

East Glamorgan Association (Twitter: @CyfDwyMor)

Issue 4: June 2023

CyfUNdeb

And what an event it was! The gathering at the Urdd Centre, Cardiff Bay on Sunday morning 12 March 2023 turned out to be a morning full of fun and excitement, of joy and worship. It was Elin Maher, one of the



through the efforts of Delwyn Siôn, Siân Meinir and Reverend Owain Llŷr Evans and Dylan Rhys Parry the idea evolved into **CyfUNdeb**. Over 80 members from the



socialising. There was also a somewhat alternative session with the children and youth who had joined us - we all know of Siân Meinir as an opera singer of note, but she managed to create and lead a new rap group for the Association! Undoubtedly, it was good to be there.



Leaders of Mynydd Seion, Newport, who had initially proposed that we reinstated the concept of an Association Sunday and



Association churches came together and much blessing was derived and received from worshipping, creating, discussing, and



Spring Quarterly Meeting (article written by the Association Secretary and appeared in *Y Tyst* on 11 May 2023).

Members of nine Association churches attended the first Quarterly Meeting of 2023; the meeting was chaired by Dr Hefin Jones and held in Whitchurch, Cardiff on Wednesday evening 22 March 2023. Gwenda Lewis and Arfon Jones from Ebenezer Church, Cardiff led the devotion, and the Remembrance Prayer was offered by the Reverend Owain Llŷr Evans. The chairman thanked Ebenezer Church members for the blessing of the devotion and also for the refreshments that would be made available during fellowship after the meeting's business had concluded. The meeting's business agenda was initiated by reporting on the most recent activities of the Association; an opportunity was taken to thank members of the Working Group that had led on the arrangements for CyfUNdeb, held earlier in the month. This, while being experimental in many respects, had been a highly successful event which had been enjoyed by everyone present.

The Secretary presented a report of the main issues discussed at the meeting of the Association's Executive Committee in February. Agenda items had included the 2023 programme of events to be held under the auspices of the Association and the recommendations of the Sponsorship Fund Panel on applications for sponsorship received from three of the churches. He also gave a report of the financial situation, an update of Siân Meinir's candidacy to be recognized as Supporting Preacher recognised by the Union of Welsh Independents, and a report on the Dementia-friendly Churches campaign. The final item of the report was a recommendation from the Executive Committee' to nominate the



Reverend Owain Llŷr Evans as President-elect of the Union. The report was accepted unanimously, along with the recommendation to support the nomination of Owain Llŷr as President-elect.

The main consideration of the Quarterly Meeting focussed on receiving two presentations on the results of Census 2021, the first on the status of the Welsh language and the other on the results within the context of religion in Wales. Manon Wynn Davies, a researcher in The Welsh Language Commissioner's Office, commented on the results of the census in terms of Welsh language usage. Acknowledging the disappointment that there has been a further reduction in the number and percentage of speakers across Wales since the 2011 census, the Language Commissioner's message is that there is no

need to despair regarding the future. There are already a number of exciting developments that potentially offer a favourable environment to promote the language. They are not, however, sufficient on their own and it is therefore essential to advocate and use the results

as a stimulus to encourage more effort to support the language. The current Welsh Education Measure has a definite role to provide an extra boost to these efforts. It is noteworthy that not all parts of Wales had experienced a fall in the number of Welsh speakers; localities in Cardiff, for example, have seen very encouraging upward trends over the past ten years.

When the initial Census 2021 results of the state of religion and faith of the Welsh were published it led to a series of headlines prophesying the demise of our Christian heritage. What shocked many was to understand that Wales, among the countries of the United Kingdom, has a higher percentage of the population describing themselves as non-religious persons, and that there has been a reduction of 14 % over ten years of those who consider themselves Christians. It was revealing to listen to the insightful interpretation of Gethin Rhys, Policy Officer for Cytûn, of the significance of the census data. After mulling over the statistics, he had come to the conclusion that we really should not be that surprised by these figures. He argued that the numbers in the 2011 Census had been unrealistically high. He further suggested that the current status and set of figures is the result of a more honest and open declaration of faith.



