

**UPPER TROSNANT
BAPTIST CHURCH**



APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

If you declare with your mouth,
“Jesus is Lord,”
and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved.

Romans 10v9



**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 May 2024 edition to **uppertrosnantbc@gmail.com** by **Sunday 14th April.**

Letter from Pastor Richard

He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

We are in the season of Easter. It is a time for us to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He was put to death on a cross, there taking upon himself all of the wrong things we have done. He was taken from the cross, his body put into a tomb, and a big stone put in front of it.



Early on the first day of the week, some women who were friends of Jesus went down to the tomb, because they wanted to put some spices on to his body. But, when they arrived, they had a very large shock. The stone had been rolled away from the tomb. They wondered what had happened, and so they went inside to investigate. And the body of Jesus was not there. They thought that his body had been stolen. But that is not what had happened.

Jesus was really alive once again, and later on he showed himself to the women, they saw that he had truly risen from the dead. And in the next days and weeks he appeared to many people.

And that is very important to us as Christians. In fact, Paul tells us it is of first importance. In 1 Corinthians 15 v 14 he writes:

If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

It is as important as that. There are some who would tell us that we don't need to believe in the resurrection. But the Apostle Paul would disagree. Without the resurrection there would be no Christian faith. What then makes the resurrection so important?

Now we could say a number of things about this, but I would just like to mention two.

First of all, the resurrection shows that God is pleased with what Jesus has done for us. In other words, the sacrifice that Jesus made for our sins has been accepted. If Jesus had not been raised there would

be no forgiveness of sins:

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins. 1 Corinthians 15 v 17

Secondly, because Jesus was raised to life, we can also know new life for ever with him. Here are some words written by Peter the Apostle:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1 v 3

Now this is not some academic exercise simply to show that Jesus was truly raised. This is a living experience for us as Christians. We can know the presence of the risen Lord Jesus Christ with us as we live our lives in this world as well as the world to come. It is no wonder we enjoy singing these words:

*He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

Alfred Henry Ackley
© 1961 The Rodeheaver Co.

Have a blessed Easter.

Love in Jesus,

Pastor Richard

Special Notice: Hope Explored - Coming Soon!

In May, on Sundays 5th, 12th and 19th at 4.00 pm, we are planning to run **Hope Explored**. This is intended to help us grow in our faith and is particularly suitable for those who are new to the Christian life. Everyone is welcome – please see Pastor Richard for more details.

Doreen's Page



Our dear sister Doreen Harrison went to be with the Lord at 6.00 am on Monday 25th March.

This was after the April Newsletter went to print, and therefore the contents do not reflect it.

Doreen was greatly loved by so many people and touched so many lives in our valley and beyond.

We thank God for her. and pray particularly for Richard and the rest of the family at this time, that they will know the love of God surrounding them completely.

Doreen's funeral service will be on Thursday 18th April, 11.00 am at Park Street Chapel of Rest in Blaenavon. We will be devoting the May Newsletter to Doreen's memory.

The Sisterhood Anniversary

In March the Sisterhood celebrated its 75th anniversary, with a special service in Church on 10th March, and a party in the Hall with guests and friends from local churches on the following Tuesday.

The service was a very joyful occasion with many members taking part. It was introduced by Clare, Liz read a poem, the Bible readings were brought by Ena and Yvonne, and Lorraine led the church in prayer. Barbara shared a short history of the Sisterhood, and Annmarie's slideshow of pictures of Sisterhood members of previous generations was greatly enjoyed. All of the hymns had been chosen by the Sisterhood members. Pastor Richard spoke from Psalm 145 v 4.



Spot the Difference! Sisterhood in 1999, and in 2024



in many months.

Anmarie and Lorraine had worked hard producing delicious food for the party, which was much enjoyed by everyone present. Prayers were said for members prevented from coming by ill-health, while it was wonderful that Pam was able to join with us for the first time



After a joyful time of singing, the meeting ended with a rousing rendition of 'Happy Birthday to Sisterhood' – for which Annmarie lit a special candle on a cake. (Although, sadly, there were no miracles, and the cake was not shared by all present!)

