

Ty Croeso

We continue to be open on Tuesdays as a Drop In and for the Foodbank; on Thursday mornings for the Welsh conversation group; alternate Thursday afternoons for the Bereavement Counselling Group; and once a month for a book club. We still find that many people in the area are unaware of our presence, but have been building up connections in the community wherever we can. (A recent outreach venture has been a 'Hymntime and Story' at the Glais House Care Home, who in return are keen to support Ty Croeso by giving us a stall at their well supported summer fete.) Shortly we'll be sending out letters to churches, businesses, and other organisations reminding them of this local charitable enterprise, inviting donations towards our costs, and inviting people to an open evening in April (see below).

We are always on the look out for new ideas for activities at Ty Croeso, for ways to develop our work, and whether we might be able to become sustainable. The current premises are very small and restricting – though cosy and welcoming! There are things we could do, e.g. sell second-hand clothes, if we had more space. For months we've been in conversation with a local church, who were hoping to take over the Forge Fach Community Centre, with a few to our having permanent space within the building and access to other rooms at times, e.g. a counselling room, and the café area. However, that church's bid narrowly missed being chosen to run the Centre. There are now indirect conversations with the group who are taking the Centre over – the Chair of the Community Council taking our case, amongst others, to those concerned. A key meeting takes place on March 25th – your prayers, please!

Ty Croeso is the home for a branch of the Food Bank, but is much more than that, and the two should not be confused. Thank you to all those individuals in the Circuit who have both contributed food to the food bank, and money for the overheads of the project. Thanks also to the Circuit/Synod; VALE works; Co-op; the City/County Council and Community Council for grants given in the past. We are in the process of applying for grants again now to cover our costs of around £5K per annum. We have run local fund-raisers but find these take energy from our volunteers quite disproportionate to the amount raised. As mentioned, lack of space prevents us expanding our second-hand sales.

Regarding the Food Bank, the amount of food given, via major stores and others, in the build up to Christmas was overwhelming and the stock of most items is still very good. Sadly, the amount of food given out last year is 50% up on the previous year, In 2014 the total number of people receiving food across the Swansea Food Bank outlets was 5,664, 32% of whom were children. At Ty Croeso we gave out food parcels for 661 people during the year, an average of 13 per session open. The vast majority come because of benefit sanctions or benefit delays.

It is a pleasure to extend a personal invitation to you and all supporters of Tŷ Croeso to an Open Meeting at Neuadd y Nant, Heol y Nant SA6 5HB on Monday 13 April at 7.00 p.m.

Social Issues

With an election on the way there are many key issues that are getting media attention. While it's not our place in the church to tell anyone how to vote, there are many resources around to help us think about our vote:

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (www.ctbi.org.uk) invite churches to organise Hustings and have provided a website with guidance on doing so. Sadly, there are so far no hustings registered in Swansea East, Swansea West or Gower. CTBI have also produced a '**2020 Vision for a Good Society**':

- All citizens have access to enough income to enable them to live with dignity, either through paid work or through a properly functioning welfare safety net.
- Reasonably priced homes where people can flourish are available for everyone who needs them and there is a reliable safety net for all homeless people.
- All children and young people are enabled to live fulfilling flourishing lives, their contributions are valued, and they are enabled to grow and achieve their potential.
- An economy that is in service to every person irrespective of their wealth or the market value of their labour; including robust action to clamp down on tax dodging.
- UK greenhouse gas emissions are falling rapidly, and the Government has helped to secure a global climate deal that limits global temperature rises to 2 degrees.

The 'Joint Public Issues Team' (Methodist, Baptist, URC) has produced a study pack with video material, Bible studies, worship resources etc. for the weeks leading up to the election, inviting us to look at the issues through the 'lenses' of truth, justice, peace, and well-being. The pack is available from Methodist Publishing at £7.50 + £2.50 P & P. The title is **Love your Neighbour**. www.methodistpublishing.org.uk

Also, on the JPI website, www.jointpublicissues.org.uk , are resources on 'Countering Political Extremism' (statements from various churches, advice and reflections); Housing; Feeding Britain; Child Poverty etc.

On Monday a Coalition of UK Churches issued a report, **Rethink Sanctions**, showing that nearly **100,000 children** were affected by benefit sanctions last year. In the same period, nearly **7 million weeks** of sanctions were handed out to people. For an individual this may mean just a week or two without benefits, but for some it has gone on for three years. Their failure to turn up on time at the Job Centre, or be active in seeking work online, may be through illness, accident, even the queue at the Job Centre and the punishment is often out of all proportion. The system penalises rather than encourages, and leaves people feeling under suspicion and valueless, deepening the cycle of ill-health. Universal Credit will extend this problem to working people as well, and the agencies concerned anticipate a huge increase in use of Food Banks as UC is rolled out. The full report is also available from JPI. This is one personal story from it:

"During the first three weeks of my sanction I continued to look for work as I was required to. By the fourth week however I was exhausted, unwell and no longer had it

in me. I was not eating as I had no food and was losing a lot of weight. I told the Jobcentre I was unwell through not eating but was sanctioned for another three months for not looking for work properly."

