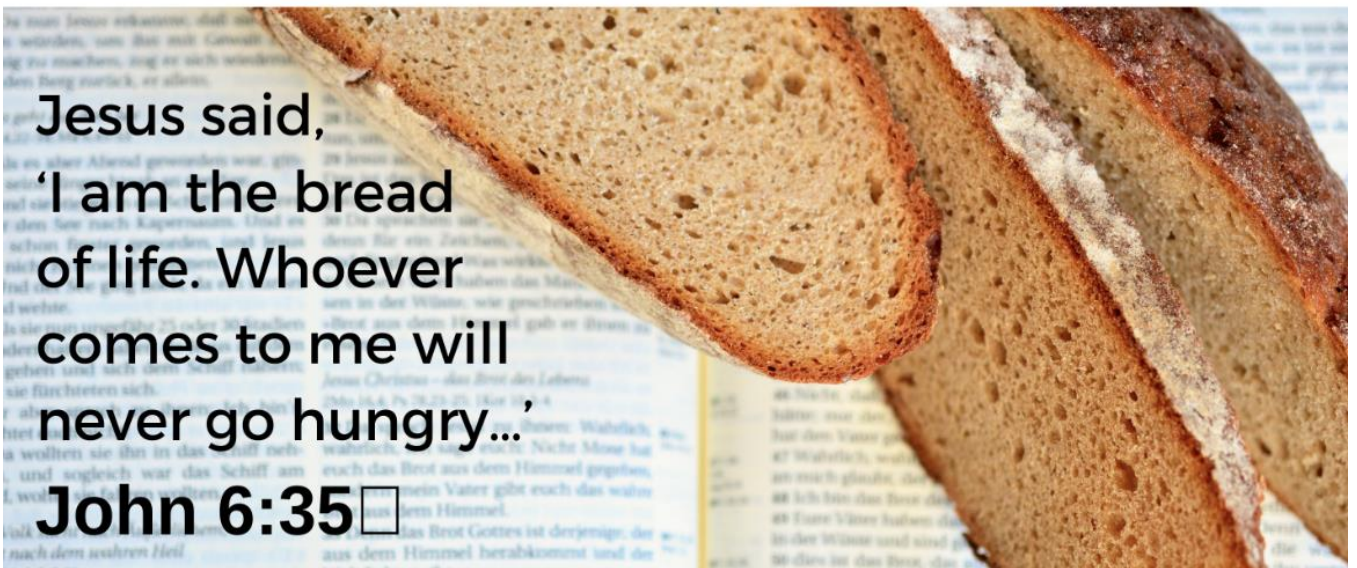


**UPPER TROSNANT
BAPTIST CHURCH**



**SEPTEMBER 2023
NEWSLETTER**



Services on Sundays at 11.00am

Online ministry Sunday@4

Go to Facebook or YouTube

and search for "Upper Trosnant"

Find us on social media @uppertrosnantbc

www.trosnant.org

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Newsletter Items:

We are always happy to receive items for the newsletter.
Please email articles or features for the October 2023
edition to **uppertrosnantbc@gmail.com** by
Sunday 10th September.

Letter from Pastor Richard

Thanksgiving

At this time of the year, we celebrate Harvest. Many of us live in an urban setting, and so maybe the concept of harvesting is a little foreign to us. However, this is an important time for those in the farming community. Those who have planted seeds and watched them develop over a whole year now gather in the fruits of what has grown. And even if we are not directly involved with this, it is vital for all of us. The groceries that we buy in the shops each week will have started out in this way before going through various processes, and eventually ending up on our supermarket shelves.



And it is good and right that each year we remember this. So, for our Harvest Sunday we will be bringing various food items to church, and these will be distributed between the local foodbank and Vision of Hope. This is an opportunity for us to share with others the good things that we have.

Most importantly, though, at Harvest we give thanks to God for his goodness. The whole process of planning, growing and reaping is overseen by him. It is because of God's generosity that we have food each week. The Psalmist writes these words:

*The land yields its harvest;
God, our God blesses us.*

Psalm 67 v 6 (NIV)

This is something we need to remember. It is on the land that the crops are grown. We could add that the hard work of farmers is also vital. But, most importantly, it is God who gives us the blessings that come from it. And we should be continually grateful to him for that. I have said before on more than one occasion that giving thanks before a meal is not simply a ritual that we go through. We should indeed be truly thankful for the food that God provides and sustains us.