Easter Gifts

A new venture for Sisterhood was an Easter craft afternoon, where under Lorraine's expert guidance members greatly enjoyed making chocolate-filled bunny gift bags to be given out in church on Easter Sunday.



(Yes, they *were* all bunnies, even if some did look just a little bit like cats, dogs and mice!)

Men's Fellowship

We are so grateful that for many years that there was an Eastern Valley Men's Fellowship. It was the vision of men such as Richard Harrison, Ron Saunders and Eric Jones. Men would come from different churches in the Eastern Valley. The times together were certainly appreciated by those who gathered each month, there was a variety of speakers together with trips out, and the fellowship of the men together was rich.

However, for a number of reasons, the season for that has come to an end. But we felt that it would be good to have an opportunity for fellowship for men. And so, we have decided to have a Men's Fellowship here at Trosnant on a monthly basis.

It is slightly different from the previous meetings in that there is no speaker each month. It is simply for men to be together for informal fellowship as well as to read the Scriptures and pray. We have already had a couple of meetings, where we have enjoyed our times together. Even though it is an event for us here, other men will be welcome to join us. We meet on the second Tuesday evening of each month, the next one being 9th April. The kettle is on from 7.00 pm for tea and coffee. Come and join us.

Pastor Richard

Happy Birthday Isaac Watts (Part Two)

This year marks 350 years since the birth of the great hymn-writer Isaac Watts. In the February newsletter we looked at his upbringing and some of the influences that led him to devote his life to God's service and to use his gift of poetry to adapt Psalms to be sung as hymns in church services. You might be surprised to know that such an active preacher and prolific writer suffered from serious ill-health throughout his life.

Although there is no modern diagnosis of a specific condition that afflicted him, the records of his life indicate that from childhood he experienced regular and incapacitating bouts of illness. As a minister he was rarely able to preach for two consecutive Sundays, needing time to recover from the effort of standing in a pulpit and raising his voice. One account describes how 'his nervous system was in a shattered condition', and he is known to have endured periods of extreme insomnia. There was nothing that the available medical treatments in the early eighteenth century could do to alleviate his symptoms.

Fortunately, Isaac was greatly helped by a number of influential and generous Christian friends, who invited him to stay with them and provided care and support. In about 1712 he was invited by the London banker and merchant Sir Thomas Abney to stay for a week – a visit that was extended for 36 years! Thomas Abney was born in Leicestershire and had come to London as an apprentice fishmonger in 1658, when he was 18. Ten years later he was elected a member of the Fishmongers Guild, rising to be a director of the Bank of England and Lord Mayor in 1700. He was knighted by King William III. Sir Thomas was deeply pious, and his Christian beliefs and devotion to prayer underpinned his business life. Isaac lived with Thomas and his wife Lady Mary Abney in Lime Street in London, also staying at their houses in Theobalds in Hertfordshire, and Abney Park in Stoke Newington. Sir Thomas died in 1722, and from 1733 Lady Abney and her two surviving daughters settled permanently at Abney Park, with Isaac as a much-loved member of their family household. It was a comfortable life, and Isaac was deeply grateful to his hosts. He dedicated his book *Divine Songs* (1715) to Lady Abney: 'It is to her unwearied tenderness, and many kind offices by night and day, in the more violent seasons of my indisposition, that (under God) I own my life, and power to write or think.

Isaac Watts never married. The nearest he came to it was in proposing marriage to Elizabeth Singer, the daughter of a dissenting minister and a Christian poet in her own right. Elizabeth had first written to Isaac about his poetry, which she found greatly moving, and when they met, he was captivated by her beauty and charming manners. Sadly, however, she was not equally smitten – one description of Isaac mentions his short stature, sallow skin, and hooked nose – and she remarked that, ‘while she loved the jewel [his mind] she could not admire the casket!’

Refusing to be crushed by such harsh words, Isaac kept his mind firmly on the Lord, his life a constant witness to his faith and joy in praising God. We regularly sing one of his best-known hymns in Upper Trosnant:

“Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known;
join in a song with sweet accord, and thus surround the throne.”