Report Of Local Preachers' Meeting Clydach 02.03.15

1. The meeting was attended by 20 Ministers and Preachers
2. It was agreed to give Jean Lang a "Note" to preach.
3. Positive reports were given on services led by the 4 preachers on trial: Selina Taylor, Cynthia Mumford, Caroline Buckler and Sue Raad.
4. The Rev Howard long reported:
 - An increase in membership in the Circuit
 - An organist rota for Penlan is in operation
 - The Alpha course in Brunswick is attracting around 12 people
 - The sad deaths of Michael Topliss, and the father of Rev Stephen Wigley
 - Ogof Adullam is attracting up to 30 guests; more volunteers are required, especially on Saturdays; around 65 people are making a regular financial contribution: another 25 required!
 - The Night Shelter has closed earlier than expected since most guests have been found accommodation: grateful thanks expressed to Gwen Dumelow and Rev Leslie Noon for their hard work organising and administering the NS at Sketty.
 - Thanks to Rev Andrew Walker for leading the funeral service of Rev Alf Austin so movingly.
5. Rev Andy Walker reported the setting up of a new leadership model at Murton
6. Ken Allison reported on the successful LP weekend at Lindors, and encouraged people to use magazines such as "Preach" and online resources when preparing worship
7. A variety of forthcoming lectures, courses, LP study groups etc was noted.
8. The meeting concluded with a discussion of some religious art.

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN SOUTH WALES

QUIET DAY TUESDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2015-02-04@NICHOLASTON

HOUSE, PENMAEN, GOWER

THEME – "Welcome to the feast"

LEADER – Janet Neilson

TIME – 10 for 10.30 am – 4 pm

COST £20 (incl. lunch, tea, coffee, biscuits)

Alan Cram

The day will be based on an MWiB resource, "Welcome to the Feast". One session will include discussing favourite family recipes, SO PLEASE BRING SOME OF YOUR WELL TRIED AND TESTED RECIPES as we hope to produce a recipe book to raise funds for MWiB projects. Also bring a Bible.

NUMBERS LIMITED TO 35 (first come first served) – **deadline to book is 1st SEPTEMBER 2015**

Travel instructions to Nicholaston House are on the back of this sheet. The house has wonderful grounds overlooking Oxwich Bay. There are quiet areas in the garden and also a chapel.

..CUT.....
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BOOKING FORM – QUIET DAY @ NICHOLASTON HOUSE ON TUESDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2015

I wish to reserve a place – please print

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....
.....

TEL NO AND/OR E

MAIL.....

I require a vegetarian option YES/NO (delete as app); I am allergic to.....

I enclose a cheque for £20 (payable to J M Neilson). Please send cheque to J M Neilson, 19 Gabalfa Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 8NF. Please enclose a SAE if you require a receipt.

CIRCUIT MEETING MARCH 19TH 2015
METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

There will be a Quiet Day at Hall Street, Llanelli on Saturday 9th May from 10am – 4 pm. Everyone is asked to bring their own lunch. The speaker will be Linda Crossley (President MWiB). More details will be available shortly from Janet Neilson.

There will be another Quiet Day on Friday 24th July at Tondu. The speaker will be Rev Catherine Reynolds (Cardiff). The cost will be £5. More details will be available nearer the date.

There will be a Quiet Day on Tuesday 6th October at Nicholaston House. The theme is “Welcome to the feast”. The leader will be Janet Neilson. The day will include a cooked lunch, tea, coffee etc., The cost will be £20. Booking forms are available now. Please see Janet Neilson if you wish to come.

Janet Neilson

CIRCUIT PROJECT – AMELIA FARM TRUST

A successful concert was held at Sketty with the Abbey Players singing “Songs from the Shows” Over £200 was raised.

All churches have been given quizzes and colouring sheets if they wish to use these to raise funds for the project.

Another idea for raising funds is to adopt an animal at the farm for a year (or longer if you wish). Small animals, such as rabbits, ducks and chickens - £10 per annum. Medium animals such as sheep and goats - £20 per annum. Large animals, such as cattle and donkeys - £30 per annum. Details are available from Janet Neilson. If you adopt an animal you are given a certificate and an information sheet from the farm. The animal adoption forms ask you to return all the details and a cheque to the farm. However, as you may know, the farm is going through a period of upheaval at the moment. They have no director and no finance officer. **So, if you decide you want to adopt an animal, please send all the forms and cheques (payable to Amelia Trust Farm) to Janet Neilson. These can then be sent to the farm in bulk and this will also enable us to keep a total of monies raised towards the circuit project.** Animals can be adopted as birthday or anniversary gifts and adopted by individuals or families. Hopefully, if people adopt animals, it will encourage them to visit the farm for a good day out, with free entry and free parking (at the moment!)

