



**Llangollen Methodist Church**  
Worshipping by the River Dee

7<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Number – 948

# Riverside Weekly

*A warm welcome to our Covenant Service*

**11:00 Covenant Service & Communion – Rev Phil Poole**

Music provided by Ted Blackman and Peter Brookfield.

Norman Pybus welcomed you at the door.

Books were given out by Margaret Davies

Reading:– Romans 12:1–21 *Page 154 in NT* — Yvonne Davies

Refreshments by Sue Smith

Today’s Steward is Jeanette Robinson

**6:00 Praise & Worship at the Memorial Hall**

As it is a Communion Service this Sunday, can we please remember to donate to the Pastoral Fund via the wooden box

**Happy Birthday to:**  
Josh Storm (*Thursday*)

Our condolences to Ivy and Mike & Val following Frank passing away in his sleep on New Years Day. He marked his 96th birthday on Christmas Eve.

His funeral will be on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 12:00 in St Collen’s Church



*Do join us for tea & coffee after the service this morning*



# *Church Diary*

## *Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January*

11:00 Covenant Service & Communion — Rev Phil Poole

6:00 Praise & Worship at the Memorial Hall

## *Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January*

12:00 Pastoral Committee — lunch 12:00 till 12:30, business from 12:30

## *Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January*

10:00 Coffee at the Hall — join us for coffee, a chat and a bit of Bric-a-brac

## *Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January*

10:00 Prayer Group meet in the vestry — you are very welcome to join us

4:00 Cytun Meeting in the Upper Room, St. Collen's Community Hall.

## *Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January*

3:00–5:15 After school Drop-In at the Memorial Hall for Secondary School Pupils.

## *Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January*

11:00 Bible Club at the Memorial Hall

11:00 Morning Worship — Rev Patrick Rudden

## *Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January*

2:00 House Group reconvenes at 5, Gerddi y Bache, 2:00 for tea and chat,

2:30 Bible Study starts

6:00–8:00 Games & Activity evening at the Memorial Hall

**An ecumenical service for all Churches in Llangollen will be held on Sunday January 21st at 11 am in Llangollen Methodist Church for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.**

**The service will be led by Deacon Lisa Rathbone and will be suitable for all ages, and all will be very welcome.**

## *Sheila's Progress Report*

I arrived safely in Sydney on Monday morning at 6.15am after good flights (although very turbulent at times!!), to be greeted by Phil and Kai. It was a very special moment. We then got back home before Rhys, who is 6 but enjoys his bed like a teenager, was even up!!

We've had a lovely time together because Phil and Elinda were still off work after the Christmas holidays and the boys are on holiday from school. Yesterday afternoon we went to the beach at Manly but there was a north easterly wind blowing and that meant that bluebottles/Portuguese men of war, were being washed in on the tide and the lifeguards were advising people to keep out of the water! The beach was very busy and the children there spent a lot of time throwing lumps of sand on to these bluebottles but we did see a few children crying in pain because they had been stung. There's no cure for the sting except to run it under cold water and wait an hour or two for the pain to die down!! Today we've been to a different beach where the boys enjoyed jumping in off the boardwalk. Tomorrow we'll be going to the 10am service at Church and the boys will join the Sunday School there, they especially enjoy the cakes, biscuits and fruits after the service!! It is forecast to be 43C tomorrow so I guess that after Church we will be coming home and trying to keep cool!!

With love and blessings to you all from "down under"

Sheila

## *Circuit Musical 2018*

It's nearly two years on since we worked together on 'Wildfire' and now it is finally time for another Wrexham Circuit Musical. We meet first on Wednesday 17th January at 7.30 in Regent Street to talk about the musical and decide together the best day for rehearsals. Even if you are not able to be there please share about the meeting with others who enjoy singing and let me know what day of the week is best for you for rehearsals if you want to be part of it.