We should thank God for ALL of the blessings he gives us, not only the food we eat. Above all, we should be thankful for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ who came into this world to live, die, and rise again so that we can enjoy spiritual food of life for evermore.

Thank you, God for everything! In the words that no doubt we will be singing:

*We plough the fields, and scatter
the good seed on the land;
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand:
he sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain;
the breezes and the sunshine
and soft refreshing rain.*

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above:
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
for all his love.*

Love in Jesus,

Pastor Richard

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

- **HARVEST PRAISE: Wednesday 13th September at 10.30 am** in Pontypool Market, organised by the Chaplaincy team.
- **HARVEST TEA: Saturday 23rd September, 3.00 pm** in the Hall. Please sign up or ring to let the catering team know you are coming.
- **MACMILLAN COFFEE AFTERNOON: Monday 25th September, 2.00 – 4.00 pm** in the Hall. Please join us for an afternoon of fellowship as we support this vital charity.
- **PASTOR'S HOLIDAY:** Please note that Pastor Richard and Annmarie are on annual leave from **Monday 28th August to Sunday 10th September** inclusive. Please pray that they will be blessed, refreshed and rested. Please raise any urgent pastoral concerns with other members of the leadership team during this time.

Doreen's Page: Blackberries

As we enjoy the sight – and taste – of autumn fruit and berries, it is good time to reflect on these wise words from Doreen's book Just a Thought in Passing.

In the late 19th century, when whooping cough was prevalent, it was common to pass small children through a bramble bush as a cure. Once passed through the bush, an offering of bread and butter was left under the arch in the belief that the disease would be left with the food. In our century, whooping cough is almost eradicated. None of us is likely to see a slice of butter under a bramble bush – or a scratched, but cured child skipping down the road! Times have changed. However, we have all seen blackberry bushes, and this year they are well loaded with succulent black fruit, reminding us once again that we are approaching autumn.



There is a promise in the first book of the Bible which has never failed.

When Noah and his family came out of the ark, God said to them, "as long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will never cease." The response that some areas of planet Earth are haunted by the prospect of famine does not negate the promise. Other areas have so much surplus that supplies are sometimes burnt or thrown away. Humanity is not quick to share and those who have plenty do not always consider those who have nothing. Supplies sent to needy countries by relief organisations are sometimes detoured by political powers and never reach those whose needs are so abject. But God is dependable and maybe those of us who are very concerned for nations in need should begin to partner our giving with earnest prayer. People who love God also love their neighbour.

So – who is my neighbour? We are all bound up in the bundle of life together and my neighbour is anyone who breathes the air of our planet. My plenty must be considered as my opportunity to share with someone who is not as fortunate as I am.

Getting to know our new Church Secretary: **An Interview with Lorraine Breese**

At the June Church Meeting it was unanimously agreed to co-opt Lorraine and her husband David onto Upper Trosnant's Leadership Team. Their coming to join us was a great answer to prayer, and Lorraine is now serving as our Church Secretary.

Lorraine, how did you and David come to Pontypool?

We had been wanting to move from Trowbridge for a long time, on account of David's health, but it was a huge challenge, and we needed to downsize from a large 4-bedroomed house. Then my daughter met a guy who owned and started renovating a block of flats in Pontypool, and we were able to move into one of them. Moving to Wales feels exactly like being back in South Africa. We feel completely at home. The weather here is not dissimilar to Cape Town, and the people are just as friendly. I was born in Cape Town into a large family; I was the third youngest of nine.

How did you and David meet?

We met in Johannesburg – I had moved there to work after I left school and was renting a flat. Dave was not born in South Africa, but his family moved to Johannesburg from Llandovery when he was 17. It was my 21st birthday but I was in a new job and had no leave to take to go home to my family. My friend's mum arranged to take me out to dinner and to go dancing, and because women never went out on their own, she invited two men to make up a foursome – and one of them was Dave. This was not a blind date! We talked over the meal, and then spent the evening dancing, and he was a total gentleman. He called on me the next day, and we got to know each other over 3 weeks. Then I returned to Cape Town on account of my mother's health – and he followed me there. The rest is history!

Did you come to the Lord together?

No. Our marriage was shaky for the first 8 years, and one evening we had a nasty altercation, and even decided we should divorce. I was devastated, all I had ever wanted was a happy marriage and family life. There were other factors involved, but that night I talked to a friend's mother on the phone and gave my life to the Lord. David did so 3 years

later, after he had watched our daughter in a school nativity play, and also because of seeing the change that being a Christian had made to me. The problems didn't magically go away in our marriage, but knowing Jesus and receiving Christian counselling made all the difference, and in November this year we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary.

