

the May

TREASURY 2024

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES



WHAT'S HAPPENS NEXT?

He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah!" Like Sunrise services, Easter Breakfasts, Lamb for lunch and a rousing chorus of *Thine Be The Glory* these are part of our Easter Sunday celebration.

But what happened on Easter Monday? What did you do next? For that matter what should we be doing now, a month on? How do we live in line with our belief that Jesus Christ is risen indeed?

The response amongst those first Christians was to do something. We know this because our New Testament follows up the account of Jesus' resurrection with a book called Acts.

Some preached. Others performed miracles. The Elders began to form

Christian communities, the deacons undertook the organisation of acts of service to, in particular, widows and orphans. Everyone shared everything they had.

But in our rush to replicate them in serving we are in danger of missing something. According to Luke, after the resurrection and ascension the disciples went back to Jerusalem where "they all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). This month the Presbyterian Church is encouraging every member to participate in a week of prayer. This month's issue includes information about it as does the website. We at *The Treasury* commend it to you as you consider, after Easter, what happens next.

PHOTO:
Ministers and workers
gathered for worship at
the Ministers retreat in
Aberystwyth in 2023



NEWS FOR THE CHURCHES

PCW WEEK OF PRAYER

As the Week of Prayer approaches, with its national Prayer Meetings and much more, I am mindful that the Presbyterian Church of Wales was used by God to shape modern Wales and that it made a huge impact on many nations of the world. We live in different times and we face different challenges, but prayer, which underpinned all that our ancestors in the faith did, is as relevant today as it ever was. We must pray. For the sake of a world in turmoil, we must pray. For the sake of a nation struggling without hope, we must pray. For the sake of our church, we must pray. Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do." (John 14:13). During the Week of Prayer let us accept this invitation to join with him in shaping the

future of our church, our nation and our world, let us pray.

Owen Griffiths is Chair of the Organising Committee of the Week of Prayer

NORTHOP HALL

The members of the church proudly unveiled this year's annual flower cross on Easter Sunday morning. It was commented that it was the best effort so far. A statement with which readers will no doubt agree.

LLANDUDNO

The Llandudno – Keswick Bible Week will be held in Gloddaeth church on 14 – 17 May 2024. The speaker will be Paul Mallard. Paul's overall theme for this year's Bible Week is 'Worshipping God with passion and serving Him

PHOTO: Members of Northop hall church with the flower cross

Llandudno-Keswick BIBLE WEEK 14-17 May 2024

with
PAUL MALLARD

**"WORSHIPPING GOD
WITH PASSION AND
SERVING HIM WITH JOY"**

Six sessions of inspirational
Bible teaching based on the
Psalms and Paul's letter to
the Philippians

At: **Gloddaeth Church**
Chapel Street, Llandudno, LL30 2BY



About our speaker

Paul Mallard is a retired Minister and a popular speaker. He is a past President of the FIEC and the Chair of its Theology Team. He is the author of numerous books, including 'An Identity to Die For: Know Who You Are' and his latest, 'Learning to Lament'

with joy', exploring his theme in the evenings through a study of Psalms 19, 103 and 66, and in the mornings through the first three chapters of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Volunteers are needed to steward, help with refreshments, serve on the praise team or with prayer. Please contact gloddaethchurch.org for more information.

MOLD

A powerful exhibition of original artwork depicting women from the Bible will be on display in Bethesda chapel, Mold over the May Bank Holiday weekend.

The stories of women from the Bible have provided inspiration for artists throughout history. Their resilience and strength resonate with us even today, regardless of our background or beliefs. We are touched by their struggles and their triumphs, which have inspired generations. Through the eyes of contemporary art, visitors will be

able to experience the personalities and lives of women of the Bible like never before. The artists featured in this exhibition have taken inspiration from these women's stories and created unique and thought-provoking works of art, including paintings, photography and mixed media. Each piece is a testament to the artist's interpretation of these women's experiences, offering a fresh perspective that challenges our thinking.

Visitors are invited to step into a world of creativity and imagination, where contemporary art meets timeless stories of courage, love and perseverance.



PHOTO:
The art exhibition at Mold

The exhibition will be open to the public during a coffee morning on Saturday 4th of May 10 – 12.30. The exhibition will also be open to groups by prior arrangement.

Bethesda Chapel, Mold CH7 1NZ, 2-7 May 2024. Entry is free.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

There was an excellent broadcast of *All Things Considered* on BBC Radio Wales broadcast on Easter Sunday. The programme entitled 'The Price of Faith' was presented by Rosa Hunt, who many of you may know and who did a superb job. Three Christians are interviewed - Susanna Koh from Malaysia, Sharon from North East India and Suleiman from Western Africa. We have been blessed to have had Susanna and Suleiman in Wales in recent weeks speaking at Open Doors events.