Janet Neilson

BRUNSWICK METHODIST CHURCH REPORT TO CIRCUIT 2015 March 19th

1. CHURCH COUNCIL DECISION: It gives great pleasure to announce that the Church Council of Brunswick has agreed to look ahead and find ways and means of re- development of the lower ground floor in view of improving the facilities for God's great Mission. The congregation was asked to write down the changes that will help them worship more easily. Some users of the building were also asked to write down what improvements they would like to see in the building. All these ideas have been put down. So presently we are waiting for the Quinquennial report, before we consult an architect to help us in the way forward. The Church Council has also agreed to take Zambuko ra Jehovah Trust as their overseas mission charity for the time while I am their minister.

2. BRUNSWICK CHURCH OFFICE : Brunswick Church Office is now in use for meetings as it is much warmer than the other areas. It is also used by the Alcohol anonymous group through Huw Davies.

3. OGOF ADULLAM : We are seeing Ogof Adullam as God's Mission at Brunswick. Because of the closure of some drop- in centres such as the CYRINIANS, we have seen great increase in number of guests coming to us. All those coming are finding warmth, food and fellowship. The Hall is now being used as part of Ogof Adullam because Aldersgate room is too small .There is also need for more volunteers to assist.

4. UNITAS : Brunswick members are joining the ecumenical members for LENT bible studies held at St Mary's Church. We will also join the ecumenical walk of witness on Good Friday from St Mary's church into the city centre like we did last year.

5. THE HILL CHURCH : They are still worshipping at Brunswick.

6. THE ASSYLUM SEEKERS AND THE REFUGEES : These are still coming every Friday for fellowship, for English lessons and art work and for food.

7. BIBLE STUDY: Every 1st and 3rd week of the month we have a bible study on Thursday at 11am.

8. FAN (Friends and Neighbours): We still meet every Wednesday at 10.30 am and we encourage all those who are lonely to come and join us for a chat and a free cup of tea/coffee and biscuit or cake. The Cardiff group will be visiting after Easter.

9. PRAYERS: Every Wednesday we meet at 11.30 am for prayers. Everyone is welcome.

God bless

Rev'd Siperire

Swansea & Gower Methodist Circuit Meeting 11/12/14

Report of Ogof Adullam

Ogof Adullam opened its doors for the first time on Wednesday, October 15th

We are open on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings 5-9pm

We have seen numerous individuals access the project from varying backgrounds. Ogof Adullam aims to provide a place of safety for individuals who have a history of homelessness, substance misuse and providing a point of contact for prison leavers and asylum seekers. I think it is fair to say that we have already achieved this goal for each of our targeted groups.

We have an excellent team of volunteers from various denominations within our city.

We are regularly experiencing new faces accessing the project, but more encouragingly we are experiencing the same individuals returning on a frequent basis. There is a lovely relaxed atmosphere and I personally will admit to feeling far more peaceful during and after the evening than I do prior to it. Almost all of our guests, volunteers and visitors will also testify to this.

We originally intended to offer cooked meals from the kitchen but due to 'Food Hygiene Legislation' had to alter this. However, Cerys has spoken to the authorities within the council and they have agreed that we can serve tinned/packet soup, toast, etc along with cake and biscuits. This though has served its purpose providing a warm, tasty, easy to prepare snack which is not expensive and has been well received by all.

For a full financial breakdown I refer you to Bernard. However, we estimate that it is costing us approximately £100 per week to run with rent, refreshments and heating costs. This cost we are hoping will be covered by the monthly direct debits and other donations.

An exciting development - we have been asked by Martin Whatty the 'homelessness officer' for the council (and former Brunswick member) whether we could possibly open up early on Saturday afternoons in order to provide a dry, warm and friendly environment for the individuals accessing 'Night Shelter' during January, February and March. Monday to Friday 9-5pm these individuals will be able to access other agencies but this is not the case during the weekend. Parklands Church has offered to open up on Sundays - which left a gap on Saturdays. We feel this is an excellent opportunity to work alongside other agencies such as Night Shelter and Housing Options as well as working with other denominations. However, it will mean an increased rent of £25 per week to be paid to Brunswick.

A 12 Step Drug and Alcohol Recovery Fellowship have agreed to start a meeting within the meeting room at Brunswick and this will start this Saturday.

We have also received our posters, flyers and business cards from Rob Weaver. These are not only an excellent quality but also an excellent design. We have posters for each of the churches within the circuit so please see me if you would like some flyers or information sheets.

We would like to thank everyone within the circuit for their support, prayers and encouragement in setting up and starting Ogof Adullam with special thanks to Howard, Siperere and all Brunswick members who have really welcomed Ogof Adullam into the building.