Did you feel guided to come to Upper Trosnant?

When we knew we were moving we started researching local churches. At first we worshipped in another church, but it didn't feel quite right, and one morning when I was running late I came to Upper Trosnant which I had heard about at the Christian Book Shop. Jill was on the door and was just so friendly, and everyone came to speak to me at the fellowship afterwards which felt like such an incredible welcome. I saw the Bible study and prayer meeting and all the other midweek activities on the notices, and I loved the singing and Pastor Richard's preaching – it was like a hand slipping into a glove! I went home and told Dave that I had found our spiritual home.

How do you hope to serve the Lord here?

In all the churches we have belonged to, Dave and I have been very involved in church work. At Cape Town I was a Sunday School teacher and would do the catering for church camps – and we had 275 members! I have led Bible studies and prayer meetings and served as a treasurer. We knew we wanted to carry on serving the Lord in a real way, and when we learned of the need for others on the leadership team, we asked the Pastor if we could help with some administration. That was how we learned that members could be co-opted onto the leadership team. I had been feeling stagnated and praying for the Lord to use me in new ways – and this has been such a strong answer. All glory to God!

Do you have a special Bible verse that guides you?

Matthew 7, verse 12: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Jesus said this in the Sermon on the Mount. It is such powerful advice!

Bible Notes (30) Food & Agriculture - Harvest

Daniel Pearson
Part 1

'So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered'. **Ruth 2:17** Here we have Ruth, who had had a hard life, following the harvesters to gather what was left - the gleanings. The harvesters were working for Boaz who was Ruth's guardian-redeemer. Read on for a full account of Ruth's harvest.



For us we thank God for His goodness and celebrate a harvest, and, like Ruth, we harvest crops, but there is a deeper meaning: **John 4:35** 'Don't you have a saying, "It's still four months until harvest"? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper maybe glad together. Thus the saying "One sows and another reaps" is true'.

Bible references to cereal crops such a barley, wheat, maze, corn etc., are often referred to as grasses.

We get a good idea of agricultural methods from **I Kings 19:19**. In Bible Notes 29, last month, we met with Elijah when he was praying for rain. Now he was led by the Lord to meet Elisha, who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. This is a considerable amount of draft power and ploughing equipment and would have followed the harvesting of crops to turn the stubble into the ground to start a new seed bed.

Elijah went up to Elisha and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. But we are told that Elisha took his oxen and slaughtered them, using the ploughing equipment to cook the meat which he gave to the people. So the equipment was most likely hardwood with iron or bronze fittings and wearing points.



Here we see the harvesting of the crop and the the preparation of the fields for the following crop and next month we will look at the sower of the seed.

FOCUS ON MISSION:

Update from Margaret Reese-Collins

On Sunday 23rd July a good number gathered to hear and enjoy fellowship with Margaret and Roy Reese-Collins, who were on their annual summer visit to Margaret's roots in South Wales. She opened the meeting by teaching everyone to sing a joyful Psalm of praise – in Hebrew – and then shared slides of her work with Messianic Testimony in Toulouse in the South of France.

The mission of the Messianic Testimony is to take the message of Yeshua (as Jesus is called in Hebrew) to Jewish people across the world. In Toulouse, many in the Jewish community have never learned to speak Hebrew, and Margaret teaches the language by reading the Old Testament Scriptures with Jews of all generations. In this way she introduces them to the many prophecies, particularly in the Psalms, which tell of the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. But the knowledge that the Messiah was rejected by the Jews can be difficult to accept, as can the idea of a loving God, especially for elderly people who witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust when they were young.

Margaret and Roy are members of an evangelical church in Toulouse where Roy acts as Pastor to a small but active congregation which includes Messianic Jews (that is, Jews who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah). The church enjoys hiking together and celebrating the festivals of the Jewish and Christian calendars, and Margaret and Roy are always welcome in the local synagogue. Margaret also runs a weekly market stall from where she distributes messianic literature and gets to know the local community.

Margaret shared a number of prayers needs:

- Pray for the year ahead, that Jews and Messianic Jews would be protected during turbulent times.
- Pray and that eternal fruit would come from her individual Bible studies, and that the elderly folk with whom she meets would come to saving faith.
- Pray that through Margaret's outreach in the market and through English speaking groups, the Holy Spirit will convict hearts of sin, and people of their need for the Saviour.