The link to listen to the broadcast, which is available for a month, is www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001xs5s.

These are the timings when each interview begins.

4:50 Susanna Koh talks about the abduction of her husband Raymond Koh in 2017

15:35 Sharon talks about the situation facing Christians in Manipur in North East India

22:00 Suleiman talks about the extreme violence facing Christians in Nigeria

I hope you will be blessed and challenged by the broadcast. Please pray that God would use it to raise awareness and to awaken believers to pray.

Jim Stewart is the Wales Church Relations Manager at Open Doors UK & Ireland

MISSION AND INNOVATION

A very warm welcome awaits at this year's Annual Conference on the theme of 'Mission and Innovation'.

Two renowned theologians will address the conference, the first presentation at 10am after the Devotion at 9.45. 'Stone upon Stone' is the title the Rev. Glyn Tudwal Jones, Cardiff has given to his address.

His title is taken from Jesus' words to his disciples when they were in Jerusalem, amazed at the glory of the Temple building. Jesus' reply was that a time was coming when the Temple would be completely destroyed, and not a stone would be left standing upon a stone. We in Western Europe have witnessed a spiritual upheaval that present us with many challenges including questions about the meaning of worship.

The second speaker, Corey Hampton from Mold will explore 'Mission in a Secular Age: Beyond Internalism/Immanence'. He is currently a Missionary Enabler in the North East Presbytery and is studying for his PhD in Divinity at the University of Aberdeen with the aim of becoming a Minister. He has an MA in Aspects and Implications of Biblical Interpretation from the London School of Theology.

There will be an opportunity at 2.00pm after lunch (own arrangements) to have an open discussion in the company of the two speakers.

The presentations will be in Welsh and simultaneous translation will be provided for Welsh Learners and non-Welsh speakers. Should you require the use of translation facilities, please contact the Secretary, the Rev. Megan Williams



to reserve your place. There will be a registration fee of £5 to be paid at the Annual Conference.

A very warm welcome awaits you at the 2024 Annual Conference in Llandudno on the 14th May. For further details, please contact the Revd Megan Williams:
megan.maescaled@btinternet.com
Telephone: 01248 713863
Mobile: 07837 345776

Rhys Bebb Jones
Cydllynnydd Hyfforddiant EBC PCW
Training Co-ordinator

PENCLAWDD

The Gower church at Penclawdd overlooking the estuary were pleased to host the annual South Wales Women's Rally. The speaker was Revd Owen Batstone who spoke on the verse I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. He reminded those listening that we all believe certain truths. These truths can get us out of bed in the morning or make us pull the duvet over our head in fear. Either way the Lord tells us truths in John 14 about our Heavenly Father that should inspire us and inspire us to tell others.

That verse is the inspiration for this year's theme book which was launched at the Rally.

PRESTATYN

On March 2nd, this year Prestatyn's Nant Hall Presbyterian Church took a major initiative in taking part in a Peace Walk in solidarity with those suffering due to the war between Israel and Hamas. The walk was organised by Revd Mike Smith's wife, Coral, who established the Prestatyn Peace Group and led the Walk driven by her sadness over the heart-wrenching plight of the suffering families in Gaza caught up in the conflict.

Several local churches of CYTUN, situated along the designated route, participated by opening their doors to the walkers, including Trinity Methodist, The Catholic Church, Rehoboth Welsh Presbyterian, The Parish Church and Nant Hall. More than one hundred and fifty Peace Walkers joined, including several Muslim families and supporters from other North Wales towns. Several carried banners and flags as well as

PHOTO:
Members and friends
of the Gower Pastorate
welcoming visitors to
the Women's Rally



desperately trying to feed and care for them in Rafah.

In Trinity Methodist Church candles were lit and roses placed beside them. Following a visit to the Catholic Church, they reached Rehoboth Presbyterian Church where they were warmly greeted by Revd Brian Jones and Nerys Biddulph and others of their congregation. Mrs Biddulph had prepared a table with a white cloth, candles and a beautifully, white painted tree branch. The walkers hung messages of love and prayer on the branches and some added more names to the huge Canvas from the Caernarfon Church, which was spread out on another table. They then proceeded to The Parish Church and finally on to Nant Hall Presbyterian where retired Minister Revd Mike Smith and Secretary of the church, Alun Jones were busy serving tea, coffee and biscuits in the hall. The church was also open with candles and a branch for messages and again roses were placed on the table. Back in the hall, Coral thanked the many who had supported the Peace Walk and she introduced a very special guest speaker from Mold, Mr David McKnight. He told the group how he had actually been in Jerusalem on October 7th and knew several British surgeons who had been working in the hospitals of Gaza and had also met Revd Dr. Munther Isaac. This Peace Walk made history as the first of its kind in this small, North Wales sea-side town and was well covered by the media and the local *Rhyl Journal* and Nant Hall and Rehoboth Presbyterian Churches shone as caring beacons of light in the town.

the huge canvas bearing hundreds of names of child victims brought along by Revd Anna-Jane Evans of Caernarfon.