In the second half of his presentation Gethin Rhys focused the analysis and perceptions arising from the work of the think tank *Theos*. This group had asked those respondents who had described themselves as non-religious persons what did this actually meant. The main conclusion of *Theos* was that there were three main cohort, each representing approximately a third of the sample used:

- A. Those who are definite atheists and actively hostile to religion;
- B. Those who are not believers themselves but sees churches as doing good work within the community;
- C. Those who say they believe but do not profess an active relationship with organized religion.

As two thirds of those declaring themselves 'non-religious' belong either to cohort B or C, Gethin Rhys argued that the result of the census is not as hopeless as it might initially appear.

Both speakers concluded that there remains much to be done to strengthen the language and the Christian faith in Wales. The situation, however, is not as depressing as what might be gleaned by purely looking at the bare statistics alone. At the present time not all the

Census results have been published and it is virtually impossible at this stage to cross-reference, for example, between the language and religion statistics and ask questions of whether Welsh-speakers are more or less likely to be religious than their non-Welsh speaking compatriots.

Sardis Pontypridd



It is sad to note that the Welsh Independents' cause in Sardis, Pontypridd has come to an end. The chapel was built in 1834 and was enlarged in 1852. Fourteen ministers have served the church faithfully over the years, among them the Reverend Dyfnallt Owen (1905-10). From the 1960s onwards there was an influx of Welsh speakers into the area to promote Welsh-medium education and as a result membership and the number of

children in the Sunday School increased. Since the retirement of the last minister, the Reverend Hywel Lewis in 2010, church responsibilities and duties of leading the services have been undertaken by the members together with the help of numerous ministers across the local area. A range of circumstances have, however, now pressurised the church to take the decision to sell the chapel and bring the cause to an end. A Service of Disincorporation was held in the vestry on 5 March 2023 under the leadership of the Reverend Allan Pickard. After partaking of the Lord's Supper, all present entered the chapel for the final time, and it was formally announced that the Church Covenant made when the church was founded almost 200 years ago had come to an end.



Bethel Church, Penarth

Christian Aid: On the first Sunday of December, a carol service was held in Bethel in conjunction with Christian Aid. Thanks to Neville Evans for organizing the service in the form of a Nine Lessons and Carols service and it was a pleasure to welcome members from various churches in Penarth to join us and participate in the worship. £267 was collected for Christian Aid. The annual series of Christian Aid Lenten Dinners started on Friday, 24 February 2023 with Bethel Church and Elfed Avenue residents responsible for dinner on

Friday, 3 March 2023. It was decided to send the proceeds to the Turkey and Syria Earthquake Disaster Fund.

Social: In November, a Fun Afternoon was held with the children and their parents when Kevin, our minister, shared the Christmas story with the youngsters before enjoying a tea party and the sharing of Christmas gifts. On 26 January 2023, a Social Afternoon was organised, centred around 'tea and a chat', and a St Dwynwen Day quiz. Pancake Night was held in February and thanks to Emma Berry and Siân Meinir and others for organizing. Just over £200 was raised for the Turkey and Syria Earthquake Disaster Fund.

Tea for the Homeless: For several years now, Bethel has been part of the rota to prepare tea for the homeless at Tabernacle Church, The Hayes. On New Year's Day afternoon some of the members prepared the tea and thanks to everyone who contributed.

Over the Christmas period, a Christmas Eve Service was held at 11.00 in the evening with a Christmas Morning Service at 9.30 on Christmas Day. This was a joint service between



Tabernacle, Barry, and Bethel. There was a New Year's Morning Service in St Francis, Barry; thanks are due to Kevin Davies for his service and indeed for his work and care throughout the year. In mid-January, a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service was organized in St Peter's

Church, Sili Road under the auspices of Cytûn Penarth. Our minister, Kevin Davies was responsible for the last service on Sunday, 22 January 2023.

We remember with sadness two members of Bethel who died during this period. Howard Evans died in November after a brave battle. Howard was a loyal member of the cause with a ready smile and witty conversation and our sincere condolences to the family. We bid him farewell on Thursday morning, 1 December 2023. Moyra Owen died at the beginning of February after a relatively short illness. Moyra's loyalty to Bethel and to the Quarterly Meeting for many years was invaluable and her willingness to undertake any task was a sign of her love and dedication to the cause. Again, our sincere condolences to the family; the funeral was held on Monday morning, 27 February 2023.

