

# Babell Chapel/Capel y Babell Pensarn Caerfyrddin

## Spring Newsletter Cylchlythyr y Gwanwyn



## Spring 2014

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Thanks to Mike Shephard for permission to do this.



Online at

<http://www.llangunnor.net>

## Dear Friends

The Danish theologian Kierkegaard related a homely parable about a flock of geese that milled around in a filthy barnyard imprisoned by a high wooden fence. One day a preaching goose came into their midst. He stood on an old crate and admonished the geese for being content with their confined, earthbound existence. He recounted the exploits of their forefathers who spread their wings and flew the trackless wastes of the sky. He spoke of the goodness of the Creator who had given geese the urge to migrate and the wings to fly. This pleased the geese. They nodded their heads and marvelled at these things and applauded the eloquence of the preaching goose. All this they did. But one thing they never did; they did not fly. They went back to their waiting dinner, for the corn was good and the barnyard secure.

That is what discourages most preachers – not the sight of empty pews but the awareness that people listen to sermons, marvel at them, applaud them and even nod their heads in approval, then go back to their waiting dinners and earthbound existence with no intention of spreading their wings and soaring to the heights of spiritual reality. How many sermons does a man or woman preach in forty years of ministry? Say 2,000. Allowing twenty minutes per sermon, that's a lot of talking, but what does it all accomplish beyond filling the air with pleasing or displeasing rhetoric? How many lives does it change? How many broken minds and souls does it heal? How many people does it reconcile to God? Surveying the situation honestly, the preacher cannot be blamed for entering the pulpit with a certain sense of futility, suspecting that Paul may have coined exactly the right phrase (1 Corinthians 1:21) when he wrote about "the foolishness of preaching."

It is here that one finds a source of major discouragement for many a hard-working minister who puts study, thought, painstaking preparation and sincere prayer into the composition of the sermon. "What comes of it all?"

It is, in fact, the seeming futility and foolishness of preaching that takes the heart out of many a conscientious minister and tempts them to opt out of pulpit ministry. They see their friends and acquaintances in various businesses and professions achieving measurable gains. Doctors and social workers can help people in a tangible way whilst the result of preaching is impossible to measure. Few of us ever know whether anything we have said from the pulpit



has ever produced a single spiritual consequence. That awareness disheartens every minister, myself included.

When entertaining such negative thoughts I gain encouragement from a story told by Canon Twells, the writer of the beautiful hymn, "At even e'er the sun was set." I hesitate to change the formal language of devout Victorians so quote his words verbatim:

*A friend of mine, a layman, was in the company of an eminent preacher, then in the decline of life. My friend happened to remark what a comfort it must be to think of all the good he had done by his gift of eloquence. The eyes of the old man filled with tears: 'You little know. You little know. If I ever turned one heart from the ways of disobedience to the wisdom of the just, God has withheld the assurance from me. I have been admired and run after and flattered; but how gladly would I forget all that, to be told of one single soul I have been instrumental in saving!' The eminent preacher died shortly after this and my friend attended the funeral service. There were many hundreds of people present and next to him was a stranger who was deeply moved by the occasion. 'You knew him, I suppose' said my friend. 'Knew him?' came the reply. 'No, I never spoke to him; but I owe him my soul.'*

The same might be said of us one day. It might be said, not simply of those who preach but of those who teach in Sunday Club. It might be said of those skilled in the ministry of caring and who offer the gift of friendship to others. The time will come when we will learn that our efforts have not been wasted and that our work has not been in vain.

I wonder, though, if we as a church are encouraging of those who work on our behalf? Do we thank those who lead our worship on a Sunday? When was the last time we spoke a word of appreciation to those who teach in Junior Church or help in the Friendship Centre? Are we sufficiently grateful for those who contribute to our worship through the ministry of music and song? Do we thank those who work behind the scenes, unheralded and unseen?

There is one way to encourage all those who minister to us. It is by OUR PRESENCE. There are some members of Babell who I have yet to meet. I apologise for that and hope to call in the very near future. I wonder if, in reading that last sentence you are thinking that it is high time you visited me and contributed to the life of this church?

I doubt if people realise how much their presence means to the minister and,



indeed, to other members of the congregation. One realises that numbers are not everything and that the less favoured and less fashionable church can be closer to the heart of God than the church crowded to the doors. I know that.

I also know that the larger congregation gives wings to the poorest of our efforts and that it is easier to preach to the many than to the few. A good congregation aids the worship and increases that sense of anticipation and expectancy which should characterise all that we do in Christ's name.

Let me make a prophecy. During the lifetime of our great grandchildren Britain will become an Islamic State, subject to Sharia Law. The signs are there already. Not only is Islam the fastest growing religion in the United Kingdom. Its members are also the most missionary minded and enthusiastic. New Mosques, all of them crowded, are being built everywhere, including Carmarthen. The Moslem faith, be it for good or for bad, is taken seriously by the majority of Moslems and they are prepared to sacrifice for it. They are prepared to do something which so many nominal Christians will not do, namely, inconvenience themselves in order that their cause might grow.

Is this what we want to happen? I have nothing against Islam. At its best it is a loving, tolerant religion. It can teach us much.

That said, there is something inestimably precious about our Christian Faith and our lives and nation will be the poorer without it. Let me close in this way:

I came to faith in Siloam Baptist Church in the village of Tafarnaubach, near Tredegar, in North Gwent. The minister there then was a man called Ronald Powell. He remains a special friend.

Looking back, we would both say that the church, then, was overly narrow and stood for an old theology that we no longer believe in. It adhered to denominational peculiarities, inclusive of closed communion, which broader people found abhorrent. The majority of members were fundamentalist in persuasion and were afraid to think new thoughts.

But one evening, in that church – ah, my soul, remember! – I, as a youth, caught a glimpse of the vision glorious. Every person has shrines of pilgrimage. That is one of the chief of mine and to it – I owe my soul!

Let me tempt you. Why not renew your baptismal vows? Why not seek to rediscover that which once you found and, somewhere along the way, lost? I say that, not in judgement but, rather, as one, who knows what it is to 'Drop

Out' of Church and who, sometime ago stayed away for seven or more years. You would be so welcome were you to return. You could exercise a ministry of encouragement to Babell and help ensure the survival of a church which has so much to give to the community.

Permit me, in closing, to remind you of an incident in the life of Jesus. It happened when he was twelve years of age and took place in Jerusalem. Jesus, in short, became lost and Mary and Joseph, worried out of their minds, spent three days searching for him. He was eventually found in the temple, in discussion with the priests and learned men. Please note that his parents had to travel back to Jerusalem, to the place where they had seen him last, in order to find him.

