts a very humble person who disliked being noticed for any help which she gave to others. She tirelessly gave and gave everything that she could to those who were in dire need. Jesus shows us in his story of the feeding of the five thousand that to share and feed was of the greatest importance. No point in giving a marvellous intellectual lecture to a starving people. They need bread. She did what she could! She helped numerous poor people with her kindness. She wrote over 400 hymns. All of the profits from the publication of her hymns were given to help the destitute. 41 of the 400 hymns she wrote to bring some comfort and love of Jesus to her little children friends. She made them clothes, she gave them food, she nursed them on her knee when she heard of any who were ill.

I think that she composed 'All things bright and Beautiful' when she was having a little visit to Markree Castle at Collooney County Sligo, which would have been a little time for her to rest and reflect on the beauty of that magnificent landscape of which Yeats wrote 'The isle of Innesfree'. It is also near an old High Cross and Rounds Tower. Sometimes we have to take time out to receive new strength to go on with 'our journey in life'. I don't know where she was when she translated the Saint Patrick's Breastplate hymn and put it into a metrical version. That however was a major task and a terrific undertaking in trying to share the theology of the Trinity.

Mrs Alexander was thirty two years old before she married. She married the Rt Rev William Alexander, D Divinity. He was Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. They were married for 45 years. What a great pair they must have been. Bishop Alexander had been educated at the the Tonbridge School [a bit like Eton] for boys only. He then went on to study at Braesnose College Oxford. He was very much under the influence in his Theology with the Oxford Movement of which Keble and Pusey were also. Mrs Alexander shared what she

could with the destitute and sick and their little children. I remember so well my father sharing stories of immense poverty in Bunclody where my granny, who died when he was 11 years old, used to send him to very poor people's houses with plates of hot food and anything she could do to help them. My father described people's houses having sacks for windows and wher the poor mother lay on a bed of straw. It touched me often. I had a clear picture of the Christ Child lying on a manger of straw- or hay - and what about the Blessed Mother and Joseph? Some 52 years ago I experienced an impoverished tinker woman who had recently given birth lying on a bed of straw with the baby boy beside her with a Guinness bottle and a teat. I was privileged to be invited in by her husband who was cooking a few carrots in a pan on a Primus stove in the first part of the tarpaulin home. The goats and donkeys and a horse and a cart were outside by the side of the road in County Cork. The Lord Jesus Christ was born into something similar.

Mrs. Alexander will not be forgotten in Ireland, 'she did what she could'. I keep thinking of Jesus saying of the woman who anointed his head at Bethany, "Truly I tell you, wherever the 'good news' is proclaimed in the whole world what she has done will be told in remembrance of her". 'She did what she could', Mark 14, verse 8 and 9.

Bishop Alexander lived for 16 years longer than Mrs Alexander. She is buried in Derry and so is he. They each loved Derry. Indeed later Bishop Alexander became Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. He was incredibly able and was very helpful during 1871 and beyond when the Church of Ireland became disestablished from the Church of England.

It still happens that "Once in Royal David's City" is sung at the opening of the Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College Chapel on Christmas Eve. Please God we can praise His Holy Name in song before too long, once more.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus Adelaide

January13th 2021

One of Molly's favourite hymns. Un o emynau hoff Molly

Pan mae'r cwestiwn "Beth yw eich hoff ?" yn cael ei ofyn mae'n anodd canolbwyntio ar un peth. Gall yr holwr fod yn cyfeirio at hoff flodyn, hoff fwyd hoff le a llawer o bethau eraill. Heddiw dwi i'n cyfeirio at hoff emyn. Mae'n amhosib dewis un allan o'r nifer fawr o emynau bendigedig sydd yn ein meddiant. Beth bynnag rwyf wedi dewis emyn John Roberts Rhif 758 yng Nghaneuon Ffydd.

Mae'r geiriau yn sôn am anawsterau a phrofiadau anodd bywyd. Mae'r cyfnod yma gyda Covid 19 yn amser anodd a heriol iawn ac yn codi pob math o ofnau a gofidiau. Mae angen cysur a a gobaith ac yng ngeiriau'r emyn mae'r cyfan 'yn y llaw sy'n ein cynnal er nad ydym yn ei gweld'. Estynnwn ni ein llaw at Ei law Ef a chawn y sicrwydd yr ydym ei angen.

