

Babell Chapel/Capel y Babell Pensarn Caerfyrddin

Spring Newsletter Cylchlythyr y Gwanwyn

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Online at

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DEAR FRIENDS,

Of all the characters who appear in the story of Good Friday, it is that of Simon of Cyrene which intrigues me the most. I would like to know more about him if only to evidence my belief that it was a black man who carried the cross for Jesus.

"They compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, to go with them, that he might bear his cross"

(Mark 14:21).

We come across Simon again in the Acts of the Apostles where he is in company with a man called Lucius from *Cyrene*. Indeed, the impression is given that both Simon and Lucius came from the same African town. Simon, moreover, is described as 'Niger' which, as we know, meant black (Acts 13:1). Interestingly, both men were active within the ranks of the early church.

I wonder what it was that influenced Simon to become a Christian. Is it possible that his experience, that first Good Friday, played a part in the process? Let us try to recapture the scene.

Jesus is on his way to the hill of Calvary outside the city gates. He has been up all night. He has passed through the agony of Gethsemane. He has seen his disciples desert him in the moment of need. He has endured the strain of four trials, one before Annas, one before Caiaphas, one before Herod, and one before Pilate. He has heard a mob cry, "Crucify." He has been whipped with a leather scourge into which pieces of iron and lead have been tied, a punishment frequently causing death to the victim. He has been crowned with a crown of thorns.

Now they have placed on his raw shoulders two huge, rough beams of wood, under the weight of which he staggers and falls.

The officer in charge of the soldiers does not know what to do. A Roman soldier must not be asked to carry the wood for a criminal. No ordinary Jew in the crowd could be impressed into the service of Rome. It would have made the man ceremonially unclean and provoked a riot, possibly.

Simon solves the problem. The Roman officer catches sight of him and he ticks all the right boxes. He is strong. He is a stranger. He is black. The officer will be able to say 'How did I know the black man was a Jew?' So it was that a black African, possibly, carried the cross for Jesus.

I don't suppose, for one moment, that Simon wanted to carry that cross. He didn't even know Jesus. He just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

That said, I believe something must have happened to Simon on that walk. It is incredible that Jesus would say nothing to one who, even under compulsion, was doing him a service. If nothing else there would have been some contact of spirit with spirit. On that journey to Calvary Simon would have come into contact with the most transforming force in the world – the friendship of Jesus and life, from then on, could not be the same again.

As one contemplates the part played by Simon in the drama of the Passion, there are three things that make me glad.

First, I am glad that Simon, the black man, is in the picture and that he came to recognise Jesus as Saviour.

In his book, 'Personalities of the Passion,' Dr Leslie Weatherhead recalls a little girl in India who was shown a picture of our Lord which had been made in England. When she saw it she cried. When asked why she was crying she said, "I didn't think he was a bit like that." She meant that he was too English to belong to her. Weatherhead comments: "*When I think of the Christ who belongs to everybody, it seems to me as though every race in the world is engaged in painting his picture. We in the practical West can paint his hands. Africa can paint his shoulders. India, I think, must be responsible for his eyes. And the picture is not complete until every race has painted him as it sees him.*"

It would be my view that the purpose of Jesus was not to found a new world religion but, rather, to reform Judaism so that its appeal would encompass the whole of humankind. That dream ended when the emperor Constantine, largely for political reasons made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and then convened the Council of Nicea (4th Century AD) which, again for political motives, transformed Jesus of Nazareth into the third person of a holy trinity and declared him to be equal with God.

Such a development was bitterly opposed by many Christians but their voices were silenced and the majority view held sway. Adherents of Judaism, with its belief in One God, were scandalised by the event and any hope of a Jewish/Christian Church was now completely negated. Later, Islam would come into being protesting, as it still does, that it is impossible that God should have a son.

We cannot turn the clock back. What we can do is to foster closer relationships with people of other faiths, agreeing where agreement is possible and demonstrating toleration where it is not. We must listen to each other, appreciating views other than our own. It is only as others contribute to our picture of Jesus that we will see him as he really is.

We may call Christianity the final religion but it has surely not reached its final form. A final religion must include the truth in every religion. If Christianity is to be the last word in religion it will have to be something far bigger than the anaemic thing we label Christianity in this elementary stage of the world's development. There is a place for black people in the picture, and red and yellow people as well.

Secondly, I am glad to think that Simon gave strength to a fainting Christ. He bore the cross that could be borne by man, and so helped Christ to bear the cross that only he can bear.

One of the most meaningful descriptions of the Church is to liken it to the body of Christ on earth. That said the body continues to let the spirit down and, time and time again, falls beneath the weight of the cross. Sometimes we do not carry it at all. To cite Leslie Weatherhead again:

"In this country we have churches on every corner. We have elaborate organisation and structures. But how weak the Church is as an expression of the spirit of Christ. The body needs to be reinvigorated. And whence will come the new life which the body needs? I believe increasingly that it will come from Africa and India and China and the uttermost parts of the earth. What if once more Simon of Cyrene, or the race which he typifies, gives strength to a Christ whose spirit is deathless, but whose body is borne down almost to the ground."

Consider, thirdly, that when they got to Calvary, Simon knew that it was worthwhile bearing the cross for Jesus. Those who have walked with Jesus, even for a few yards on the journey of life will know what a wonderful experience it is. Those who have had a vision of what the cross means and who have shared it with him, feel the honour of that sharing and know the joy of that communion. They never complain but feel humbly proud.

As we think of Simon, the cross-bearer, let us dedicate ourselves to the task of bearing his reproach, even if that bearing interferes with our immediate pleasures and takes us out with Christ beyond the gate of comfort to the skull shaped hill of Golgotha where he is crucified still.

Easter Blessings,

Mike Shephard

Family News

We extend the warmest of welcome to two new members. It was my privilege to receive Megan Griffiths into membership on Sunday 4th January. A fortnight later I had the pleasure of extending the hand of friendship to Iris Roberts. One doesn't have to become an 'official' member of the church to be viewed as part of our family but it is always lovely when people decide to do so. Megan and Iris – YOU ARE SO WELCOME!