Bethlehem Church, Gwaelod-y-garth

Greetings from Bethlehem, Gwaelod-y-garth, although the news presented here looks back on the past few months. We acknowledge the help of everyone who has worshipped with us both for their company and for leading services among us over the past few months. We

thank Delwyn Siôn for his care for us as Leader. The Christmas season provided a special opportunity for the membership, children, youth, and adults to take the lead.

Services were held on Recovery Sunday (end of October) and Urdd Sunday / Safeguarding Sunday (end of November), with the latter coinciding with the World Cup period in Qatar.



Unexpectedly, we received greetings from Jâms Powys (who was in Qatar) sharing his experiences of following the Welsh football team around the world, and the importance of the Urdd to his upbringing and his values in life. The opportunity was also taken on Safeguarding Sunday to show a short film prepared by the Interdenominational Safeguarding Panel. You will recall the 'Dechrau Canu

Dechrau Canmol' saga - at last, we managed (on 6 November 2022) to record the children and adults presenting and singing the chosen hymns, and it was rewarding to receive this message on behalf of the filming company: *"With our gatherings dwindling and 4-voice singing declining, it was a delight to hear enthusiastic SATB singing from the Bethlehem singers. The children were also wonderfully charming and lively."* Many thanks to Eilir Owen Griffiths and Delyth Evans for all the preparation work to ensure such a response. (Photos: Final rehearsal and following the recording!)



Excitement continued into December and both the Nine Lessons and Carols service, and the Christmas Morning service contributed to the celebrations. A presentation of the Sunday School Christmas story was preceded by an animation theatre (on film) created by some of the young people of the church (with the help of a few adults). Yes, Santa paid a visit to the Vestry after the presentations!

Bethlehem and food are two words that comfortably intertwine; the monthly support offered to the Cardiff Food Bank, along with the occasional opportunity to dine as members together. An evening of crafts and singing carols was held for the benefit of a local charity that is being supported, namely Cymdeithas Alzheimer Cymru.

In the middle of January 2023, the Plygain was held, extending the opportunity for guest singers to join in the singing for the first time since the lockdown period. The Sisterhood has been busy during the past months, organizing a visit to the BBC Center in the Central Square in Cardiff in October, a talk ("From Valpariso to Vladivostok") by Arwel Ellis Owen in November, suggestions for Christmas treats in the company of Marian Ifans in December, "Books" in the company of Shân Osborne in January, and a presentation by the Reverend R Alun Evans to denote a century of broadcasting in Wales in February. We also managed to visit a few restaurants between all the activities mentioned! There was also a service full of blessings under their care in February when three of the group chose their favourite hymns.

There were losses in the membership before Christmas (Viona Jones, formerly from Pentyrch, and Branwen Mathias from New Church) and there were also baptisms, the twins Casi and Dafydd, and Betsi and Sara. We embrace the families in their grief, and we are proud of the birth of the group of children brought into our care. Bethlehem was included on the Union of Independents' (*Undeb yr Annibynwyr*) website as part of the "Church of the Month" series during 2022, and an "Eco Church" Bronze Award certificate was awarded to the church at the beginning of 2023. Two editions of "*Gair bach Bethlehem*" have been published since the last newsletter was shared, and you will find more about what is happening under the Garth in them. These can be found on the Chapel's website, www.bethlehem.cymru. We are also on Twitter @gwebethlehem and you are always welcome to contact the Secretary, Rhodri-Gwynn Jones, for more details: rhodrigj@btinternet.com.