Guided by local Community Police the Peace Walk stretched from the station all the way along to the top of the High Street to the chant of "Peace! Peace! The War must Cease!" reverberating all along the line and back. On reaching the Pendre Memorial Gardens, Mrs Coral Smith delivered a speech, which included several quotes from the sermon held in Bethlehem, by Lutheran Minister Revd Dr. Munther Isaac, entitled 'Christ in the Rubble'. In his Christmas sermon he said that "If Christ were to be born today, he would be born under the rubble in Gaza" and adding "We are tormented by the silence of the world". An impassioned poem and another speech followed this by members of the core group. The walkers headed for the churches where Coral read out the names of 30 children currently trying to survive in war torn Gaza, where she is in almost daily contact via Messenger, with a woman



serves around 20 people and families every Friday morning.

THE TREASURY

The editors were grateful to the office staff in Cardiff for marking their fifteen years in post at this journal.



CONNAH'S QUAY

Revd Wayne Adams visited Flintshire to see some of the work being undertaken by the Northern Presbytery's Pioneer Minister. He attended the Food hub which operates out of Quaystone church and which

Advertisements

ARDDANGOSFA JOHN ELIAS
250 MLYNEDD ERS EÍ ENI
JOHN ELIAS EXHIBITION
250 YEARS SINCE HIS BIRTH

Yn cynnwys enghreifftiau o'i lythyrau, nodiadau a lluniau o'r manau pwysig yn ei hanes

Including examples of his letters, notes and images of important places in his life

01/05/24 - 31/05/24
Canolfan Glanhwfa, Lôn Glanhwfa, Llangefni LL77 7EN
Oriau agor / Opening times: 9am - 4pm,
Dydd Mawrth - Gwener / Tuesday - Friday

CANOLFAN GLANHWFFA
CATHOLIC HERITAGE CENTRE
BANCOR

Exhibitor: Rhodri Iwan, Arddangosfa Llyfrau, Ffordd o'r Goffa, Stryd y Wylfa, Bangor. Images copyright: National Museum, National Library of Wales, Bangor, Wales.

Wayfiver Productions Presents

THE BELOVED SON
A NEW PLAY BY MURRAY WAITS

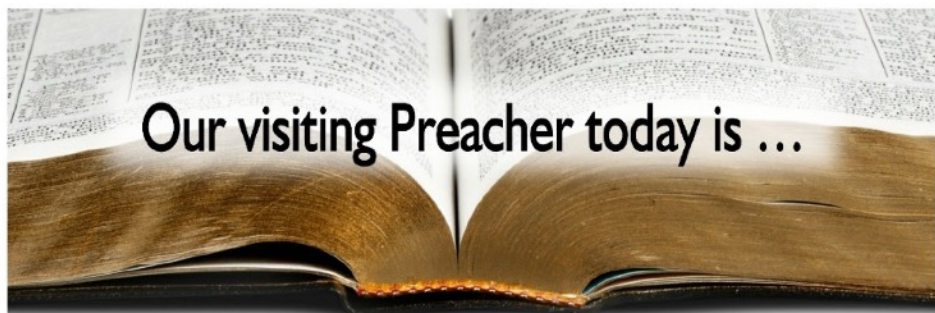
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Murray Waits | PERFORMED BY Andrew Harrison

From the creators of the acclaimed *Mr Dorian's Tree* and *Five From Heaven* comes a remarkable new play about the life of *Jesus Nazareth* (Gwyneth Hearn)

3RD | SATURDAY | MAY 11TH
WESLEY CHURCH CENTRE | ST JOHN'S ST | CHESTER | CH 1A
TICKETS £10 (UNDER 18s £5)

Tickets: Brian Hoyle (07743582041) bhoyle92@gmail.com or from the Wesley Office (01244322017) or at the door.
Refreshments available from Wesley's Café before and after the play
www.WESLEYCHESTER.CO.UK

*PHOTO:
Wayne Adams meeting
volunteers at the Food
hub at Quaystone
church.*



Our visiting Preacher today is ...

Is it difficult finding a preacher for your Sunday Service?

During 2024 we will be re-launching the series 'Our visiting preacher today is...' We hope that this series will help to solve this problem.

Chapels are finding it difficult to hold regular Sunday services, due to a shortage of preachers. Our hope that this project will assist our churches, so that the pulpit isn't empty on Sundays!

The package will include:

- A Sermon on film and a copy on Word which can be printed.
- Three suitable hymns will have been chosen.
- Bible readings will have been chosen.
- A written prayer.
- Three questions which can be asked to the audience to answer and discuss.