In fact, these powerful words were written in response to Christians who felt that while Psalms were appropriate songs in church, new and modern hymns were not, and it was not unknown for people to walk out of services to show their disapproval. Verse two goes on:

“Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God;
but children of the heav'nly King may speak their joys abroad.”

Many of the original words of Isaac's hymns have been adapted to meet the changing needs of churches over the past three centuries. Surely he would have approved! As we sing this one, we use a chorus that was added by the American composer Robert Lowry in the 19th Century. Inspired by the third verse, it looks forward to our future home in heaven:

“The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets
before we reach the heav'nly fields, or walk the golden streets.

*We're marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful, Zion:
We're marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God!”*

How could Isaac not be full of joy with such a hope in his heart:

“Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground, to fairer worlds on high.”

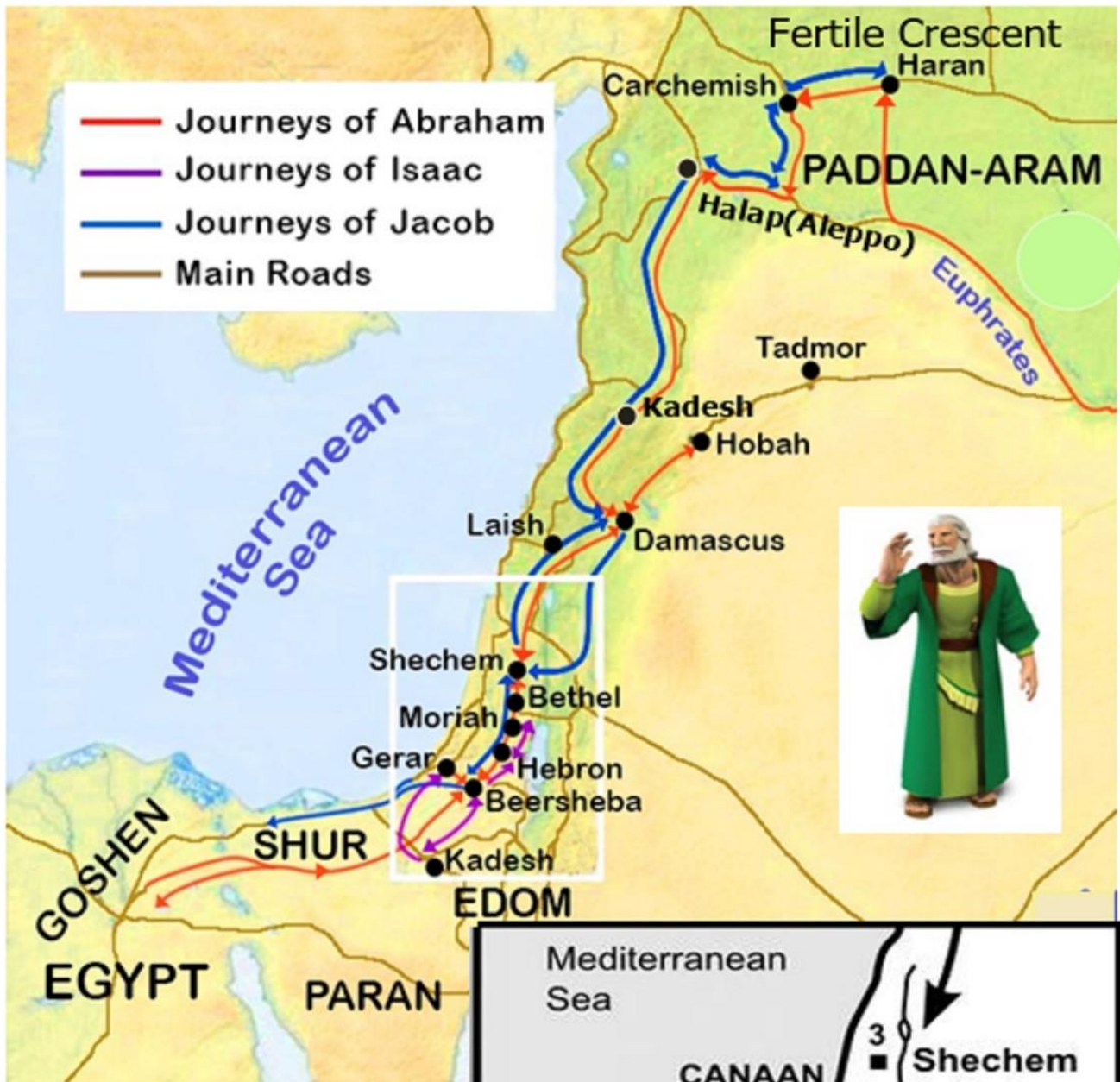
To be continued....