A number of friends have been unwell during the winter months. Several have succumbed to the usual winter ailments and, like us all, will be looking forward to the coming of spring. Amongst those known to me are Sally, Alan, Vi, Janet, Lyn and Sian. A number of friends have had other health related problems. We think of Nelda, Judith, Joy, Donna, Bronwen, Bridget, Trevor, Roy and Keith. We wish them all well. Needless to say, I apologise for any names omitted.

There are two friends who must be mentioned by name and we think of them at what must be a worrying time for them. To Mandy Walters and Leslie Locke-Edmunds – our love. As I write, my own hospital admission, on Feb 2nd, is now behind me and I am home again. The Health Service, these days, is often criticised and, prior to the General Election will continue to be used as a point scoring exercise by politicians of whatever shade of colour. I can only say that I received excellent care from the staff at Glangwilli Hospital and that they could not have done more to make the stay as comfortable and productive as possible. Yes, the system is under enormous pressure and bed managers are being run ragged as they attempt to do the impossible. That said, the whole team, inclusive of theatre staff, nurses, pharmacists, caterers and cleaners deserve praise for all that they do on our behalf. I cannot pretend that a trans-urethral resection of the prostate is a pleasant procedure or that the recovery process involves no pain. It is quite debilitating at times but one hopes that, ultimately, it will prove to have been worthwhile. If nothing else it has decreased my reluctance to talk openly about such matters and I now am quite vocal in encouraging men to get themselves checked out. In my case nothing 'sinister' was found but it could have been otherwise. As men are now warned in poster campaigns – "Don't die of embarrassment!" It is unlikely that I will be back in church before the 1st Sunday in March. I am grateful to Helen for leading worship on at least one of the Sundays when I was unable to be present.

On 1st Feb, we welcomed Llangynnor School Choir to our church. This was an all age service and was enjoyed by everyone. I consider Llangynnor School to be a special place and it is a joy, both for Helen and myself, to lead morning assembly on the second Thursday of each month. Incidentally, in Aled Davies, the school has a new head teacher. We welcome him as he settles into his new role and look forward to an increasingly close link between the school and Babel.

I must take this opportunity of congratulating our good friend, Emir Williams, on his appointment as an assistant minister within the Presbyterian Church of Wales. He will share responsibility, with Revd Ian Simms, for some fourteen congregations within the Carmarthenshire area.

Can I remind everyone that our next Quiz Night will be on the first Monday in March at 7pm. Every team should have four members, the entry fee being £10 per team. This will include the traditional St David's Day Cawl which, in past years, has been much appreciated. We are grateful, once again, to Linda Owen and Trevor Lloyd for organising the event. I am told that, on this occasion, there will be no Bible questions!!!! However, there will be a section on sport and another on James Bond. I feel seriously disadvantaged as a result of these changes! Lee Whatley, though, will be smiling like the cat who got the cream! Do make the event known. The quiz starts at 7pm.

Our Friendship Centre is becoming very busy these days and we will shortly have to consider moving it into the church proper. Without the pews we now have the flexibility to allow for this. The move would also enable us to develop the vestry area with new toilets and an enlarged kitchen being a priority!!! Who would have thought that the lack of space would be a problem? It is a lovely problem to have though – particularly for a chapel building that is not in the centre of town. It is most encouraging.

How quickly the months fly by. I can scarcely credit it that it is almost three years since I became minister here! I have had several pastorates over the years but none happier than this. There are no factions here and few, if any, undercurrents. There is an atmosphere of mutual acceptance which makes it easy to be minister here.

That said, I will be 69 in November of this year and have no wish to continue in ministry beyond the age of seventy years. In other words, my intention is to retire as minister at some stage during 2016, my hope being that, during these coming months, we can give consideration to seeking someone to succeed me as leader. I will obviously have many opportunities to thank you for your love and friendship, these being things that will continue into the future. Meanwhile, let us use the time to grow as a church, both numerically and in spiritual depth.

Mike Shephard

MINISTER WANTED

A vacancy occurred in a church and a new minister was required. In due course the following letter was received by a senior deacon:

I understand that you have a vacancy for a minister and I would like to apply for the position. I have many qualifications that I think you would appreciate. I have had considerable success as a preacher and writer and churches have grown under my ministry.

It should nevertheless be noted that I am over fifty years old. I have never stayed anywhere for more than three years at a time. In some towns where I have worked there have been riots and disturbances and I have been sent to prison four times, though not for any real wrong doing. My health is not too good but I get things done despite it. I have had to work at a trade so as to help pay my way. The churches I have preached in have been small. I have not always got on with religious leaders. I do tend to be quite controversial. I think it true to say that I have not always been a popular minister but, if appointed, I will do my best for you.

The diaconate discussed the application but decided not to take matters further. Why call as minister an unhealthy, contentious, trouble-making, ex-convict who was also too old? In fact they felt insulted that his application had even been presented. The diaconate asked the name of the applicant.

The chairman replied, **"The Apostle Paul!"**

From the Newsletter of Memorial Baptist Church, Swansea.



"I just don't know what to make of the new Minister . . ."



"Your first baptism, is it?"

Joy Thomas Writes

Mike has asked me to write a few lines regarding possible outreach ventures for Babell.

Most people are aware of the Food Bank which operates on a voucher system to help those in need in the Carmarthen area. It has been suggested that a box for collecting food items could be available, in the vestibule and Friendship Centre. This would entail the recruitment of a volunteer to set up and maintain the box and make deliveries to the central food bank.

Another venture, set up primarily by the Lammas Street Centre is called 'Fresh Start.' It also operates on a voucher system and provides those in need with basic essentials. Items are assembled in various packs, such as for use in kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms and, on receipt of a voucher, is given to those who are attempting to make a fresh start in life. It may not be possible for Babell to store equipment but individuals could may wish to make a direct approach to the Lammas Street Cent. The Centre can alswo be accessed via the Internet. The email address is: freshstart@englishbaptistchurch.org.uk.