Two Zoom meetings have been arranged to discuss the project and the equipment required. Both meetings will be held in English on Thursday, February 22nd. You can join either meeting using the links below:

10.00am until 10.45am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85072499601?pwd=NkVOTGdHNnRlV0tQek53a1dNa243UT09>

Meeting ID: 850 7249 9601

Passcode: 210151

6.30pm until 7.15pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81420565020?pwd=ZjduYWdNOFdyOStmalRTbFhSZm9Zdz09>

Meeting ID: 814 2056 5020

Passcode: 726875

If you are unable to join on Zoom, perhaps you could ask someone to assist you? Alternatively, perhaps you could join a meeting organized by a nearby chapel.

Should you require further details or if you encounter a problem with joining a meeting, you are welcome to contact:

The Revd Gwyn Rhydderch (PCW - Head of Projects and Communications):

gwyn.rhydderch@ebcpw.cymru or telephone 07979 860537

or

Rhys Bebb Jones (Training Coordinator at PCW):

rhys.jones@ebcpw.cymru

Advertisement

War, religion and my mechanic

Not too long ago Gareth the mechanic was fixing my car tyre. He noticed my Bible and said, 'your Bible is the cause of all the wars in the world.' I said 'interesting', took his email address and wrote him this letter. I hope it's of some help to you as you read.

Dear Gareth,

You might find the following statistics interesting. It's from a three-volume book called the *Encyclopedia of Wars*, which documents some 1,763 wars that have been fought over the course of human history. Of those wars, only 123 have been religious in nature, which is an astonishingly low 6.98% of all wars. This means that all faiths combined have caused less than 7% of all of humanity's wars and violent conflicts.

The truth is, non-religious motivations and naturalistic philosophies bear the blame for nearly all of humankind's wars. Here's the death toll from wars and murder committed by Non-Religious Dictators:

Joseph Stalin - 42,672,000
Mao Zedong - 37,828,000
Adolf Hitler - 20,946,000
Chiang Kai-shek - 10,214,000
Vladimir Lenin - 4,017,000
Hideki Tojo - 3,990,000
Pol Pot - 2,397,0003

In a book called *Lethal Politics and Death by Government*, by R.J Rummel, it's recorded that almost 170 million men, women and children have been shot, beaten, tortured, knifed, burned, starved, frozen, crushed or worked to death; buried alive, drowned, hung,

bombed or killed in any other of a myriad of ways governments have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners. The dead could conceivably be nearly 360 million people.

So, thanks so much for fixing my tyre. You did an amazing job, I'll be recommending you to people. And thanks for your openness and willingness to talk about religion. I always appreciate people like you. But the historical evidence is quite clear: Religion is not the number one cause of war.

I'll tell you what is. Jesus provides the answer very clearly: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man". In short, humans cause wars because humans are sinful! And I work for a church spreading the message that Jesus can deal with the sin in people's hearts and change them. If you have any other honest and open questions to fire at me, please do. My email address is above.

Yours, Pastor Owen Batstone.

Owen Batstone is the minister of Park End in Cardiff.

A Rocha UK: Caring for Creation

Delyth Higgins spoke last month at Tregaron about her work as A Rocha Eco Church Officer for Wales. A Rocha is the Christian charity that promotes and works to protect and restore the natural world and is committed to supporting Christians and chapels and churches in Britain who wish to take care of the environment, the natural world and creation.

She referred to some of A Rocha's nature reserves such as the Foxearth Meadows, Essex. The 11 acre site has a variety of habitats including the banks of the River Stour, wetlands



and woodland. It's a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including otters and kingfishers

Some of A Rocha's current programmes such as Partners in Action, Wild Christian and Eco Church.

Partners in Action is a network that supports partner chapels and churches, community groups, schools and farms. The look for practical ways to improve the

biodiversity of their land, tackle climate change and share their experiences through a series of environmental education programmes.

Wild Christian is a Christian community that recognises the responsibility to care for creation as an integral part of Christian mission. Individuals and families come together to enjoy and learn about the natural world and how it can be protected through practical action at home and in the community.

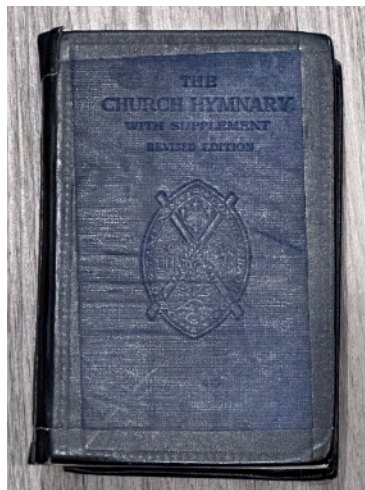
Eco Church: A Rocha provides a framework to support chapels and churches to take practical steps to care for creation. They offer an online survey and resources and help churches to receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold Eco Church award.

