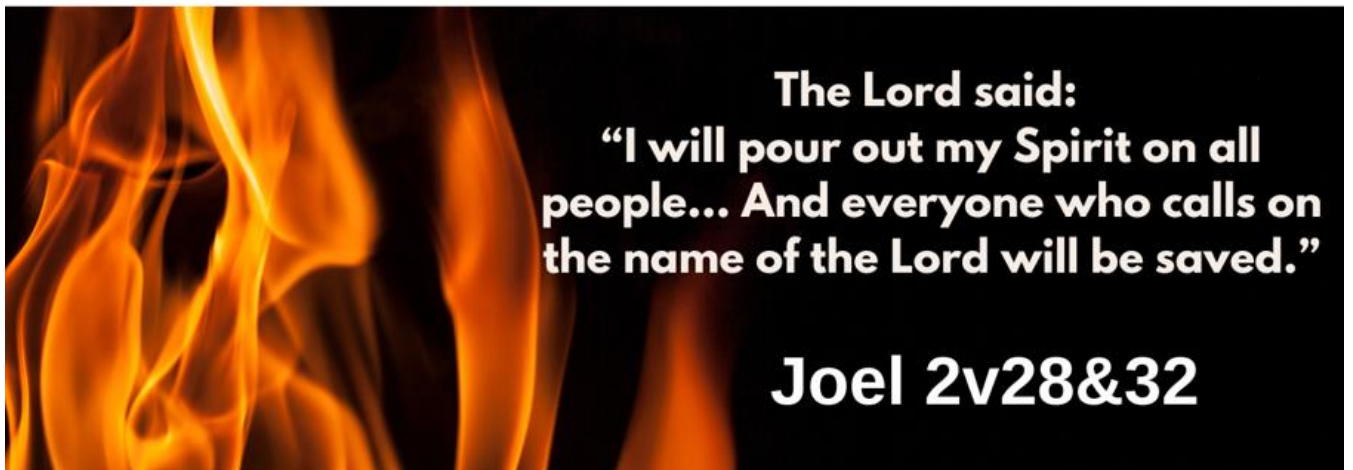


**UPPER TROSNANT
BAPTIST CHURCH**



NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



**The Lord said:
“I will pour out my Spirit on all
people... And everyone who calls on
the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

Joel 2v28&32

**Services on Sundays at 11.00am in the church
and informal fellowship at 4.00pm in the hall**

Online ministry on YouTube & Facebook

Just 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 December 2023
edition to **uppertrosnantbc@gmail.com** by
Sunday 12th November.

Letter from Pastor Richard

Joys and Sorrows

I'm sure you would agree with me that life is full of joys and sorrows. In all of our lives, good and bad things happen. Sometimes more that is good, sometimes more bad.

That is true in our world, too. As we look at the situation in Israel and Palestine, things there are really bad. And we need to pray that a good solution would be found to the issues that surround the war that is going on there. And there are many other parts of the world we could think of where there is conflict. These are all things that bring us sorrow.



But even in that situation, with all that is happening there we know that God is in control of things. Now it may not look that way, as we have seen the devastating scenes over recent weeks. But, as with everything else in the world, this has not taken God by surprise. And you may well ask why God has not intervened to stop the bloodshed. And the answer to that is that we do not know. We DO know that such violence does not please God. However, he will use it for his own purposes. We may never know the reasons why he allowed this to happen, but we can trust him as a great God. In the words of a song that we love to sing:

*Though the nations rage, kingdoms rise and fall
There is still one King reigning over all
So I will not fear for this truth remains
That my God is, the Ancient of Days
None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days*

Jesse Reeves / Michael Farren / Rich Thompson / Jonny Robinson

© City Alight Music

In our own lives too, there are sorrows. I am very much aware at this time that there are many in our fellowship who have issues with health, or are looking after others who do. Please avail of the prayer list on page 18 to remember those going through tough times. And we have this promise from God's Word:

*"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour;"* Isaiah 43 v 1b – 3a (NIV)

But there are joys for us too. There is much for which to give God thanks. That is why the Agenda item at our Church Meetings "Reasons for Encouragement" is so important. We are seeing God at work – his presence is amongst us as we meet, people have come to me and told me of the ways that God has spoken to them from his Word. We have the opportunities to regularly reach out into the community through things such as Warm Space and our monthly meals. There will be more things happening next month as we approach Christmas – look out for the December Newsletter.