Ebenezer Church Cardiff



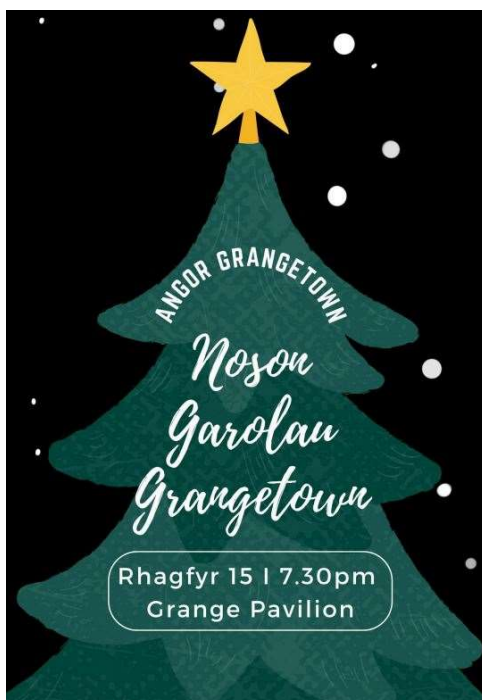
The Nativity: Celebration was the keyword over the Advent Season with a number of special services and activities celebrating the birth of our Messiah, Lord Jesus. Thanks to everyone who helped prepare for the services and to those who participated in various ways. The seasonal services began with worship centring on the King as a subject on Sunday morning 11 December 2022. King Herod and King Jesus were considered and the substantial differences between them highlighted. The Worship Group sang "*Suai'r Gwynt*" and "*A welaist ti'r ddau ...*" (Troyte Chant) creating a beautiful and inspiring atmosphere. In the afternoon on the same Sunday there was a service led by the members which was based on the

verse, 'For a boy was born to us, a son was given to us, and the authority will be on his shoulder. He is called, "Wonderful Counsellor, steadfast God, everlasting Father, Prince of peace".' (Isaiah 9). Enfys Harding, Gwenda Lewis, Eleri Williams, Eilir Jones, Ifan Roberts, Eynon Williams and Catrin Wooler took part. The Worship Group sang two carols namely, "Mae'r nos yn fwyn ym Methlem ..." and "Loywaf o'r Sêr". Thanks to Helen Thomas for her leadership in choosing the hymns and training us. The service befitted from the support of Catrin Roberts as accompanist.

On the following Sunday (19 December) there were two events of a very different nature. In the morning Messy Church for all ages was held in the New Church Centre. An enthusiastic group came together, including new members and families to be part of this special event. The blessing was evident and a joyful, 'bubbly' spirit filled the place. The team spent Saturday evening busily



preparing and decorating the Centre so that the location was festively decorated with lights and decorations. We thank Huw and Luned Aaron for preparing all the crafts, Alison Jones, and others for organizing delicious refreshments. There was an improvised play presenting the main events of the birth story led by Catrin Roberts – with a host of famous actors taking part! A short message was presented by Gwilym Jeffs emphasizing the significance of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. In his love God took on flesh and came among us to save us



from our transgressions. He died on the cross for us in order to reconcile us with God, rising on the third day and conquering death. No wonder the angel said his birth was "*good news of great joy...*". It was a great privilege to be part of this Messy Church. On the same Sunday there was a completely different tone at 6.30 in the evening in the bilingual carol service with our friends from the Methodist Church; the subject of praise, however, was the same and centred on the One. We were welcomed by Rev. Cathy Gale and there were readings, carols, and items from both churches. Accompaniment was provided by Helen Thomas and Eric Nash

Christmas – Angor: There were two festive meetings arranged by Angor Grangetown. It was wonderful to welcome Meilir Geraint, Pontypridd to lead the

worship on Sunday afternoon 11 December 2022 at the Reach Center. He led us in praise with new songs and traditional carols. He also presented the message about the meaning of Christmas emphasizing the need for people to understand and believe the great message attached to the birth of Jesus. Then on Thursday night, 15 December 2022 an evening of carol singing was held at The Grangetown Pavilion. This is a modern centre with ample resources and rooms to host a multitude of activities. Praise singing was led by a band directed by John Nicholas and among the musicians were Eysyllt and Gruffydd Jones. Refreshments were then prepared by the *Angor* crew. Thank you to everyone who organized these activities.

Clwb Sêr: The club has been meeting every Sunday morning in the Whitchurch Center and we are trying to encourage more families to join us regularly. This, it has to be admitted, is proving a hard challenge – a difficult ‘nut to crack’. We would like to encourage you to pray for this essential work in the life of Ebenezer Church, asking the Lord to ignite in the hearts of parents a desire to allow their children to learn about Jesus. We would like to thank the loyal team who prepare and teach the children month by month for their dedication.

ODID: The ODID Bible study continues to meet and after a long period we have returned to meeting in one another’s homes. In these meetings we have been following a series by Tim Keller, *"The Prodigal God: Finding Your Place at the Table."* Please join us and be part of the fellowship and discussion.