There are various areas for churches to think about including Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and global engagement and Lifestyle.

A Rocha's vision is that chapels and churches of all denominations should have the ability to care for creation as an integral part of their work in the name of the Lord. PCW churches that have already won an award include Ewloe Green, and Mold which received a Bronze Award in 2020.

Rhys Bebb Jones is the EBC/PCW Training Co-ordinator and EBC/PCW Environmental Policy Champion for Ceredigion a Gogledd Penfro Presbytery.

MEMORIES OF THE BLUE BOOK



It may be a sign of getting older that we come to regret the falling into disuse of a number of hymns that were once the staple of the *Revised Church Hymnary* (1927), a book that was common to Presbyterian Churches across the United Kingdom and Ireland and as far afield as Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. As a child I was often mesmerised by the large impression on the front cover of each blue book whatever the size, and would trace with my finger the various symbols that reflected some of the lands where the book was used. Dominant however was the Cross of St Andrew that acknowledged the origins of those other Churches from their mother Church in Scotland. The book was instantly recognisable in whatever land or holiday church Presbyterian Church members might be visiting, and it emphasised their unity with a world-wide Reformed Church through a hymnbook that generally reflected good doctrine, set under a

variety of themes to aid public worship.

Church Hymnary 3 that was published in 1973 never achieved the same universal acceptance, partly through a decline in its doctrinal stance on issues like the shed blood of Christ. In Wales in particular, by the 1970's the more evangelical Presbyterian churches had opted for books like *Hymns of Faith* that though slimmer were consistent with the Confession of Faith that such churches sought to adhere to, while the wider PCW focussed on the Shorter Declaration of Faith and Practice. It wasn't until *Christian Hymns* was published in 1977 by the Evangelical Movement of Wales that a hymn book appeared that created the sense of oneness between evangelical churches, that had once been enjoyed by the *RCH*. In other quarters like Ireland, and even in Scotland itself, newer hymnals like *Praise* published in 2000, as well as *Christian Hymns* became the preferred option to *Church Hymnary 4*. This latest edition was the first occasion in which the Association in the East played no part in the preparation of an updated *Church Hymnary*, and its content partly influenced by Iona and Taizé is very different to the familiar hymns of faith that still appeal to most local PCW churches. *Mission Praise* first published in 1983 is now common in many of our churches and seems to meet the needs of young and old alike. Mid week and on Sunday nights, many Forward Movement Halls used *Sankey* as an added hymn book, and is still used in some more mission

PHOTO:
Note the grooves in this
copy of the Church
Hymnary still in use at
Golfryn church., Deeside.

hall-style churches in South Wales especially.

More recent years have witnessed the replacement of the hymnbook by the projection of words in services. While recognising the benefits, something has been lost in the abandoning of books. In Wales where four part singing adds so much to congregational praise, and where people carried their own music or words copies to church, the ability to look back at the hymn that has just been sung is no longer an option, and sadly unison has largely replaced four part singing. The great themes under which hymns are classified in older hymnbooks are no longer obvious to those who simply use a screen to sing from. The art of imbibing well-known words by reading them, if only to pass the time while waiting for the beginning of a service, is another loss.

It is surprising that *Rest of the weary, joy of the sad* has been omitted from more modern books like *Christian Hymns 2* and *Mission Praise*. Its four verses by J B Monsell (b.1811) encapsulate lovely Bible themes like Matthew 11: 28-30, 1 Peter 5: 7, and in Jeremiah 31: 25, 'For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.'

Listening to his congregation in Salisbury Park, Wreccsam, where he was minister from 1919-1921, J D Vernon Lewis (1879-1970) was inspired to write or translate similar words in Welsh in 1922 while he was minister at Gibeau, Brynamman. He felt that a Welsh hymn of similar feeling would give comfort to those who sang it. His words 'Gwawr wedi hirnos' still seem to resonate with Welsh chapels (See *Caneuon Fydd* No

789). Vernon Lewis was influenced by F Ridley Havergal's 'Light after darkness...' (see Sankey No.112) for verses 1,2. Whilst in both languages the better know tune, *Theodora* is common, a newer tune, *Gorffwysfa* composed by the Penclawdd-born musician, and former organist of Tabernacle CM Chapel, Robert Nicholls is worthy of wider use. Like Rob Nicholls, Vernon Lewis was born in Swansea. Now a minister himself, Robert Nicholls is based at the Welsh Church of Central London. In later years Vernon Lewis retired to Machynlleth where he died some fifty-four years ago.