Please allow me one more song, this one from Graham Kendrick:

*For the joys and for the sorrows, the best and worst of times,
For this moment, for tomorrow, for all that lies behind,
Fears that crowd around me, for the failure of my plans,
For the dreams of all I hope to be, the truth of what I am,
For this I have Jesus, for this I have Jesus, for this I have Jesus,
I have Jesus.*

Graham Kendrick, Copyright © 1994 Make Way Music

Doreen's Page: November

As we wrap up warm in our winter jumpers and coats, this piece from Doreen's book A Benediction of Bluebells reminds us to take time to be thankful to enjoy all the blessings of this season.



(Picture: Thomas Quinten, Pixabay)

Of all the months in the year, I always feel that November is the most nostalgic. Summer was special, with hot days and holidays, but autumn glows with superb colour – how delightfully creative of God to celebrate the entrance of winter with a palette of leaves, now ochre, bronze, rust, saffron, crimson, copper! We review memories of commotions, concerts, capers, commiserations, companionship, congratulations – and with the celebration of Christmas clamouring for our attention, we wonder where the year has gone.

Well, now, once the juvenile jollifications of November 5th is over, there is a pause in activity and we can take time to observe the advice in Psalm 46 verse 10:

Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

Time seems to be in such short supply in our super-efficient society. We need space to catch up – to regain a composure of soul and a contentment of spirit. Turn off the TV, tune out the family, turn over your timetable, and just sit quietly by yourself. Then say, "Jesus, it's me," and you will discover that He is here, already eager to meet you.

November can bring Spring into your soul when you recollect that the joy of the Lord is your strength. In a medieval English hymn Jesus has been described as the 'Lord of the Dance.' Reach up to Him – and ENJOY being part of the family of God.

Meet our New Deacon: An Interview with David Breese

At the June Church Meeting it was unanimously voted to co-opt David Breese and his wife Lorraine onto Upper Trosnant's Leadership Team. Their willingness to serve has been a great answer to prayer, and Dave has kindly agreed to be interviewed for the Newsletter.

Dave, you were born in Wales, but you have a strong South African accent. Where do you call home?

Wales! Even when I lived in South Africa, I always knew I was coming back – and I always supported Welsh teams. I was born in Llandovery, the other side of the Brecon Beacons, and when I first came to Pontypool I didn't really like it. But once I started to settle comfortably in our flat and got to know people, I liked it more and more.

How did you come to know the Lord?

Lorraine has shared that we went through a bad time in our marriage. She gave her life to the Lord but I didn't, even though I noticed a big difference in her. But our children were in Sunday School, and my daughter came home and said, "I's going to be sheep!" I went to the service, and after the Nativity, a chap called Rob Vincent stood up to speak – he was a lawyer who helped write the new South African constitution. Usually in church I would get irritable, and Lorraine would dig me in the ribs if I started fiddling with the hymnbooks. But after a while I felt Rob was speaking directly to me. He brought me some books and pamphlets including John Blanchard's *Ultimate Questions*, and a section on Romans kept drawing me back. I read it twice then got down on my knees. I didn't tell Lorraine, and she didn't know until the next Sunday, when the minister asked her, 'Did you notice any change in Dave?' That's when I started getting involved in the Church.

At one stage I was planning on taking a correspondence course on the Bible, when I was retrenched by my company three times. So I went to the Baptist College in Cape Town for a 4 year course, and took certificates in pastoral ministry and preaching.

Did any special signs lead you to Upper Trosnant?

It started when I looked round Pontypool on Google Streetview, and saw the Christian Bookshop. I moved here ahead of Lorraine and went

to find the Bookshop. I walked in and learned that they'd been praying for someone who understood computers; that's when I met Anthea. I had always felt Trowbridge was our final place – until we came here. One morning I was unwell, and Lorraine was late for the church she had intended to go to. So, she visited Upper Trosnant, and came home to tell me she had found her spiritual home. And she was right.