Thank you for this Joy. It gives me much pleasure to hear of the English Baptist Church in Lammas Street as I was minister there from 1987 until 2000. I had a part, along with others, in setting up what was then known as the 'Drop-In' Centre and it is good to know that the work we started has not only been sustained but expanded. I am particularly proud of having had involvement in initiating the annual Christmas Day Lunch which, twenty five years on, is ongoing catering, last year, for 80 or more persons.

I would like to start something similar at Babell, next Christmas. Our aim would not be to compete with Lammas Street but, rather, to complement the wonderful work done there. We could begin by sharing the day with members of our own congregation who are on their own during the festive season. I appreciate, of course, that many have families and are committed elsewhere that day. Speaking, only for myself, I would prefer to be part of a church based Christmas and would be glad to hear from others who share that view. Do let me know what you feel.

MFS

BETHESDA RIP WIRE

Did you see the recent series of 'Weatherman Walking?' Everyone's favourite weatherman, Derek Brockway, was walking in the vicinity of Bethesda, North Wales and, whilst there, took the opportunity of going on the mile long Rip Wire which enabled him to 'fly' at speeds of 60 miles an hour over the slate quarries and beyond, looking down on the wonderful scenery of Snowdonia.

I suggest that we make the 'Rip Wire' a sponsored event, possibly in late May, the aim being to raise money towards that cost of upgrading our kitchen and toilet facilities and, once again, enhancing our work on behalf of the community in which we have been set. Please let me know if you would like to do the Rip Wire? I believe it costs £50 per person. We would also need to pay the cost of B&B for one night. Each participant would need to meet these costs themselves, so maximising the amount of sponsorship that will be raised. It could be really exciting and something to be remembered all our lives.

MFS

LENTEN DISCUSSION GROUP

We will all have been shocked by the recent happenings in Paris. For the umpteenth time in recent years Islamic fanatics, believing that Allah approved of their actions, murdered those who, in their view, had dared to insult the prophet, Mohammed.

As is always the case politicians, afraid of offending Moslem sensitivities, are quick to emphasise that violence of this kind has nothing to do with Islam and is representative of a perverted interpretation of the Islamic faith.

There may be some truth in that assertion. That said, the Koran is like a pick and mix selection. If you want peace you can find peaceable verses. If you want war you can find bellicose verses.

The problem with Islam is that the Koran is seen as the very word of God. As such one must not criticise it. It is not possible to describe any verse as being unworthy. To suggest that the text is in need of revision is not permissible and, Islam, in consequence, is stuck in a time warp. It is incapable of being reformed.

Patrick Sookhdeo, director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity wrote an article for the Spectator in 2005. He pointed out that the Koran contains contradictory views about violence and that, in order to cope with the contradictions, Islamic scholars developed the principle of abrogation, whereby later texts trump earlier ones. Unfortunately, the peaceable passages in the Koran are mostly early, dating from Muhammad's time in Mecca. The more belligerent verses tend to date from later, after his flight to Medina. The

result is that *“the mantra ‘Islam is Peace’ is almost 1,400 years out of date. It was only for about 13 years that Islam was peace and nothing but peace. For today’s radical Muslims – just as for the mediaeval jurists who developed classical Islam – it would be truer to say ‘Islam is war.’”* Sookhdeo concludes that those who murder in the name of Allah may well come from the very core of the Muslim community and are motivated by a mainstream interpretation of Islam.

The Bible, arguably, contains far more violent passages than does the Koran and to read certain parts of the Old Testament is to enter a world in which Yahweh, the god of the Hebrew people, appears almost psychopathic. Even parts of the New Testament encourage Anti-Semitism, with the Gospel of John’s tirade against ‘THE JEWS’ being cited by the Nazi Party as justification for the Final Solution. As a thinking Christian I have the right, denied to Moslems, of saying – *“These scriptures have wrought much evil and have nothing to do with the God revealed in Jesus Christ.”*

I would go further. I believe that the Christian Church, sooner or later, will have to address the unworthiness of some of its scriptures.

What I would like us to do during Lent is to examine the violence in the Bible and to discuss our response to the passages in question.

I would emphasise that these discussion groups may well be uncomfortable. They will certainly challenge our belief systems. If we are to find them helpful an open mind is essential. A fundamentalist approach to these discussions could well prove destructive.

Lent, this year starts in the middle of February. I will not be back in action until March. Our Quiz Night is on Monday March 2nd. I suggest that our discussion group meets on the subsequent Monday evenings – **MARCH 9th, 16th, and 23rd** **at 6.30pm.** A WARM WELCOME.

Mike Shephard

Space Filler Multiply your age by two. Add 5. Multiply the result by 50. Add the number of coins in your pocket. Subtract the number of days in a year. Think silently of the total thus far reached. If you add 115 to the number you should be left with 4 digits. The first two give your age, and the second two the number of coins you had in your pocket.

AN IMPOSSIBLE LANGUAGE

It was mutations that finally beat me;
I was foxed by my *mab* and my *fab*.
My *merch* and my *ferch* just confused me;
As too did my *tad* and my *thad*.
I soon learned the Welsh word for children,
And was aware that they were called *plant*.
But nothing in Welsh is that simple;
For then came the *phlant* and the *blant*.
The Welsh word for brother perplexed me.
I truly believed it was *brawd*.
But then came those damnable changes,
Which made him my *frawd* or my *mrawd*.
I thought on these changes at *brecwast*;
Or *frecwast* as it can be named;
Yet another example of nonsense,
For which someone should be blamed.
I attended a meeting in *Caerdydd* -
Which often mutates to *Gaerdydd*.
That this makes a language flow smoothly,
Is something I can't quite believe.
I went to my GP in turmoil;
Mutations were making me ill.
I cannot remember who saw me;
It was *doctor* or *noctor* Gill.
I said that the language depressed me –
I spoke of dark cloud in life's sky.
I told her the word was *cymylog*;
When she offered *gymylog*, I cried.

