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BABELL ZION NEWYDD

Rhiw Babell Pensarn Caerfyrddin SA31 2JQ



D. M. S. W. 1997

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Thanks to Babel Zion Newydd Chapel for permission to do this

Llangunnor Network
*Preserving and Promoting
Llangunnor*

The Congregation at Babel Zion Newydd

Congratulations to Helen on her acceptance into the Gorsedd. I'm sure some of us would have seen her, very nervously, being introduced to the Arch Druid during one of the early broadcasts and then to see her take her place on stage during the Chaining Ceremony. A very proud moment for both Helen and Gwyn



Several members from Babel Zion attended the Baptismal Service of Doreen's brother, Gareth at Rev Chris Rees' chapel in Narberth. Gareth will be accepted into membership here on Sunday 8th September during the Communion Service led by our own minister.

Following the church meeting to elect Elders, Molly, Corey and Lynn have been invited to become Elders. The Ordination could possibly take place at a meeting of Presbytery on November 14th at Bancyfelin.

There are many friends who are not well at this time. We wish them all God's blessing.

World Peace: We have received a joint invitation from Carmarthen Town Council and Carmarthenshire County Council to join them in raising the "World Peace" banner on Saturday, Sept 21st. A short ceremony will be held at 12 noon in Guildhall Square and this will be led by members of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and representatives of local youth groups. The occasion should last for around half an hour. If wet, event will be held in St Peter's Civic Hall.

Dates for your diaries:

Friendship Centre	Resumes Thursday 5 th September
Cymanfa Rehearsals	Sept 15 th and Sept 22 nd at 6 pm in Priordy
Elders' Meeting	Monday Sept 23 rd at 5:45 pm
MacMillan Coffee Morning	Friday Sept 27 th 10 am here at Babel
Cor Meibion Machynlleth	Concert October 12 th at Heol Awst
Bible Study	Monday October 14 th 5:45pm for 4 weeks.
Christmas Fayre	Saturday Nov 30 th 10 am @ English Baptist

The Christian Church began when Jesus, walking beside the Sea of Galilee, invited people to become his friends and that, in my opinion, should still be the test of membership.

So many churches demand that members assent to the clauses of a creed. They ask that we sign on a dotted line and agree that we will accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God. They enquire as to whether or not we have accepted our need for a saviour and if we are truly saved. It is only as we agree with their interpretation of matters that we are accepted into the fellowship of the church.

Jesus never behaved in such a way. He had an immense respect for personality and made no intellectual demands on his followers. Not one of them had heard of the Virgin Birth and the last thing a Jewish monotheist was likely to believe was that a man was God. Later, they would reach certain conclusions about him but, to begin with, they were simply offered the gift of his friendship.

The Church, at its best, remains a place where people can find friendship. It is meant to be a community of people who have become friends of Jesus and who offer friendship to all.

Here is a question for us. How friendly is our church? Do we make the visitor feel welcome? Do we know each other's names? Do we invite 'would-be' friends to join in activities with us?

Our churches should be more than worship centres open for an hour or so a week. If we are to become a community of friends we must offer more than a diet of prayer and Bible study.

This is one of the motives for the establishment of the 'Walking Together' group at Babell Zion Newydd. It is the reason why the Friendship Centre came into existence. It is also the reason why, for many years now, the church has organised an annual outing or pilgrimage to places of historical and spiritual interest. It affords us the opportunity of really 'getting to know' those who worship with us on a Sunday.

Thus to the purpose of my contribution to your magazine.

On July 27th 2019 Gwen and I travelled with you, by coach, to Tintern Abbey, in Monmouthshire. We stopped off, first of all, at Mynydd Bach Chapel, near Swansea where we met with Revd Grenville Fisher who told us something of the building's past history, as well as of future plans concerning it. From there we went to Abergavenny where we had time to enjoy the amenities of this lovely old town. The day concluded with time spent at Tintern itself, save that later, on the way home, we enjoyed a meal at the White House hotel, just outside the village of Sennybridge.

When I heard that we would be calling at Mynydd Bach Chapel, I admit to not being that excited about the prospect. Redundant chapels are 'two a penny' in Wales and whilst history is important we cannot go on worshipping our past.

