

AN EASTER REFLECTION

Beloved Lord,
 Once again You are leading us to those three days that lie at the heart of our belief in You.
 The Friday we have learned to call "Good"
 The Saturday that is a Silent Mystery
 The Sunday of the Purest Joy.

So why do we have to call that Friday "Good", Lord?
 With all its tragedy and that terrible cry of dereliction?
 Is it because it stands at the heart of our belief in You?
 With the question "Why?" pointing to an incredible purpose and the answer we have in that incredible purpose which brought us the Father's amazing gift of Salvation, even as you pronounced your task is "Finished" and gave up your spirit of your own accord.

And then the Saturday of Silence in which we wonder where you went in those hours of darkness?
 In a creed written by men it says that you descended into Hell.
 What greater "Hell" could there be than crucifixion?
 Except perhaps the hell of souls lost in a place of unbelief
 a place that warns us of the danger in rejecting You.

And then we come to that Sunday Lord that we have learned to call "Easter Day"
 That glorious day of Resurrection.
 That wonderous day of your complete Restoration as our beloved Lord and Saviour for ever at the right hand of the Father
 and yet so close – keeping your promise never to leave us or forsake us
 as you watch over us as our everlasting Shepherd.
 Thank You Lord.

*The Reverend Valerie H Davies,
 Fishguard (Sister B)*

Farewell Menna



At the end of February we said farewell to Mrs Menna Jones who had served as the Officer Manager for over twenty years. Without a doubt we will miss her tremendously. Menna worked quietly and conscientiously for the Churches and ensured a well organised and efficient office for the Union. We will have an opportunity during the Council meeting to recognise Menna for her faithful service over the years. Thank you, Menna!

As we say farewell to Menna, we are delighted to welcome Ms Gwen Vaughan who will be assisting us on a temporary basis. Gwen has already commenced and we hope that she will be happy with us.

RETIREMENTS



We ask God's blessing on the Reverends Alwyn Daniels, Carn Ingli Pastorate and Denzil John, Cardiff on their retirement following many years of faithful service. We wish them a healthy and happy retirement. Thank you, Alwyn and Denzil!

Ministers' Retreats

WELSH LANGUAGE MINISTERS' RETREAT

On Thursday, 4 February a retreat was held for Welsh Language Ministers over Zoom. We were led by the Reverend Dr Densil Morgan who spoke about two important figures in our history as Welsh Baptists, namely John Myles (1621-1683) and Timothy Thomas (1720-1768). Both characters belonged to very different periods and their ministries too were different. John Myles' emphasis was on mission work and pioneering whilst Timothy Thomas pastored churches that had already been established with learning playing an important part in the life of the Churches. We had a great discussion as we considered the lessons for today. Thank you to all who supported the event but most of all thanks to Densil for reminding us of our roots and for stimulating a valuable discussion.

ALL WALES BAPTIST MINISTERS CONFERENCE 2021

With the annual visit to Saundersfoot not possible this year there was more time to plan an online conference that offered something different to Ministers and church leaders in the English-speaking Baptist churches across Wales. Whilst we missed the informal conversations over mealtimes, it was good to welcome new faces joining us online from all parts of Wales including friends from North and Mid Wales.

For many church leaders the past year has been challenging and therefore this conference was not about providing more online meetings but to offer a 'sabbath break'. Our morning devotions were led by Rev Andy Percey, Minister of Manvers Street Bath who spoke so helpfully about finding rest in a fast-paced world. Speaking from his own experience, Andy helped many of us to think again about our approach to work and the God who gives the gift of rest.

We were blessed to have the Rev Yinka Oyekan, BUGB President, to share and pray with us. His enthusiasm brought fresh inspiration to some weary Ministers. Several leaders took the opportunity to be prayed for, recognising that we all need that encouragement from the Lord. Our final session was hosted by Mark Ord from BMS World Mission with a panel discussion around 'What does Missional leadership look like for us today?' We heard from several contexts around Wales and learnt a lot from each other in the resulting discussion.

It would be fair to say that all those who attended found the online format engaging and a helpful time of retreat and renewal.

Video recordings of the sessions are available here if you would like to view them:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBx84r90rdfYQjkuFVbzPJEI7Na6pXhtV>

A WORD OF THANKS

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you all for your greetings, cards and the gifts I received on my retirement at the end of February this year. Special thanks also to all those who have contributed towards my testimonial – I very much appreciate this.

It has been a special privilege and honour to work for the Union for over 20 years. I greatly appreciate that, through my post, I have had such a wonderful opportunity to meet so many ministers, secretaries of our churches and the diligent and conscientious members of the denomination.

I am also very grateful for having been able to work happily with all union staff throughout the time at Ilston House and at the Llwyfan.

