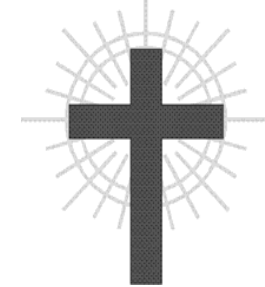


THE MESSENGER

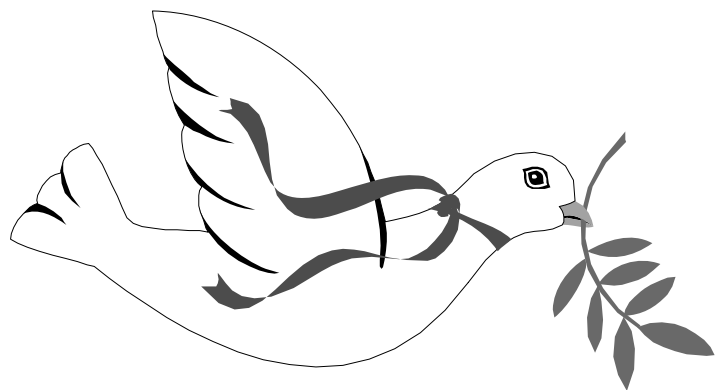


Monmouth

Circuit

**Monmouth
Trellech
Broad Oak
Gwern-y-Saint
Llancloudy**

April/May 2006



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Olivia McLachlan

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trampling the Dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch during the first Crusade, and so brought back the story of St. George with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St. George.

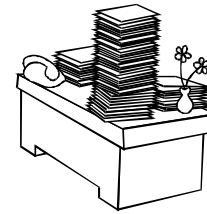
Ann Smed

How much do you love me?

'How much do you love me, Jesus?' I asked.
'This much' he said, his arms open wide.
'How much do you love me, Jesus?' I asked.
'This much' he said, with a spear in his side.
'How much do you love me, Jesus?' I asked.
'This much' he said, his eyes full of pain.
'How much do you love me, Jesus?' I asked.
'This much' he cried again and again.
I love you so much that I died on a cross,
I love you so much did not count it loss
To pour out my life blood to cleanse you from sin,
To bring you deep healing and wholeness within.
I love you so much when you hurt I hurt too.
I love you so much my heart bleeds for you.
To fill you anew each day my desire,
To pour out my spirit and light up your fire.
My grace is sufficient, my love all you need
To replace all the deep hurt, the anger, the fear.
My spirit will bring you my love, joy and peace,
At the foot of the cross you will find deep release.
Just leave me your burdens - go, you are free.
How much do I love you?
You are everything to me.'

Susan Chard

Val Davies



From the Minister's Desk

This week I received three invitations from schools about Easter. For two of them it was to attend their Easter services and the third invited me to conduct theirs. I accepted all three and was encouraged that junior schools in the area still share the truth of the Easter message with their pupils.

Easter needs to be foremost in the thinking of the Church because the message of death and resurrection gives hope to us that there is more to existence than merely this life. We can look to a future which includes being in the presence of God. Many people in this country seem to think that because we are a, so called, Christian Country where in theory people believe in Jesus, then that is enough for them to have a place in eternity.

Yet the truth is that Christianity is about a relationship with God through Jesus who died on the cross and rose again to make that relationship possible. If we allow Easter to be seen only in the sentimentality of Chocolate eggs and Easter bunnies then we fail both our Lord and the people around us.

We fail Jesus if we do not share the enormity of the suffering of Jesus on the cross as well as the history changing message of the resurrection. We fail the people around us if we do not challenge them to respond to the events of Easter.

I look forward to Easter and invite you to join in the events in the life of the Circuit this Easter Season and hope they fill you with joy.

Barry



Monmouth Methodist Church

*Easter
Bonnet
Parade*

Spring Fair

*Easter
Egg
Hunt*

Saturday 8th April

10am — 2pm

Coffee

Lunches

Teas

Stalls

*books, bric-a-brac, produce, cakes,
“nearly new”, hand crafted items, cards,
and more*

23RD APRIL - SAINT GEORGE'S DAY

The Saint of an English army before he was Patron Saint of England, St. George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 A.D.-supposedly the 23rd of April. Over the years St. George became the example of a Christian fighting man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier hero of the Middle Ages of whom remarkable deeds were reported.

