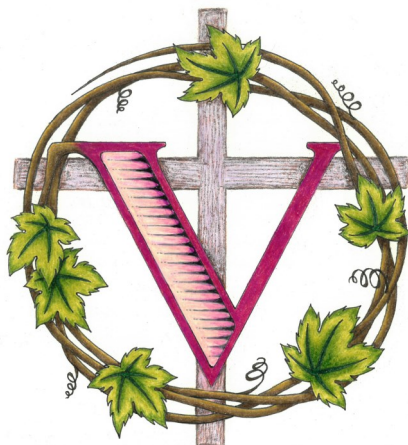


THE



Gwent Hills and Vales Methodist Circuit

INE

Autumn 2023

Times and Seasons

Dear friends,

I write in the week that marks the 100th anniversary of the **Radio Times** and 50 years of the email. Those two milestones spoke to me of continuity and change, and of how continuity and change (whether we are always aware of them or not) are part of daily life, indeed exist side by side.

At our September Circuit Meeting, a number of proposals were approved which will involve some change over the coming year but will also, I hope, provide some sense of continuity and stability as we – in our churches and the Circuit – try to understand truthfully where, and in what ways, God is leading us.

I share with you here the proposals approved at the Circuit Meeting and take the opportunity to introduce and welcome to the Circuit the Revd Gareth Powell. Gareth is a 'Minister in Other Appointment' currently employed as chaplain to the **Marie Curie Hospice** in Penarth as well as carrying out academic work at Cardiff and Oxford universities. Gareth has agreed to work in the Circuit for one day a week and to conduct worship regularly in our churches. I look forward to and am grateful for, Gareth's ministry among us.

The proposals which the Circuit Meeting approved are as follows:

- Revd Steve Boxall move from the Pontypool manse to the Llantarnam manse: October 2023.

Revd Catherine Brobbey

- Revd Steve Boxall take pastoral charge of Fairhill, Hope, Llanyrafon and Upper Cwmbrân churches: September 2023.
- Revd Steve Boxall retain pastoral charge of Pontnewynydd church and share this ministry with Revd Gareth Powell: September 2023.
- Revd Catherine Brobbey take pastoral charge of Bethel (Garndiffaith) and Trinity (Abersychan): September 2023.
- The Pontypool and Nantyglo manses to be sold and a new manse to be purchased in the vicinity of Beaufort, Nantyglo, Cwmcelyn, Blaina and Blaenau Gwent churches: earliest possible date.
- Revd Andrea Sims move from the Nantyglo manse – in the short-term either to the Pontypool manse or to a new manse purchased from the sale of the Nantyglo and Pontypool manses – and eventually to the Pontllanfraith manse: earliest possible date.
- Revd Lorette Hinson move from the Pontllanfraith manse to the new manse purchased from the sale of the Nantyglo and Pontypool manses: date to be agreed.
- Revd Andrea Sims take pastoral charge of Tredegar and Ebbw Vale churches: September 2024.
- Revd Lorette Hinson take pastoral charge of Cwmcelyn and Blaenau Gwent churches: September 2024.

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HOUSEKEEPING

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

CWMBRÂN BAROQUE SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday, 2nd December 2023, 7.30pm
St John the Baptist Church, Newport

CIRCUIT CAROL SERVICE

Sunday, 3rd December 2023, 4pm
Trinity Methodist Church, Abersychan

CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN PONTYPOOL MARKET

Wednesday, 6th December 2023, 10.30am
Pontypool Indoor Market, Pontypool

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

Sunday, 10th December 2023, 4pm
Trinity Methodist Church, Abersychan

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

Monday, 11th December 2023, 6.30pm
Blackwood Methodist Church, Blackwood

THE BIG BREAKFAST

Thursday, 14th December 2023, 10.30am
Pontnewynydd Methodist Church, Pontnewynydd

This space is expressly for you!
It has been set aside so you can let
the rest of the GHAV Circuit know
what is going on in your church/area,
so we can all support each other.

In the winter edition of **THE VINE**, we hope
to list all of the special Christmas services,
particularly those happening
on days other than Sunday,
so if you are planning a Christmas Day service,
or some other celebration or event
over the next quarter,
please let your Circuit Office know!

THANK YOU!

GWENT HILLS AND VALES CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE

Every Sunday evening, 6pm. Here's the link:

<https://zoom.us/j/94168420492?pwd=cjFTbzZUejhwTFBtVXdLl1FVkdIdz09>

Meeting ID: 941 6842 0492

Passcode: 831858

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Deadline for items to be included in the Winter issue: 10th November 2023

WALES WATCH



On a rainy Saturday afternoon in July, Cyncoed Methodist Church witnessed us bidding farewell to Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, who had been at the Synod's helm since September 2008. Along with Rev Jennie Hurd, he recently oversaw the blending of the English and Welsh-speaking synods to form Wales Synod Cymru. After a time of rest and refreshment, he will be continuing in ministry in the Cardiff Circuit.



Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (2nd from right) with his wife Jennifer and family

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in September, we gathered once again in Cyncoed Methodist Church, this time to welcome our new co-chair of Synod, Rev Andrew Charlesworth. Unfortunately, Yours Truly completely forgot to take any photographs! He will be visiting Gwent Hills and Vales later on in the autumn, to preach in four of our churches.

We pray God's blessing over these two faithful servants, Stephen and Andrew, as they pursue their respective callings in ministry!

*Joanna Saunders
Photo: Wendy Barwise*

In different ways, the **Methodist Church in Britain** has partnered, or promotes, a number of organisations that encourage Christians to engage with ecological issues and to relate issues around climate and creation to faith. Since a great deal was shared on this topic at the recent **Wales Synod Cymru** gathering, we thought you might be interested in what one of our churches in **GHAV Circuit** is doing in regard to this issue. The following article comes from **Deacon Gwenllian Knighton**, based at Castle Street, Abergavenny:

There can surely be few Christians who would argue against the need to care better for the environment, as we believe it is God's creation. **Tear Fund** has apparently declared a 'climate emergency', while **Christian Aid** has long pointed out the injustice occurring when countries which have done least to cause the problems are those who suffer first and most drastically.

While there may be different opinions about the best way to go about the prophetic task of calling the world to change its ways in this regard (or for that matter in other areas of protest), it is surely the task of us all and our

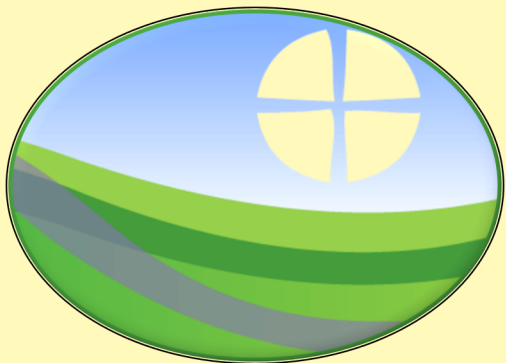


churches to make sure our own actions are, as far as possible, in harmony with our beliefs about this. **The Methodist Church** is aiming in its policies to have reached 'net zero' by 2030 in its use of the world's resources and energy, in all its activities and policies, including investment of assets (i.e. not taking more than is put back of the earth's resources).

Some years ago, a charity called **Arocha** devised a useful scheme to help us to work in this direction called **Eco Church**. Basically, a congregation reviews all aspects of its life and buildings by means of an online questionnaire and, depending on answers, can work towards a bronze, silver or gold award. The number of Methodist churches achieving awards is growing.

Abergavenny is a community where many people care for the environment through charities such as **Friends of the Earth**, and there have

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BRANCH LINES

News around the Gwent Hills and Vales
Methodist Circuit

"We would like to thank you for the very generous gift and beautiful flowers from the circuit presented to us at the farewell service on 16th July at Nantyglo. It was an inspiring act of worship for which we are most grateful and the buffet refreshments were enjoyed by all. We would also like to thank everyone for your understanding, support and encouragement during our time with you, especially over the last 12 months which have been challenging for us all. We look forward to what God has in store for us in retirement, and pray for God's blessing on the continuing life of the circuit.

Much love, Paul and Mary"

**A SPECIAL
THANK-YOU**

AND IN LOCAL PREACHERS' NEWS...

- ◆ Congratulations to Kelly Edwards who came through her trial service with flying colours on Sunday, 17th September at Upper Cwmbrân, then aced her interview with the Local Preachers' meeting. The date, time and location of her Recognition Service will be released in due time – we will keep you posted!
- ◆ There are a number of our local preachers who are being recognised with Long Service Certificates for their faithfulness in bringing God's word to us – watch this space for details...



IN WITH THE NEW!

What felt like a very short time after we waved goodbye to Revds Paul and Gareth and their families, we were welcoming our next victim, uh – I mean, our next minister – the redoubtable **Revd Lorette Hinson** (left, with some rather lovely flowers and our new co-chair of Synod, **Revd Andrew Charlesworth**, who presided over the service).

As with all our special services, it was a beautiful celebration, accompanied by a delicious buffet tea – our thanks again to Nantyglo Church for all their work on these services over the summer, and to every one of you who contributed in some way and/or attended.

Photograph: Joanna Saunders

BLACKWOOD BOYS' BRIGADE AND GIRLS' ASSOCIATION



Hello from **2nd Blackwood Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association**,

based at **Blackwood Methodist Church!** We are a small company consisting of 13 youngsters ranging in age from 5 to 18 years, 1 Captain and 2 officers.