In particular, I will be forever grateful for the privilege of having worked with three General Secretaries – The Reverends Peter Dewi Richards, Peter M Thomas and Judith Morris.

*Every Blessing,
Mrs Menna Jones*

MISSION & DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The Baptist Union of Wales is looking for a new member of the team to follow Menna Machreth in her role as Mission Co-ordinator. We are grateful to Dr Christian Williams who stepped into the role temporarily, not once but twice! Christian now needs to return to his duties with the Corporation and Union projects.

This new role reflects the increasing need to communicate effectively in mission to a digital world and to support churches looking for help in this area. Many of us have had to learn new skills during the global pandemic and we are hoping that the person appointed will be able to develop this further. They will also bring focus to our engagement with younger generations and explore new ways to connect with this age group. Our hope and prayer is that together we will be able to inspire a new generation of leaders among our Churches and Associations.

The position is full-time, although there is flexibility to consider a job share arrangement within the role.

If you know anyone who might be looking for a new challenge, please share this position with them. More details will be available on the BUW website in the coming weeks.

TIMOTHY RICHARD APPEAL



Please note that there are new resources (videos, powerpoint, reflections) on our website for the Timothy Richard Appeal.

Many thanks to the Reverend Peter Thomas for preparing the new material.

PLACEMENT AT NEWCASTLE EMLYN



I commenced a placement at Capel y Graig, Newcastle Emllyn during the pandemic in September 2020 and I had shared with the deacons many ideas about what I wanted to achieve during the year.

The intention was to preach one Sunday per month; work in the schools and the Cylch Meithrin (which is held in the vestry); spend time at Glyn Nest and visit members at home. Discussions had also begun with the new vicar, the Reverend Johnathan Parker. We had heard a great deal about the intention to relax the restrictions by September and that there would be an end to the

distressing and frustrating situation. However, whilst many of the plans had to be put aside, we proceeded full of hope and confidence that the situation would improve and that we would be able to open the chapel doors once again. The most important thing was to introduce myself to the members. So a newsletter was prepared to inform the membership that I had commenced the placement and was ready to work hard for them in the name of our Lord Jesus. And after that of course, it was necessary to try to open the chapel doors safely once again. Phone calls became an important part of pastoral work, with numerous conversations as we got to know each other.

With the help of the deacons and Dylan, my husband, we managed to open the chapel at the end of September. It was pleasing to see the chapel, although we were in our masks and socially distanced, comfortably full. Members, friends and visitors from other chapels had come to support, and also to seek tranquility and an opportunity to worship our Lord in a chapel once again. The following week it was greatly encouraging to welcome a friend and mentor to preach in our Thanksgiving Service, the Revd D

Densil Morgan. I cannot thank him enough for his support and encouragement over the past four years. The opportunity of being a student in his company has been invaluable.

The team at Y Graig were very positive regarding the immediate future and the intention was to proceed with the original plan over the coming months. Unfortunately, the Covid outbreak increased significantly in the area. The schools closed and it was agreed to keep the chapel doors closed over Christmas. And then another lockdown was announced! Newsletters, telephone calls and Christmas cards were shared amongst members so as to keep in touch.

With the vaccine bringing new hope, we hope and pray that we will soon be able to open the doors of the chapel once again. However, the health and safety of the congregation comes first. This year has not gone as we hoped but I feel that I have got to know the members of Y Graig well and have made lifelong friends who will stay with me as I prepare for the future, and I thank them sincerely for their support.

Sian Elin Thomas

THE INTERNSHIP YEAR SO FAR

I have spent the first half of the academic year as an intern with Tabernacl Church, Llwynhendy, my home church, under the guidance of the Reverend John Treharne. We both meet regularly to discuss the contents of the reading scheme I am following, as well as pastoral issues. At Tabernacl I have opportunities to preach on Sundays and lead weekly prayer meetings, organise the Youth Club, and co-ordinate the Sunday School for younger children.

Since January I have been working with Carmel Church Pontlliw, and I look forward to being yet more involved in the life of the Church under the leadership of the Minister, the Reverend Vincent Watkins. Carmel Church has just resumed meeting every Sunday morning in the Chapel building after being closed during the recent lock-down period,

and they meet every Sunday afternoon on Zoom - I recently had the opportunity to lead one of these services, and I'm sure I will have opportunities to contribute more to the life of the Church over the coming months. In addition to this, I have benefitted greatly from the Reverend John Derek Rees of the West Glamorgan Association as my mentor.

Although I would never call myself 'technologically gifted', my understanding in the field has developed over the year (I'm sure this is true for many of us) as many of the meetings in both Churches have been held on the internet.