Where did we lose Jesus? Where did the vision become lost? When did our enthusiasm begin to wane? Let me put it another way. Do we remember a time when the Christian Church meant much to us? Do we recall times when prayer seemed real and when Jesus was a constant companion at our side? Was there, at the very least, moments when we saw a deeper meaning to life, no matter how dimly, and determined to follow 'the star' wherever it lead us? Is it possible that we need to return, not to the temple, but to the church in order to find Jesus again? Is it here, perhaps, that he will become real to us again?

Can I, at the very least, remind all of us of the vows and promises made when we were made members of the church? The words might have varied, as might have the language used. The sentiment, though, would have been the same:

**Question.** *Do you believe and trust in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, maker of heaven and earth, redeemer of the world, giver of life?*

**Response.** *I do.*

**Question.** *Do you, trusting in God's grace, repent of your sins, renounce evil, and turn to Christ?*

**Response.** *I do.*

**Question.** *Do you promise, trusting in God's grace, to be faithful in public and private worship, to live in the fellowship of the Church, to share in its witness? And do you promise, by that same grace to follow Christ all the days of your life?*

**Response.** *I do.*

**With all good wishes**

**MIKE SHEPHARD**



## THAT MORE FAVOURED CHURCH

He envied those who ministered to that more favoured church.

Although they talked of 'sacrifice' most people seemed to search for the 'buzz' which often comes from being with the crowd.

Thus it is – the small church dies. One day, he prayed aloud:

*I do not crave great miracles. A minor one will do.*

*The crowds, I know, will go elsewhere, but is there one or two committed, eager Christians, prepared to hear the call, of a smaller, struggling church? And having heard – give all?*

He thought of those he pastored: the elderly, the frail; The anxious and the troubled and those whose nerve had failed.

For every active member several others were housebound.

At times he longed to set his feet, on that more favoured ground.

He said to God: *"At present, my work is all uphill, And life would be more pleasant if 'gifted' folk came in.*

*I seek the help of people with aptitude and skill, Who'll do so many needful tasks and who the gaps might fill*

And then, in desperation, a prayer not dared before:

*On Sunday next inspire such to enter through 'our' door.*

That favoured church could spare them and would not feel the loss.

It talked a lot of sharing but had failed to share the cross.

Next Sunday came. He noticed, a stranger take his seat.

With quickened stride, he almost ran, this visitor to greet.

He felt, inside, a surge of praise. He saw now sitting there,

A symbol! And a promise! An answer to his prayer!

The stranger saw the pastor move quickly down the aisle;

He looked at him with sadness; and yet with eyes that smiled.

Accepting words of welcome, he too stretched out his hands.



They bore the marks of nail prints which said *Please understand –*  
*My Church is for the needy, and is for those who fail.*  
*It stands by those, in every age, who are to crosses nailed.*  
*That crowded church, attended, by those who crave a 'buzz,'*  
*is not as favoured as you think. Success is judged – by love.*

The stranger disappeared then (Perhaps it was a dream);  
The pastor, though, began to see, things hitherto, unseen.  
He saw his congregation through very different eyes -  
And knew that its true value could not be judged by size.

Mike Shephard ©

## **FAMILY NEWS**

I must begin our Family News by expressing our condolences to Vi Williams and family as they come to terms with the sad loss of Vernon. Vernon had been diagnosed with cancer some fifteen months previously and he understood, from the beginning, that his illness was terminal. Throughout the course of the illness he remained brave and seldom complained. He would speak of having had a good life and contrasted so “fortunate a situation” with the plight of much younger people, especially children, who suffered with the condition. Throughout his illness he was sustained by his faith and by the affection of a family who loved him dearly. We share something of their grief in that we mourn the loss of a man who was committed to Babell and who, over many years, had served us so well. Vernon expressed a wish that any tribute be given in the Welsh language and, that being the case, I was so grateful to Beti Wyn James, minister of Priordy Chapel, for sharing the service with me. She is a joy to work with and I would thank her, sincerely, for helping make, an admittedly, sad occasion so memorable.

Our gratitude too, to all who took part in a service that was witnessed by a large congregation and which, in itself, was a tribute to Vernon. Following the service Vernon was laid to rest in the cemetery of Llangynnor Church, with the committal being performed by the Revd Aled Griffiths, Vicar. One cannot mention *Aled Griffiths* without wishing him well on his retirement from the Ministry. I have known him for many years and know how much he will be missed, not only amongst Anglicans, but by the wider church also. He has always been ecumenical in outlook and has endeared himself to people of all religious persuasion and of none. We pray God's blessing upon him. We will look forward in due course to welcoming Aled's successor. A part of me wishes that we could form an ecumenical partnership with Llangynnor church or, at the very least, work more closely with each other. Why do we insist upon doing separately what could be done together? All one would say for now is wouldn't it be nice if .....?

I am sure I speak for everyone when I extend our sympathy to the *Revd Geraint Davies* who mourns the passing of his wife. Mrs Davies had suffered from dementia for some time past and, in recent years, had been in residential care. What a cruel illness it is. To see a loved one suffer with it is to be bereaved twice over. Long before the final parting we will have already said goodbye to the person we once knew. There are some things too deep for tears. We remember Geraint prayerfully at this time.

*The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* began on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January, this year, with a well-attended bi-lingual united service at the English Congregational Church, Lammas Street. Simultaneous Translation was available for those who did not understand welsh and this, surely, is a practice that is to be commended, whatever a person's language.

We really do need to work for greater unity among the churches though, as I said during our own morning service, our words and actions have yet to be wedded to the other. Most of our churches and chapels, sadly, would rather die than unite and that surely is a tragedy. I suggested, tongue in cheek, that someone, during the week, should walk to the front of a church and pray the following prayer: *Lord, we offer our prayers for unity today but, not one of us really mean the words we pray. We only want unity if it is the other church that closes and if other congregations join with us. We are not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices and are merely going through the motions. We are all hypocrites, Lord and, come what may refuse to change. AMEN.*



I must say, in fairness to Babell, that *this is a church which is prepared to embrace change*. We agreed, in a recent church meeting to **further consider** the possibility of removing the pews in order to create space which could be used, not simply for worship but for community activities as well. I would very much like to see our Friendship Centre being located there with the resultant warm, café like atmosphere proving attractive to people who might venture inside. I am not a betting man but did once enter a betting office. I felt like an alien. I just didn't fit in. I was uncomfortable in unfamiliar surroundings. That is how non church-goers feel when they enter our churches and, somehow, that barrier must be broken down. One day, possibly, we will succeed in creating a church 'without walls' but until then must find ways of engaging with the lost generations who are alienated by our present structures. This is not a case of 'dumbing down' the Gospel. It is making the Gospel relevant to a changed world. It is an attempt to become an incarnational church and to give concrete expression to the person of Jesus – *The Word Become Flesh*. We also agreed to look towards using a projector and screen for displaying hymns which, once again, could be used, generally, in worship. We are grateful to *Lee Whatley* for agreeing to assist with this, even though he arrived late and got volunteered into the role during his absence! How did Lee put it: "I don't know what I have agreed to but I will do it anyway." Well said Lee! We do so appreciate your enthusiasm and commitment to Babell. Change is, of course difficult and I must stress that **nothing concrete has been decided as yet**. I hope, nonetheless that you will accompany me as we journey into the unknown, taking risks in Christ's name.