You are a familiar sight running the computer in Sunday Services. Do you think technology is important for Christians?

It is. You can do more studying, much quicker – although there is a lot of false information online and you do have to be careful. I like to spend a lot of time researching and to really know what I'm talking about. I have been in computers since 1979 – I was working on one of the very first ones in South Africa which took up a whole floor of a city block. My laptop is more powerful now! I fell behind when I retired in 2016/17, but I realised newer computers are just different versions of the old. Everything that I have learned in work I have put towards what I do now. Lots of older people are scared of using computers, and at Trowbridge I would teach them how to do it.

What are your hopes and prayers for the Christian Bookshop?

It is all in the Lord's hands. It can't survive from books and selling coffee; it does need donations from churches and people. My vision is that it is not there just to push Bibles on people – it should be a place of listening, somewhere there is shoulder to unburden yourself on. People should leave the bookshop in a better state than when they come in. I believe that the Lord will keep it going.

Is there a Bible verse that you always turn to?

Psalm 84 verse 10 says, "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." In South Africa I welcomed people on the door for 12 years – it was such a big church we needed continuity to know if somebody was new. I have always had a heart to serve God and help other people and I love being busy.

And They're Off – an Update on the Shoeboxes

A big thankyou to everyone who has prepared a shoebox Christmas gift this year, or donated items to the table in the hall to be used in this way. 'Shoebox Sunday' was held on 15 October, and a wonderful total of 54 shoeboxes has been collected in. These will be checked by the team and then collecte by representatives of Blythswood Care, before starting their long journey by road to churches and distribution centres in Eastern Europe. Thank you too to everyone who has donated money towards the cost of the transport.



These pictures were taken during a special Sisterhood Box Wrapping Workshop, when Janet guided a team of willing volunteers through the intricate process of measuring wrapping paper and sticking it neatly to a shoebox. Everyone present completed the task

successfully, and the finished boxes were truly beautiful. Covered in Christmas paper inside and outside, they too will be a useful and cheerful part of the gift.

Please pray for safe travel of the boxes on every stage of their journey. We do not know anything about the individual



children, teenagers, adults or older people who will be receiving them, but the Lord knows exactly who they are and what they need. Pray too that he will bless them richly, both through the items that the boxes

contain, and through the knowledge that somebody, somewhere, loved them enough to send a gift at Christmas.



Special thanks to Janet Pollard for her hard work over many months in planing the shoeboxes, and in coordinating the collection from Blythswood Care. She has been very ably assisted by Rhoswyn, Janet Jones, and many others in Sisterhood.

This picture shows the two Janets with the the finished boxes in Church.

Sisterhood Sharing Together

On Tuesday 17 October, the Sisterhood came together for an afternoon of sharing, during which each member brought a poem, a short reading,



or a favourite hymn or Psalm. It was a very blessed and joyful afternoon of fellowship. New members are always very welcome to come along; if you would like to know more, please contact Annmarie via the church contact details on the back page.

Bible Notes (32)

Daniel Pearson

Fishing and Fish in the Sea of Galilee

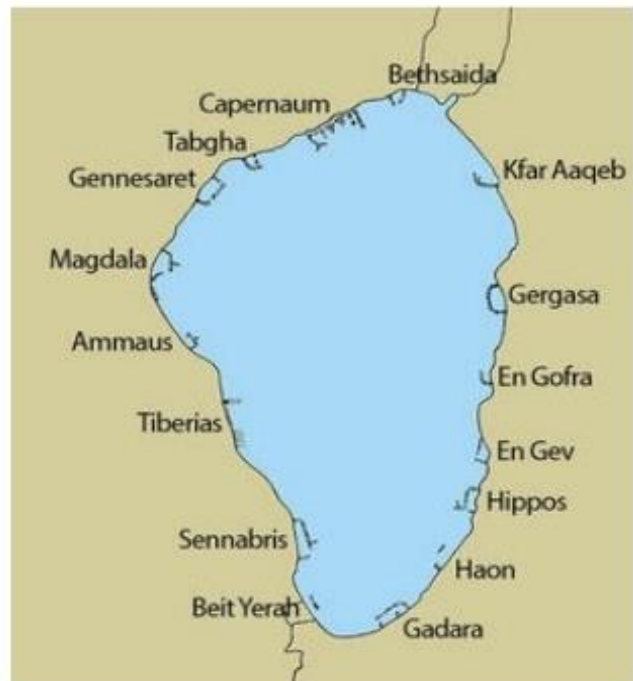
Fishing was a productive industry at the time of Jesus; mostly conducted from small shallow draft boats which could be rowed or propelled by a small sail. Nets were used, either cast from the boat or the shore. Line and rod fishing was not used. The map opposite, prepared by Mendel Nun, shows the harbours around the fresh-water Sea of Galilee mostly used by fishermen.

