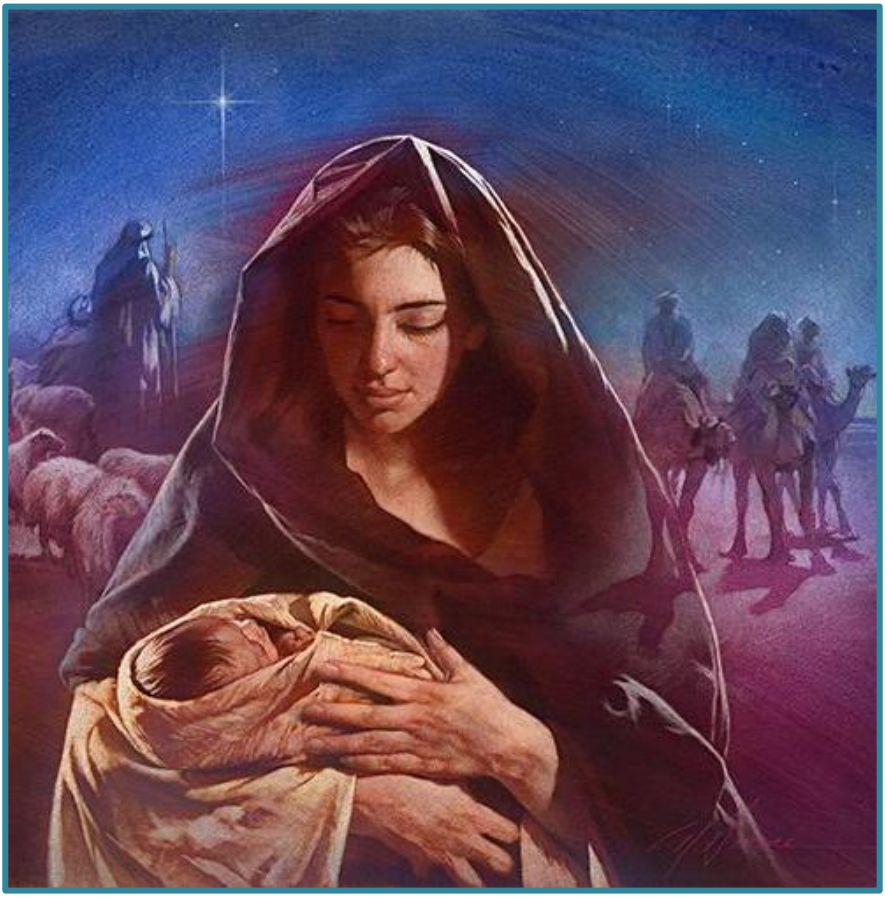
PENTREF BAPTIST CHAPEL

The Chapel at the Heart of Newbridge



The Newbridge-On-Wye Newsletter
Pentref Baptist Church
December 2024

December can be busy and bring a lot of pressure to get everything right – the right presents under the perfect tree beautifully decorated, whether as we have always done or in the latest fashion… That's how it is for some of us anyway. Others cannot or refuse to pay to join the race or they find the winter months so dark that it becomes a daily struggle to push aside the duvet for another day of work. Christmas has haunted us since Halloween stopped, and by the time we get to it, we've worn ourselves out already.

I remember when I was a child, we would count down the days with an Advent candle with tiny numbers. A basic chocolate calendar was a real treat before school in the morning and if I recall correctly, it wasn't until later that the carefully wrapped small gifts began, collected over months to have something to wrap and tie to the cross-stitched wall hanging with all the little rings. We weren't poor as such, but I know we had to watch the pennies – or "ører" which is the Danish currency equivalent.

The decorations would begin going up just before the 1st Sunday of Advent, and an Advent wreath would help us to count down to the Day Itself which in Denmark was Christmas Eve – no waiting up for Santa where I am from. We knew the routine, what went where, what we'd have to wait for Dad to do because he was taller or just because it was his job… I think in many ways, those routines helped me as a child to feel anchored and content. I carry some of that inner clock, the seasons, the holidays with me even now. While my family never really went to church or read the Christmas story, the Scandinavian tradition of holding hands and "dancing" around the Christmas tree singing carols after too big a dinner has meant that I remember the Good Tidings in verse and rhyme and tune anyway.