It is hard to believe that our *Friendship Centre* was six months old on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2014. It is already fulfilling a useful purpose and it is lovely to see people 'dropping by' on a regular or, indeed occasional basis. We are learning as we go and have now decided, not to charge, specifically, for refreshments but, rather, to accept donations from those who are willing and able to contribute to our running costs. Not everyone is so able and it is important, once again, that none feel excluded or embarrassed.

A recent development in the Friendship Centre is that our friend, Judith Hammond, attends once a month to give Reflexology to any who want it. We are appreciative of her work. I am able to report, also, that another friend, Bronwen Wilkins, has agreed to teach basic welsh, at the Friendship Centre, from 9:15am – 10:15am on a Thursday morning. Thank you, Bronwen.



We send our best wishes to all who have been unwell of late. It is good to see *Alun, Sally and Esme* who are back with us after illness. We remember *May James* who is not well enough to attend church and, indeed, all who are housebound. Iris is very much missed at present and we send good wishes to her. We think of *Ena Wilkins* who remains on Gwennllian Ward, Glangwilli Hospital.

A very big thank you to all who contributed to the success of *our Christmas activities*. I really enjoyed the carol service organised by Helen. This was a Welsh service but music, I feel is a language that everyone understands. The singing was inspirational and the atmosphere, enhanced by candlelight, was absolutely lovely. The second, candlelit service, later in December was an equally memorable occasion, as was the Communion Service on Christmas Eve. It was so encouraging to see so many people present at these services and we would express our gratitude to all who supported us in this way.

Permit me, if I may, to float the idea of a *Christmas Day Lunch* on Christmas Day next. You will be aware that this happens at the English Baptist Church, where I was minister from 1987 – 2000. I am not suggesting that we do it on that scale and many people, I know, have family commitments at Christmas. That is fine. It would be good, though for those of us who would otherwise be on our own, or who want to spend Christmas Day differently, to meet in the Friendship Centre and spend the day together. Do let me know what you think.

Isn't it good to see an increase in the number of children attending *Sunday Club*. There are now eight children attending which is so encouraging for Sian and Helen.

Incidentally, our congratulations to *Sian Cassel* who has been employed as an Escort. I hasten to add that her work entails travelling to and from school with children who have special needs. I am told that there are other kinds of escorts though, as an 'other worldly' type of person I know not what they are!! Well done Sian.

Before closing our family news I would request '*feedback*' on our Church Newsletter. It demands much in terms of time and it would be good to know if people actually read it. I think it is a valuable way of reaching people, not all of whom attend church. Would you agree or disagree with that statement? Our circulation is certainly growing with, the winter edition running to a little under two hundred copies. Do you think it can be improved and, if so, in what way?

As always, your contributions will be welcome. Can I suggest that everyone connected with our church write a few sentences for the next newsletter under the heading of - What I like about Babell Church. I know what I like about it. I like its friendliness. I like its musical tradition. I like the warmth displayed in our Friendship Centre. I like its preparedness to look at different ways of doing things. I particularly value the small signs of congregational growth. I appreciate your welcome of me as minister. I like being your minister but regret not having come here sooner in life, when I had a little more reserves of energy. Now – Over to You.

MFS

### **PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND**

I have been asked to lead a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2015 with the relevant dates being Aug 30<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September. This is a copy of a letter received from a friend, Anne Powell:

*Dear Mike,*

*Thanks for coming back to me last evening regarding the Holy Land tour, which I have provisionally booked for 30 August – 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.*

*The cost of the tour will be approx. £1500 per person for a twin/double room. If a single person occupies a double room they will pay a supplement of £450. Travel Insurance is not included in this price.*

*The price includes*

*Return flights from London to Tel Aviv.*

*Accommodation in good quality hotels in twin bedded rooms with private facilities on a half board basis*

*Transfer of passengers and baggage.*

*Sightseeing as in itinerary.*

*Services of a fully qualified English speaking guide.*

*Travel by air-conditioned coaches.*

*Entrance fees, gratuities (except for lunches), service charges and portorage*

*Airport taxes.*

*I hope you approve of the itinerary: it includes most of the popular sites as well as a few not so frequently visited – see the visit to Haifa. Obviously there are sites that have not been included in the tour, but God willing another tour can always be planned to visit places not seen on this occasion, if you wished.*

*Meanwhile, you will need to write a short profile and send it, along with a photo to:*

*Worldwide Christian Travel, 36 Cold harbour Road, Bristol, BS6 7NA. WCT will then produce a brochure with the write-up and photo, which will be inserted on their web-site. They will send you a number of brochures to pass on to anyone interested in the Love and best wishes.*

ANNE



## **HOLY LAND TOUR/ITINERARY**

### **Sunday**

We take our flight from London to Tel Aviv. On arrival we will be met and transferred to our hotel in Jerusalem for dinner and overnight.

### **Monday**

We visit **Jerusalem** for the day, starting by viewing the **Model of Jerusalem**. We then view the **Old City** from the **Mount of Olives** before entering the **Old City** to visit the **Pool of Bethesda** (where Jesus healed a crippled man). We follow part of the **Via Dolorosa** (the approximate route Jesus took to his death on the cross). We see flagstones thought to be from the **Antonia Fortress** (the Roman barracks, where Jesus was tried); on these can be seen an engraving known as the **King Game**, perhaps related to the mocking of Jesus. At the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** we see the traditional site of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. We end the afternoon viewing **Gordon's Calvary**, and with quiet reflection and worship at the **Garden Tomb** (possible alternative locations for Jesus' death and resurrection). Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem.

### **Tuesday**

We trace the **Palm Sunday path** down from the **Mount of Olives** into the city, pausing at the **Dominus Flavit** church (recalling Jesus weeping over Jerusalem). We see **Gethsemane**, where we will celebrate communion, and have time for quiet reflection. We walk part of the "**Last Path**" (through the Kidron valley), and visit the church of **St Peter in Gallicantu** (reputedly where Peter denied Jesus, the site of **Caiaphas' House**). Entering the old city again, we see a possible location of the **Upper Room** at St Mark's Syrian Church, and visit the **Burnt House** – an ancient priestly house from the time of Jesus. Our new hotel is close to the walls of the **Old city of Jerusalem**.