There were about 10 species of fish out of 18 that were sought by fisherman and these can be divided into 3 groups. The binny, also known as a barbel, grows to 750mm weighing 7kg. The second group is called musht and grows to about 450mm long and a weight of 2kg. The third group is the kenneret sardine. Today the Ministry of Agriculture states there are around 27 species of fish here with the additional species being introduced from elsewhere.



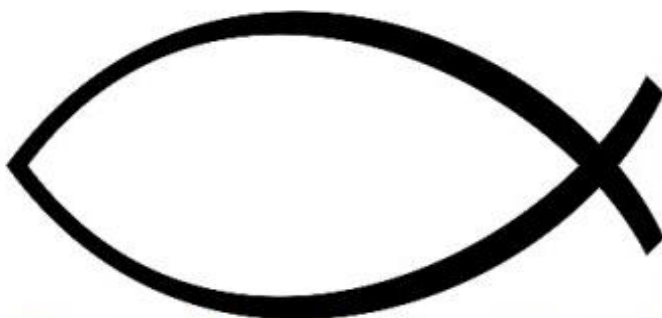
Replica of a shallow draft fishing boat used on the Sea of Galilee at the time of Jesus

Walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me', Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men'. Matthew 4:18-19 & Luke 5:6 So when they followed Jesus's instructions they caught such a large number of fish their nets began to break.



Jesus said, 'You give them something to eat'. They answered, 'We have only five loaves of bread and two fish - unless we go and buy food for all this crowd'. About 5,000 men were there. But Jesus said to his disciples, 'Have them sit down in groups of about 50'. Taking the five loaves and two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied . . . Luke 9:13-17.

The early Church used the sign of the fish as a sign to mark Christian meeting places and tombs.



The Greek word for fish is 'Ichthys' and symbolises baptism by water immersion, as practiced by the early Church and was a reminder that Christians are "fishers of men".

The sign above often used by Christian travellers, sketched with a stick in the dirt to know friend from foe.

Focus on Mission: UFM Worldwide

The visiting speaker for Upper Trostant's Church Anniversary Sunday in October was Tim Howlett, who is the Head of Partnerships at UFM Worldwide. In the morning service, Tim spoke inspiringly about mission, encouraging us to see ourselves as missionaries in the place where we are, knowing that we are not acting on our own but as part of a team working for the Lord.

Although UFM Worldwide was not previously known to many at Upper Trostant, its work began in 1931 when a group of missionaries working in Brazil and in the country now called The Democratic Republic of the Congo, joined together to form the Unevangelised Fields Mission, with its headquarters in London. Until 1976 they and their successors worked with agencies in the USA and Canada before the organisation divided into three separate parts, and the UK based branch became known as UFM Worldwide.

UFM Worldwide does not send its own missionaries abroad; rather it partners with churches, helping them to identify, train, send and support workers for cross-cultural mission. Currently they have more than 200 mission partners in 35 countries, sent by 90 gospel-hearted churches. UFM workers are committed to making disciples of all nations, taking the gospel to the least reached, and supporting under-resourced churches around the world.