I said that Welsh made me *diflas*,
And told her how I truly felt.
She told me to render it *ddiflas*,
And explained just how it was spelt.
It was starting to snow when I left her;
I thanked God I had a warm *cot*.
But then came the doubt and the questions;
Is it a *chot* that I've *got*?
I soothed my stressed mind with calm music;
I spell *cerddoriaeth* with C.
There can be a variant spelling,
For the word, being female, takes G.
I've decided that all female cousins,
Should, from this moment be banned.
If I tell you the word is *nghefneder*,
My reason you will understand.
I am certain our long distant forebears,
Were cruel and heartless and mean;
They invented these awful mutations,
To add to one's tears and screams.
And so, in frustration and sorrow,
I bid the Welsh language, Goodbye;
From now on the book, *Cwrs Mynediad*
Unused on my bookshelf will lie.

Mike Shephard ©

Actually the poem, mistakes included, is not quite true. I continue to enjoy learning Welsh and am grateful to Mrs Bronwen Wilkins for her patience with the Beginners Class that meets at Babel Chapel, Carmarthen every Thursday from 9.30am to 10.30am. Do feel free to join us. There is no charge.

That said it is a hard language to learn and one does wonder if mutations are necessary. Incidentally, I know of one language that is harder than Welsh. It is the language of love, as preached by Jesus. Not one of us is able to master it fully. Fortunately God has given us the gift of eternity to learn it!!!

BABELL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

The Friendship Centre is a place where everyone is welcome and where none experience rejection. We are non-judgemental in our outlook and attitude and aim to be an inclusive grouping. We refuse to discriminate on grounds of background, age, gender or sexual orientation. We are open to people of every religion and of no religion. Our purpose is not evangelistic though, as disciples of Jesus, we are motivated by our love and regard for him. The Friendship Centre is one small way in which we can 'act out' his ministry of care and compassion for others.

Far more people are in distress of mind and body because they are starved of love than because their religious beliefs are in a muddle, or because these have largely been given up. I feel sad when I pass some churches and realise that their main doors are open only for an hour on Sundays and that if one penetrated through the back or side doors to various meetings one would only be offered devotional succour: prayer, hymns and exhortation.

People must sometimes pass those doors on the way to commit suicide (It has been estimated that, in Britain, forty thousand people a year contemplate taking their own life) or on their way to ask their doctor questions which he or she is not trained to answer. Countless others who have not reached that level of despair nevertheless feel frustrated and unhappy because life has become meaningless. Far more people are ill because they are unhappy, than are unhappy because they are ill.

In a sense, the various healing movements, the existence of organisations such as Relate, Rotary and Round Table clubs – are a rebuke to the churches in that men and women have not found in them an answer to their questions, the satisfaction of their need of fellowship, or adequate scope for their service to others. All this and much, much more they should have found in the churches and would have done so if the churches had cared more for people and less for creed and ceremony.

I know of churches which are counselling centres, never closed to the needy, where a wider use of dedicated laymen and lay women is made than is possible when they are only used to hold office or to conduct services as lay

readers or local preachers. There are Christian mothers, lawyers, teachers, relate counsellors, reflexologists, therapists, psychiatrists, medical men and women and business men and women ready to give advice, who would willingly give time each week to work which the minister alone cannot hope to offer. Of more than one church I can speak from experience, and concerning them, it would be true to say that there is scarcely any trouble into which a person could fall but the minister could say, "We have just the person you need to advise you."

It may be said that other social services meet people's needs, the National Health Service for instance, but few doctors have time to sit down and listen to a problem that is a real and frantic worry to someone, but which, in the telling and the advice, may take an hour, and many such problems are nothing to do with medicine or even psychiatry. As one minister of religion said: "Am I to send people to a psychiatrist because they are lonely?"

Loneliness is a problem for many and, when it is linked to the death of a partner, can be devastating. Surely the churches have a part to play here.

The experience of divorce, likewise, can be highly traumatic and with 42% of marriages breaking down such trauma is increasing year on year. Of those who cohabit 27% will have separated before the five year mark and the associated heartbreak, especially for the children, cannot be imagined. In my work as a Family Court Adviser, I see the 'fallout' at first hand and often think that the churches should be ministering to broken families.

Think, too, of prisoners released into the community, often without any support systems in place. Is there not a role for churches here?

The problem is that many churches have become too respectable to exercise a ministry of caring, something which frustrated me during my work as a probation officer. I frequently encountered offenders who would benefit were they to have the support of a loving, accepting and tolerant church community but referral was impossible by the dearth of suitable fellowships.

Churches frequently say that the lack of resources prevent them from exercising such a ministry. Resources would be found if we were willing to tear down or sell our barn like buildings and unite with other struggling churches in order to form a viable congregation. I hate to sound disloyal to the brave souls

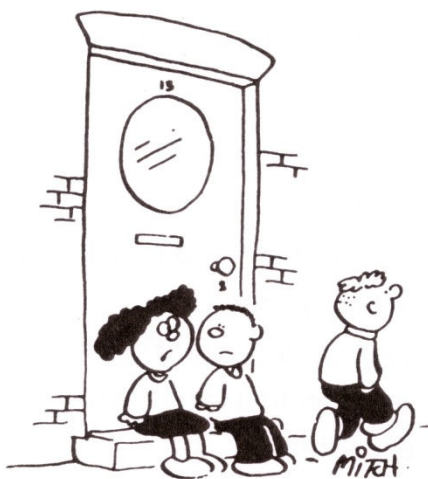
who strive to keep the doors of a struggling church open but to what purpose is their effort? Were we to unite we could do so much more and, not least of all, in the sphere of service to our community.

The possibilities of the church are immense. Ideally it is the Christ centred , loving community drawn together in fellowship to worship God, to learn of his ways with men and women, and to care and pray for one another and for all those “who, in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity.”

Such, in short, is what our Friendship Centre is all about. If you attend Babell but have not yet discovered the centre do please call in. You may feel that you do not need its services, but we can all offer friendship to others. If you live locally and would like to drop in, you will be welcomed, albeit in a quiet and unobtrusive way. You do not need to be a church goer to attend or even be particularly religious. If the truth be told I am not overly religious yet am the minister of the church!