Pan fwyf yn teimlo'n unig lawer awr, Heb un cydymaith ar hyd llwybrau'r llawr, Am law fy ngheidwad y diolchaf i Â'i gafael ynof er nas gwelaf hi.

Pan fyddo beichiau bywyd yn trymhau, A blinder byd yn peri i'm lesgau, Gwn am y llaw a all fy nghynnal i Â'i gafael ynof er nas gwelaf hi. Pan brofais archoll pechod ar fy nhaith, A minnau'n ysig ŵr dan gur a chraith, Ei dyner law a'm hymgeleddodd i Â'i gafael ynof er nas gwelaf hi.

A phan ddaw braw yr alwad fawr i'm rhan,

A'r cryfaf rhai o'm hamgylch oll yn wan, Nid ofnaf ddim, ei law a'm tywys i Â'i gafael ynof er nas gwelaf hi.

I have chosen a hymn from Caneuon Ffydd as my favourite hymn although it's impossible to choose one out of the wealth of hymns that we have. However I like the words of this hymn because the author refers to the Hand of God as our support and help through all of life's troubles. A hand that we cannot see but know and believe in it. We are in a very perilous period at the moment with Covid 19 presenting all sorts of fears and worries. It's a great comfort that in the words of this hymn we are assured that in God's hand we will be safe.

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Christmas Services

A rather different approach was taken for our Christmas Services at the end of 2020. The Sunday Club members young and old took part in the familiar Christmas Story dramatized by the Bible Society with carols taken from CDs. On Christmas Eve a Short Communion Service was led by Corey and Helen which took us into Christmas Day with us all wishing each other virtual Christmas blessings.

Pat Morgan

The poetry of George Herbert - dealing with the struggles in life.

Part One

I've always had a soft spot for George Herbert [1593-1633] I was about 20 when I first came across his poetry. I think I know why I warmed to him; he was born in Montgomery so there was the Welsh connection and mid-Wales at that! One of my grandmothers came from that area and I'd spent many happy childhood days visiting family. One of my earliest memories was watching my dad and a friend of his [a lovely old shepherd who was hunch-backed] shoot rabbits. The poor things lay in the footwell of my pushchair and I paddled in their waters. My aunt and uncle, with whom we stayed, had a farm labourer's cottage with a pump in the front to draw water and a cosy wooden lavatory at the end of the garden with two seats! People could sit there quite comfortably and put the world to rights. We'd travelled by train- the glorious mid-Wales line and then my uncle arrived on his motor bike at Builth Road station to ferry us, one at a time to his home. I was terrified of the bike, it was a roaring spitting beast that backfired and real flames shot out, heating the metal that burned your legs. I've hated gun shots and motor bikes ever since but I love mid-Wales. The gentle icy-cold River Wye glided alongside the village and occasionally a salmon supper was enjoyed by all.

But back to George Herbert! He was born into a wealthy family but sadly his father died when he was three leaving his mother Magdalen to raise seven boys and three girls on her own. She was a capable devout woman who did a good job. Some of the boys joined the Army and fought for King and country in the lowlands. Another became a naval seacaptain, one went to New College Oxford and the eldest, Edward, became an "outstanding example of a gentleman."

Then there was my favourite- George. He was a little shy; a contemplative thinker and worrier; sometimes depressed and uncertain and he was frail and quite often ill. However he did well, attending Westminster School, gained a scholarship to Trinity College Cambridge where he flourished and became a lecturer. One of his closest friends was John Donne, Dean of St Paul's. King James I appreciated George's gentle wit and charm and valued his advice. In 1624 he became an MP for Montgomery, spoke in parliament and moved in elevated circle. But when King James died and King Charles I took over the reins George became disillusioned with the affairs of state, fed up with politics and he lost his way.