Blythswood Care Christmas Shoebox Appeal

Dear Friends, You may have noticed the table in the Hall ready for donations for the Christmas shoeboxes. Last year long-life food, also toiletries, personal hygiene products and cleaning materials, to those in need, there are two boxes in the Hall: one for our local Pontypool Foodbank, and one for the residents at the Vision of Hope Farm. All gifts will be put to good use and will be greatly appreciated. Upper Trosnant sent a fantastic 45 shoeboxes to needy children, adults and the elderly in Eastern Europe, and wouldn't it be wonderful if we could do the same again this year! **There are many ways you can help.** You may wish to wrap and pack a box yourself at home – please use the lists available in church or from me to make sure you meet all the requirements and suggestions for the different ages, and **don't forget to tape a ticked checklist to your box** to show what it contains. Please **do take items from the table** to use – we don't want anything to be left behind!

The Gift Table is also there for your donations if you have an empty shoebox you can contribute or would like to buy some suitable items for others to use. Blytheswood Care request a **donation of £3 per box** towards the cost of road transport across Europe, and gifts of money towards the charity are always very welcome too.

Please note these dates: I will be holding a **Box Wrapping Masterclass in Sisterhood on the afternoon of Tuesday September 26th**. Come along and learn how to do it; and if you can, bring your own box, scissors, glue stick and a roll of Christmas paper to have a go. **"Shoebox Sunday" will be 15 October** when we will be praying for the boxes and for the people who will be receiving them. This is the latest date to bring boxes to church as they need to be checked before collection. And finally, please note that **wrapped sweets** inside the boxes need to have a best-before date of at least **March 2024**.

Thank you in advance for all your hard work and help. **Janet Pollard**

Don't forget...

If you would like and are able to donate gifts of dried, tinned, or long-life food, also toiletries, personal hygiene products and cleaning materials, to those in need, there are two boxes in the Hall: one for our local Pontypool Foodbank, and one for the residents at the Vision of Hope Farm. All gifts will be put to good use and will be greatly appreciated.

Upper Trosnant Update

- The month of August is often a time when many are away on holiday. However, it has been very encouraging to see how many people have been with us for our services. The work of the church has continued; meetings and other informal gatherings have known God's presence and blessing.
- Since the last Newsletter, we have had two Teatimes at Trosnant. As always, it has been great to welcome those who do not usually come to church as well as good friends and those who are from our fellowship. The food has continued to be at a very high standard, and much appreciated. Our grateful thanks to all who help in the preparation, including Anne Orphan from Malpas Road Church who willingly comes each month – and to the many willing volunteers who wash up afterwards! The Gospel has been shared in song as well as through short messages from Pastor Richard.
- The activities of Churches United in Pontypool continue. The monthly Prayer and Praise evenings have been well attended, it is so good to be together to bring the needs of our town and valley before the Lord. The next event is the Market Harvest Service (See events page).
- Garden Fellowship and Open house have continued and despite the changeable weather we have managed some outside gatherings.
- Sisterhood restarts on Tuesday 12th September at 2.30 pm. This has been such an encouraging meeting; new people will always be made welcome.
- A small number of men had a good time of informal fellowship at our two-monthly meeting. In October, we are planning to visit Abertillery to join with the Men's Fellowship there for one of their meetings.
- We were so pleased to welcome Janet Jones into Membership at a Communion service in August. Janet has been a dear friend to us in Trosnant for many years faithfully serving the Lord. We pray God's blessing upon her.
- The planned Church Members' Meeting in September to discuss the supporting document to the constitution has now been moved back to November. Watch this space for details...

CHURCH DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY SERVICES AND PREACHERS

11.00 am: In the Church building and later on YouTube;
followed by Tea and Coffee in the Hall.

3rd – Huw Stephens

10th – Richard Harrison (Communion)

17th – Pastor Richard – **HARVEST**

– **followed by Bring your own lunch**

24th – Gordon Cooke

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS @ 4 O'CLOCK

3rd – Facebook Live with Pastor Richard

10th – Facebook Live with Annmarie

17th – **NO AFTERNOON MEETING**

24th – Facebook Live with Pastor Richard

From October, all Sundays @4 will be in person, in the hall

– see next month's Newsletter for details

MONDAY

4th – **OPEN HOUSE** – from 2.00–4.00 pm in the Hall

11th and 18th – **Garden Fellowship** in the Church garden

18th – **TY CEIRIOS** 2.00 pm service for the residents

25th – **Macmillan Coffee Afternoon** 2.00-4.00 pm in the Hall

TUESDAY – SISTERHOOD 2.30 – 4.00 pm in the Hall

12th – **Sisterhood Restarts** – new members very welcome!