You will certainly not be preached at. Jesus told his followers to go into the world and preach the Gospel. He said nothing about using words!

Mike Shephard



"His mother must be a lousy cook — they say prayers before every meal . . ."



THE OVERCROWDED HEARTH

The following verse is written 'tongue in cheek' and is intended to be humorous. That said, it does have a serious point to make. One notes, for instance, that the only people whom Jesus threatened with hell were those who thought themselves among the save

A vicar, quite conservative, had fathered children three.
Two of them, both Christians, were good as good can be.
They went to church on Sundays, to worship, sing and pray.
And shared the same ambition; to preach 'the word' one day.

The other son, the black sheep, was rebel through and through.
He had no time for narrow ways; they were for him taboo.
He saw no point in churches and hated "all that stuff."
And of his father's sermons, he'd really had enough.

His father nagged him daily; his brothers prayed and prayed.
But this younger sibling ignored salvation's way.
They pointed out his failings; admonished him and preached.
The rebel, though, would not be caught and stayed out of their reach.

They warned him of God's judgement; and threatened him with hell:
"Become like us!" they pleaded; to which their brother yelled:
"Become like you? No thank you! Self-Righteous! Bigots! Prigs!
I'd rather be a prodigal; sent out to feed the pigs!"

One chill and frosty morning; or so I've heard it told;
The father lit a fire; and warmed his hands so cold.
His thoughts were of a heavenly land, where winter winds don't blow.
He said: "I'm saved and chosen! I'm heaven bound! I know!"

The elder boy now entered; and was taken by the hand.
He joined his father on the hearth and by the heat did stand.
"I dreamed a dream last night," said he (as he poked the coal in grate):
"I dreamed I was in paradise where endless bliss awaits.

With that the second son came in; He also had been blessed.
He, too, had dreamed of heaven; and had awoke refreshed.
"God bless you child!" his father cried: "Come here and stand by us."
He basked within his father's love; and relished all the fuss.

The youngest son, the outcast, received no 'God bless you!'
A chill 'hello' was all he got; but that was nothing new.
"Guess what?" he said on entering; Last night I dreamed of hell!
And of its flame and anguish, I can't begin to tell."

The 'threesome' now did chorus: "But tell us what you saw!"
They were, each one, astonished; and filled with deepest awe.
"Describe to us your vision! Relate to us the sight!"
They truly thought this foolish boy had, seen, at last, the light.

"What is hell like? I'll tell you – it is much the same as earth:
I would even say it is like home; devoid of joy and mirth.
I could not see the fire; the flame could not be reached;
The hearth was overcrowded; WITH FOLK LIKE YOU WHO PREACH!"

Mike Shephard ©



"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE BORED?"

IN MY FATHER'S WHAT?

I saw God this morning. I was in the church porch, building a ramp. He walks right past me with a quizzical look on his face.

"Morning," he says, "You look busy."

"Just doing my bit," I says. Then he strolls inside and stands leaning on the font.

"What's all this then?" he says.

"Keep your voice down," I says, "there's a service going on."

"What is it?" he says, "A sort of play? Nice costumes."

I says, "No. It's Holy Communion."

"Holy what?" he says.

"It's like mass," I says.

He looks at me, totally blank.

I says, "It's a sort of celebration."

"What of?" he says.

"Of that last meal your lad had when he was down here," I says.

He says, "Come off it, there's nothing to celebrate there; that was the night he got mugged. What are they having?"

I says, "A crumb of bread and a sip of wine."

He says, "Are they slimming?"

I says, "No it's just like – symbolic."

"Get on with you," he says, "I think you're pulling my leg. Our kid had meat, and fruit, and bread, and all that sort of thing, you know a proper do. What's the point of this like?"

I says, "Well the bread represents his body and the wine reminds us of his blood."

He says, "Oh."

"It's the central bit of the whole religion," I says, "like the cross is its symbol."

He says, "I'd have thought an open tomb might have been a bit more appropriate, but then that's me being pedantic?"

I says, "Come on, it was your lad's idea like. He told us we had to do it on a regular basis."

"Give over," he says, "stop putting words into his mouth. He told you to give him a thought every time you feed yourself and at the same time thank me for what you've got on the table."

"Have we got it wrong?" I says.

"Trust me," he says, "I wrote the script."

He looked up at the building. "What is this place?" he says.

"Stop larking about God," I says, "It's a church!"

I could see I'd lost him.

"A what?" he says.

"A church, you know, like a temple."

"A temple?" he says.

"You know, like in Jerusalem, Solomon's temple."

"It's nothing like it!" he says. "Besides I got the Roman army to flatten that."

"Well, they can't all be on that scale." I says. "We've got thousands of them to look after."

"Thousands?" he says. "What for?"

"So we can praise you," I says.

He looks at me, totally vacant. "Is it me" he says, "or have you lot missed the point?"

"You're not telling me you're God and you don't like churches," I says.

"Oh no," he says, looking round, "It's very nice, a lot of work's gone into it."

"Not half!" I says.

"But not a deal of common sense," he says.

"What do you mean?" I says.

"Expensive is it?" he says. "Building and running a place like this, what's it come to?"

"Blimey, thousands of pounds," I says, "Why?"

"And you reckon there's a lot of them?" he says.

"Thousands," I says.

"So we're talking millions of pounds," he says, "just to keep the doors open."

"Oh aye," I says, "probably billions to look after them all."

He fixed me with one of them looks. "And half the world are starving?" he says.

"I was going to mention that," I says. "How can you let that happen?"

"Me?" he says, "What's it got to do with me? I've given you the food. You waste it. You've got the technology but you use it for killing. I give you the resources and you spend it on places like this. My lad told you what to do three times. 'Feed my sheep!' Are you deaf or stupid?"

I says, "Keep your voice down God, people are listening!"

"Good," he says, "that'll make a change. Didn't my lad tell you, 'what you do to each other, you do to me?' While this lot are on their knees dreaming of pearly gates and golden harps, they could be out there visiting the sick, helping the poor, doing something worthwhile, 'stead of sending me a wish list!"