At this time of the year I would like to share one thing that is important to me about Easter - it reminds me of the heart of the Gospel - Christ

crucified. Although we should remember and reflect on this every day, Easter is a time of year when we traditionally remember the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. This is what I really appreciate about Easter - the heart of the Gospel - Christ dying in my place on the Cross as an atonement for my sin.

Gruff Jenkins



Covid-19 at Glyn Nest

It is with sadness that we note how Glyn Nest Home recently had to face the most challenging and distressing situation in its history. We were on the verge of being forced to close. It is good to assure our generous supporters within the denomination that the situation has improved since then and that the signs are now much more encouraging.

We are grateful to Carmarthenshire County Council for coming to our aid at the eleventh hour. With the pandemic at its peak and, Jayne Evans, Manager of Glyn Nest, along with a number of her colleagues infected by Covid-19, the outlook was bleak. Our darkest hour was undoubtedly Christmas Eve when we understood that there was possibly an intention to close the Home and move the residents the following day to the Llanelli area. We will be indebted to Carmarthenshire County Council for stepping in and providing the services of a Manager from one of the neighbouring homes for a period of one month, as well as a Responsible Person. With the additional support of Care Agencies, the situation was brought under control. We also received the support of Members of Parliament and the Senedd, County Officers and local Councillors who worked in the background to help bring the situation to the attention of those who were able to help.

It is fair to acknowledge the hard work of Judith Morris, Bonni Davies, Nigel Vaughan and Dr Carol Williams over many weeks. We did not leave a stone unturned. Up to

three meetings per week were held over Zoom. Due to the variety and frequency of problems that needed to be resolved and due to everyone's desire to contribute, some meetings would last for hours. All Directors made a sterling contribution at this time of crisis.

Responsibility for the day-to-day running of the Home was transferred back into Jayne's safe hands within a month and we give thanks that she is gradually getting stronger. Others have returned in the meantime and seven new members of staff have been employed in the hope that the additional staffing will prove to be sufficiently resilient should we ever find ourselves in a similar situation again.

Six of the residents have passed away, four from Covid-19 and two from natural causes. We sympathise with their families and thank them for their patience and grace. The home was not blamed for what happened. Indeed, a number of letters were received from families expressing gratitude for the staff's gentleness of care to their loved ones.

I have to admit that I personally learned a great deal. I feel confident that we will emerge from the situation stronger – and having benefited from our troubles. Please continue to hold the home in your prayers and especially the heroic workers who continue to suffer from the long-term effects of this terrible illness.

*Reverend Irfon Roberts,
Chair of Glyn Nest Home*

Senana Cymru Annual Meetings

Senana Annual Meetings: Caersalem Dyfed, near Newport and Gwaun Valley, Pembrokeshire. The Annual Senana Cymru Meetings were scheduled to have been held in Pembrokeshire on the 6 May last year. Due to the pandemic, the meetings were postponed until this year.

Unfortunately, we have found ourselves in a similar situation. Mrs Bonni Davies, from the Gwaun Valley, will therefore not be inducted as the Senana Cymru President until May 2022. We give thanks to Mrs Anne Lapage, Ruthin, for agreeing to continue as the President for a further year.

In the meantime, it is our intention to hold a short "Zoom" meeting on Wednesday, 5th May 2021 at 2pm. All are welcome and even if you are not able to use Zoom, this facility allows you to participate by phone. A warm welcome is extended to anyone who wishes to join via the internet or by home telephone. Please contact Bonni on 01239 820333 or email bonni@ubc.wales for the link or telephone number for the meeting. **Annual Senana Conference, Lampeter:** In order to ensure the safety of delegates, it was agreed that the Conference be postponed until September 2022.

Cenn@d
YN CYNNWYS Y GOLEUAD A SEREN CYMRU

Welcome to Cenn@d

The new Welsh language weekly newspaper published by the Baptist Union of Wales and the Presbyterian Church of Wales has arrived!

This is the new publication which includes Seren Cymru and Y Goleuad. It is available on the website free of charge:

www.cennad.cymru

If you would like a paper copy then please contact the Reverend Aled Davies: 01766 819120. Please remember to send your news to Aled: aled@cennad.cymru

ANNUAL ASSEMBLIES

We are preparing for our Annual Meetings which will be held virtually with some face to face meetings attended by a limited number of people.

Please note the following dates:

**Welsh Language Assembly:
20-22 June 2021
(Virtual Meetings)**

**English Language Assembly:
23 May – 27 June 2021**
(Regional Meetings to be held throughout Wales culminating with a live broadcast on the 27 June at 6.30pm)

NEW BUW WEBSITE
We look forward to launching our new website in the coming weeks!

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR THE OFFICE:
Telephone number: 0345 222 1514
E-mail: post@ubc.cymru



Easter Blessings from Judith, Simeon, Bonni, Nigel, Helen, Christian and Gwen.