Such a pessimistic and depressing attitude was quickly dispelled when we entered Mynydd Bach and met with its one time minister – Revd Grenville Fisher.

He reminded us that the church did have a wonderful history in that its roots could be traced back to the 1600s and that it was one of the oldest nonconformist churches still in existence.

In those days life was difficult for those who were of the non-conformist persuasion and persecution was still rife. True, the terrible times, ushered in by Henry VIII and Bloody Mary were over and those who did not accept the teachings of Canterbury or Rome were no longer put to death or banished from the realm.

However, toleration, in the fullest sense had yet to arrive. For instance, permission to erect Mynydd Bach was given on the condition that it be built in a remote place, rather than in a populous area – the presumption being that 'heresy' would then be more difficult to spread. True 'freedom of worship' was still sometime away and life, for our forebears, was made as difficult as possible by those in authority.

As I sat listening to Revd Grenville Fisher I compared the 'out and out' faith of those early nonconformists with my own, sometimes, 'wishy washy' kind of faith that has seldom had to encounter any kind of persecution. I asked myself if I had had life too easy and if that was why my convictions were so easily compromised. I think a number of us asked the same question that day.

We were told that declining congregations, together with the growing secularisation of society resulted in Mynydd Bach closing some fifteen years before. Inevitably, it fell into a state of decay and was subject to the mindless vandalism that occurs when old buildings are vacated. The chapel was therefore put up for sale.

The minister told us that it failed to attract a single bidder, largely because the purchaser would be expected, not only to renovate the building but to care for a four acre graveyard that had succumbed to the ravages of Japanese Knotweed!!!!

The Revd Fisher, seeing the hand of God, in the 'non sale' decided to purchase the building himself and to place restoration in the hands of a trust. It is an ongoing project.

It is quite amazing, though, what has been achieved thus far and no words of mine can make up for a personal visit to the church.

When you do so, look up at the painted ceiling. That in itself must have been an immense undertaking and was the work by one person – a young man aged twenty two years. I refer to him by his initials PR as his story, whilst inspiring, is also personal.

He suffered from mental health problems, had attempted suicide on two occasions

and, being depressed, still found social situations difficult. He was to say: "I will paint the ceiling but only if I can work on my own." It appears that he wanted no one around when he was doing the work.

His handiwork is quite amazing and all one could do was look up in wonder! Moreover, the work aided the healing process. He regained his health and now works, in the area as a self-employed painter and decorator. Miracles do happen!

Mynydd Bach is no longer a place of worship and may never be used in that way again. Times have changed and revival, if it comes, might take a very different form to awakenings of the past. The aim, rather, is that it should become a community centre and live on as a haven for those in need, such as asylum seekers. With faith in their hearts, the restoration committee are saying to God: "Here is the labour of our hands and the dream of our hearts. We dedicate it to you. Use it as you see fit."

We spent time amongst the gravestones which, given their age, are a mirror into the past. Buried here is the writer of 'Calon Lan' – Daniel James, whose bardic name is Gwyrosydd (1847 – 1920). Next year will be the centenary of his death and, earlier, in the church, we sang the hymn to the tune composed by John Hughes who is buried a quarter of a mile away in Caersalem Newydd. The words and tune were clearly made for each other and accompanied by the newly restored organ we, quite literally, sang our hearts out. We stopped short of 'raising the roof' as this would have been to undo much of the restoration work done thus far!

In the graveyard we saw a parable of life coming out of seeming death as, amidst the tangled roots of the ivy that festooned one particular grave a bird had built its nest. It contained a single egg. As I looked at it, I felt the stirrings of next year's Easter Sermon.

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Abergavenny is a truly delightful town and, given that it is only 13 miles from my boyhood home it was already well known to me. That said the town is very different to the village of Tafarnaubach where I grew up, if only in terms of height above sea level. At 1100 feet our winters and, indeed summers, were much colder with Abergavenny being described still as "two coats warmer." It was certainly warm there on the day of our trip and, although rain threatened, we were able to enjoy the pavement culture which is now such a lovely feature of the town.

There is much to see and do in the town and, not far away is the old mining village of Blaenavon with 'Big Pit' being a major attraction. If readers have never visited Abergavenny or Big Pit put it on your 'to do' list.