Many thanks, Lisa

## *Why do you go to church?*

This question is usually asked spontaneously and we find ourselves on the spot. So what answer should we give? Chair of Plymouth and Exeter District, the Revd Graham Thompson, reflects on worship

We go to church to worship God! We enjoy being with God. We want to celebrate all that Jesus offers, for we are people of the Resurrection – those who die and rise with Jesus and live every moment of every day certain that our risen Lord is in us and with us. We offer praise to God for who God is and all that God means to us. We offer thanks for the many wonderful ways in which God has blessed us; for the privilege of enjoying a relationship with the eternal God.

Worship is the central activity of the Church. Without worship there would be no Church. You can take away Bible studies and prayer meetings, you can lose a Sunday school or youth group, you can ignore social evenings and home groups, but if you have worship, you are still a church – a poor church but still a church.

### *Self-fulfilling worship?*

In his report to the 2011 Conference, the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, then General Secretary of the Methodist Church and Secretary of the Methodist Conference, said that having travelled around the country for a few years, he had picked up a prevailing view that Methodist worship “neither reaches the heights nor plumbs the depths”. Is Dr Atkins right? If he is, what has caused this and how might we change things?

I believe we get the worship we deserve. If we go to worship with a wrong frame of mind; without preparing ourselves (including praying for those who will lead worship); if we go with our minds made up as to what it is going to be like and what we will get out of it, questioning the length of sermon or choice of hymns, we then generate a self-fulfilling prophecy. You might find it helpful to think about other stumbling blocks to good experiences of worship, including these typically Methodist tripping hazards:

1. The free availability of the Preaching Plan listing who is taking



the next service, along with announcing who is taking next week's act of worship, instead of simply stating when the next service will be and inviting people to attend. We need to move the focus away from the leader of worship to the God whom we worship.

2. Busy office holders going to church with lots to sort out and people they need to talk to – focusing on the busyness of responsibility rather than the One for whom we seek to be useful. The privilege of worshipping the God of love; the God of all creation; the God who was, and is and is to come, means that our primary focus should be God.

### *Glorifying and enjoying God*

Worship is when we come together to meet with God and any encounter with the living God will change us. People leaving worship should be different – changed – by the experience of meeting God. Perhaps imperceptibly at first, but over time we are changed. The Westminster Catechism states that the chief purpose of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy God forever. Not to go to worship so that we can get something good from God. The principal focus of any worship is God. Graham Kendrick, quoting Lamar Boschman, puts it like this: “Worship is first and foremost for God’s benefit, not ours, though it is marvellous to discover that in giving God pleasure, we ourselves enter into what can become our richest and most wholesome experience in life.” Worship is the central activity of the Church and – perhaps – we could do better?

### *The editor's jottings!*

*“A New Year”* — May we all experience God’s Blessing throughout the coming year, and be thankful for everyone who God has used to bless us in the past year.

*Norman*



## Readings

*Mark 1:4-11* “I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.” (v. 8)

*Psalm 29*

## Background

On the Sunday after the Epiphany, the Church remembers the Baptism of Jesus. And, when many Methodist churches will be holding their Covenant Service, it is especially fitting for each member to think about their own Baptism also.

The Baptism of Jesus is placed in the very first chapter of Mark's Gospel. It marks the start of Jesus' ministry, and connects it with the great prophetic traditions of Israel. John the Baptist is seen as the last of the biblical prophets, in the style of the fierce and uncompromising Elijah, living off the land in the wilderness. He is the forerunner of Jesus: sent to clear the way for God's Messiah-King. Mark sets the scene with a quotation from Isaiah 40:3 – from a chapter that told of a great redemptive turning-point to come. He is saying powerfully that that time has now arrived! John's ministry was a time of great revolution and spiritual awakening for many faithful Jewish people, who heeded his call to repentance. The symbolic dipping and washing in the river Jordan pointed back to the entry into the Promised Land in the book of Joshua (Joshua 3) and pointed forward to greater promises yet to be completed. Baptism symbolised turning back to the true God, and entering into God's own kingdom-movement. It was about being cleansed ready for the arrival of the Messiah-King.

