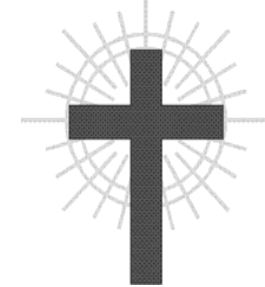
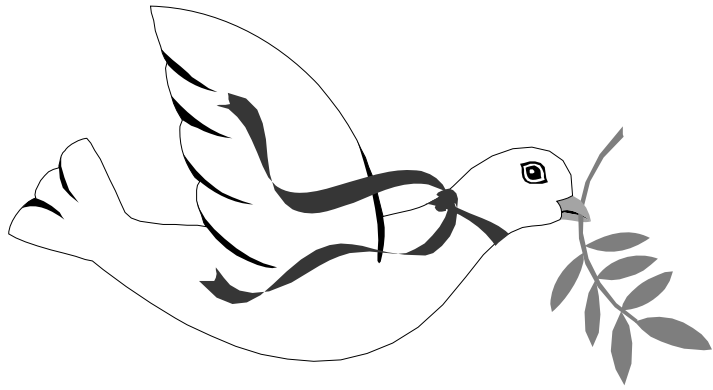


# THE MESSENGER



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

**February/March 2011**



Many thanks to all our contributors to The Messenger

*Patrick & Ann*

## THANKS

Thanks to all those who willingly provided the Christmas decorations at Monmouth. "Christmas Around the World" didn't quite cover all the continents, but it did provide a joyful representation of the celebrations of the one who was "born for all." Austria had a hidden quiz and "A child's Christmas in Wales" had a nostalgic Dylan Thomas feel to it. Christmas in the Middle East gathered ethnic and religious threads together, while the Mexican legend of the Poinsettia was depicted in the vestibule. Mexico was never this cold! But Finland fitted right in to the weather at the time.

The display for North America was a representation of the Huron Carol written by French missionaries to the New World in about 1643. The priests adapted the story of the birth of Christ for people who were unfamiliar with swaddling cloths and sheep!

There were four pictures of the Christmas story in the vestibule painted by a Chinese artist. Produced by Magnet, they depict "The Prophets and Preparation," "The People," "The Proclamation" and "The Promise and the Presence." They are colourful and moving and will certainly be on display again.

*Dorothy Lloyd Williams*

### On Love

Life is a song – sing it.

Life is a game – play it.

Life is a challenge – meet it.

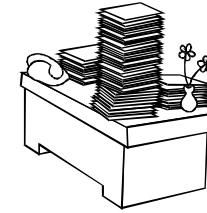
Life is a dream – realise it.

Life is a sacrifice – offer it.

Life is love – enjoy it.

Sai Baba

Sent in by *Barbara Isaac*



## From the Minister's Desk

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Feb at about 8.30 p.m. I had to drive through Monmouth town centre. Dixton Rd. was closed because of an overturned lorry at the island. As I drove down Monnow St. a cow was walking, determinedly, up the street. Unusual for Monmouth but it took me back to India where cows and bullocks are everywhere on the streets together with dogs, pigs, goats and chickens. As I continued sedately down Monnow Street I was reminded of the horrendous, three quarters of an hour, taxi journey we had from the airport in Vishkapatnam to the orphanage in Vizianagaram.

The flight carrying our friends Don and Hilary was several hours late and so it was decided the Bejibab, our host, Pam and I should travel by taxi to the orphanage. The driver argued about the best way to take us, he undertook, he overtook dangerously, he created a lane of traffic where there was not one, he went through at least three sets of traffic lights on red, he was swerving in and out of traffic at high speed dodging cars, buses, lorries bicycles, animals, tuk-tuks and pedestrians, he went the wrong way down a dual carriageway, at one point he braked so hard we were nearly thrown out of the car ( after suggesting we didn't need seat belts) and finally he drove off with one of our suitcases still in the taxi.(We did get it back). It was only when he had gone that our host said the driver was drunk.

A journey like that does wonders for your prayer life!!!!

But apart from that journey and Pam being ill we had a great time in India. The colours, smells, friendliness of people and the joy, hope, enthusiasm and expectation of the Christians is remarkable.