In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine gave St. George a handsome write up. The story runs thus; One day St. George rode up to the heathen city of Sylene in Lybia, where he found the citizens in great distress. A neighbouring dragon had forced them to surrender two sheep each day for it's dinner, and when the sheep gave out, two of their children, and now they were about to sacrifice the King's daughter, dressed as if for her wedding. St. George encountered the little party by a stagnant lake where the dragon lived, and persuaded the sobbing Princess to tell him why she was so miserable. At that moment the Dragon appeared looking inexpressibly revolting. St. George charged and drove his spear into the gaping mouth. To everyone's amazement he tumbled the monster over and over. Then St. George borrowed the Princess' s girdle, tied it round the Dragon's neck, and persuaded her to lead it back to Sylene herself. The sight of her approaching with the befuddled Dragon on it's makeshift lead emptied the town. When the inhabitants timidly crept back, St. George promised to behead the Dragon if they would all believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised.

It was a most effective form of evangelism, for everybody said “yes” at once. So 15000 people were baptised, and four carts were commissioned to remove the Dragon's body. St. George thus became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed

Later in the week it was decided that we should all take an extended trip westward into the Queensland outback. Marie drove about 300 miles through the mountains of the Great Dividing Range and on to the flat and now fairly arid plains beyond. Strangely it poured with rain for most of the journey and this was welcomed greatly by the locals. We found a comfortable hotel in Roma but it was still



raining when we went to dinner at the Roma Bowling Club to have an early celebration of Mike's impending birthday. After a look round Roma next day, it was back to Narangba, taking a different and desolate road for a journey of 130 miles without finding a petrol station. We only just reached Condamine without running out of fuel but it was an interesting journey as we saw an abundance of wild life including kangaroos and emus.

We had a picnic in Condamine and then completed the return journey. Back at Min-y-Nant there was one last dinner and a toast to absent friends!

The next day was our last and it was fortunate that Alan and his wife Cindy had a day off and were able to visit and meet with us. It was good to see him again after such a long time but not so good to learn that he had a painful back problem that would require some delicate surgery. Fortunately we have learned that he has had the operation and is recovering well so far but he is still in our prayers.

Mike Roberts

Moving On

Patrick asked if I might write on my feelings at the prospect of moving from this lovely area to Witney in Oxfordshire. I remembered the preacher's story of the man whose new car was driven over the cliff edge by his mother in law. He said "I have mixed feelings".

How could it be possibly other than that for us. We have been in the Monmouth area for so long, loved the countryside, met so many nice people, made friends including Christians from every church in the town and thought we were settled here for life.... and there is so much more. Leaving is bound to be emotional. Partings from people you are close to are never without pain. If we got into mentioning names we should never end!

But in this life nothing ever stands still. When I was much younger I used to have a period of sadness when the harvest was gathered in, but it passed. Every new Spring was a joy.

At a recent Christian Aid lunch, Richard Pain, the vicar of Monmouth remarked when I said we were moving, "Moving is rather exciting, don't you think", just the right positive words. Our home is no longer in the right place and we get no younger. Thankfully we can still enjoy new beginnings. We have found a desirable house in Witney Jen, Dan and Catrin live in nearby Oxford, Steve and family are the same distance away. We are sure we are doing the right thing and would love you to visit us if you can and of course we shall be back. Who sang, "Thanks for the memories?" Our bond of Christian love remains. And we are not going just yet, maybe end of April.

Elgin (and Nancy)

HOLIDAY IN THE HOLY LAND

Perhaps "Holiday" is not the right word to describe a tour that had a tight schedule to visit so many places in such a short time that after the first few days I felt absolutely shattered. However I would not want to have missed it. It was spiritually uplifting, informative and enjoyable.

Under the heading "Spiritually Uplifting" I was surprised at some of the activities where I did feel uplifted and some where I expected to but didn't. For example I was expecting to feel full of awe and wonder on the Sea of Galilee and on the coach trips through places that I had read about in the Bible but whilst under motor power on both boat and coach I felt nothing. However when we stopped and stood by the water's edge by the "Seven Springs" our guide explained that it was likely that Jesus had been close to the spot where we were standing because the springs were hot ones which warm up that area of the sea, so attracting fish. Therefore the fishermen amongst His disciples would have spent a lot of time there. This was when I had the feeling of awe and wonder. Then later that night walking alone in the grounds of the Kibbutz there was a small beach and I thought "No-one knows exactly where Jesus was. I wonder if He was in a boat that pulled up on this beach" and suddenly I felt His nearness as I stood silently in prayer.