As J C Philpot (1802-69) in the *Gospel Standard* observed in 1859, 'Tunes should be suitable to the hymns. A solemn tune and a lively hymn - how inconsistent!' Both *Theodora* and *Gorffwysfa* are ideally matched and suitable for use on occasions when quiet music is required prior to the beginning or end of a service, or when the sentiment of the words come to the minds of listeners on solemn occasions.

In making his composition more widely available, we ask those who use Robert Nicholls' tune more widely, to acknowledge its copyright. The same applies to the recent translation of the Welsh words by Revd Meirion Morris, Llandysul.

Iain B Hodgins was brought up within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. He has been a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Wales since 1975.

NB We include the words and music of the hymn on the next page. It would be easy to print and distribute to congregations for them to sing in Welsh or English..



Gwawr wedi hirnos, cân wedi loes,
Nerth wedi llesgedd, coron 'r ôl croes;

*Light after darkness, gain after loss,
Strength after weakness, crown after cross;
Sweet after bitter, hope after fears,
Home after wandering, praise after tears.*

*Sheaves after sowing, sun after rain,
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;
Joy after sorrow, calm after blast,
Rest after weariness, sweet rest at last.*

*Tears while sowing, reaping with joy,
All of life's tempests, love will employ.
Fleeting afflictions will fly away
As weight of glory dawns on that day.*

*Judge of the living, judge of the dead,
You reign in power, you are the head,
Glory and honour, praise to His name,
Friend and Redeemer, ever the same.*

*Eternal dwelling of God above,
Fear will not grip us, we have a home;
Living in glory, all will be well,
With Hallelujah's, our praises swell.*

*Gwawr wedi hirnos, cân wedi loes;
Nerth wedi llesgedd, coron 'r ôl croes;
Chwerw dry'n felys, nos fydd yn ddydd.
Cartref 'r ôl crwydro, wylo ni bydd.*

*Medi'r cynhaeaf, haul wedi glaw,
Treiddio'r ddirgelwch, hedd wedi braw:
Wedi gofidiau, hir lawenhau,
Gorffwys 'r ôl lludded, hedd i barhau.*

*Heuir mewn dagrau, medir yn llon,
Cariad sy'n llywio stormydd y don;
Byr ysgafn gystudd dderfydd yn llwyr
Yn y gogoniant ddaw gyda'r hwyr.*

*Farnwr y byw a'r meirw ynghyd,
D'eiddo yw nerthoedd angau a'r byd;
Clod a gogoniant fyddo i Ti,
Ffrind a Gwaredwyr oesoedd di-ri.*

*Anniflanedig gartref ein Duw,
Ninnau nid ofnwn, ynddo cawn fyw,
Byw i gyfiawnder, popeth yn dda,
Byw yn oes oesoedd, Haleliwia.*

Francis Ridley Havergal verses 1 and 2, verses
3,4 and 5 translated by Meirion Morris.

Broadcasting Mouse



The game *Rebel Inc* is available on various platforms including iPhone. The player has been appointed to restore stability to an unnamed war torn region. This can be done by making various political decisions. All is well until insurgents begin to circulate unsettling the population and turning districts against the government. The question is: what will you do to stop this?

Hawkish readers will advise a policy of Shock and Awe. Boots on the ground to crush the insurgents sounds good but troops cost money to buy and time to train and deploy. Settle your troops around one insurgent settlement if you like but apply too much pressure and you'll force them to spread out and multiply.

Doves will counsel a policy of Hearts and Minds. Pay for healthcare and education, win the support of the local people and you'll see insurgent sympathy dry up. But rolling out reforms across mountainous or desert territories takes time and resources. Paying for roads and telecom networks solve that problem but they aren't flashy; they don't win you immediate support and they take money away from other things.

You can appeal to the UN or NGO's for help but Coalition forces upset the locals and charitable initiatives encourage corruption. Democratic reforms win support in the urban centres but irritate extremists. It is a race against time, public opinion, enemy forces and the threat of rampant inflation.

There's a Grand Unified Theory feel about *Rebel Inc*. There is no simple solution. To win, a player has to take time, consider competing demands, say no to some things, make long term decisions, and sometimes just know when to quit and restart.

Meanwhile IRL national and international problems multiply. There are plenty of people claiming to have the answer to our problems. But a round or two of *Rebel Inc* is a timely reminder that in life (as in church) there are few straightforward solutions to complex problems;

The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

Proverbs 9

PHOTO:
Editor's own

PRAYER WEEK

I am delighted to be able to write to you concerning the inaugural Week of Prayer, which will take place between **Monday 20th May and Sunday 27th May 2024**.

Prayer is both a privilege and a blessing. It is an opportunity to be alone in the presence of a loving God and an opportunity to share that experience of encountering God with others. It is an opportunity to be involved in God's plan for his creation, to bring before Him the future of our church, our community, our country and our planet.

Prayer is a constant of church life. But the Week of Prayer will be a time when, as an entire denomination, we can bow our heads and raise our voices as one, united in our concerns and our burdens for the future of our land and this world.