Clare Hopkins

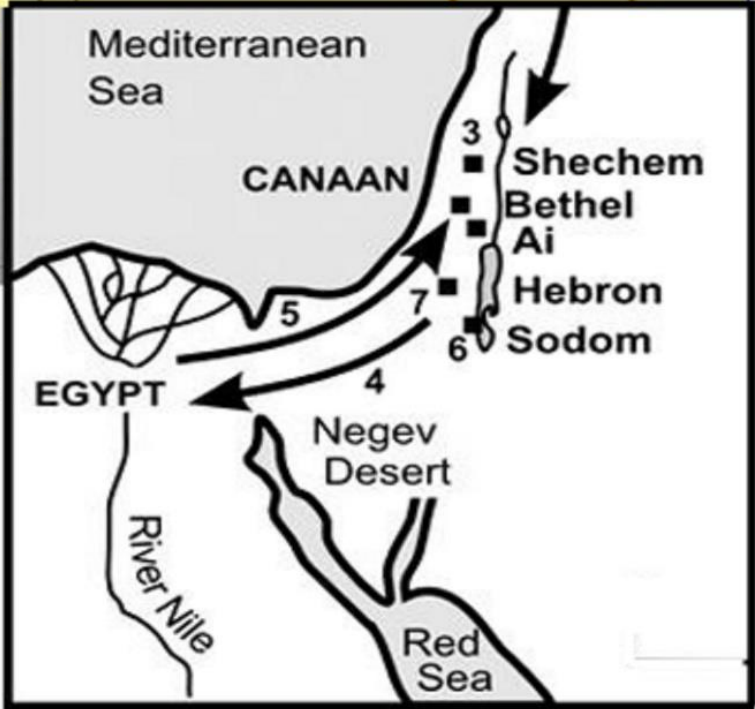
Bible Notes (37) Part 3 Fertile Crescent Daniel Pearson

Abram's journey from Carchemish was now south (Gen 11:31) and from here his caravan travelled among Semites (i.e. Jews and Arabs) The speed of the caravan of carts and camels, depended on the pace of his flock, which would have grazed and bred on the way. The caravan included (Gen 12:4) Abram's wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot. In spring or early summer the caravan, a little under 4,000 years ago, descended into the Bekka valley. Their first important stop was Aleppo, known then as Halap which means iron or copper; Then on to Kadesh. This was a busy city with buildings made of basalt, although few of them are left now, and then it was on again to Damascus.

This was a journey of faith, directed by the Lord, and Damascus (the name means a Sackful of Blood) stood out as a city on the edge of the desert. In Abram's day it was almost 3,000 years old and Abram would have stayed here for some time, possibly wintering near the Barada river. It was centuries later that Paul of Tarsus, in the Straight Street (Darb-al-Mustakin), had his blindness cured. It was on from here towards the hills on the east of Bethel (Gen 12:8) with Ai to the east and then to Shechem (v6) where Abram built an alter to the Lord, who had appeared to him. Then Abram set out towards the Negev. This was the same place, five centuries later, Joshua stood and built another altar from a pile of stones and spoke his final words of commendation to the gathered tribes of Israel. After 15 centuries more, not far from here, Jesus met the woman of Samaria at the well dug by Jacob. From here there was a change of plan: famine had moved from the east and now threatened Canaan so Abram journeyed on towards Egypt, where the Nile delta provided a rich and well watered land.



Right: inset map shows Canaan in relation to Egypt and Abram's journey from Shechem (4) into Egypt and then back (5) to Canaan. The outward journey would likely have been via Hebron and Beersheba .