Another experience was at Cana where our guide spoke of the miracle of water into wine. She mentioned that Mary said to the servants "Do as he says", they did so and the miracle was performed. She then turned to us and said "Do you always do as He says?" It hit me then that I don't always do as He says but have the nerve to ask God to do as I say in granting the miracle of answer to prayer.

If there is a demand I can write under my other two headings in future editions but in the meantime I leave you with this challenge: Do you always do as He says? Do you expect your prayers to be answered?

David Hoare

we were able to see a variety of birds including ospreys, whistling kites, pelicans, godwits, ibises and bitterns. Then we all attended the Sunday Morning Service! To explain, the church at which Geof and Marie worship is an Anglican church that has no building of its own. Therefore it use the Roman Catholic Church and as they have first call on Sunday we celebrated Holy Communion together on Saturday evening. It didn't seem to make any difference but it was certainly different to be served with hot-dogs instead of Liz's cakes!

Our next outing was to more distant parts as Marie drove us about 50 miles northwards to an area known as the Glass House Mountains National Park. Here we, including Geof, very adventurously started up to the top of one of these, which is called Beerburrum. The path was very steep and quite slippery in parts and so Geof did not get all the way to the top but the rest of us did and so we had a marvellous view of these volcanic peaks that rise so spectacularly steeply from the surrounding landscape. A little further on we came to an area famed for the production of ginger and at Buderim there is a factory to visit. It is an attractively laid out site with a magical boat-ride for the children. A ginger bread man has escaped from the bakers and visitors are invited to find him amongst the many tableaux on the tour. There are also a number of old-fashioned style shops, a train ride around the site and an ice cream counter that was too inviting to pass! We drove on to the coast and had a walk on the one of the beaches of the famous 'Sunshine Coast', to which many Australians come to spend their holidays. Behind Anne and Marie is the Pacific Ocean, nothing between them and South America, give or take a few islands!



The Alpha Course

The Roberts Visit the Murphys

Many of you will be aware that our eldest son, Simon, lives in Melbourne and that in February we were going to visit him. We planned to stay in Australia for five weeks during which we were very much looking forward to visiting Geof and Marie Murphy, who live in Narangba, just 20 miles to the north of Brisbane. After spending some time in Melbourne and touring in Tasmania, we flew up to Brisbane on 23 February, leaving lovely sunny weather in Melbourne with temperatures in the upper twenties, to arrive in Brisbane two hours later in pouring rain! Quite a surprise!

That did not dampen the Murphy welcome, however, and it was really wonderful to see them both again and to find Geof recovering so well from recent minor surgery. As you can see, they have a lovely house and surprisingly it is called Min-y-Nant!



It is a spacious, newly built bungalow, which is quite different from the Min-y-Nant in Whitebrook. It overlooks a woodland area at the front and the view from their front windows is truly delightful.

The Murphy hospitality is no less in the new Min-y-Nant and after a quick tour of their house, we were seated at the familiar dining table eating well, toasting our hosts in a convivial glass of Tasmanian Riesling and chatting nineteen to the dozen. There seemed to be so much news to exchange and so many events to catch up on.

We had quite a few trips out and about, the first of which was to the Osprey Park Nature Reserve. From special observation platforms

I have wanted to participate in an Alpha course for a very long time and having a young family and living in a small town, the opportunity to do this has been difficult. Churches Together have done a marvellous job of organising the course to "explore the meaning of life".

The evening starts with a shared meal provided by one of the churches involved. I look forward to going as these are always delicious! Following this, we take our coffee (and often chocolates!) and view the video talk by Nicky Gumble, which is always clear and well delivered with plenty of humour and a challenging message. After the presentation, there is a time for smaller group discussion, with about 12 people in each group.

In my discussion group we have a real mix of people - some who are committed Christians looking for a refresher on the teachings of Jesus, some who thought they were and now realise they need to do more, some who want to find out more as they seek a relationship with Jesus and some who are there just to see what its all about. The great thing about this mix is the discussion is always lively and everyone is talking openly about his or her views. It's interesting to see how some people's views alter over the weeks and I believe God is using this situation in powerful ways.