We have focused on 2 main themes this year – “*The love of our Father*” and “*Heroes of the Bible*” (Joseph and King Solomon). We’ve also decorated biscuits, played games, made a collage to commemorate the life of our patron **Queen Elizabeth II**, celebrated the coronation of **King Charles III**, and held an outreach evening, where parents and siblings could come along and participate in activities.

At Christmas we held an Advent/Enrolment service, which we opened up to members of our circuit. The young people all received a certificate from Santa (*as pictured below*), as they completed a challenge to find his missing elf before Christmas.

In March we entered the **International Team Games**, where Brigades from around the world completed set games and entered their scores online. I am delighted to report that we came 200th out of 231, and 2nd in Wales, a real achievement for such a small company!

I am also delighted to report that both my officers have been recognised for their work in the community. **Wendy Thomas** received a certificate from **Blackwood Rotary Club** for dedicating over 40 years to Brigade and Sunday School. **Sam Evans** received an award from **GAVO (Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations)** for his gardening work. Well done Wendy and Sam!

Finally, on 3rd July we held our Awards evening, where we recognized the achievements of our young people. A huge thank you to our parents and church members for their continued support.

We are looking forward to more adventures since starting back on 11th September 2023.

Captain Karen Jones
(who also took the photograph)





CONNEXION CORNER

**“Do not allow yourself one thought
of separating from your brothers and sisters,
whether their opinions agree with yours or not.”**

John Wesley

News from the Methodist Connexion of the UK



Meet our new President of Conference, **Revd Gill Newton** (left), a life-long Methodist, raised in Cornwall, who has served as the Sheffield District Chair since 2014.

“I am both humbled and honoured to have been entrusted with this role by the members of the Methodist Conference. With God’s help and together with the Vice President..., **Deacon Kerry Scarlett**, I look forward to the opportunities we will have to encourage, inspire and challenge the Methodist people during our year of office.”

Deacon Kerry Scarlett (pictured below), from the Birmingham District, has a passion for justice and seeks to enable and amplify the voices of others. Kerry founded **ADAVU**, an anti-trafficking charity, and participated in regional network and anti-trafficking campaigns.

“It is an honour and a privilege to have been elected Vice-President... I am very much looking forward to working with (Revd) **Gill Newton**, and am very grateful for the opportunity to serve the Methodist Church in this way.”



Continued from Page 3

been, over the last few years, several actions of awareness-raising and protesting, both in the centre of town and further afield. Moreover, there are hardly any green spaces which don’t have their own little ‘Friends’ committee who work hard on issues of diversity of wildlife etc. Surely, we feel, the churches, of all groups, should not be seen to be dragging their feet, but witnessing to their love and concern for creation.

In Castle Street, we started by forming a small group, each of us taking responsibility for working on one aspect of the questionnaire: worship and teaching, use of buildings, awareness of and responsibility for the wider world, and individual responsibility and action. It is quite allowable to register ‘not applicable’ for any question, e.g. if there is no land attached to the building. The main thing is to be working to improve on all areas that are applicable. Happily, Abergavenny has recently been awarded ‘bronze’ status and has a certificate and an optional lovely wooden plaque to show for it (although no decision has been made yet where to display the latter). If you come to Abergavenny for a meeting, there is a noticeboard in the hall which will give you further news.

An interesting recent development has been a gathering in the town of churches of other traditions who are also working towards these certificates, ensuring a Christian presence at **Greener Abergavenny**, a large Monmouthshire Eco Fair which has just taken place in the Market Hall. Probably our biggest challenge is to go on encouraging one another in individual actions including recycling of less usual goods, as well as improving our own individual carbon footprint scores. Sadly, an outlet in town for the recycling of blister packs from medicines has had to be discontinued. Anyone know of other places where these can be taken?

For more information about the Eco Church project, please visit:
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>

Deacon Gwenllian Knighton,
Castle Street, Abergavenny

PUZZLE PAGE

A Methodist Way of Life is a way of saying yes to the good news. There are **twelve things**, included in this word-list, that we can do as individuals or as a church community:

CARE
CHALLENGE
FLOURISH
LEARN
LIVE
METHODIST
NOTICE
OPEN
PRAY
SERVE
SHARE
TELL
UNCONDITIONAL
WAY OF LIFE
WORSHIP

For more information, visit:
www.methodist.org.uk

U	X	C	P	T	X	Y	V	I	E	R	A	H	S	N	B	X
W	B	W	Z	U	N	P	O	N	U	Z	W	T	O	T	C	F
I	O	C	J	M	M	S	E	R	V	E	M	A	Q	A	G	N
K	K	P	O	L	A	N	O	I	T	I	D	N	O	C	N	U
S	B	O	E	N	F	E	Q	D	Q	H	L	E	A	R	N	Z
P	U	D	I	N	G	E	C	H	S	I	R	U	O	L	F	D
C	X	T	W	H	R	G	V	V	O	G	J	D	W	I	W	Q
H	J	S	G	A	I	Y	N	O	T	I	C	E	T	Q	F	R
A	J	I	C	W	G	V	I	K	O	M	L	E	D	G	G	G
L	P	D	B	G	A	L	N	M	E	H	L	U	S	P	Z	C
L	O	O	C	P	L	Y	P	D	K	L	I	C	I	C	M	I
E	E	H	J	R	Z	I	O	Y	D	O	I	H	G	P	G	C
N	G	T	G	A	S	K	V	F	O	M	S	G	X	G	X	E
G	V	E	F	Y	A	C	C	E	L	R	N	L	H	M	Y	S
E	H	M	R	D	S	S	K	B	O	I	Q	O	H	D	O	S
V	X	J	B	Q	P	G	X	W	K	N	F	A	W	I	I	W
K	L	P	D	N	A	Q	J	R	O	O	J	E	O	B	Q	E

Puzzle created by Joanna using wordmint.com

SUMMER WORD SEARCH SOLUTION

R	E	N	E	W	H	E	N	V	I	R	O	N	M	E	N	T
C	L	E	G	N	A	H	C	E	T	A	M	I	L	C	G	R
S	A	G	E	S	U	O	H	N	E	E	R	G	V	V	E	X
X	H	R	S	O	L	A	R	P	O	W	E	R	G	U	B	F
C	P	Z	B	S	W	I	D	O	R	H	Y	L	S	I	D	C
O	F	N	W	O	N	U	G	M	K	O	O	E	O	V	V	I
N	O	O	I	F	N	F	O	B	E	B	G	D	G	U	R	T
S	S	I	N	G	O	F	D	B	A	T	E	F	S	L	Z	S
E	S	T	D	Z	S	A	O	L	K	G	S	H	J	E	E	A
R	I	U	T	J	B	E	W	O	R	U	C	Y	J	N	L	L
V	L	L	U	H	C	A	D	A	T	R	A	D	S	G	C	P
A	F	L	R	N	R	W	D	S	U	P	Z	I	Z	O	Y	A
T	U	O	B	M	N	A	O	H	S	I	R	Y	B	C	C	D
I	E	P	I	N	B	S	C	I	I	W	K	I	S	K	E	E
O	L	N	N	L	I	O	M	D	D	C	N	K	N	I	R	Q
N	G	W	E	E	C	C	S	Y	G	P	Q	Y	V	T	X	A
O	V	H	W	E	A	T	M	O	S	P	H	E	R	E	J	I

ATMOSPHERE	GLOBAL
BIODEGRAD- ABLE	WARMING
CARBON	GREENHOUSE
FOOTPRINT	GAS
CLIMATE	PLASTIC
CHANGE	POLLUTION
CONSERVATION	RECYCLE
ECO CHURCH	RENEW
ECOSYSTEM	REUSE
ENVIRONMENT	SOLAR POWER
FOSSIL FUEL	WIND TURBINE



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING...

“O Dduw ein Creawdwr,
fel y glöwr yn cloddio dan ddaear
a’r chwarelwr yn naddu wyneb y llechen,
rwyf ti ar waith i ddarganfod trysor mewn
mannau annisgwyl.
Boed i ni gynhyrchu rhywbeth hardd i ti,
hyd yn oed o’r tywyllwch a’r oerni,
fel y dygom ogoniant i’th enw
ac er mwyn drfodiad dy Deyrnas.
Amen.”

“O God our Creator,
Like the collier digging underground
and the quarryman chiselling the face of the slate,
you are at work to discover the treasure
in unexpected places.
May we produce something beautiful for you,
even from the darkness and the coldness,
that we may bring glory to your name
and for the sake of the coming of your kingdom.
Amen.”

*Revd Jennifer Hurd
Co-Chair, Wales Synod Cymru*

Times and Seasons

Continued from Page 1

- Revd Gareth Powell provide additional support and training to Local Preachers and Worship Leaders and become a member of the Circuit Leadership Team: September 2023.

I hope that there will be opportunity to consider these changes at our autumn church councils; otherwise, any of the ministers may be contacted about them.

Thinking of continuity and change, I was reminded of a hymn by **Nahum Tate** and **Nicholas Brady** (*Hymns and Psalms* 73). The hymn begins with the verse,

***“Through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ.”***

The verse struck me as a remarkable statement of faith. The writers declare their intent to hold to God and to praise God come what may. They say that those who trust in God and in God’s truth discover, through their lived experience, God’s faithfulness and blessing. The hymn ends (and perhaps this is where I should end too):

“Make you his service your delight, your wants shall be his care.”

God is the constant in our lives, our source of continuity through change. Our glad response to God’s faithfulness and love is the offering of our lives, as individuals and churches, to God’s praise and service.

With every blessing, Catherine

Revd Catherine Brobbey