Mission Focus – The Work of BMS in Ukraine

On February 24th 2022, 180,000 Russian soldiers crossed the borders of Ukraine with orders to conquer and take over the country. Over the following two years, many Ukrainians have shown heroic courage in their resistance to the Russian invasion, often at great personal cost. Many have turned to the Lord and pray earnestly for His help and deliverance, and there are a great number of testimonies of miracles they have experienced, giving them hope that the Lord is with them and hears their prayers. Despite this, millions of Ukrainians are suffering great hardship, loss and trauma, whether it be losing their homes, being separated from family and loved ones, enduring freezing winters with no electricity or clean water, or living in a foreign nation surrounded by people of a different language and culture.

In the midst of this terrible suffering, BMS World Mission is doing everything possible to support Christians in the Baptist churches of Ukraine and neighbouring Moldova as they offer support according to their means and the needs of those they are helping. Some churches have opened their buildings to offer a warm space, hot meals, hygiene items and a place of comfort and safety for those whose homes and communities have been destroyed by bombing. Others have welcomed refugees who have fled from other parts of the country, providing them with humanitarian aid and an opportunity to attend Bible studies and support groups. Some churches have formed chaplaincy teams that go to the troops wherever they are deployed, as well as to hospitals and rehabilitation centres, whilst other churches are providing temporary accommodation or helping people to rebuild their homes and communities. Many churches are specifically reaching out to the growing number of widows and orphans, offering practical support as well as friendship and comfort to them in their loss, and trying to restore a sense of hope for the future through the love of Jesus.

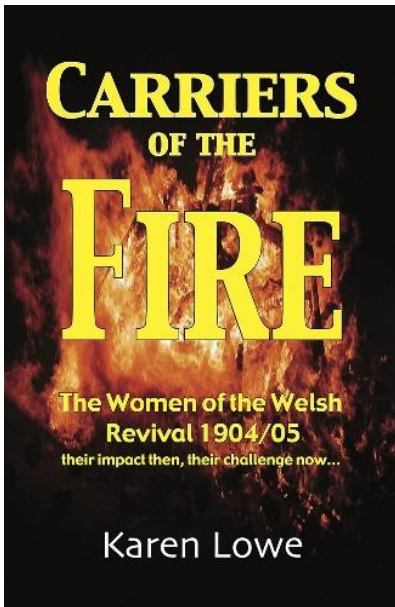
The BMS is also supporting the work of a Christian refugee assistance centre in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau, which offers not only food and shelter, but also psychological and spiritual support to those who come to their door. They take time to listen to those who need to talk and tell their story, and they offer to pray for comfort and healing of those with broken hearts and troubled minds. The BMS asks us to pray for the

people of Ukraine, especially....

- That the Lord would guide and strengthen the Christians who are selflessly giving their time to minister to the needs of others.
- That those who hear the gospel would become followers of Jesus and that His love would heal every wound.
- That the Lord would bring an end to the war as swiftly as it began, and would bring freedom and prosperity back to the people so that they can rebuild their lives and their country again.

Jill Morley

Calling All Book Lovers!



If you enjoyed Jill's review of 'Carriers of the Fire' in the last edition of the Newsletter and would like to read the book itself to learn more about the women of the 1904 Welsh Revival – then now you can! A copy of the book has now arrived in the Church Library, ready to be borrowed and shared.

And if you have never used the Upper Trosnant Library, then why not come and have a browse? It is in our "Comfy Corner" and is available at any time the Hall is open – during fellowship

on Sundays, for Open House and Warm Space on Mondays, and before and after all mid-week meetings. Anyone can borrow a book for as long as they like – but please remember to bring it back when you've finished it so somebody else can enjoy it too. Whether you enjoy true stories about great Christians of the past, uplifting poetry, Bible notes, or Church history, these topics and many more are all there.