You can learn more about the work of UFM Worldwide on its webpage: <https://www.ufm.org.uk/> . This sets out its commitment to the Gospel, to Churches, to People and to the Lord. The work is based on the truths of biblical, historic Christianity and the organisation's mandate is the Great Commission of Jesus to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising ... and teaching them to obey all I have commanded you." The priority is especially to take the gospel to least reached people in the World and to serve the most under-resourced churches. Underpinning the work is the principle that responsibility for identifying, training, sending and supporting workers for cross-cultural mission rests primarily with the local church, and UFM workers have a strong sense of God's leading which is confirmed by their home church. UFM also partners with many national and international

churches/agencies in areas such as pioneer evangelism, student ministry, church planting and pastoral and leadership training. The aim is to be a family, not simply an organisation, and also to be flexible, with structures established to serve people while they serve the Lord. UFM is happy to enable mission workers to go anywhere in the world, if possible.

UFM also supports the IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) InterAction programme which offers placements of one to two years in national student movements across Europe or with international student ministry. Many of these are based in traditionally Greek Orthodox countries including Greece and Moldova, or Catholic ones such as Italy and Spain. They work alongside evangelical students in their churches, encouraging them to share their faith with their friends and helping to plan Bible studies and outreach events. Their goal is for every student to have the chance to hear and respond to the gospel.

Another organisation partnered by UFM Worldwide is ACTS – African Christian Textbooks. Across Africa, many African pastors and theology students have very few books, and those that they need can be difficult to obtain and often unaffordable. For 30 years ACTS have been supplying pastors and Bible students with quality textbooks, sourcing them from major publishers all over the world, and helping develop and publish books written by African writers who can relate best to the African context.

Some of the missionary work being done is much closer to home, for example a ministry to Muslim shop workers in the UK, and missionary who was born in Egypt but has lived for over 30 years in London, working among Arabic-speaking people on the streets. He has much experience in sharing the gospel with different Arab cultures from the Middle East and North Africa, and is involved in different types of outreach, including street and open air evangelism, a pavement café and book table ministry, one-to-one discipleship, evangelism training ministry, and preaching and teaching the Bible in the UK and the Middle East.

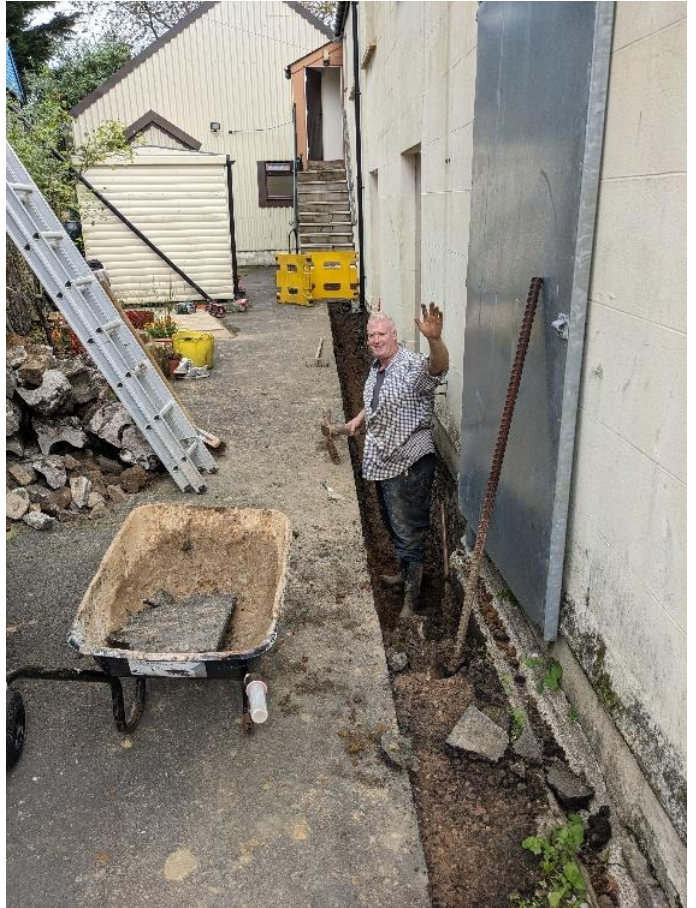
Let us pray for the work of UFM Worldwide, and let us ask the Lord to give us a heart to reach out to those who do not know the Gospel in our own town of Pontypool.