I says, "But they're praising you, in the house of God, aren't you grateful?"

"Grateful?" he yells, "Grateful! Listen laddie" he says, "When did I ask for praise? I've had a belly full of praise, I've got praise up to here!"

"Then what do you want?" I says.

"Let me spell it out!" he says. "Help them as needs helping! Care for them as needs caring! And love one another like my lad loved you, and stop wasting my time, telling me how wonderful I am."

I says, "But your lad went to church."

"Three times, he said. "The first, he argued with the priests, the second he got chucked out, and the third he chucked everybody else out. Hardly amounts to seamless devotion, does it?"

"Do you mind at the back there?" The vicar's voice rang down the nave. "Yes, you at the back! Would you kindly keep your voices down, we're trying to pray?"

"Sorry, Reverend," I stammers, "but this here is God, and I think we should listen to him!"

"When I see God, I shall know him for myself," he says. "We all shall."

"Well, I hope you're right," I says. "Cos there's a fair discrepancy between what you're saying and what he's on about! He's trying to show us the way!"

"Well would you ask him to show it somewhere else," he says, "we're trying to worship!"

I looks back at God, but he was already at the end of the path closing the gate.

"Can I walk with you?" I shouts.

"Whenever you like," he says, "but not just now eh? You finish building your ramp."

From 'God Worra Yorkshireman' by Jeff Loy

Smile Please

Two fishermen, piecing together their tackle on a river bank one Sunday morning heard the sound of the church bells calling to them across the meadow. 'We really ought to be matins,' acknowledged one. 'Well, I wouldn't be able to go, anyway,' said his friend, casting his line, 'my wife's ill.'

THE GIANT'S GARDEN by Oscar Wilde

Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.

It was a large, lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. "How happy we are here!" they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

"What are you doing here?" he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.

"My own garden is my own garden," said the Giant; "anyone can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself." So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board.

TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED

He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children now had nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside. "How happy we were there," they said to each other.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. "Spring has forgotten this garden," they cried, "so we will live here all the year round." The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. "This is a delightful spot," he said, "we must ask the Hail on a visit." So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

"I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming," said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; "I hope there will be a change in the weather."

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. "He is too selfish," she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. "I believe the Spring has come at last," said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.

What did he see?

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. "Climb up little boy," said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the boy was too tiny.

And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. "How selfish I have been!" he said; "now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever." He was really very sorry for what he had done.

So he crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant stole up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. "It is your garden now, little children," said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.

All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him good-bye.

"But where is your little companion?" he said: "the boy I put into the tree." The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.

"We don't know," answered the children; "he has gone away."

"You must tell him to be sure and come here to-morrow," said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.

Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. "How I would like to see him!" he used to say.

Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge armchair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. "I have many beautiful flowers," he said; "but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all."

One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.

Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.

Downstairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, "Who hath dared to wound thee?" For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet.

"Who hath dared to wound thee?" cried the Giant; "tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him."

"Nay!" answered the child; "but these are the wounds of Love."

"Who art thou?" said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.

And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, "You let me play once in your garden, to-day you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise."

And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NIGHTMARES
(Beware of perceptive children)

A class was looking at the story of Jonah and the whale. The teacher pointed out to the children that it would have been impossible for a human being to be swallowed by a whale. Although it was a very big mammal, its throat was very small. A little girl unconvinced by this notion stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale because it said so in the Bible. The now irritated teacher reiterated that a whale could not possibly swallow a human, it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I go to heaven, I will ask Jonah" The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you can ask him!"

A teacher had set a task for the children to draw their favourite character from the Bible. As she walked round the class looking at each child's work she noticed one little girl working diligently at a portrait, and she asked who it was going to be. The little girl replied, I'm drawing God" The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like" Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute"

The Ten Commandments were being discussed in a class of five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honour" thy Mother and thy Father, the teacher asked, "Is there a Commandment that tells us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Quick as a flash a little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill"

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

QUIZ & CAWL

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

Monday 2nd March 2015 at 7pm prompt

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

For further information contact Lee Whatley ☎ 07846 919453

Myfyrdod y Pasg

Yn aml y bydd y Gweinidog yn holi am gyfraniadau ar gyfer y cylchlythyr ac felly gan ei bod yn dymor y Grawys a'r Pasg yn nesau, dyma ddwyn ar gôf atgofion am ymweliad a wnaed ag Israel a'r hyn mae'n ei olygu i mi heddiw.

Mae gen i ar y "music stand" ger y piano record hir. Record ydyw o ganeuon ac emynau gan Gorws y BBC ar gyfer taith i Israel yn Hydref 1984. Sefydlwyd y Corws yn 1984 a gwahoddwyd John Hugh Thomas, arweinydd Côr Bach Abertawe, i'w arwain. Roeddwn eisoes yn perthyn i Gôr Bach Abertawe ac fe dderbyniwyd y rhai oedd yn dymuno gwneud yn aelodau o Gôr y BBC. Y gwaith cyntaf i ni ei berfformio oedd un o weithiau Handel sef Jephtha ac y mae rhan i angel yn yr oratorio hwnnw, i fachgen yn arferol. Fe'm rhyfeddwyd ni i gyd yn y rihyrsal y prynhawn hwnnw gan lais yr angel. Pwy ydoedd? Ie, Aled Jones yn fachgen tua 12 oed. Roedd nid yn unig yn swnio fel angel, roedd yn edrych fel angel. Yn dilyn hynny cafodd y corws wahoddiad i wneud dwy rhaglen deledu gydag Aled: y naill ar gyfer y Nadolig a'r llall ar gyfer y Pasg. Ble? Wel yn y Wlad Sanctaidd wrthgwrs ac roeddwn i wrth fy modd. Pwy na fuasai? Erbyn hyn roeddwn wedi cael swydd dysgu Lladin yn Ystalyfera, yn dysgu Addysg Grefyddol hefyd, ac, ynghyd â Pat, wedi fy ordeinio'n flaenor yn y Babell ac roedd mynd i Wlad yr Iorddonen a chanu yno y tu hwnt i bob breuddwyd.