### **Wednesday**

We learn about the city in Jesus' time - seeing the **Western Wall**, where we will hope to witness a **Bar Mitzvah**; and the **Southern Temple Mount excavations**; we visit the **Temple Mount** and explore the **Western Wall tunnels**. The remainder of the day will be free to explore the Old City further or shop in the Souk. Return coach transfer to the hotel. Alternatively you may like to visit other places of interest perhaps by taxi or the Metro. Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem

### **Thursday**

In the morning, we visit **Bethany**, the site of **Lazarus' tomb** and continue to nearby **Herodion** (one of Herod's many palaces, believed to contain Herod's



tomb); the **Shepherds' Fields**; and the **Church of the Nativity**. There will be free time to stroll around Milk Grotto Street and visit Old Market Souq before visiting a local **Orphanage**. Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem.

#### **Friday**

Leaving Jerusalem we drive through the **Wadi Kelt** (possibly the inspiration for the "Valley of the Shadow of Death") where we see **St George's Monastery** across the valley. we continue to **Jericho** - where we see the ruins of the **ancient city** captured by Joshua, recall the **temptation of Jesus**, and reflect on Jesus' encounter with Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus. We visit the Roman city of **Beit Shean** and the Baptism site at **Yardenit**. We drive to Galilee for dinner and overnight.

#### **Saturday**

This morning we drive to Nazareth, passing **Mount Tabor** (a possible site of the Transfiguration). We visit the **Nazareth Village** (depicting life in the time of Jesus), and the **Mount of the Precipice** (believed to be where Jesus was taken by the angry crowd after preaching at the Nazareth Synagogue) – from which we view the **Jezreel Valley**, the Biblical location for **Armageddon**. We visit **Cana** (where Jesus turned water into wine). Dinner and overnight in Tiberias.

#### **Sunday**

We sail across the **Sea of Galilee** on a replica of this boat - pausing during this for worship. We visit sites associated with Jesus' ministry: **Safed** a fortified Jewish town in the Upper Galilee; **Bethsaida** (Peter and Andrew's home, with the recently excavated "Fishermen's House"); **Capernaum** (Jesus' home town, with its ancient **synagogue** and **Peter's house**); and **Tabgha** (site of the feeding of the 5000, and a lakeside resurrection appearance of Jesus). We finish the day celebrating communion on the hillside of the **Mount of Beatitudes** (the setting for the Sermon on the Mount). Dinner and overnight in Tiberias.

#### **Monday**

We leave our hotel and drive to **Akko** for a visit and continue to **Haifa** for a spectacular view over the bay and the **Bahai Gardens** followed by a walk on the Louis Promenade. We visit **Mount Carmel** associated with the prophets Elijah and Elisha and take the cable car from the sea to **Stella Carmel**. We continue to our hotel in Netanya. The remainder of the day is free. Dinner and overnight.

#### **Tuesday**

This morning we visit **Joppa** before we continue to the airport for our return flight to London.

Worldwide Christian Travel

Do let me know, as soon as possible, if you are interested in the tour. Gwen and I have never been to the Holy Land and are looking forward to this, immensely. The tour, ideally, is for those with a very real commitment to any Christian Church. Please note that it is a PILGRIMAGE. It is not simply a holiday but, rather, a means of encountering the Jesus of the Gospels as we tread the paths he once trod. The aim, for us all, will be the deepening of our spiritual life. I would appreciate if you could make this known. Would it be too much to see 40 people joining us? Too many? Not if we are among friends and with people we know well.

### **AN EASTER MEDITATION**

The Reverend Tom Ellis Jones was principal of the North Wales Baptist College, Bangor. This was during the early 1960s when I was a student there. He once led a tour to the Holy Land and told us this story:

*It was the evening before we were due to fly home and we were gathered together on the shore of Galilee.*

*I said to those present:*

*'This is the place where it all began for it was here that he called the first disciples, Peter and James and John, to follow him.*

*Here is the very sea upon which he is said to have walked. These are the waves that, during a storm, became still at his word. Once, he stood in a fishing boat, close to this very shore, perhaps, and spoke to the assembled crowds. Across the water is the land of the Gerasenes where he healed a mentally ill man.*

*Not that far away is the hill upon which he preached the Sermon on the Mount.*

*There is another hill that we have visited, called Golgotha, where he revealed the extent of God's love by dying for us, in agony, on a cross.*

*All these sites, and many more, we have seen.*

*And now we are leaving it all behind us, for tomorrow we are going home. I am sure you will join me in saying "Goodbye Jesus, Goodbye."*

***BUT NO! IT IS NOT GOODBYE!***

*For there is the tomb from which he was raised! Jesus is alive!*

*And when we get back to our own country he will be there!*



*When we return to work he will be there!*

*When we encounter joy or sorrow, happiness or grief, he will be there!*

*He already possesses our tomorrows and when we start each new day we will find him there already!*

*No problem is too big for us to deal with for he will be at our side!*

*In life and death he will journey with us!*

*He will be our constant companion for he is THE RISEN CHRIST!*

*It is not 'Goodbye Jesus!' He is with us always, even unto the end of the age!*

I have never forgotten that story. Those of us who are liberal in our theology may well wish to reinterpret the story of the empty tomb in line with new ways of thinking and I can understand that wish. Place the whole matter, if you so wish, in a mental drawer labelled 'Awaiting Further Light.' That is what I do with so many things I do not as yet understand.

What I do believe is that Jesus lives on! That Death did not have the last word! That we can still feel his touch upon our lives! That he has never left us and will never forsake us! Such is the Easter Faith.

I cannot say that I have always found such a faith easy to discover and, still less to maintain. What matters, ultimately, is not my weak grasp of him but, rather, his grasp of me. In life and in death; in times of belief and in times of doubt; on the mountain top and in the valley – he holds me in his hand and, ultimately, will bring me to where he wants me to be. As Albert Schweitzer said, in those tremendous sentences which close his book, 'The Quest of the Historical Jesus,'

*He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lakeside, he came to those who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word, 'Follow thou me,' and sets us to the task he has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey him, whether they be wise or simple, he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He Is.*

MFS

## SALEM

*Most of us will be familiar with the print entitled 'Salem.' It has the alternative name 'The Devil in the Shawl.' Esme Phillips tells us something of the pictures' true origins.*

Salem is set in a Baptist Chapel situated in Cefencymerau, near Llanbedr, Merioneth. The picture is not that old, being painted, in 1908, by Sydney Vosper (1866-1942) a Devonian who spent much of his time working in Wales. It began its life, not as a print but, rather, as a painting intended for exhibition at the London Royal Watercolour Society and eventual sale, possibly to one of the wealthy metropolitan audience who would have viewed it. In point of fact it was bought by William Hesketh Lever, of Sunlight Soap fame, for the then considerable sum of 100 Guineas and, these years on, is the property of the Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight. It was Lever's Sunlight Soap who issued a colour print of Salem which, originally, was given away to customers purchasing soap in bulk.