We met new pastors, street workers, bible school students and old friends whom we have seen grow in faith over the years. The future is bright. God is blessing the work that is being done and the Church is growing.

Please pray for the family who run things, Benjibab and Krupa, Prasant and Shanti and Andrew and Evangeline. Pray also for the pastors the congregations and the outreaches being planned ,particularly in Goa.

Back here please pray for Catherine Lewis as she continues in her candidature.

One thing the Christians in India know for certain is that prayer works.

God bless

***Barry***

before, during and after the exhibition, with some administration, and with printing picture titles and labelling. The proposed dates and times are Friday July 15<sup>th</sup> open from 6 to 9pm, and Saturday and Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, both open from 10am to 6pm.

Help will be needed to receive and hang pictures on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> and Friday 15<sup>th</sup>; to be present during the exhibition to welcome people, record sales and provide security; and to take down and supervise the issue of pictures to buyers and artists on Monday 18<sup>th</sup>. Actual timings may vary according to circumstances and progress made.

A letter to artists inviting them to take part will be sent out soon. This letter will come from Aled Pickard and will give details of the project for 2011 - *Good food and clean water: changing lives in Sierra Leone*.

This letter is being sent to all whose details are on the current mailing list; artists, helpers, donors, supporters for many years. If you would like to be removed from this list, or know of others who may wish to be added, please let us or Aled Pickard (Christian Aid, 5 Station Road, Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8AA; phone 029 2084 4646; email Aled Pickard APickard@christian-aid.org) know.

Finally, thank you once again for faithful, sustained and cheerful support over 20 years! This amount brings the total raised during the twenty years to over £70,000, which - as Aled points out, with matched funding from recent years - means that more than £100,000 has been raised.

Please may it continue as we hand over.

***Peter & Catherine Symes***

## Art for Africa 2010/2011

**Fern Lea  
Trellech Cross  
Monmouth, NP25 4PX  
Tel 01600 860264  
Email: prsymes@tiscali.co.uk**

10<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Dear Friends

Firstly, thank you for another successful exhibition at Catbrook. The total raised was £2,296.38. I quote from a letter of thanks from Aled Pickard, Regional Coordinator, Christian Aid in Cardiff: "Thank you again for your tremendous effort for Art for Africa 2010. The £2,296.38 raised will go directly to support the work of partners Zimpro and Lutheran Development Services in South Matabeleland, Zimbabwe.... With the European Union's matched funding, the total is almost £23,000 – a magnificent amount, which will go a long way in helping develop new farming methods to ensure food security for people ...the project has now reached its financial target and the work of transforming lives can begin."

This year's exhibition was the twentieth, and the fifth to be held in Catbrook Memorial Hall. As mentioned previously, this was to be the last Art for Africa unless someone came forward to refresh, enliven and develop it into "more and better."

We are very pleased to be able to let you know that it may not be the last! We hope that the 2011 exhibition will be held in *Bridges* Community Centre Monmouth, subject to security and other arrangements being acceptable. Christian Aid staff in Cardiff will help, as will the Christian Aid committee in Monmouth and Catherine and myself. We will need volunteers to help with security

## Links Youth Fellowship (2010 Report)

Dear supporting Churches,

At the beginning of the year I am writing to let you know how Links has fared throughout 2010. We are blessed by your continued support in so many ways; the Priory gives us a spacious venue for our meetings; financial support has enabled us to balance our budget; and we are also conscious of the prayer support of individuals and churches.

Our current membership is healthy with regular members from many denominations and none and from every Secondary School in the town. Young boarders from HMSG continue to join us for one or two Sunday evenings each term.

Our outings have included a night playing skittles at the Royal Oak and trips to Gorsley Baptist Chapel Youth Service to enable our young people to meet with other young Christians and participate in inspiring contemporary worship.

Richard and Olivia McLachlan have continued to lead club. They spend much time and energy planning and leading the meetings and all are grateful for this. They have been helped both by the OM team, when available, and by outside speakers from Cardiff, Ross and local churches.