Ogmore Pastorate – Tabernacle Porthcawl

As a church we want to thank the East Glamorgan Association for supporting our request to support financially collating and publishing a dozen reflections written by the late Reverend Gerwyn Jones. Gerwyn and Cathy joined the church when they moved to Porthcawl to live. At the time we were without a minister and Gerwyn's support for everything that was going on in the church was immeasurably valuable. Gerwyn preached occasionally, held our Bible Class during the lockdown period, and prepared bilingual reflections throughout the period. After discussion with Dylan, once a minister had been inducted, Gerwyn continued to prepare meditations for a further few months. Altogether a period of almost 18 months – resulting in the preparation of some 80 bilingual reflections.

Our intention as a token of appreciation of Gerwyn's tremendous work is to publish a dozen of his reflections in two small booklets, one in Welsh and the other in English. We are very grateful for the support of the Association to help us realize our dream.

Learners' Coffee Morning: When, a few years ago, we were preparing to raise money to rebuild our hall, one of the ideas suggested was to hold a Coffee Morning for learners in the area on the first Saturday



Morning in each month. This was one of the best decisions we ever made as the monthly Coffee Morning has continued since without fail, apart from the lockdown period. We have made new friends over the years and the appreciation of the learners has been evident.

Lenten Cawl: At lunchtime on Wednesday, 22 March 2023 it was Porthcawl Tabernacle's turn to host the Lenten Cawl. We welcomed members and friends to this special occasion.



DEC Appeal Turkey Earthquake / Northern Syria: As have the majority of churches, we have made a special collection towards trying to alleviate a little of the effects of this distressing disaster.

Bible Study: Every Tuesday morning we hold our Bible Class. This season, the Book of Proverbs has been receiving our attention. We are very grateful to our Minister for preparing so thoroughly for us.

Manse Meditations: This is an opportunity to pray, reflect and socialize over a cup of tea at the Manse every month. Dylan is still experimenting with the timing of the meditation, bearing in mind that many members of the Pastorate are not uncomfortable to leave their homes in the evening, especially during the winter period.

Pastorate Sunday: One of the decisions made by the committee that discussed the establishment of the Pastorate for calling a Minister, was that the fifth Sunday in any month, occurring typically four times a year, would be a joint worship Sunday. On this Sunday one service will be held, alternately, in the Tabernacle, Bridgend and the next in the Tabernacl, Porthcawl. The idea has worked extremely well. It is an opportunity for the members of the two churches to get to know each other and create a feeling of belonging to the Pastorate, instead of always being in separate churches. This, contextual approach, also applies to the Manse Meditations and all other activities that Dylan has jointly organized for the Pastorate.

Ogmore Pastorate - Tabernacle, Bridgend

Stiwidio Ogwr: The recent Eastern Glamorgan Association's Quarterly Meeting awarded a grant to Tabernacle, Bridgend to develop 'Stwidio Ogwr'. This is a new missionary digital project that Dylan is currently working on. We will, in due course, be able to create podcasts and recordings of the



highest possible quality. It is hoped that youth, members, learners, and the wider community will be able to use the equipment and the studio to create various programs for everyone. A heartfelt thank you to the Association for making this possible with the sponsorship.

Lenten Cawl: At lunchtime on Wednesday, 8 March 2023 Tabernacl, Bridgend hosted Lenten Cawl. An opportunity to enjoy cawl, socialize and pray together. It was good to welcome members and friends to this special occasion.



Llanfair Penrhys Church

Life is very busy in Llanfair - in our worship and in our work in the community. A number of us take turns leading the Sunday School - Anne, Natasha and her son Harvey Jay who is 10 years old, and myself, and recently Tyra, who is 16 years old, her sister Carly who is 12 years old and their friend Maddie, who is 15 years old. Harvey and the girls often experience difficulties at school on a day-to-day basis, so helping in Llanfair is a special opportunity for



them to gain confidence and self-development. They also volunteer in our Homework Club, along with 17-year-old Yasmin, who has learning difficulties.

One of the highlights of our week is welcoming a class of children from Penrhys Primary School and their teachers to our worship on Monday morning. The children love to take part - especially those with

special needs. One boy recently shared his heartfelt prayer "*Thank you God for everything You have done for me*". After the children go back to school, a number of us as members of Llanfair's 'Nurture Group' meet for a Bible Study. Over the last few weeks, we have had the privilege of welcoming our dear friend, John Morgans, to join us, and his contribution to the

group have been extremely valuable. John and his late wife, Norah, founded the group several years ago.