An article about the picture appeared in the Welsh language magazine, Y Ford Gron (Round Table) in 1933 and, shortly afterwards, copies were sold, through the Urdd, for the sum of sixpence each. In 1950 the picture appeared in calendar form.

It was seen as "one of the most beautiful pictures of the religious life of Wales" in old time. It captured the seeming timelessness of Welsh nonconformity, the simple piety and the centrality of the Word of God – at a time when the Chapel was already in retreat. It was and is a deeply nostalgic image of what appears to the viewer to be 'real' people.

In fact it was a carefully contrived image for which members of the congregation were paid to pose. The artist worked on the picture for three months and made its subjects into local celebrities.

The picture depicts a congregation waiting quietly for the service to begin. The central standing figure was modelled by Sian Owen (1837-1927) of Tyn-y-Falnog who is seen walking towards the pew, the door of which is slightly open. The time on the clock is a little before 10am and suggests that she has arrived late, during the customary silence preceding the worship. Her shawl, ornate Paisley, seems to contrast with the more sombre dress of the other worshippers and is a comment, possibly, on the sin of vanity.

Many people have claimed to see the devil's face in the folds of the fringe of the shawl. Next time you look at the print examine the woman's left arm.

Vosper, however, would have none of this. He admits to having trouble with the shawl as Sian kept fiddling with it! He became so frustrated that he, eventually, sent to London for a figurine, pinned the shawl to it and so completed his 'devilishly' difficult task in that manner. He nevertheless denied painting any devil into the shawl and any such resemblance is purely coincidental.

*If you would like to see a copy of this print Esme has one hanging behind her front door She has seen several copies of it in various houses but always in rooms that are unused! One questions if that is due to people being afraid of what they might see? Thank you Esme.*



## **ON YOUR WEDDING DAY**

*We send our congratulations and best wishes to Matthew Davies and Cassie Graveling who were married at Hackney, London on 01/02/2014. Matthew is the son of our good friend, Linda Owen. I am certain that the following poem, read by Linda, added much to the occasion.*

**Today is a day you will always remember -  
The greatest in anyone's life.  
You'll start off the day just two people in love;  
and end it as Husband and Wife.**

**It's a brand new beginning, the start of a journey,  
with moments to cherish and treasure;  
And 'though there'll be times when you both disagree,  
these will surely be outweighed by pleasure.**

**You'll have heard many words of advice in the past,  
when the secrets of marriage were spoken;  
But you know that the answers lie hidden inside,  
where the bond of true love lies unbroken.**

**So live happy forever, as lovers and friends;  
It's the dawn of a new life for you,  
As you stand there together with love in your eyes -  
from the moment you whisper, 'I do.'**

**And with luck, all your hopes and your dreams can be real;  
May success find its way to your hearts.  
Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys,  
but today is the day that it all starts.**

## **SMILE AWHILE**

I once had the dubious pleasure of officiating at a marriage where the Groom was unable to pronounce the letter 'L'. All went well until I asked him to repeat the words - 'I take thee to be my lawful wedded wife.' He married her despite thinking her 'awful.'

Verbal gaffes in the wedding service are sometimes made by the officiating minister. How about this one. 'I charge you that if either of you know of any lawful impediment why you may not be *loined* together in marriage you are to declare it.'

I like the story of the well-meaning vicar's wife who texted a friend on her wedding day: *Read 1 John 4.18*. Unfortunately the figure 1 before 'John' was missed out. The friend, naturally, turned not to the First Letter of John but to Chapter 4 and verse 18 of John's Gospel. Imagine her bewilderment at being told that she had had five husbands and that the man she had now was not her husband!

There is also the story of the young couple who wanted to incorporate a song that meant a great deal to them in the service. They asked the vicar if it would be possible to have played on the organ the song 'Everything I do, I do for you,' which was featured in the Kevin Costner film of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. They were delighted when the vicar said that would be no problem. 'Just tell the organist what you want,' he told them. When they spoke to the organist, who was of considerable age, he mumbled under his breath, but assured them that he knew the song and would play it.

On the happy day all went well until the couple turned at the end of the service to march out of church. To their horror, the old organist was playing the 1950s TV theme tune: 'Robin Hood, Robin Hood, riding through the glen ...' The look on the faces of the newly-weds was reportedly caught on video for posterity.

Our son David and wife, Yvette were married, by me, in 2007. They walked out of church to a song chosen by Yvette. I thought it quite fitting. It was '*Son of a Preacher Man!*'

### **The WORST WEDDING SERVICE EVER**

How can I ever forget marrying a couple whom I will only identify by their initials – C and C? They had no church connection, though this, in itself, was not an issue. The church exists to serve others and openness is essential. This couple tested that philosophy to the limit and caused some to say 'Never Again!' Their guests had little respect for the church or, indeed, for the religious element of the service. They made no attempt to sing the hymns or to join in the responses when requested. One member of the congregation coughed loudly when the 'any impediment' question was asked and seemed to take pleasure in threatening some kind of disclosure. The bride and groom, far from being mortified, laughed at the Joke. The Groom had wanted a church wedding as this was the church where his parents or grandparents had been married. He truly shamed their memory that day. To add insult to injury the happy couple left without paying the church fees or the organist. Three years



on, they remain unpaid. The Groom is a taxi Driver. In my less Christian moments I am tempted to don a disguise, enter his cab and say. 'Take me to London.' On reaching my destination I would say. "Thanks Mate! Take the fare out of the money you owe to Saron Chapel." Now, there's a thought!

On a more serious note, it would be so sad if our churches became closed shops and only catered for church-goers. I have had the privilege of seeing people I have married becoming active in the life of a church and moving from occasional visits to full commitment. It is witnessing things like that, that makes it worthwhile to be an 'open' church. The negative feelings provoked by people like C and C are outweighed by the positive results which come from a welcoming approach. No one was more 'open' than Jesus. His emphasis was on inclusivity and his message was for everyone.

I am fond of the story about new army recruits being divided up according to denominational allegiances. The Anglican Chaplain said, 'All Anglicans come with me.' The Roman Catholics and Non Conformists were separated in the same way. The rest of the men were addressed by the Salvation Army Officer: "Right men! All you who belong to no one – Follow Me!" That is surely the note of the Gospel. It should characterise all of us who claim to follow Christ. The alternative is to see the Church become a club for religious people and that, surely, is unthinkable.