During the course we had the opportunity to spend the whole day together in fellowship to discover more about the Holy Spirit. We shared a faith lunch and there was plenty of opportunity for individual or group discussion and prayer. The day culminated in a time of worship, which was very uplifting.

Churches Together are hoping to host another course in the near future due to the success of this one - possibly to start in September. I would urge everyone - no matter how much you think you know the answers - to participate, as there is something in it for everyone at whatever stage of your spiritual journey you happen to be at.

Olivia McLachlan

Pause for thought

*Do not retreat into your private world
That place of safety sheltered from the storm,
Where you may tend your garden, seek your soul,
And rest with loved ones where the fire burns warm*

*To tend a garden is a precious thing,
But dearer still the one where all may roam,
The weeds of poison, threat and war,
Demand your care, who call the earth your home.*

*To seek your soul it is a precious thing,
But you will never find it on your own,
Only in the clamour, threat and pain
Of other people's need will love be known.*

*To rest with loved ones is precious thing,
But peace of mind exacts a higher cost,
Your children will not rest and play in quiet,
While they still hear the crying of the lost.*

*Do not retreat into your private world,
There are more ways than firesides to keep you warm.,
There is no shelter from the rage of life.
So meet its eye and dance within the storm.*

Writer unknown

Elgin

A Warning

*Moses was busy with his flock;
Saul was busy searching for his father's lost beasts;
David was busy caring for his father's sheep;
Elisha was busy ploughing;
Nehemiah was busy in the palace of a king;
Amos was busy with his sheep;
Peter and Andrew were busy with their fishing;
James and John were busy with their nets;
Matthew was busy collecting taxes;
Paul was busy persecuting Christians;
God never goes to the lazy or idle when he needs men.
When he wants a worker he does what you do - he calls a worker.
When God wants a great servant he calls a busy man.*

If you think you're busy - watch out!

Val Davies

Landscape of the Spirit

*Walk with us, Lord
sometimes beside us, sometimes in front
but never so far that we cannot follow,
each footstep precisely in yours.
Stay with us on the empty, sandy track of the wilderness,
over the changing contours of the dunes of the desert;
Climbing the steep inclines of rocky outcrops –
Be our companion on the upward path
of our human, spiritual journey;
be our companion on the lonely road
of our human spiritual journey ...
and where our wanderings take us to the isolated stranger,
come home to them through our attentive presence,
as we travel with them on their human, spiritual journey.*

Author Unknown

Marie Murphy

Computerspeak

The other day I overheard a couple having an argument about the word “computer”. They were trying to decide if this noun was masculine or feminine.

The man came down firmly on the side of it being feminine and the reasons he gave were:

1- no one but the creator understands their internal logic. 2- the native language they use to communicate with each other is incomprehensible to everyone else. 3- the message 'bad command' or '.file name' is about as informative as “if you don't know why I am mad at you then I am certainly not going to tell you”. 4- even your smallest mistakes are stored in long term memory for later retrieval. 5- as soon as you make a commitment to one you find yourself spending all your pay cheques on accessories for it.

The woman, as you can guess, was certain that it should be masculine and the reasons she gave were:

1- they have a lot of data but are still clueless. 2- they are supposed to help you solve your problems but half the time they are the problem. 3- as soon as you commit to one you realise that if you had waited a little longer you could have obtained a better model. 4- in order to get their attention you have to turn them on. 5- big power surges knock them out for the rest of the night.

Val Davies

Out of the mouths of the children.....
“Grandad, could you help me with my homework, please?”
“Yes dear, I could, but it wouldn't be right, would it?”
“Perhaps not, but you could try.”

Bob Rose

The following headlines appeared in newspapers. Some in the UK and some in the USA: -

SHELL FOUND ON BEACH

TYPHOON RIPS THROUGH CEMETERY; HUNDREDS DEAD

TWO CONVICTS EVADE NOOSE, JURY HUNG

Top Surgeon Is To Head New Body In Medical Ethics

Crematorium Plans Put On Back Burner

JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT

FALSE CHARGE OF THEFT OF HENS, Police On Wild Goose Chase.