Upper Trosnant Update

- Every month we say the same thing, but every month it is true. God has been so good to us as a church. We have prayed that he would speak through his Word, and it is such a joy to hear people saying that God indeed has spoken to them, often in a very particular way.
- Our Weekly Sunday @ 4 gatherings are underway. Those who have been have said that they are being blessed being there. We have had a variety of different things happening including Facebook Live, informal Communion and a guest speaker in Tim Howlett who challenged and encouraged us with regard to Mission.
- We have had two Saturday events since the last Newsletter. Our Harvest tea, which was a "Ploughman's", was greatly appreciated. We were able to thank God for his goodness and enjoy fellowship, including singing a couple of hymns together. The second one was "Soup on Saturday" which is an indication that we are now in colder seasons. Again, those who were there enjoyed the soup and the company. Pastor Richard shared from the Scripture.
- Another sign that the weather is changing is we now have Warm Space on Monday afternoons. This is another informal opportunity to be together and chat whilst drinking tea or coffee. Cake also accompanies the drinks! Not forgetting our monthly Open House.
- Sisterhood continues to go from strength to strength. The numbers have been extremely encouraging, and more importantly the sense of fellowship and prayer that there is amongst those who meet is a very positive thing.
- In October was the Quarterly Church Meeting. It was good to be together to discuss various matters regarding the life of the church. There will be a meeting for Church Members only on Wednesday 29th November to discuss our "Supporting Document" to the new CIO constitution. **Please note it will start at 6.00 pm.**
- It was also good to host the Gwent Baptist Association Autumn Meeting. There will be a report in the next Newsletter.

- Work on the drain outside the building has almost been completed. The ditch has been dug and the membrane and stones put in. The guttering will be redirected to the drain at the front. The work inside the building is expected to take place in the New Year.

This photograph shows John McCoy, a regular member of our congregation, hard at work digging out the ditch for the drain. It was difficult work – but he managed to keep smiling throughout!



- The Spirit Choir is visiting us on Saturday 18th November – see the back page. This is a great opportunity to hear this quality local group singing God’s praises in our hall. Admission is free, but we will be taking a collection for them. Refreshments will not be on the usual scale of our Saturday events, but there will be something to eat!
- The next Newsletter will be our Christmas edition! All of our Christmas activities will be in there, but just to whet your appetite; on Saturday 25th November, the day that the lights are switched on in Pontypool, there will be Carol Singing around the Christmas Tree by the Park gates at 5.30 pm, organised by Churches United in Pontypool.
- We are having a Church Christmas Lunch. We thought we would make it early to avoid the busyness as we come up to Christmas. It will be on Saturday 2nd December at 1.30 pm in the hall. Details to follow.
- In the week leading up to that, we will be putting up the Christmas decorations and trees in the church and hall. If you are able to help, please let us know.

CHURCH DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

SUNDAY SERVICES AND PREACHERS

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

5th	Pastor Richard (Communion)
12th	Pastor Richard – Remembrance Sunday Please Note: Service starts at 10.45 am
19th	Richard Harrison
26th	Pastor Richard

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS @ 4 O'CLOCK

Meeting together in the Hall, with tea and coffee.

5th	Fellowship and Facebook Live with Annmarie
12th	Fellowship and Facebook Live with Pastor Richard
19th	Informal Communion, with Pastor Richard
26th	Sermon Discussion with Pastor Richard

MONDAY

WARM SPACE – every week 2.00–4.00 pm in the Hall.

Everyone is warmly invited to drop in for a friendly chat over a nice cup of tea of coffee and biscuits.

13th – OPEN HOUSE – We play games or share crafts, or just meet for a cup of tea and a chat.

20th – 2.00 pm – SERVICE AT TY CEIRIOS – new faces are always welcome to join us singing with the residents.

TUESDAY – SISTERHOOD 2.30 – 4.00 pm in the Hall

7th	Sisterhood Lunch out (1.00pm)
14th	Pastor Richard
21st	Annmarie
28th	Terry Jones

WEDNESDAY – PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

1st and 15th – 6.50 pm for a 7.00 pm start

8th and 22nd – 1.50 pm for a 2.00 pm start

29th – Special Church Meeting – 5.50 for 6.00 pm

This is a meeting for Church Members only, to vote on the 'Supporting Document' for the new Church Constitution under our status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

THURSDAY

29th – PRAYER AND PRAISE EVENING - 7.00 PM

Join with **Churches United in Pontypool**, here at Upper Trosnant.