Cawsom letya mewn Kibbutz ar gyrion Jerwsalem ac yna teithio yn gynnar o ddydd i ddydd i fannau arwyddocaol yn hanes Crist. Yn gyntaf, Sgwar Bethlehem ger Eglwys y Santes Catherine sydd yn ôl yr hanes wedi ei hadeiladu uwchben man geni Yr Arglwydd Iesu. Canu'r garol adnabyddus "Draw yn Ninas Dafydd Frenin" a wnaethom fan honno. Cymerodd Aled y bennill gyntaf ond gyda'r oll oedd yn digwydd o'm cwmpas, y Muezzin yn galw'r Mwslimiaid i'r awr weddi o uchel dŵr y Minaret, yr Iddewon Uniongred yn ei phylacteriau du yn brysur symud o fan i fan, roedd yn anodd iawn cadw rheolaeth ar unrhyw emosiwn wrth i ni ganu'r penillion oedd yn dilyn. Canu wedyn "Deep River" ar yr Afon Iorddonen a chorws bychan ohonom yn llythrennol ar lwyfan wedi ei godi dros yr afon. Canu yn y synagog yng Nghapernaum, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the Coming of the Lord." Yn Emaus, canu "We shall break bread together on our knees" heb anghofio Capel y Gwynfydau ar Fynydd y Gwynfydau. Cerdded lawr Mynydd yr Olewydd yn canu Dawel Nos a chael goleuni ar yr ymadrodd taith diwrnod Saboth. Ym mhennod gyntaf Llyfr yr Actau mae Luc yn dweud bod y disgyblion wedi cerdded o Fynydd yr Olewydd wedi'r Esgyniad yn ôl i Jerwsalem 'taith diwrnod Saboth'. Beth oedd 'taith diwrnod Saboth'? Wel yn ôl y deddfau Iddewig caniatwyd ond $\frac{3}{4}$ milltir o daith ar y Saboth ac mi ddaeth hwn yn glir wrth weld pellter Mynydd yr Olewydd dros Ddyffryn Cedron o Jerwsalem.

Daeth y daith i ben yng Ngardd Gethsemane ac yn y capel tywyll yno gyda'i murluniau tywyll yn portreadu'r frad ac wedyn gydag ymweliad â'r Ardd lle'r oedd y Bedd yn y Graig. Mae'n anodd credu erbyn heddiw fod y daith wedi cymryd lle o gwbl a hawdd fyddai dweud "Roeddwn i yno!" ond wrth i mi ysgrifennu fe gymer y geiriau hyn ystyr newydd. Ysgrifennodd Gwilym R Jones:

Mae ar ein traed ni laid Caersalem,
O'r Pasg y flwyddyn 33,
Mae ar ein dwylo greithiau'r ddraenen honno a blethwyd at yr uchel sbri.
O yr oeddym ninnau yno,
Ond rydym rywsut wedi hen anghofio.

Boed i eiriau'r gerdd hon fod yn ffocws ein myfyrio yn ystod y deugain niwrnod nesaf wrth i ni baratoi ar gyfer y Pasg.

HG

A visit to Israel

I have on a music stand by the piano an LP. It is a recording of songs and hymns sung by the BBC Chorus in preparation for their tour of Israel in the Autumn of 1984. The BBC Chorus was established in that year under the conductorship of John Hugh Thomas who also conducted the Swansea Bach Choir and as members of the Bach Choir we were invited to join the BBC Chorus. The first project was a performance in the Saint David's Hall of Handel's Oratorio Jephtha which has a part for an angel usually taken by a boy soprano. We were all in awe of the angel's voice at the rehearsal that afternoon. Who was he? Well none other than Aled Jones who was then 12 years of age. He not only sang like an angel but he also looked like an angel. Following this, the Chorus was invited to film two programmes, one for Christmas and the other for Easter in the Holy Land. What a privilege! By this time I was teaching at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, teaching Latin and Religious Studies and together with Pat had been ordained an elder at Babell, and visiting the Holy Land was beyond all expectations.

We stayed in a Kibbutz on the outskirts of Jerusalem and travelled early every morning to different locations for singing and filming. I remember quite vividly singing "Once in Royal David's City" on the Square of Bethlehem near the Church of Saint Catherine where, according to tradition, is the birthplace of Jesus. Aled took the first verse but with all that was happening around us, the Muezzin calling the Muslims to prayer, the Orthodox Jews going about their business dressed in their black phylacteries, it was very difficult to contain any emotion as we sang the remaining verses of that well known carol. We sang "Deep River" on the River Jordan quite literally on a platform raised across the river. Then it was "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the Lord" in the synagogue in Capernaum, a visit to the Church on the Mount of the Beatitudes and in Emmaus "We shall break bread together on our knees."

I was already well versed in the phrase "a Sabbath's journey" but was not really sure of its meaning. In the Book of Acts Luke says the disciples walked back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives after the Ascension- "a Sabbath's journey". It became all too clear as we made our procession by candlelight down the Mount Olives singing "Silent Night" in our long blue choir gowns at sunset which happened quite suddenly at about 5 o'clock in October. A Sabbath's day journey was according to Jewish Law $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile: the distance permissible to travel on the Sabbath day. From the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile.

The tour ended in the dark church of the Garden of Gethsemane with its murals portraying the betrayal and with the final scene in the Garden of the empty tomb. It was such a privilege to have been there although sometimes one even doubts whether it happened. We often say, don't we, "I was there!" But as I write, they take on a new meaning. The poet Gwilym R Jones wrote:

Mae ar ein traed ni laid Caersalem,
O'r Pasg y flwyddyn 33,
Mae ar ein dwylo greithiau'r ddraenen honno a blethwyd at yr uchel sbri.
O yr oeddym ninnau yno
Ond rydym rywsut wedi hen anghofio.

A brief paraphrase would be that we today carry on our feet Jerusalem's dust from the Easter of 33. On our hands we bear the marks of the thorns that were used for a crown in mockery and fun. O Yes, We were there, but somehow we have long forgotten.