During our visit today Gwen and I enjoyed the company of our friends, Daphney and Milly. We were late back to the bus and got into Helen's bad books! I blamed it on Daphney who is known as "the late Daphney Davies."

If ever I conduct her funeral service she will be known as the late, late, Daphney Davies and she has given me permission to refer to her as such!!!

We were, though, not as late as was Andrew earlier that morning! He thought the bus left at 10am rather than 9am and, in true Christian spirit, we left without him. He caught us up later and all ended well

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And so it was we arrived, all of us, at Tintern Abbey – surely one of the loveliest settings of any monastic community in Britain, if not in the world. It is surrounded by tree clad slopes, is close to the beautiful river Wye and is the starting point for many lovely walks through breath-taking scenery.

The Abbey is an impressive building now. Imagine then, what it must have been like before that terrible vandal, Henry Vlll, embarked upon the dissolution of the monasteries. It was all part and parcel, supposedly, of his version of the reformation, but was as much motivated by the acquisition of monastic wealth as by any religious or spiritual purpose.

His vandalism apart, it is still possible, in imagination, to walk through the cloistered walls and hear the sound of monks at prayer. If I could make one suggestion to the powers that be it would be for monastic chants to be recorded and played, from the heights, during visiting hours. I am surprised that this does not happen already as it would add to the ambience of the place and transform a visit of historical interest into a spiritual experience.

The Abbey, for your information was founded, by the Cistercians in 1131 being destroyed by Henry Vlll in 1536f.



The day ended with an evening meal in Sennybridge which was enjoyed by all. We arrived home at about 9pm. We had experienced a marvellous day, made even better by pleasant summer weather. It was also a spiritually enhancing occasion with much to provoke thought and commitment.

The Seeds Of God



Picture from Home Publishing

Everything has its season
In order for new growth
One day the beauty will be seen
From the seeds that God has sowed

For our lives are like a garden,
The planting of the Lord,
Sun and rain combine to bring
A bountiful reward

For seeds need God's nature
In order to produce
A beautiful, fragrant garden
Ready for kingdom use

At times, God needs to weed out
Ungodly things in us,
So nothing will come to threat
The sowing within He does

As we grow to our potential
In what God's given us,
We will be more effective
In the spreading of His love

And as we spread this seed
Of His love to other lives,
We will reap a mighty harvest
Of souls for Jesus Christ

Our lives forever changed
From what it was before,
The beauty produced in our lives
Is the reflection of the Lord.

Poem © M.S.Lowndes
www.heavensinspirations.com

FLOWERS

September	Mrs Joan Stephens
October	Mrs Maisie Johnson
November	Mrs Nelda Davies
December	Mrs Nan Thomas

Services for the next three months/Gwasanaethau'r tri mis nesaf

	Pregethwr /Preacher C= Communion/ Cymundeb
01/09/19 10:30 am	Rev Mike Shephard
08/09/19 10:30 am	Rev Nicholas Bee Communion
15/09/19 10:30 am	Rev Brian Lewis
22/09/19 2pm	Mr Corey Hampton
29/09/19	Cymanfa Ganu'r Plant yn y Priordy (10am) Cymanfa I'r Oedolion (5pm) NO SERVICE AT BABELL ZION NEWYDD
06/10/19 10:30 am	Rev Adelaide Wheeler-Cocks
13/10/19 10:30 am	Rev Nicholas Bee
20/10/19 10:30 am	Children's Harvest
27/10/19 2pm	Mr Hugh Waddell
03/11/19 10:30 am	Rev Nicholas Bee Joio Gyda'r Iesu @ Capel Seion, Drefach (2.30pm)
10/11/19 10:30 am	Rev Adelaide Wheeler-Cocks
17/11/19 10:30 am	Mr Martin Dalling
24/11/19 2pm	Mr Corey Hampton

Ministers and Service times may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Announcements and Preparing Communion Table

September	October	November	December
Carole/Meurig	Nan/Molly	Helen/Pat	Sian/Vi

Editor this month: Mrs Carole Rees

Please forward any news/articles to Carole at carolerees4@gmail.com
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