If anyone feels called to help serve in this ministry, perhaps as a speaker giving a testimony or as a helper on a more regular basis, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We have continued with the 50p subscription for members and this has helped our bank balance but not covered all expenses. Contributions from churches and individuals are always most welcome. Cheques can be made out to Links Youth Fellowship and sent to Peter Waghorn at Westgate, St Maughans, Monmouth, NP25 5QF.

*Olivia Mclachlan*

# Trellech News

## *Families at Four*

The church was full for our annual Christmas Eve Families at Four celebration. We welcomed many old friends and some new ones and Gordon Casson led a lively service.

Some young musicians played instruments and a good sing was had by all.

## *New Windows*

The windows in the church and schoolroom are worn out. Replacement wood windows are being installed. We have raised most of the money needed ourselves from a variety of sources and some generous grants and bequests.

There is a little way to go though, so Peggy and Nassim Hilu planned to hold a “Sing along with carols” with supper at their home. This was, however, not possible because of the snow and ice. We were all disappointed because Peggy’s cakes and savouries are delicious, well known and much appreciated! All the more so, because some of the food had to be thrown away because it could not be frozen. Ironic! Anyway, instead, not to be daunted, a sale was held in the church on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> January. Lots of people came and donated and bought lots of items. The church and schoolroom buzzed with people chatting, enjoying refreshments and buying items. A good time was had by all and over £800 was raised towards the cost of the windows!

A big thank you to all who organised the event and to all who donated items and bought them! About half the windows have now been installed. All are welcome to inspect the windows from the inside when the installation is completed within the next few weeks by coming to one of our services!

*I was asked to write a Prayer of Adoration for the Family Service in January and was pleased to be given this privilege. When I sat down to write it, I realised how my prayers are usually so centred on me and not on worshipping God. It wasn't as easy as I thought to write a prayer of simply to worship God, so I thought if I found it hard, maybe others do too and may appreciate reading this prayer as part of your own time with God.*

*God Bless, **Olivia***

“Lord, I am totally amazed by the breath-taking vastness of the universe; I find it hard to conceive the immense and overwhelming creation you have designed to broadcast your glory... and yet your immeasurable love for me.

Lord, when I think about the intricate plan you have for my life, and that each life matters to you, even in amongst all the majesty of the heavens, I know I am worshipping an awesome, creator God; maker of all that is seen and unseen.

Lord, it is so humbling to know that I am wonderfully made in your image, with freedom to choose, think and love, because you wanted me to have these precious gifts, even before I chose you, thought about you or loved you. And now I am so thankful for the times when I can feel your presence in my life; knowing that you strengthen me and won't let me fall; you never let go - you cherish me, even when I mess up and walk away from you. Lord, you astound me with your infinite capacity to forgive me. Lord, thank you for the times when you refresh my faith and let me start over.

Lord, you provide me with the loving fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ, both those who are here and those who are further away yet close to my heart. I am reminded that as part of your church, I am called to be part of your body on this earth and thank you for the many ways in which your church has nurtured me and ministered to me, meeting my unique needs, and the times when you have been able to use me to reveal yourself to others.

Lord, you know exactly what I need when the world is rushing around, constantly striving for the next big thing, when I end up being pulled away from you, drowning in the busy-ness of life. You are there to re-focus my perspective, to tell me to be still and know that you are God.

Lord you are so generous, in all that you give and all that you do; to think you would let your own son die because you love me so much. Lord you gave yourself for even me – you are truly wonderful and I can't thank you enough.

Amen.”

## “The Big Brew”

The President of the Methodist Church, Rev Alison Tomlin, and the Vice-President, Deacon Eunice Attwood encourage Methodists to stage a Traidcraft “Big Brew” as part of the Fairtrade Fortnight, February 28 to March 13. At **Monmouth** there will be a “Big Brew” Coffee morning on **Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>** between **10 and 12 noon**.

Not only will there be a Traidcraft stall, but we will also have kitchen and cookery items for sale. There will be plenty of newer and older cookery books. Other items of kitchen equipment or linen will we welcome as well.