There are a number of different Llanfair projects (e.g., the Homework Club, Day Café and C.A.F.E. (Children and Families Evening)) that are popular and more important than ever since we reopened after the lockdown period. Unfortunately, our Food Bank has been very



busy since January as so many individuals and families find it a difficult and challenging time due to the huge increase in food costs, energy etc. We are very grateful for all the donations of goods and money that come to us from friends near and far that enable us to maintain the Food Bank and the Clothing and Furniture Bank.

Since October, we have been hosting a 'Warm Places' Coffee Morning in the Lounge on Friday

mornings (when the cafe is closed) with a number of people coming together to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, toast, and company in a room warm and comfortable. Our new local volunteer, Jan, is responsible for the Coffee Morning; this is important to her as her husband died last year after a long illness and she had been looking after him.

Several successful activities have started in the past year through the Arts project, 'Beyond Asking', - in particular the Parent and Child Group on Thursday mornings and then the Pilates Group. Recently, two parents who live in Tonypany have set up a Group in Llanfair Lounge after school on Tuesdays to support and welcome children with special needs and their families.

For a few weeks, we have had a 'visitor' who has come on holiday to the chapel, namely Peri, the pilgrim - a ten-foot puppet created by Victoria Lowry to mark the Penrhys Pilgrimage Route which starts at Llandaff Cathedral. Before his arrival, Peri was for a time at City Hall, Cardiff. He looks very much at home with us in Llanfair!



Minny Street Church, Cardiff



Over the Advent season there were various and blessing-offering services held to lead us to celebrate the birth of our Lord on Christmas morning in the company of friends from the Presbyterian Church, Crwys. During Advent there was also an opportunity to follow our Reverse Advent Calendar that involved us donating a specific item for the Cardiff Food Bank in a box every day and then, on

Christmas Eve, transferring everything to boxes held in the Vestry in order to hand them over to the Food Bank. With so many of the members having chosen to be part of the scheme, the dedicated boxes in the Vestry were on the small side to receive all the donations and a section of the floor had to be designated for the goods! Our Greeting Tree was a means of presenting greetings to fellow members while also contributing towards Christian Aid rather than spending on cards and stamps. Our children and youth generously contributed to Boomerang ensuring that children living in poverty received at least one present to open on Christmas morning.

The church calendar is now back to pre-Covid busyness with the return of many familiar meetings and the appearance of the occasional new meeting. It was wonderful to be able to return to St Teilo Sant's Church in St Fagans for the Celebration of the Plygain in January and our evening Koinônia provides an opportunity to enjoy fellowship over a meal after the Evening Service. The Cultural Association (*Y Gymdeithas*), has provided us with an

impressive programme of acclaim and high standard over the Autumn and Winter seasons. This gathering meets every other week on Tuesday evenings and alternately with Bethania, the Bible Study series. The latter now meets at members' homes with Luke's Gospel being the focus of discussion and interpretation. A number of monthly meetings are also held



including a series which focuses on a different Saint each month (Dining with the Saints), an opportunity to see and discuss a film at a Film Night, and an opportunity for Coffee and Chat (or the Soup and Chat variant) at a member's home. There was also an opportunity to prepare for Lent provided through quiet devotion on Ash Wednesday and the day of our Patron Saint, 1 March, was marked with devotion and 'cawl'.



Through our monthly trade table, we have the opportunity to ensure that we buy and use Fair Trade goods, and resources for the Cardiff Food Bank are received regularly. Free collections on

Sundays in February were an opportunity to contribute towards the Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and there was an evening of entertainment by PEDAIR at the beginning of the month with all the profits going towards local charities that we support as a church.