Lingerie Shipment Hijacked – Thief Gives Police The Slip

CRASH COURSES FOR PRIVATE PILOTS

Invisible Man Disappears From View

Golfer Charged With Drunken Driving

BLIND BISHOP APPOINTED TO SEE

Alzheimer's Centre Prepares For An Affair To Remember

20 – Year Friendship Ends At Altar

Council To Stamp on Dog Mess

Dead Body Found In Cemetery

MAN SHOOTS NEIGHBOUR WITH MACHETE

Bob Rose

TRELLECH NEWS

Art for Africa 2006 – new venue and new date!

Last year was billed as the final *Art for Africa at Fern Lea*. It was the final exhibition at Fern Lea, but not the final Art for Africa, thanks to the generosity and support of the people of Catbrook.

This year's Art for Africa exhibition will be held in Catbrook Village Hall over the first weekend in August, opening from 6 to 9pm on Friday 4th and 10am to 6pm on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th.

Please note the dates in your diaries and join us for some time over the weekend.

We are looking for people to take on specific roles in putting the exhibition on: for example, recording pictures exhibited and sales, printing picture titles, taking care of cash and paying in, sending out artists' letters. Several people have indicated that they would like to help. Could they, and anyone else who is willing, please contact Hazel or Peter Symes on 01600 860264 or at symes@fish.co.uk

Christian Aid Lent Lunches

The annual Lent lunches got off to a good start on Friday 10th March, with many people dropping in to enjoy delicious soups, sandwiches and sweets. Fair Trade produce was also on sale. Lunches will continue every Friday from 12 to 2pm in the Priory, with the last one on Friday 7th April. Do pop in!

Churches Together Monmouth Good Friday Walk

The annual walk will take place in Monmouth on Good Friday. There should be enough people to fill Monmouth from the Rolls memorial to the old bridge! Check assembly time beforehand and *please come!*

Can You help with Osbaston School's Intergenerational Project?

To help the children at Osbaston School experience the benefits of living and learning in a community, the school is launching a project to allow people of different generations to work together for their mutual benefit.

In the summer term, the school are working with Monmouth Day Centre and other local organisations, inviting older members of the community to work with the older children in school each week. For example, one week the children may show the visitor how to use the internet, and another week, the visitor may teach the children about gardening.

Do you think you might enjoy such a link with the school yourself? The time commitment would be about an hour each week, initially over the period of the summer term. If you would like to be nominated to find out more at a meeting at the school, please see me and I can then put your name forward.

Many thanks for considering this, and please pray for the success of this project.

Olivia McLachlan 01600 714224

Easter Services

Thurs 13th Maundy Thursday Communion, Monmouth, 7.30pm
Fri 14th Good Friday Meditation, Monmouth, 10.30am
Good Friday Procession through Monmouth 1.30pm
Good Friday Service, Trellech, 7.00pm Rev B Smith
Sun 16th Easter Morning, Holy Communion, Monmouth 8.00am
Easter Morning Breakfast, Monmouth 9.00am, contact Ruth Bean

When I say .. “I am a Christian”

When I say ... ‘I am a Christian’
I’m not shouting ‘I am saved!’
I’m whispering ‘I get lost!’
‘That is why I chose this way.’

When I say ... ‘I am a Christian’
I don’t speak of this with pride
I’m confessing that I stumble
And I need someone to be my guide.

When I say ... ‘I am a Christian’
I’m not trying to be strong.
I’m professing that I’m weak
And pray for strength to carry on.

When I say ... ‘I am a Christian’
I’m not bragging of success.
I’m admitting I have failed
And cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say ‘I am a Christian’
I’m not claiming to be perfect,
My flaws are too visible,
But God believes I’m worth it.

When I say ... ‘I am a Christian’
I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartaches
Which is why I seek His name.

When I say ... ‘I am a Christian’
I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority.
I only know I’m loved.

*From the church
magazine of
Sandyford
Henderson
Memorial Church,
Glasgow*

Richard McLachlan

Trellech Methodist Church

Service every Sunday at 6.15pm, reverting back to the usual time after the earlier time of 3.30pm during the dark evenings.

Good Friday Service at 7.00pm

Please join us for this short service, which Rev Barry Smith will be leading.

Coffee Morning and Plant Sale, 10.30am to 12.30pm, Saturday 20 May at The Green, Pen y Fan, The Narth

Nassim and Peggy Hilu have kindly offered their house for this event to raise money For Trellech Methodist Church. It is a beautiful spot, with ample parking. Please join us for coffee, some plant bargains, and other items including books.