MFS

**STAYING POWER AND RELIGIOUS FAITH** From the writings of Harry E. Fosdick.

How beautifully love begins! With what romantic launchings can it get its start! But we elders, who watch the young folks at their weddings, habitually ask a deeper question. They have the qualities that can start a home; do they have the qualities that can keep one – the deep fidelity, the long-term loyalty, the steady and abiding love that can keep a home? For in marriage, as in all life, a good beginning only makes more tragic an unhappy end.

It is not among practising Christians that marriages break down. It is among those who have left the altar out of their married life. It is not enough to begin married life before the altar; it must be continued there and, if it is not, one is always a little afraid.....

If I were a millionaire I would give to every couple I married a prayer book and ask them to use it every night. You cannot keep up an estrangement with your wife, you cannot allow things that separate to do any harm, you cannot become selfish and overbearing if, night after night, you are praying with her at the feet of God; what God so constantly joins together nothing can put asunder.

## **ESME PHILLIPS WRITES**

The world is a mixture for us all. We have our joys and our sorrows. I was a nurse for many years and met so many people – the charming and not so charming. I can remember, in my first year, referring to one, very fierce consultant, as Mr 'Robinson.' He retorted, "My name is not 'Robinson.' It is 'Robertson.'" I blushed and muttered my apologies. I said: *"I am so sorry, Sir. I should have remembered that it is the same as the jam with the little Golly!"* I think it put him in his place and, after that, we began to understand each other.

When I met my husband, a farmer, another chapter began. I think it true to say that our love became stronger with the passing of the years. He asked me, in youth, if I would still care for him when he was old? I answered, *"Of course I will!"* – a promise which I kept until Glyn's demise at the end of 2011. Once again, this was a life changing event.

I found the impossible possible having been brought up in a Christian home where Mum was a Sunday- School teacher. I am not sure that I prayed as such but, in my silent moments, my thoughts were pointing towards Jesus. I had important matters to deal with and needed faith. I felt a little insecure. Although the happiness I had known with Glyn lifted me I had many down days. Amongst other things I had to look for a new home. I viewed a number of properties but was uncertain . . . .

Then, at last I found my little nest! I moved into Glyn Aur on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 and am so settled there.

Cymro, my little dog must be thinking, *"Gosh the holiday here is a long one!"* I was greeted at Llysmorfa by the most amazing of neighbours; each and every one of them a pleasure to know; even little Cymro was made so welcome. I did not feel as alone as I thought.

I became a member of Babell – another life changing experience. If there is joy in one's heart it is because of being here at Babell. Within these walls I have found peace. What is important here is not a person's faith but loving and caring for one another.

My mind goes back to 1995. Glyn and myself spent some time in Minnesota and Colorado and our host took us to his chapel. We were asked where we lived and I told them. Some people didn't know that Wales had its own language. I responded to the minister's welcome in Welsh but translated the response into English. The congregation applauded. The minister there, Frederick Sauer gave us a letter of greeting to take back to Revd Geraint Jenkins who was minister of Cwmdwyfran where we were then members. It is a small world.

It really is a blessing to be at ease and peace in Babell now. I would end by saying that it is a privilege to know you all.

Esme

*Thank you, Esme. You have enriched Babell with your presence. I have asked that we all write a few sentences for the next newsletter saying what we like most about this place. Esme has shown us the way. We are grateful.*



## THE COMING QUARTER

<u>March 2<sup>nd</sup></u>	2pm	Minister	Communion
<u>9<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Hugh Waddell	
<u>16<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Minister	
<u>23<sup>rd</sup></u>	2pm	Revd John Morgan	
<u>30<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Minister	
<u>April 6<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Minister	Communion/Helen Gibbon
<u>13<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Minister/	Distribution of Palm Crosses
<u>20<sup>th</sup></u>	10.30am	EASTER SUNDAY/FAMILY SERVICE	
<u>27<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Revd John Morgan	
<u>May 4<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Revd Geraint Lloyd/Communion	
<u>11<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Minister	
<u>18<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Minister	
<u>25<sup>th</sup></u>	2pm	Revd Chris Rees	

Please note that all our services are predominantly English Services unless otherwise announced in the Newsletter.

### DATES FOR THE DIARY

Lenten Study Groups will be held at Babell on Tuesday evenings, throughout Lent. They will be on the theme of John Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress. They will commence at 6.45pm with the relevant dates being March 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The discussions will be led by David Folland and we would express our gratitude to him. We normally 'give up' things for Lent. Alternatively we can DO things instead. DO PLEASE SUPPORT THESE GROUPS WITH YOUR PRESENCE. THEY ARE OPEN TO EVERYONE.

### MARCH 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm                      QUIZ AND CAUL EVENING

These occasions, facilitated by Trevor Lloyd and Linda Owen are great fun. Do come along. The more the merrier.

**April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**    **A Service for Maundy Thursday.** We associate this day with the inauguration of the Last Supper: 'Do this in remembrance of me.' Of equal importance, in my opinion (as I get older I am more and more attracted to the Quakers/ The Society of Friends) was the ceremony of 'foot washing'. Prior to the Last Supper the disciples had been arguing about who was the most important among them and the Passover Meal was eaten, at first in a sullen silence. Not one of the disciples would perform the foot washing ritual for the others. "I'm not washing *his* feet!" The words may not have been spoken but such were their thoughts. It was then that Jesus acted out a parable in that he took water and began to wash the feet of his disciples.

**During this service, therefore, we will celebrate Holy Communion and the rite of Foot Washing. Do please make every effort to be present on this occasion.**

### **TRUE GREATNESS**

*Some few years ago the BBC 2 launched a new series to determine the greatest Briton of all time. Some of those one would expect to have made the top 100 made the final list. Yet there were some very bizarre omissions.*

No mention of Disraeli; or space for William Pitt.

Gladstone, too, is absent, from the dubious list.

Tennyson and Milton, are not within the frame.

Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley, are other ones not named.

Constable and Turner – fine artists though they were;

Did not, on this occasion, raise a single cheer.

Perhaps the competition was simply much too strong;

Or could it be that some of us have got life's values wrong?

One notes that Richard Branson, was voted in by some;

As too was Robbie Williams: God knows what he has done!

Beckham answers 'Here Sir!' when the roll is called.

One cries out, 'What the Dickens! He only kicks a ball!'



The choice of Johnny Rotten provokes the deepest sigh.  
And who, with any common sense, would shout out 'Princess Di?'  
No place found for George Elliot – though Austin's name I see:  
That's due to 'Pride and Prejudice' as seen upon TV.  
And as for Locke and Johnson? They should have been born late;  
Television coverage, would have made them great.