If you have a contribution to make, please make sure I have them by the last Sunday in February, the 27<sup>th</sup>. Those attending Monmouth can leave their items in the choir pews at the front of the church. Even if you haven’t anything to contribute, please come. Bring your friends and neighbours. There will be no ulterior motive other than to support a most worthwhile charity.

*Dorothy Lloyd Williams*

*Tel: 01600 772085*

## Women’s Fellowship Dates

### **February**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mr. M Brain: History and funny side of insurance
- 8<sup>th</sup> Rehearsal for the WWDP (Pianist Mrs J Newman)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Beetle Drive
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Miss E Jeremy: Teaching in a Muslim School

### **March**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mrs J Hopkins: As time goes by (Kenya)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Pancakes and Bring and Buy
- 15<sup>th</sup> Mrs Pam Smith: Update on Indian Orphanage
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Rev.J Lloyd Williams: Miscellany 3
- 29<sup>th</sup> Mrs J Newman: Songs of Praise

### ***Fifth Sunday Joint Service***

We held our fifth Sunday joint service with our friends from St Nicholas’ church on 30<sup>th</sup> January. It was our turn to host and we had a good number of people and appreciated the service led by Mr R Bafico.

### ***Photocoffee Morning***

These popular get-togethers have been discontinued for a while. Several people have asked for them to start up again. Watch this space for a date in the Spring and another opportunity to browse old photographs of Trellech and around and chat over a cup of coffee and a cake.

*Peter Symes*

### ***A Request from Llancloudy Chapel***

***Llancloudy Chapel needs a new pulpit-fall to replace the present faded one. Is there a lady (or gentleman!) possessing the skills of Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 35: 30 – 35) who would be able and willing to help us? If so, the Steward (Arthur Isaac, 01989 770604) would be very glad to hear from you.***

## Olive Bough News

The Olive Bough Christian Book Stall has now been trading for 5 years in Monmouth Market on Saturdays (except in January).

As you all know we have been trading from the Cattle Market Car Park for the last 2 years. For those of you who have not visited us PLEASE COME! We trade from 9am and start packing up at 3.30pm. We have over £2000 worth of books, cards (for all occasions) and gifts. We also have gift vouchers to spend on the stall (a very useful present if you do not know what to buy someone).

Starting in February we have a special SALE. For every purchase including cards and new orders a FREE GIFT will be given. These free items include Wooden Perpetual Calendars, Wooden Screw Nutcrackers, Wooden Hand Crosses and more, so, some real bargains, but, hurry as they will soon go and all that will be left in the free gift box will be pencils and rubbers! You may be wondering what is the catch? Well, we are in a good financial position and want to clear space for new gifts.

Our Market Managers and many of our lunch time volunteers have been loyal since our beginning, but, we are all getting older and to continue trading every week (except January) we **desperately** need new Market Managers who can once a month do a full day with lunch time relief.

*Ordinary lay people have always played a major part in running the church and its worship.*

*Small groups are invaluable in helping us to share in prayer and Bible study and to provide practical support, and my group has been very helpful to me.*

*Methodists have an inclusive theology; no one is beyond the reach of God's love.*

*His love is there for us even before we turn to him.*

*Wesley explained his conversion as an experience where his heart was strangely warmed. I like that.*

*There's something welcoming about it.*

The Covenant Service is important. It's an opportunity at the start of the year to surrender our lives again to God's call. Ever since the beginning, Methodists have been encouraged to be involved in the community. Wesley started schools and a dispensary for the poor. His views on slavery had a positive influence on the anti-slavery movement. Methodists have always worked for justice and equality and the right use of resources. Wesley said we should give – and give even more to those who need it most. What could be more Biblical than that!

Finally, however, there is Wesley's view of ecumenism. He wrote a sermon entitled, "The Catholic Spirit." In it he said, "Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him; and will not more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desire to unite in love that single question, "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?...Give me thy hand." And so it has proved through the years that Methodists have always been willing to value and to work with their sisters and brothers in Christ.

*Dorothy Lloyd Williams*

## ***Why am I a Methodist?***

At the Christian Unity Service at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church on Wednesday, January 19th, representatives from the Roman Catholics, the Baptist, the Anglicans and Wyesham Christian Fellowship spoke about their reasons for belonging to their denominations. I was asked to give 4 minutes of my time to set out reasons for being a Methodist. I was subsequently asked that my presentation be printed in "The Messenger."