Tabernacle, Efail Isaf

Christmas Collections: For a period of six weeks from the beginning of November until the middle of December, the members of the Social Justice Working Group were very diligent in organizing a series of 'Christmas Collections' in an attempt to bring a little joy into the lives of people who are facing difficulties and austerity. The members and friends were invited to donate Christmas treats and hygiene products to mothers and children who would be spending Christmas in shelters, and people of all ages who did not have a permanent home. It was hoped this would shed some light on the lives of young people who leave care and those who would spend Christmas in hostels for the homeless. Financial support was offered to five hostels to provide Christmas refreshments to their residents. Thanks to the members' generosity, the campaigns were a huge success and with the help of a group of volunteers we managed to sort, pack, and distribute the delicacies and hygiene products in good time before Christmas. With the help of Social Services, £1,000 worth of vouchers were



also distributed to young people leaving care, and to homeless people's hostels, to help them experience some Christmas spirit. In the meantime, Tabernacle's other humanitarian activities such as collecting and distributing goods to those who are moving into their own home for the first time, and supporting the food banks and local charities continue.

The 'Twmiaid' and the 'Twmiaid Bach': The Social Justice Working Group were not the only ones who were very busy over the months of November and December. Under the inspiring leadership of Eleri Mai, we managed to hold a wide variety of activities with the 'Twmiaid' playing a central role. At the start of November our youth rolled up their sleeves to invent



and present a 'World Cup Quiz' - quite a challenging task seeing how competitive some of the older ones were! It is a relief to report that there was no need to show a red card and that everyone enjoyed a warm social evening that spanned several generations in the Tabernacle. Also, during the month of November, the 'Twmiaid' and the 'Twmiaid Bach' were busy in their Sunday

afternoon sessions creating various items to sell on their craft stand at the Efail Isaf Village Fair. The fruit of their labour proved to be one of the fair's most colourful stalls. Before having a chance to catch their breath after the fair the 'Twmiaid' were faced with a new challenge, namely the Festive Bake Off competition. The many photos of the attractive treats shown on the Tabernacle's Facebook page suggest that there is a very talented group here who could be candidates for the real Bake Off in no time.

Christmas Services: It was the Sunday School children's turn, together with the 'Twmiaid', to star in the Christmas Service on the morning of Sunday 18 December 2022. After the long absence during the pandemic, it was wonderful to see the Tabernacle packed to support the youngest children from among the Sunday School pupils as they stepped onto the stage to present the familiar nativity story. We were not disappointed as the shepherds, the angels and the wise men filled the stage and performed the story in so polished a way, in word and song. In the second half of the service, it was the 'Twmiaid''s turn to present an alternative nativity story, one that was more contemporary and lighter in tone, such as the rappers of angels who wore T-shirts and sunglasses, and other characters who thought that the village called Bethlehem in Carmarthenshire was the birthplace of Jesus. At the end of the service, Eleri Jones thanked the children and young people, the parents, and the teachers for all their preparation and for presenting the Christmas message so effectively and in such a contemporary fashion.

Christmas Eve Carols: For the first time since the pandemic, the traditional community bilingual service was held on Christmas Eve. There was considerable discussion as to which time would be best - some wanted to keep to the old practice of starting at 11 at night and others wanted to move it to 5.30. In the end, we agreed to experiment by holding it earlier, and discover what the response would be. The evening was very ably led by Eluned Davies Scott and Lyn West and there were musical contributions from a number of groups. It was welcoming to hear that the time change received an enthusiastic welcome from everyone. Some had managed to attend the meeting for the first time as the time was more convenient, and it was also wonderful to see many children and young people among the audience and the performers. It was concluded that the experiment had proved a success



among members of the Tabernacle and the wider community. This was a fine musical offering, setting an appropriate tone to celebrate the Festival.

Board of Directors: In 2007 it was decided to change the church's status to a registered charitable company, and a Board of Directors/Trustees was established as a management committee, replacing the tradition of

electing deacons. This was a very risky step and broke new ground among Welsh chapel culture. The new constitution states that the directors are required to resign at the end of a three-year term, which is why we said goodbye to five members whose terms were coming to an end at the Annual General Meeting at the end of November. They were thanked for their service to the church and a warm welcome was given to the five nominated to succeed them, namely Elwyn Hughes, Aled Humphreys, Siân Jones, Non Morris, and Bethan Reynolds. It is interesting to note that close to 70 (c. 40 %) members of the church have now served on the Board for a term of three years at least once over the last fifteen years.

Contributions by: Alwena Harries; Gwilym Huws; Bethan Jones; Rhodri-Gwynn Jones; Gwenda Lewis; Dylan Rhys Parry; Tom Price; Sharon Rees; Alun Tudur.