Over all the years since then, it has never failed to amaze me how in the Christmas story, poverty and pomp converge around a feeding trough in a Jewish-Palestinian village overrun by visitors. Shepherds, the lowest and least regarded, and later the Wise Men – able to afford the flashy gifts that show their status and hint at who he is, the baby boy sleeping in that noisy, yet somehow hushed scene and later tottering around the house.

That is the most stunning thing to me: As a young mother counts and recounts ten little fingers and toes, and sighs in the scent of the tiny baby she has been given to look after, she is face to face with God. God who has given us the greatest gift by coming to us, vulnerable, small, real and present with us in the rush, the darkness, the poverty, disappointments and great joys of life, combining in this tiny, hidden place the immense glory and the staggering fragility of love into one amazing gift. May the gifts you give and receive this Christmas reflect that love too. **-Misha**

SERVICES AT PENTREF

Sunday	**1st**	**Dec**	**10:30am**	**Rev Misha Pedersen (Communion)**
				No evening service
Sunday	**8th**	**Dec**	**10:30am**	**Rev Misha Pedersen**
			5pm	**Carols by Candlelight**
Sunday	**15th**	**Dec**	**10:30am**	**Rev Ifor Williams**
			6:30pm	**Bring & Share Service**
Sunday	**22nd**	**Dec**	**10:30am**	**Rev Steve Wallis**
			6:30pm	**Communion Service**
Weds	**25th**	**Dec**	**10:30am**	**Christmas Service with Misha**
Sunday	**29th**	**Dec**	**10:30am**	**Rev Misha Pedersen**
			6:30pm	**Film, Food & Favourite Songs**

Rev Steve Wallis hosts a weekly Zoom service with communion twice a month. It's on Sundays 4:30pm. Details: steveoncomputer@aol.com

First Sunday in January				
Sunday	**5th**	**January**	**10:30am**	**Rev Misha Pedersen**
			6:30pm	**Evening Service**

A very happy Christmas to you and yours from all at Pentref chapel!

What's on at Pentref?					
Date		Morning	Early afternoon	Late afternoon	Evening
Sunday	1	Morning Service		Zoom Service	No Service
Monday	2				
Tuesday	3				
Wednesday	4	Coffee Morning			
Thursday	5		Creative Group	Iona Prayers	
Friday	6				
Saturday	7				
Sunday	8	Morning Service		Carol Service	
Monday	9				
Tuesday	10		Event in Chapel Vestry		
Wednesday	11				Shared Meal
Thursday	12		Creative Group	Iona Prayers	
Friday	13				
Saturday	14				
Sunday	15	Morning Service		Zoom Service	Bring and Share
Monday	16				
Tuesday	17				
Wednesday	18				
Thursday	19		Creative Group	Iona Prayers	WI in vestry
Friday	20		School Event at Chapel		
Saturday	21				
Sunday	22	Morning Service		Zoom Service	Communion Service
Monday	23				
Tuesday	24				
Wednesday	25	Christmas Day			
Thursday	26				
Friday	27				
Saturday	28				
Sunday	29	Morning Service		Zoom Service	Film, Food, Song
Monday	30				
Tuesday	31				

The exact times of these events can be found in the newsletter. If you would like more details or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the minister or the church secretary.
You can find our details on the back of this newsletter.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING: 4th December 10:30

December 4th 10:30 am till noon. Every 1st Wednesday of the month, the coffee morning supports local charities. We look forward to seeing you if you are free and fancy some cake, biscuits, cuppas and a chat with friends new and old. We are currently collecting for the Scouts, who need new equipment. The next charity on our list is then the British Heart Foundation. Thank you for all your contributions to these local causes – it is much appreciated.

DEFIBS AROUND NEWBRIDGE

The village defibrillator is on the side wall of the Post Office. Another is on the hill at Llysdinam, next to a gate a bit further up than Cefn y Maes. If you ever need to use them, a voice will guide you through the process, so you have the best chance of making a huge difference in an emergency.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Newbridge WI meets in the chapel vestry every third Thursday of the month at 7pm. In December, there is a Christmas Lunch but if you have questions and want to get involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Lyn Davies on 07393602896 for further information.