19th – Pastor Richard

26th – Shoebox Wrapping Masterclass with Janet P – see p.10.

WEDNESDAY – PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

6th and 20th – 6.50 pm for a 7.00 pm start

13th and 27th – 1.50 pm for a 2.00 pm start

THURSDAY 28th – PRAYER AND PRAISE EVENING

Join with Churches United in Pontypool, 7.00 pm at Tabernacle,
Penygarn.

Prayer Page **The Power of Prayer**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was one of the most powerful preachers of the Victorian age. From the age of 19 until his death aged 57 he preached to congregations of thousands at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, while his sermons sold 25,000 copies weekly and were translated into 20 languages. Spurgeon read 6 books each week to prepare his sermons and to sharpen his mind. He opened a college for pastors, founded an orphanage and wrote more than 140 books, while editing a magazine and responding, by hand, to over 500 letters each week. How did he achieve so much? By the power of prayer! He said:

“The prayer-meeting must be maintained at all costs. The communion of the church with God must never be broken. If you visit a factory, you may see thousands of wheels revolving, and a host of hands employed. It is a wonderful sight. Where is the power that keeps all this running? Look at that slated shed! Come into this grimy place, smelling of oil. What is it? It is the engine-house. You do not think much of it, but that is the centre of power. If you stop that engine, every wheel will stand still. Some good people say, ‘I am not going out to-night. It is only a prayer-meeting.’ Just so. It is only the engine, but that is everything... Prayer is the engine of the Church; it supplies the force. I like to see the engines going—praying, praying, praying, praying!”

We may sometimes think our prayers are feeble – but the Lord does not. Just as the regular prayer meetings of Spurgeon’s church members empowered his sermons and outreach, so the Upper Trostnant Prayer Meeting is our ‘engine room’. The preaching of the word each Sunday is always top of the prayer list, and we pray for the Pastor and Annmarie, for our leadership team, and for all the activities of our Church. Members of the congregation and their families are lifted up when in need, and the meeting prays regularly for situations in the world, our nation, and closer to home in Pontypool. During the past year we have seen many blessings from God – and we express our thanks to him too.

If you have not yet been to a Prayer Meeting, please do come along on a Wednesday afternoon or evening – see the previous page for dates and times. And if you can’t – the Lord will hear your prayers at home.

Please Pray for...

- Pray for all the services at Upper Trosnant during September, including the Harvest service, lunch and tea. Pray that Pastor Richard and Annmarie will be greatly blessed and refreshed by their holiday. Lift up the leadership team as they plan and prepare events and services.
- Pray for our missionary friends around the world: For Margaret and Roy Collins-Reece in Toulouse; and for David and Sue Verwey in Japan. Pray for Angus and Helen Douglas as they begin their new life in Birmingham.
- Pray for Dale Norman as he prepares to begin his final year of ministerial training, and for him, Naomi and Felicity as they settle in their new home.
- Remember all those in our fellowship who are ill or recovering from illness or accidents, or in need of a special touch from the Lord: Val Attwell, Emma Attwell, Barbara's sister Brenda, Beryl from Blaenavon, Dave Breese, Pam Charles, Doreen Dixon, Lindsey Firth, Liz Harris, Doreen Harrison, Audrey and Eric Jones, Jean Miles, Helen Norman, Jeff and Judith Parry, Janet Pollard, Ann Price, Ron Saunders, Ann Stephens, Alan Stephens, Linda Swires-Hennessy, Greta and Derek Wagg, Marion Webb.

ROTA for September

	Reading	Door	Teas	Flowers
3 rd	Huw Stephens	Barbara	Yvonne	Barbara
10 th	Richard Harrison	Anthea	Rhoswyn	Janet P.
17 th	Ena	Lorraine	Annmarie Lunch: Lorraine	Yvonne
24 th	Gordon Cooke	Ena	Clare	Sandra
Communion: 10 th : Lorraine				



**HELLO
SEPTEMBER**

**You are
invited**

**UPPER TROSNANT
BAPTIST CHURCH**



Harvest Tea

**Saturday
23rd of September
at 3pm**

**Please let us know if you are coming
via the contact details below.**

Upper Trosnant Baptist Church

Lower Bridge Street

Pontypool

Torfaen

NP4 6JU

Contact Pastor Richard Miles

e. uppertrosnantbc@gmail.com

t. 01495 751020

www.trosnant.org