SATURDAY

4th – From 1.00 pm, volunteers are invited to come along for an afternoon of Church Cleaning and Sorting. There will be refreshments!

18th – An Afternoon with the Spirit Choir – 3 pm

Everyone is invited; please see the back page for details.

ROTA for NOVEMBER

	Reading	Door	Teas AM	Teas @4	Flowers
5 th	Priscilla	Barbara	Janet J.	Annmarie	Barbara
12 th	Pastor Richard	Anthea	Sian	Janet J.	Pam
19 th	Richard H.	Lorraine	Lorraine	Lorraine	Anthea
26 th	Clare	Priscilla	Rhoswyn	Clare	Sandra
Communion: 5 th : Clare 19 th : Lorraine (PM)					

Prayer Page

A Prayer for Israel and Palestine

As Israel responds to terrorist atrocities and the situation unfolds with unimaginable suffering extending throughout Gaza, and wider conflict threatening to spread throughout the Middle East, it can be difficult to watch the news on our televisions, and almost impossible to know how to pray. If it is helpful, please use this prayer, which was shared by the congregation together in church on October 15th.

O God our Heavenly Father,
Our hearts are broken in pieces
at the suffering and murder
in Israel and Palestine;
Our voices cry for peace
and for justice.
Comfort those who grieve,
Console and heal the injured,
Be close to those in fear,
Restrain with your mighty hand
those who perpetrate violence.
Send us your wisdom
in all that we say and do,
That our voice may always
seek justice, peace and security for all.
We ask this in Jesus' Name,
Amen.

Prayers for our World

- Please remember too the many other nations where there is conflict. Lift up the people of Ukraine in their ongoing struggle to free their land from the Russian attack, and all those afflicted by civil war or insurgency in nations including Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Syria.
- Pray too for all those affected by famine, drought, floods or other effects of climate change.
- Ask the Lord to give strength and endurance to Christians everywhere where they are persecuted for their faith.

Prayers for our Town

- Let us pray for Pontypool and our local authority of Torfaen. Remember those who work on, and for, the council, and all those who provide transport, work in the local shops, maintain the streets and care for the parks.
- Remember teachers, health service staff and care workers, as they deliver essential services.
- Pray for the Pontypool foodbank, and for Simon Matheson and the volunteers for CAP, as they reach out to those in the greatest need.
- Remember our brothers and sisters in other churches up and down the Valley. Rejoice with those who are thriving, and say a special prayer for members of Forgeside, Blaenavon, who will soon be closing their doors. Pray for all those planning united Christmas events and carols.

Prayers for our Church Family and Fellowship

- Please pray for Pastor Richard and the leadership team as they meet to plan and prepare events and services, and as care for our finances and church building.
- Pray for all those who will come to the Warm Space on Mondays and Open House during November, asking the Lord to bless them as they enjoy fellowship together. Lift up the Afternoon with the Spirit Choir on 18 November and ask that many will be blessed and inspired.
- Remember our missionary friends working overseas: Margaret and Roy Collins-Reece in Toulouse; and for David and Sue Verwey in Japan.
- Continue to lift up Dale Norman in his final year of ministerial training at Cardiff Baptist College, as he and Naomi wait on the Lord as to where they will serve him in the years ahead.
- Please pray for all those who are ill or frail, 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, Lorraine Breese, Pam Charles, Doreen Dixon, Lindsey Firth, Liz Harris, Doreen Harrison, Audrey and Eric Jones, Jean Miles, Helen Norman, Jeff Parry, Judith Parry, Janet Pollard, Ann Price, Ron Saunders, Ann Stephens, Alan Stephens, Linda Swires-Hennessy, Greta and Derek Wagg, Marion Webb.



You are invited to a concert with **UPPER TROSNANT BAPTIST CHURCH**

Spirit Choir



FREE Admission

**Saturday
18th of November
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