SHARED MEAL 11th DECEMBER

The next shared meal will be **Wednesday the 11th December at 6PM**, where we will serve pasta carbonara (mild cheese sauce and bacon) with bread, cheese and hopefully, some yummy puddings, which we hope you will come along to enjoy in good company. While donations are always much appreciated, please just come as you are. You can always phone Misha: 07432 530983 if you have any questions. Looking forward to seeing you if you can make it.

NEWBRIDGE CREATIVE GROUP

Bring your own creative project to the chapel vestry on a Thursday afternoon and enjoy the company of other creative and crafty men and women – and a cuppa halfway through!

The group, which is open to all, is facilitated by Vanessa Wallis who can be contacted on 01597 860185 if you have any questions.

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Christmas Craft Fair in the chapel vestry on Saturday 30th November from 10.30 till 4pm. Refreshments available, local crafters, come find that special Christmas present you've been looking for all year!

MEET JOHN RICHARDS – In his own words

John spent his early years living in Darlington, Leeds, Kerry, Llanbister Road, Nantmel, Newbridge... His father was a Baptist Minister and moved around a lot – (his uncle was one as well, but didn't move quite as much). He spent much of his growing up in Nantmel. Nantmel was a dark place --- electricity had not reached it, but this had its advantages. Walking to Chapel in the dark you saw thousands of stars in the black sky, passers on the road called out "good night " in order to find out who you were; the Chapel was lit by the warm light of the paraffin lamps which, together with the dramatic words from the pulpit, the sounds of the harmonium and the singing produced a liking for the theatre to be enjoyed later in the Old Vic (then the National Theatre) in London.

John left Wales for over thirty years, firstly to "study" French in London (King's College, no less) and then to earn a living as a librarian (Holborn public library, Chelsea College, Nottingham University...) Then accidentally back to Newbridge to "retire" and make a garden.

John was baptised aged 15 in Dolau Nantmel Chapel and later worshipped in several churches in London and Nottingham. Now he is a deacon in Pentref.

Once, many decades ago, a small boy was supposed to climb the stairs into the pulpit in Dolau Nantmel Chapel and read the lesson on what was probably the Sunday school anniversary service... He didn't……he went home instead! Not much has changed. John still aims to arrive at the last minute for services so that hopefully all the reading slots have been allocated to others. It sometimes works….

Now, what's the next hazard to be avoided? …oh, yes, it's Pentref Chapel Carol Service on Sunday December the 8th at 5PM… make a note of that!

"I will honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."

Mary on a donkey, Messiah still in there.
She wonders what his eyes are like, the scent of his hair.
The road is dusty, narrow, as they travel along
and under her breath she humms a budding mother's song.

Mary on a donkey, the night is closing in
with no idea about the things about to begin.
Even darkness and frost have hope they wish to give
and see, the light is coming, that all the world might live.

Mary on a donkey, Messiah on her arm,
they had to leave at night, so she is keeping him warm.
Mary on a donkey with the King of Heaven. See!
The child looks at his mother. Joseph leads them carefully.

A mother approaching a town that will make a little more room.
The man by her side a bit nervous - will it happen soon?
The baby approaching a manger - God accepting our love -
dependent and fragile he came from perfection above
into our brokenness, darkness and pain as the Light.
God left the splendour of heaven to shine in our night.
There He shines, quietly, still as the rain falls in Wales.
A rough sleeper shares with me, stranger, a few of his tales
and I share with him this messy humanity
as my Saviour still does, and that will do for me.
Here is a woman in pain giving birth to God's dream:
To be with us, always, forever. A few stars beam.
A father approaching a son on the road from pigsty
to something called home
as a homeless boy in a manger makes God's heart known.
And angels and echoes of what was the plan from the start
sing of peace on earth, glory, goodwill to us all
from the depths of God's heart.