Prayer Hour, 1st Friday each month, 9am to 10am

Please feel free to join us for this quiet hour – come and go as you feel appropriate. Dates are Friday 7 April, 5 May, 2 June. We look forward to sharing this time with you.

Trellech Festival weekend

During this weekend there will be in the Methodist church:

- Old photos exhibition of Trellech and around on Saturday 3rd June from 10am to 5pm.
Refreshments available.
- Songs of Praise at 6.15pm on Sunday 4th June

Peter Symes

Spring --Time to go on pilgrimage

People have been going on pilgrimage for centuries, and often in the Spring, when travel in bygone years was more possible. A pilgrimage can of course be a solitary affair, but it is far better when shared with others. After all, Christianity is essentially a community faith, requiring individual commitment. Some pilgrimages have a particular destination in mind, a great Cathedral or Holy mountain, or we may do as the Celtic Monks did, simply wander, with no particular end point in sight. Just happy to journey simply for the love of Christ. Pilgrimage is simply a physical journey that somehow or other 'kick starts' the inner or spiritual journey.

When we go on pilgrimage, we leave everyday routine behind, and set out on a journey with the Lord. Travelling as a small community, telling stories and exploring places and issues, provides us with a great way to discover more about ourselves and about our faith. It is a time of new beginnings, a time to rekindle a flickering faith, to discover a new purpose and a new meaning; so when the time is right, and the road beckons you - don't hesitate.

Ann Smed

Easter Offering Service

Please do not forget the following date

Circuit Offering Service 2006

This service will be held on

Sunday 7th May

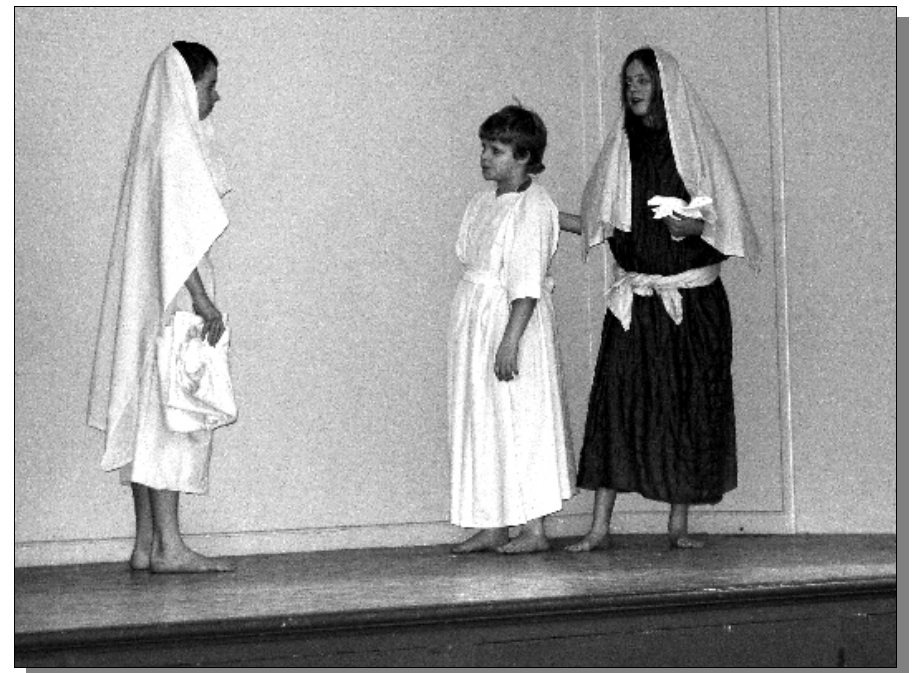
10.30 am at Monmouth Methodist Church

Speaker: Mrs Meryl Bedford

Garway Youth Group

The group thoroughly enjoyed competing in this year's Scripture Union Drama Competition in Hereford. The bible verses – the birth and calling of Samuel — on which the drama had to be based, weren't easy to transform into a believable play for young people of their age. But their hard work paid off and once more they have come away with the cup and another certificate to decorate the walls of the hut. Congratulations to Abigail, Katie, Sophie, Jonny, Nick, Cory and Jack. We look forward to your next performance.

Ann Mills



Jack as Eli, Nick as Samuel and Abigail as Hannah