Reasons for being a Methodist are as varied as the people who are asked. Like most churches, there is a wide spectrum of theological points of view and styles of worship. Your experience of Methodism (as with many other denominations) will depend upon where you are at the time.

Responses to the question, too, would reflect the predilections and expectations of those asked. John Wesley is known as the father of Methodism, but he was born to an Anglican clergy father. He and his brother, the hymn writer, Charles, were Anglican priests – and remained so all their lives. The Methodist movement became a separate denomination in the UK only after John's death.

The following are some possible responses to the question, "Why am I a Methodist?" The answers might not all be mine, but they are bound to be somebody's!

*I was born into a Methodist family.*

*The people in the congregation have been very supportive of me.*

*Methodism was born in song, and the singing is always good.*

*I like the simplicity of the building and the worship.*

*I approve of the fact that the ordained ministry is open to women as well as men.*

*The minister is friendly.*

*This is where I have found my spiritual home.*

Please pray that new managers will be found so we can continue our Christian presence in the friendly market. If you would like to know more please contact Liz Hicks on 01600 714159.

## **The Easter Experience**

This year the Easter Experience for all Year 6 children in Monmouth and Trellech will be held on March 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

The Dress Rehearsal on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March is **open to everyone** starting at the Methodist Church at 5pm. For those who have not seen this 'experience' the Easter Story is told and acted in 4 parts in the Methodist, Roman Catholic, Baptist and Parish Churches. The 6 performances on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> are for the 5 Monmouth and 1 Trellech School children specially invited. If you have not seen it please come on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>.

If you have seen it and would like to be part of this great inter-denominational event could you act as a steward? We need 12, two for each performance (full instructions given and reflective bibs provided). Please ring me if you can help on 01600 714159.

Thank you,

***Liz Hicks***

## *Church Life in a Listed Building*

Monmouth Methodist Church was completed in 1837 by the local architect and builder George Vaughan Maddox who designed other local buildings and structures, including the viaduct that carries Priory Street into the town. It is a grade II listed building and thoroughly deserves to be so. Its internal and external features are very fine, but what is it like to worship in such a place?

At the time it was built much importance was placed on sermons and the pulpit was very high and was uncomfortable for the congregation in the front rows looking upwards, so that in 1885 the chapel floor was raised by two feet. However it remains too remote for most preachers today. Although listed, the church has lent itself to many adaptations which have been made over the years bringing the church, which has I believe a very lovely and reverent ambience for worship, into an even more user friendly place.

Firstly an entrance porch was constructed improving access and warmth retention. An area for computer use and sound system was created. We now have screens at the front of the church for projecting hymns, scripture and notices, although the installation of wiring and projectors proved a challenge. A lift for disabled access has also been installed. The latest innovation is the creation of a performing area at the front of the church for our worship group of musicians and singers.

All these alterations and improvements necessitated the removal of some pews for which listed building consent was necessary which can be a long winded process. Some would like to see all the pews removed and replaced by more flexible use of chairs for comfort and other reasons, whereas others consider it would completely ruin the

traditional character of the building. The chapel initially had seats for 340 and the original pews survive in the galleries which provide additional accommodation for special occasions such as ordinations, weddings and christenings although some complain of a restricted view. Civic services celebrating the installation of the Town Mayor have also been held with the participation of a male voice choir. The front of the church does lend itself to performances and lately we have enjoyed the talents of the local ladies choir and a fantastic performance by church members of the musical "The Inn Crowd".

The altar rail is lovely it can accommodate up to nine people at a time for Communion. The decorative plaster work is of very high standard picked out in blue and white and there is a charming mural of Jesus meeting Peter and others in a fishing boat on Galilee. The church itself is light and airy with large windows which lend themselves to decoration for special occasions such as Harvest Festival and Advent. So overall, even with the listing restrictions, the chapel is well suited to our needs and is a great mixture of the traditional and the modern in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Richard Bond January 2011*