John's Baptism was for “the forgiveness of sins” (v. 4), which is both about personal reconciliation with God and also a general term for what God would bring about when the long period of exile was truly and finally over. Although geographical exile had ended centuries earlier, many scholars believe that the spiritual exile continued: God had not yet ‘returned to his temple’ (see Malachi 3:1; Zechariah 8; Ezekiel 43). John promised that the coming Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit – the true God would at last return to dwell with people. And in verse 9, the true Messiah makes his long-awaited entrance.

## To Ponder

The voice from heaven declares: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (v. 11). Do these words only apply to Jesus? In what sense does God say that to all of us?

What are the things in your life that perhaps prevent you from hearing God’s loving voice? What are the noises and distractions that deafen you to that message?

If you have been baptized, what did it mean to you? How do you express the sense that Baptism is both the proclamation of the loving voice of God and the repentant response of the believer?

*Bible notes author: The Revd Andrew Murphy*

## Some of the religious programmes on TV & Radio each week

**BBC1 16:30 Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January — Songs of Praise**

Epiphany Sunday

To mark Epiphany, Sean Fletcher is in Durham for the UK’s largest light festival. He joins tens of thousands of visitors who come to see the medieval city and towering cathedral transformed by light installations. Falling each year on 6 January, Epiphany is the twelfth day of Christmas and marks the end of the festive period. Sometimes known as Three Kings’ Day, it is a time to remember the story of the wise men led by a star to Bethlehem to worship the infant Jesus.

Sean meets professor of physics Tom McLeish to discover more about this part of the Christmas story and explores the great cathedral to learn more about its rich Christian history.

**Radio Wales — 7:30 Sunday — Celebration**

**9:00 Sunday — All Things Considered**

**Radio 2 — 6:00 Sunday – Sunday Hour – Rev Kate Bottley**

**7:00 Sunday – Good Morning Sunday – Angie Greaves**

**Radio 4 — 8:10 Sundays — Sunday Worship**

**Radio 4 (LW) — 9:44 Weekdays — Daily Worship**

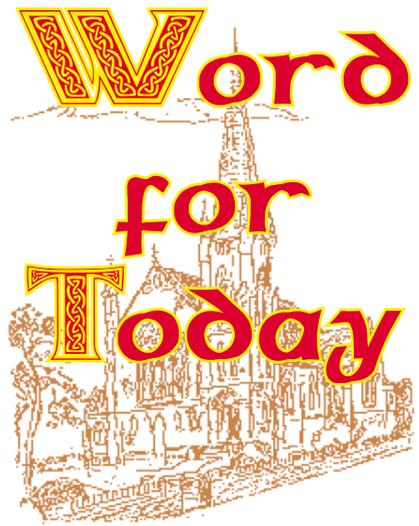
*Information for ‘Riverside Weekly’ should be sent to the editor,*

## Get closer to God

*'Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world.'*

*James 1:7-8*

The planet Mercury is hot, whereas Pluto is cold. That's because Mercury is close to the sun and Pluto is a long way off. A planet's temperature and climate are determined by its proximity to the sun. There's an important spiritual principle here. As a redeemed child of God, your spiritual temperature is determined by how close you are to Jesus. You say, 'I wish I were closer to the Lord.' The truth is that you are as close to Him as you desire to be, decide to be, and discipline yourself to be. Your pursuit of God reveals your passion for God – or the lack of it. To experience true intimacy with someone, you must be willing to sacrifice other things and give yourself fully to that person. The psalmist wrote: 'You have said, Seek My face [inquire for and require My presence as your vital need]. My heart says to You, Your face (Your presence), Lord, will I seek, inquire for, and require [of necessity]'



(Psalm 27:8 AMPC). You'll notice that the psalmist didn't say you were to seek God's gifts, but His face! Not the gifts, but the Giver of the gifts! And a wonderful thing happens when you do that: 'Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires and secret petitions of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord [roll...each care of your load on Him]; trust (lean on, rely on, and be confident) also in Him and He will bring it to pass' (Psalm 37:4-5 AMPC).

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