I'm told three thousand people, cast votes for 'Greatest Briton.'  
They clearly were not very wise and could be labelled 'Cretin!'  
Where is the sense of history? And where, on earth, is pride?  
There are names upon this doubtful list that make one want to hide.  
I've yet to see the winners – (Those numbered 1-10).  
I daresay some so honoured, will merit an Amen!

Jesus, in the Gospels, set little store by fame.  
The truly 'Great' are those who serve. God only knows their names.  
And once, he took a little child and put him in the midst.  
He said that he would have first place on God's most favoured list.  
*Whoever would be great, he said, must first like children be.*  
The test, as Jesus saw it – is termed HUMILITY.

Mike Shephard ©

### **MAY DAY WALK**

Let me know if you would like to do another walk this year. We will make the route flat in order to open it to those of varied ability.

# CAPEL Y BABELL CHAPEL

Ionawr 2014,

Annwyl ffrindiau,

Wrth i ni ddechrau blwyddyn newydd carwn ar ran Vi a finne ddiolch yn fawr i chi eto am eich cyfraniadau a'ch rhoddion yn ystod 2013 p'un ai drwy amlenni, gasgliadau rhydd, Ffair Nadolig neu drwy roi a gweithio dros achos yr Arglwydd yma yn y Babell. Isod fe welwch yr adroddiad ariannol am 2013 a baratowyd yn drylwyr ac yn brydlon yn ôl ei harfer gan Mrs Vi Williams. Diolch i Mrs Pat Morgan ac i Mrs Janet Davies am ei wirio. Fe welwch fod swm sylweddol wedi ei ad-dalu trwy rodd Cymorth eleni ac mae'n diolch i Pat am gyflawni hyn yn ôl y ddeddf newydd a basiwyd.

Rhoddwyd £80 i'r Cinio Nadolig yn Heol Awst trwy gasgliad rhydd a chodwyd £147.81 ar gyfer Apêl y Philipinnau sydd heb ymddangos ar y cofnodion eto. Codwyd £500.26 yn y Ffair Nadolig a'r Bore Coffi a diolch i chi gyd am eich amser a'ch cymorth. Mae'r casglu o ddrws i ddrws ar gyfer Cymorth Cristnogol ym mis Mai yn dal yn llwyddiannus ac eleni codwyd £311.06. Diolch i chi wirfoddolwyr. Nid yw'n hawdd.

Ar nodyn trist siom yw cofnodi colli dau aelod annwyl o'n plith sef Mrs Muriel Vaughan a Mr Vernon Williams. Cydydeimlwn yn fawr gyda Pat a'i theulu ar golli ei mam. Cymerwyd Vernon oddi wrthom ynghanol ei waith ac fel y gwyddoch roedd yn drysorydd y Gronfa Adeiladau a'r Tŷ Capel a chadwyd yr holl gofnodion yn drylwyr ac yn ddestlus. Bu'n flwyddyn anodd iawn a gyda chalon drom estynnwn ein cydymdeimlad diffuant gyda Vi, Mandy a Ruth, Lleucu, Erin and Ffion a'r teulu mewn gwerthfawrogiad o'r holl waith a wnaed yn yr addoldy hwn.

Chwerw-felys felly bu hi eleni. Ar nodyn calonogol agorwyd y Ganolfan Gyfeillgar ym mis Medi ac fe â o nerth i nerth. Dymunwn Duw yn rhwydd ar Mike wrth iddo ein harwain unwaith eto i fewn i flwyddyn newydd ac i bennod newydd arall yn ein hanes.

Yn ddiffuant

Trysorydd M. V. Williams.

Ysgrifennydd ariannol

Receipts 2012	£	Expenditure 2012	£
Casgliad amlenni	3690.00	Pregethwyr teithiol	435.00
Casgliad rhydd	888.39	Trydan	261.99
Llôg o Gaerdydd	29.13	Y Gronfa Gynnal	2400.00
Rhodd Cymorth 2012	432.81	Yr Henaduriaeth	97.65
Rhodd Cymorth 2013	1349.85	Cymdeithas y Beibl	10.00
Mr Anthony Davies	100.00	Chwaeroliaeth	25.00
War Stock	1.50	Dydd Gweddi Byd- eang	25.00
		Cymdeithasfa	20.00
Ffair Nadolig Tachwedd	500.26	Detholiadau Gymanfa Ganu 2012/13	45.65
		Amlenni casglu	111.90
		Apêl Guatemala	280.00
Casgliad Cymorth Cristnogol	311.06	Casgliad Cymorth Cristnogol	311.06
GIG [ Cais yr Henaduriaeth]	500.00	GIG	500.00
Rhif siec.000990 ar gyfer Heol Awst	80.00	Siec Heol Awst Drop In	80.00
		Tiwnio piano	65.00
Rhodd	10.00	Dyfed Cleaners	23.70
Blwyddlyfrau	5.25	Cylchlythyrol ac arwyddion	686.37
		Gwin Cymun	11.25
		Llienau Bwrdd a mân bethau	55.40
		Darllenfa a phlac	356.00
		Nwy	83.70
		Bocs storio	8.49
Is-gyfanswm	7898.25	Is-gyfanswm	5893.16
<b>Arian yn y banc 1:1:13</b>	<b>£ 3370.49</b>	<b>Arian yn y banc 31:12:13</b>	<b>£5375.58</b>
	11,268.74		11,268.74

Gronfa Adeiladu: £9157.37

Y Gronfa Rhent: £3291.06

Diolch am eich cyfraniad am 2013



## Teyrnged

Taenwyd cwmwl o dristwch dros y gymuned yn y Babell ar Ragfyr 4ydd pan glywyd am farwolaeth Vernon. Er ein bod wedi cael amser i baratoi roeddem yn dal yn gobeithio y byddai yn cael mwy o amser yn ein cwmni. Daeth Vernon yn flaenor yn 1987 ac fel swyddog a thrysorydd yr adeiladau gweithiodd yn ddiflino dros yr achos yn y Babell. Y mae'r llun ohono yn peintio nid yn unig y tu fewn y capel ond y walydd allanol hefyd yn dal yn fyw yn y côf ac yn wir mae llun yn yr archifau ohono ar ben y sil uchaf yn y capel yn peintio'r nenfwd a'r adnod, "Gogoniant yn y Goruchaf i Dduw." Roedd ganddo falchder mawr yn yr holl waith a wnaed ac fe fyddai yn rhwystredig iawn os na fyddai yn gallu cyflawni yr holl gorchwylion. Bu'n lywydd y Cwrdd Dosbarth a threfnodd sawl cyngerdd yn y Babell i godi arian ar gyfer gwaith ar yr adeiladau a dros nifer o elusennau. Gyda Vi yn drysorydd cawsom dŷm heb ei ail. Roedd yn awyddus i weld pobl yn gwneud y gorau o'u talentau ac roedd gweld pobol ifainc yn llwyddo yn eu gwahanol campau yn rhoi balchder a boddhad o'r mwyaf iddo. Mawr y gwelir ei eisiau. Coffa da amdano.