Let this new meaning be the focus for the coming forty days as we prepare ourselves for Easter.

HG

WE ARE SURVIVORS

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio jabs, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball point pens, before dishwashers, tumble-driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes ... and before man walked on the moon. We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' was something we had for tea. We existed before house husbands and computer dating. Sheltered Accommodation was where you waited for a bus.

We were before Day-Care Centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts or word processors. For us a 'Time-Share' was togetherness, a 'chip' was a piece of wood or fried potato, hardware meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word. When we were young 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double decker bus to the terminus. In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in a coalhouse, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock Music' was a mother's lullaby while 'aids' just meant help for someone in trouble. We who were born in the 40s or before must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today but **BY THE GRACE OF GOD ... WE HAVE SURVIVED.**

THE DIFFERENCE

I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day.
I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me and heavier came each task.
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered. He answered - "You didn't ask."
I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on grey and bleak.
I wondered why God didn't show me. He said: "But you did not seek,"
I tried to come into God's presence and used all my keys in the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided: "My child - You didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning and paused before starting the day.
I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.

Contributed by Janet Thomas

SMILE PLEASE An English teacher spots a boy staring out of the window and calls out a question. "You, boy! Give me two pronouns." The boy looks around and says, "Who? Me?"

THE COMING QUARTER

Sunday March 1 st	2pm	Minister/ Communion
Sunday March 8 th	2pm	Minister
Sunday March 15 th	2pm	Revd Aled Maskell
Sunday March 22 nd	2pm	Pastor John Morgan
Sunday March 31 st	2pm	Minister/ Palm Sunday

Sunday April 5 th	10.30am	ALL AGE FAMILY SERVICE EASTER SUNDAY/Minister
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Sunday April 12 th	2pm	Mr Hugh Waddell
Sunday April 19 th	2pm	Minister/ Communion
Sunday April 26 th	2pm	Minister

Sunday May 3 rd	2pm	Minister/ Communion
Sunday May 10 th	2pm	Pastor John Morgan
Sunday May 17 th	2pm	Mr Hywel Hughes
Sunday May 24 th	2pm	Minister
Sunday May 31 st	2pm	Mr Marc Lonney

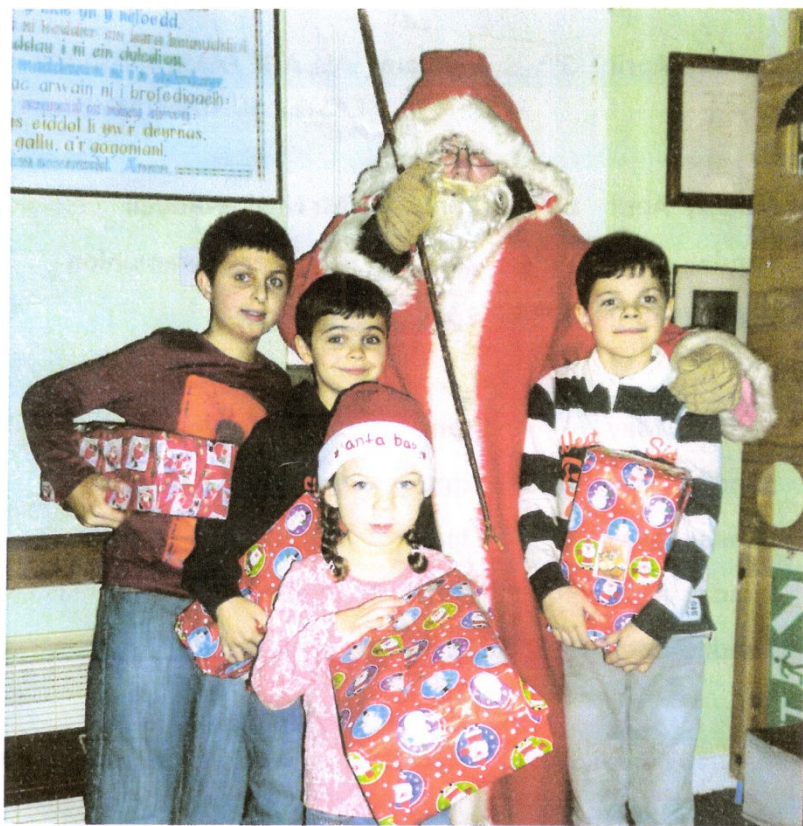
**MAUNDY THURSDAY 2nd April at 7pm/ Minister/ Communion &
Foot Washing**

**GOOD FRIDAY 3rd April 12 noon onwards/ March of Witness
Starting point. Wesley Methodist Church**

**LENTEN DISCUSSION GROUPS/ Violence and the Bible/Monday
March 9th, 16th and 23rd/7pm**

Sunday School News/Newyddion Yr Ysgol Sul

Mae'r Clwb Sul yn cwrdd bob Sul am 10.30 ac yr oedd adeg y Nadolig yn brysur iawn fel arfer. Roedd dwy Noson Garolau i baratoi ar eu cyfer ac wrthgwrs te parti nos Wener ola'r tymor. Fe adroddwyd hanes y doethion trwy ddrama fechan gan y plant gyda chymorth eu mamau Liz a Kelly a rhaid eu canmol am eu hymdrechion. Roedd y canu yn arbennig ac yn glo ar y cyfan. Yna, yn y parti yr oedd gan Sion Corn ddiddordeb mawr i glywed eu storiâu ac fe gawsant eu gwobrwyo gydag anrhegion hyfryd, fel y gwelwch yn y llun. Diolch i'r rhieni am eu cymorth ac am eu cefnogaeth drwy'r flwyddyn.



Sunday Club meets every Sunday at 10.30 and Christmas time proved to be very busy; two candlelight services to prepare for and a Christmas party. This time the children performed the story of the Wise Men and their singing was the icing on the cake. Father Christmas, as seen in the photo, was particularly interested in their achievements during the year and all four were rewarded with lovely presents. We also grateful to Liz and Kelly for their participation in the services and for their support [and Ian's] throughout the year.