In 1626 he took some time out staying for a while with his brother Sir Henry in Essex. They say "he lost himself in a humble way". He wrote many poems about indecision and discontent, he questioned values, goals. Indeed he asked himself big questions about the purpose and meaning of life. He wrote about the personal relationship between God and man. He was restless, questioning, seeking fulfilment.

Two important life changing events happened- he met Jane who became his wife and he was ordained a deacon. In 1630 Herbert was given responsibility for two churches in Somerset.- in Bemerton. Both buildings were in need of repair and the rectory needed maintenance. He set about his tasks with a renewed vigour and his parishioners loved him.

There's a lovely story about his early days there. It was the custom that the new priest was locked into the church alone, he was to toll the church-bell and spend some time in prayer. His friends and parishioners waited patiently outside but the bell stopped and there was an extremely prolonged silence. Concern spread among the crowd and one man clambered up to a window. He saw Herbert prostrate on the stone floor before the altar. Herbert reported later that he had been lost in contemplation. He'd experienced doubts and dread; he'd prayed for strength and guidance; he'd been lost in awe, wonder and praise. Most of all he was worried was he good enough to serve the Lord?

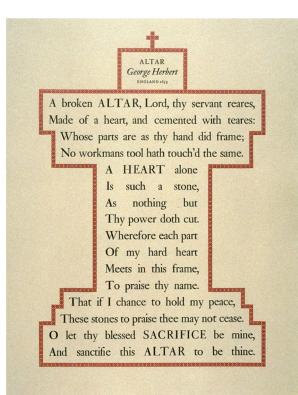
One of Herbert's poems is called: 'The Church Floore' where he describes the different stones and textures and sees in them human virtues. The square and speckled stone- so firm and strong he sees as patience. The black and grave stones suggest "humilitie." The slight unevenness rising towards the 'Quire above' is confidence. The 'sweet cementone sure band ties the whole frame, is love, and Charitie'.

The poem ends – picturing God as the Architect 'whose art could build so strong in a weak heart.'

It is not idyllic, the floor has been stained by 'sinne' and death itself 'puffing at the door, blows all the dust about.'

Yet Herbert has faith in the Architect's art and his own calling.

There is another poem called 'The Altar' in which the poet imagines himself as an altar



before God. Herbert was famous for writing in a visually pleasing pattern which echo the theme. 'Easter Wings' takes the form of wings on the page, as does the 'The Cross" and our next poem "The Altar' is shaped too. Who could not admire the humility of the man who writes

A broken A L T A R, Lord, thy servant reares, Made of a heart, and cemented with teares:

All through his life Herbert searched for God. He felt his heart to be 'such a stone' but divine power can cut through. As often happens the poem concludes with a neat couplet – quiet reconciliation

> O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine, And sanctifie this ALTAR to be thine.

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

Gweddi/Prayer

Meurig	17.1.21
Molly T	24.1.21
Rev Mary Thorley	31.1.21
Rev John Graham	7.2.21
Sian C	14.2.21
Helen G	21.2.21
Catrin H	28.2.21
Nan T	7.3.21
Pat M	14.3.21
Kevin B	21.3.21
Carole R	28.3.21
Easter Sunday Rev	4.4.21
Adelaide	
Rosemary K	11.4.21

Elders' Meeting/Cyfarfod Blaenoriaid The nest Elders' Meeting will be held on January 25th 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/8798 6477837 Telephone: +44 203 481 5240 Meeting ID: 879 8647 7837 C - Cymraeg E - English

Readings/Darlleniadau

Nan T C	17 1 01
	17.1.21
Ian W E	
Helen C	24.1.21
Rosemary E	
Rev Mary Thorley	31.1.21
Rev John Graham	7.2.21
Tina C	14.2.21
Nelda <mark>E</mark>	
Kevin C	21.2.21
Carole <mark>E</mark>	
Vi C	28.2.21
Owen E	
Nan C	7.3.21
Pat E	
Helen C	14.3.21
Ian E	
Molly C	21.3.21
Rosemary E	
Catrin C	28.3.21
Easter Sunday Rev	4.4.21
Adelaide	
Corey C	11.4.21
Nelda <mark>E</mark>	