## Newyddion y Clwb Sul a'r bobl ifainc

Cafwyd sawl aelod newydd i'r Clwb Sul a dysgwyd caneuon newydd o'r Detholiad a Junior Praise. Dilynwyd Stori'r Geni drwy thymor yr Adfent a chafwyd cryn hwyl wrth actio a cheisio portreadu'r cymeriadau gyda Liz yn cymryd rhan yr angel, Sian yn Herod a Helen yn angel [wrthgwrs!]. Roedd Ellie Grace, Kian, Ioan a Josh wrth eu bodd. Roedd y plant yn haeddu parti ar ôl tymor prysur ac fe ddaeth Sion Corn ar ymweliad hefyd gydag anrhegion a stori. Diolch i'r rhieni am eu cefnogaeth ac i Sion Corn wrthgwrs. Croeso mawr i Efa i'n plith a da gweld ei mam Elin Haf [cyn ddisgybl i Mrs Gibbon yn Nhregib gyda llaw] yn ymuno gyda ni ar y Sul. Bu'r bobl ifainc yn brysur hefyd yn canu yn y gwasanaethau Golau Cannwyll, ym Mhlygain Merched y Wawr yn Priordy ac hefyd yn Nantgaredig. Edrychwn ymlaen at dymor newydd yn eu cwmni.

## Sunday Club and Young People's News

Sunday Club welcomed several new members and several new songs were learnt from the "Detholiad" and Junior Praise. We followed the Christmas Story during Advent and much fun was had as the children tried to act and portray the different characters with Liz as one of the shepherds, Sian as Herod and Helen as the angel [ofcourse!]. Ellie Grace, Kian, Ioan and Josh were most amused! Following a busy term the children deserved a Christmas party which was held on Thursday December 19<sup>th</sup> and Father Christmas popped in with a sackful of goodies and a story to tell. Thank you to the parents for their support and to Father Christmas ofcourse. A big welcome to little Efa this year and to her mother Elin Haf. We look forward to a new term in their company as we do also with the young people who have also been busy singing in both Carols by Candlelight services and Plygain services in Priordy and Nantgaredig. Thank you one and all.

## **ROLLING IN THE AISLES**

A much loved family cat died. The owner asked the Welsh Presbyterian Minister if he would bury the cat in the chapel graveyard. "Certainly not!" Said the minister. You can't bury a cat in consecrated ground. It isn't seemly."

"I see," said the bereaved person. "That means I won't be able to donate £10.000 to the chapel."

"Good Heavens!" Replied the minister. "Why didn't you tell me it was a Presbyterian cat?"

An itinerant Baptist Minister came to a small country town and asked a young boy to direct him to the church where he was preaching that evening. After the boy had given him directions, the minister said to him: "You must come along tonight and bring all your friends."

"What for?" asked the boy.

"Because I'll tell you all how to get to heaven."

"You must be joking. You didn't even know how to get to the church."

Sister Magdalene had spent the whole period of Religious Instruction telling her children about repentance. At the end she asked the class: "What do we have to do first before we can obtain forgiveness of our sins?"

Young Michael O'Shea was the first to answer.

"Sin."

The little boy was describing a confirmation service to his parents. He said: "Today, the bishop came to church. Now I know what a real crook looks like."

After his first appearance in the pulpit, the new curate asked the parish priest what he thought of his performance. "Did I put enough fire into my sermon?"

"Yes, you did to be sure. But from the reaction I'd say it might be better to have put a lot of the sermon into the fire."

A Methodist Minister was shaking hands with members of his flock. She was rather pleased when one of them told him that her sermon had been like the peace of God. She looked a little crestfallen when he elaborated: "Yes, It passed all understanding!"

A church-goer was bemoaning the smallness of the congregation. "It's terrible. This morning, when the minister said 'Dearly Beloved,' I thought he was proposing to me!"

From the "Rolling in the Aisles" Joke Book.



FUN ON BOARD by Eva Brick (Newsletter's Social Correspondent)

Conversations overheard at the bar of an American cruise liner last year between a barman and a Welsh traveller in the early evening. The traveller went to the bar and said 'Good Evening'. The barman who was a friendly soul introduced himself as Richard and said everyone calls me 'Dick'. The traveller explained that he was a GP and everyone called him 'Doc'. So.....

*'Evening Doc what would you like to drink' said Dick*

*'I'll have a daiquiri Dick' said Doc (NB daiquiri is pronounced dackery)*

*'I make a special version which uses chicory' said Dick*

*'Ok, I'll have a chicory daiquiri Dick' said Doc*

Every evening there followed a similar pattern

*'Evening Dick'*

*'Evening Doc, what will you have?'*

*'A chicory daiquiri Dick'*

Until one evening Dick discovered there was no chicory left. Luckily he found some hickory which he ground up in readiness. Next evening .....

*'Evening Dick'*

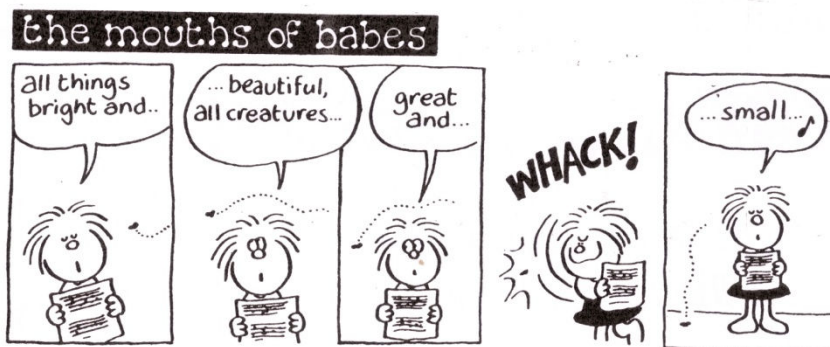
*'Evening Doc, what will you have?'*

*'A chicory daiquiri Dick'*

At this point the hickory was substituted for the chicory and the cocktail was presented to Doc. After taking a sip .....

*'This isn't a chicory daiquiri Dick'*

*'No, it's a hickory daiquiri Doc'*



**COME TO AN EVENING OF FUN & FOOD  
TO CELEBRATE ST. DAVID'S DAY**

# **QUIZ & CAWL**

**at BABELL CHAPEL, BABELL HILL,  
PENSARN, CARMARTHEN**

**Tuesday 4th March 2014  
at 7pm prompt**

*Teams of no more than four,  
Entrance fee £2.50 per person*

***EVERYONE WELCOME***

For further information contact  
Lee Whatley ☎ 07846 919453