Zoom Service

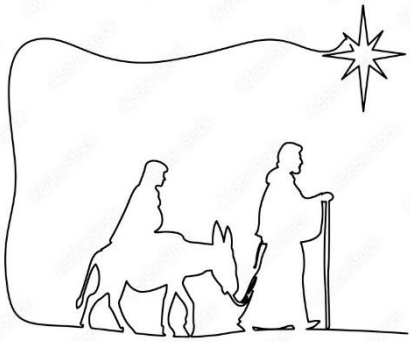
Every Sunday at 4.30pm, a small group of people meet on Zoom to talk about a text from the Bible and to pray together. There is also an opportunity twice a month to take communion together. Rev Steve Wallis coordinates the group which has participants from this area and further afield. It is a service where you can share your thoughts and listen to others, but where there is no singing nor a long sermon. This service may suit you particularly well if you can't go out much or if your church/chapel only has occasional services. If you are interested in joining, please contact Steve on steveoncomputer@aol.com to get added to the list so you receive the joining details. You would be very welcome to join.

Clive Barrett reports

The speaker at the October "**Window on the World**" meeting was Catherine Rees, Senior Environmental Officer for Powys County Council. She gave a most interesting and enlightening talk on the various rules and regulations and the day-to-day problems she deals with.

She proved that her job is not just inspecting businesses for health and safety, food hygiene and food standards. Catherine and her team also investigate outbreaks of food poisoning and infectious disease, collect samples for laboratory testing, and even inspect houses to make sure they're safe for people to live in. They also investigate incidents such as a noise problem, toxic contamination, and pest infestation. Catherine's overall responsibilities and duties include monitoring and enforcing health and hygiene legislation.

Thanks to Catherine for a very engaging insight into her varied role. Window on the World will return in the new year with more local speakers.



THOUGHT for the DAY

Why not visit the chapel website and join us on an epic Advent journey in pictures, words and song? There will be a message of hope and encouragement every day from the 1st of December to help you connect with the Christmas story afresh. Visit https://newbridgebaptistchurch.co.uk/category/daily-thoughts/ to see.

SPOTLIGHT

Sunday School
but not Sunday School

Fun and playful 'Sunday School' at 10am normally on the 2nd and last Sundays of the month. All children welcome to join us.

We want things to be fun, engaging, and practical, so we colour in, sing, act, create things and sometimes go outside. We really hope your child or grandchild would want to join us. We currently have 3-4 children joining our small group and we really want more friends!

The next dates are **8th December and 29th December at 10am in the chapel** – come in through the vestry door.

We are super pleased that we now have Gina helping us with Sunday School and look forward to what she and her creative companions come up with. It seems to have a lot to do with glue, stickers, felt tip pens and glitter, cutting, pasting and colouring in.

If you know of a primary school aged child who would like to come, please bring them along so they can see whether they like it. Children need to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward humankind."

Hello there! I'm Misha, the minister at Pentref Baptist Chapel. Please get in touch if I can be of help in any way. Life as well as faith, humdrum or crisis, there isn't anything too big or small.

If you'd like a chat or need support, please don't hesitate to contact me and we can arrange a visit to your home or a meeting in a neutral location if that suits you better.

I'm happy to pray for you, your family, or any concerns you might have – simply send a message, give me a ring, or drop a note in. Likewise, if you would like us to pray together, that'd be lovely.

If you or a relative are going into hospital and would like a pastoral visit, please let me know and we can arrange that, or where it is not possible, I can help liaise with my chaplain colleagues in the NHS to make sure you have the support you need.

Please do not hesitate to drop a note through the letterbox at The Manse (next to the chapel) or to send an email, text, or WhatsApp message if we can help. All messages will be treated with discretion.

Tel: 07432 530983 or 01597 821581
Email: mishatheminister@yahoo.com

If you would like to include an event in future issues, please contact either Misha (minister) or Elsa (church secretary).
mishatheminister@yahoo.com
elsa.harflett.eh@gmail.com

You can also find us on the internet at:
www.newbridgebaptistchurch.co.uk
or on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/pentrefnewbridge

January 2025 Edition Deadline: Monday 16th December 2024
Please send to mishatheminister@yahoo.com