At the heart of the Week of Prayer will be two National Prayer Meetings at 7pm on Monday 20th and 7pm on Thursday 23rd May. These will be an opportunity for the entire church to join in prayer. On the Monday, we will be able to gather in designated centres around Wales which will all be linked by Zoom. The Thursday prayer meeting will be conducted entirely on Zoom so everyone will be able to join if they can access Wi-Fi. In addition to the national prayer meetings Presbyteries and churches will be encouraged to organise times of corporate prayer of their own during the week. As a vital part of our church and society children and young people will be welcomed to join us in prayer so that they may be inspired to see its central role in a flourishing life and that we might be inspired by them in turn.

An email has been sent to all church secretaries. Attached can be found several resources to help individuals and churches make the most out of the Week of Prayer. They include:

- A prayer diary for the week
- Suggestions and advice on organising prayer meetings and more informal prayer times. (See below)
- A map of the prayer centres for the National Prayer Meeting on Monday 20th May

Films will be uploaded to the PCW website throughout the Week of Prayer and, for those churches who do not have a preacher for the Sunday of the Week of Prayer (27th May), a video sermon will be provided about prayer. It is going to be a full week.

I am mindful that the Presbyterian Church of Wales was used by God to shape Welsh nonconformity and, with it, modern Wales. And its influence, under God, extended far beyond the borders of our small nation. We live in different times and with different challenges, but prayer, which underpinned all that our ancestors in the faith did, is as relevant today as it ever was. We must pray. For the sake of a world in turmoil, for the sake of a nation struggling without hope, for the sake of ourselves, we must pray. Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13,14). During the Week of Prayer let us accept this invitation to join with him in shaping the future of our church, our nation and our world, let us pray.

Owen Griffiths is Chair of the Organising Committee of the Week of Prayer



The Presbyterian Church of Wales

National Week of Prayer

20th – 26th May

PRAYER: A RESOURCE

1. One prayer meeting during the week. The meeting can be held at any time of day.

10 minutes - Hymn, Bible reading and a devotion.

50 minutes - Introduction of a new prayer theme, every ten minutes. (See the list of themes)

It would be beneficial at this point, to show pictures-by means of Power Point- or to watch one of the Prayer Motivation Films.

At the end of the meeting - A time for socialising and refreshments.

2. Prayer Day Meeting.

Organising a prayer day is not an easy task!

It is possible to divide each hour of prayer, into shorter sessions. The duration of the meeting is a matter for you to discuss. There are no set times for beginning or ending the meeting. Your meeting could last for one or two hours; five or six hours or even longer, if you so choose. There are no set times for beginning and ending the meeting and people are welcome to drop in at any time, when and as it is convenient for them. A Prayer Café!

Below is a possible pattern which you might like to follow:

15 minutes - Socialising /Refreshments.

10 minutes - Hymn, Bible reading and devotion.

5 minutes - Introduction of chosen theme. (See list.)

30 minutes - Prayer time

At the end of the hour - Follow the same pattern as above.

Ask people to choose a Bible reading, followed - if possible - by a short devotion.

Illustrations are important. If you have a church member who understands PowerPoint, you might like to ask him/her, to prepare a presentation of illustrations based on each of the various themes chosen. (See the list of themes)

Don't over-look the time for socialising or refreshments! Many an important matter has been brought to light during an informal chat.

3. A Week of Daily Prayer Meetings

It is possible to have two daily prayer meetings, one in the morning or afternoon and the other in the evening. The advantage of having two daily meetings, is that everybody has an opportunity to attend at some point during the day.

(Follow the above pattern.)

Other alternative suggestions:

4. A personal time of prayer as appropriate.

5. Invite friends to your home for a time of prayer.

6. Arrange a zoom meeting with friends.

7. Walk around your city, town, village or area, praying as you go. 8. Climb a hill/ mountain and pray for the areas you see below.

*Find more resources, tips and ideas on
www.ebcpcw.cymru*



PUNDITS FOLLY

Regular readers of *The Treasury* will have seen the news last month that the Editor (my father) is retiring from this position due to ill health. In this *The Treasury* loses a great deal. His knowledge of the history of the denomination, his loving interest in the Church, its congregations, her ministers and elders. We lose also his eye for mistakes and typos, and his extensive library of PCW related photographs.

As a family we lose a great deal too. His terminal diagnosis came as a dreadful shock to us and we feel a terrible uncertainty now about the future as we walk together through the valley of the shadow of death. However I

am very conscious that our suffering is not unique. As a minister I speak to lots of people in different churches and situations and there are many people facing uncertainty right now.

As I think about this I am reminded of an incident in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* that takes place towards the end of that story. The battle is over, the White Witch is dead and the children are reconvening with Aslan. Peter tells Aslan about his brother Edmund's heroics: how he fought through the battlefield to find the witch, brought his sword down on her wand to destroy her magic and how he

PHOTO:
The 'stone table cracked from
side to side' from *The Lion,
The Witch and the Wardrobe*

was dreadfully wounded for his trouble. CS Lewis writes:

They found Edmund a little way back from the fighting line. He was covered with blood, his mouth was open and his face a nasty green colour.

“Quick, Lucy”, said Aslan, and then almost for the first time Lucy remembered the precious cordial that had been given to her for a Christmas present. Her hands trembled so much she could hardly undo the stopper. But she managed it in the end and poured a few drops into her brother’s mouth.

“There are other people wounded” said Aslan while she was still looking eagerly into Edmund’s pale face and wondering if the cordial would have any result.

“Yes I know” said Lucy crossly. “Wait a minute.”

“Daughter of Eve said Aslan in a graver voice. “Others are also at the point of death. Must more people die for Edmund?” “I’m sorry Aslan” said Lucy getting up and going with him. And for the next half hour they were busy restoring the wounded to health. When at last she was free to come back to Edmund she found him healed of his wounds and looking better than he had looked for ages.

That picture has really helped me recently. As a family we have been mercifully spared a lot of the illnesses and accidents one hears of other people enduring.

We’ve had problems, but in the end they seemed to work themselves out. The world of Oncology, Macmillan nurses, blue badges, and GP visits is all new to us.

As a consequence, I have felt like I was navigating this situation with someone else’s map. I half remember anecdotes from other people in this situation. For example I seem to recall someone saying that when cancer comes, everything else becomes tiresome and inconsequential. Early on, I worried that this was true. The night I heard the diagnosis I had a two hour Zoom meeting. The speaker in the first hour might as well have been speaking in binary code. I felt distracted and irritated. Was this the future? I wondered. Would everything now be boring? Thankfully, it turned out that the speaker was just very dull! Hour two was delivered by a different lecturer who was much more stimulating. Apparently life goes on.

Like Lucy in Narnia, I can see how I could get very introspective. I am, you will of course understand, concerned about my dad, worried about my mum and aware of the loss he will be to our family. Our church family is very concerned too. We are all suddenly aware of how much a part of the church he is and how much we will miss him.

However, he is not the only person wounded on the battlefield. And whilst he is a

hero to our family, other families have heroes too. I recently conducted the funeral of a church member who was also a huge part of our church; she too is a much missed. Others in our church family are suffering with serious illness and the fear and pain that comes with that. Their families too are worried about cancer, dementia, and other serious afflictions. It would be very wrong to imagine that mine is the only grief in town.

What is more, Lucy learns a second valuable lesson. Having given Edmund the medicine she can do no more. Waiting, watching, checking for minute changes is understandable but not profitable. She must learn to wait for the outcome. And in the meantime she is much more use serving others. In fact she is much more blessed too. This is the mystery of Christianity that our culture doesn't get. Our culture thinks that enlightenment and peace come from greater and greater self absorption. But Christians find that they grow best when they mimic Christ, thinking less of themselves and choosing to serve others instead.

This is true not only in what we call suffering, but in life in general. We spend a lot of time thinking about ourselves, applying filters both digital and physical. Like Narcissus staring at himself in the pool we can begin to imagine that everybody else thinks as much of us as we do. But they do not. When a

proud Dad sends a photo of his baby to the group chat he genuinely believes that his is the world's most beautiful baby. And the group chat will apparently confirm this with suitable comments and emojis. But attached to the comment "Aww she's the most beautiful thing in the world" is the unwritten coda "to you." (As in 'she's the most beautiful thing in the world— to you') The same goes for your five year old grandson's singing, my sixteen year old's piano playing and your 21 year old's graduation photo. We share your joy and we delight in your success, but only as part of the wider picture. We forget that at our peril.

The final part of the story is that the magical mendicant does more than enough. Lucy returns to find Edmund better than she has seen him in a long time. Certainly not since "he went to that horrid school, which is where the problems began". Our family mourns that there isn't a medicine that will restore my Dad to health. Our prayer is that God might yet intervene. Our family's assured hope is that either way, he will be restored to something better than he has ever been in this life. We hold this hope because of Christ. It is important that, in our suffering, we don't forget to hold it out to others too.

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The Treasury
incorporating Glad Tidings
English publication of the
Presbyterian Church of Wales.
Published monthly
Price 50p

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Unless otherwise stated the views
expressed are those of the
individual contributor and are not
necessarily the view of the General
Assembly or the Editor.

*Enquires about subscriptions and
non-editorial matters should be
addressed to:
The Presbyterian Church of Wales,
Tabernacle Chapel, 81 Heol Merthyr,
Caerdydd, CF14 1DD*