Gift Day

It has never been the custom for Upper Trosnant to hold a Gift Day every year, and the leadership team are well aware of the regular, generous and faithful giving shown by members and friends of the church each week. As a small fellowship we are greatly blessed that we are able to support a Pastor and maintain our church in a good state of repair as well as keep it nice and warm. In recent years it is only when a particular need has arisen, that we have invited individuals to make a special financial gift, as they see fit, and as the Lord guides them.

As you will already be aware, in 2023 we undertook quite major work to eliminate the problem of the damp church wall. A deep trench was dug and filled with gravel, and the inside of the wall was replastered. Now that the winter is over, we will be beginning a second phase of work, treating the damp and damaged plaster of the front wall of the church, and then repainting our whole building. As a leadership team we believe that it is right that we take good care of our church, and that it should look cared-for and welcoming.

All the work completed so far has been paid for, and we thank the Lord that he has blessed us financially so that this could be done. However, the overall cost of both phases will be approximately £15k-20k, and our reserves have been significantly depleted. In order to keep our finances secure therefore, we are inviting all members and friends of Trosnant through a Gift Day, to make donations toward the cost of completing the building work and decorating.

The Gift Day will be held over two Sundays, 21 and 28 April. Gifts can be brought to either service or sent by any convenient means. Special envelopes will be available in Church and sent with postal copies of the Newsletter. Please be mindful that we can claim 25% of the value of your gift back from the government, at no additional cost.

"You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others."
(2 Corinthians 9: 7-8.)

Keith Fordham, Upper Trosnant Treasurer

Upper Trosnant Update

- We say this every month, but God is SO good to us. And we should never get tired of saying it. We trust he will continue to be good to us as we meet together.
- It has been a real joy to gather each Sunday to praise and worship the Lord. It has been really great as well to hear of the way that God is speaking to people through his Word. Please continue to pray for our weekly Sunday ministry.
- There are several people who are not well at the moment, please look at the prayer list and remember them as you pray. Some have been prevented from coming to church because of illness, and yet the Lord has brought others, so we have had good sized congregations. Numbers are not everything, we know that, but we thank God for his goodness.
- Our Warm Space and Open House continue to be appreciated. It is lovely to meet on an informal basis for tea or coffee, and cake – thank you Sandra and Janet!
- We have had the joy of celebrating 75 years of our Sisterhood (see page 5). In one of our morning services, we had an opportunity to reflect on the way that God has been good to the Sisterhood over the years and to successive generations. A good number were at the Sisterhood Party on the following Tuesday. There were refreshments, hymns to sing and another opportunity to thank God for his goodness to the Sisterhood. All in all, a joyous occasion. We look to God for his blessing for the next 75 years!
- A small group of men had a blessed evening of fellowship too. See page 6 for further details.
- A slightly smaller number than usual were at our February Soup on Saturday, but those who were there, as always, really enjoyed the food and fellowship.
- Our Church Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 20th March. There will be a report in the May Newsletter.
- Also, as we said last time, we have a full programme over the Easter weekend. Again, we will be reflecting on that next month.
- Please note that Pastor Richard's Day Off each week is Friday. Please do not contact him or Annmarie on that day except in an emergency.

CHURCH DIARY for APRIL

SUNDAY SERVICES AND PREACHERS

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

7th	Pastor Richard (Communion)
14th	David Breese
21st	Pastor Richard
28th	Richard Harrison

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS @ 4 O'CLOCK

Meeting together in the Hall, with tea and coffee.

7th	Fellowship and Facebook Live with Pastor Richard
14th	Informal Communion, led by Pastor Richard
21st	Fellowship and Facebook Live with Annmarie
28th	Fellowship and Facebook Live with David Breese

MONDAY

1st – **Bank Holiday** – no meeting

8th – **OPEN HOUSE 2.00 – 4.00 pm in the Hall** – We play games or share crafts, or just meet for a cup of tea and a chat.

15th, 22nd and 29th – **WARM SPACE 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 or coffee and biscuits.

SERVICES IN RESIDENTIAL HOMES:

8th – **11.00 am @ REGENCY**

15th – **2.00 pm @ TY CEIRIOS**

If you would like to join the team in visiting these homes and sharing the joy of Jesus with the residents, please speak to Pastor Richard. Our visits are always greatly appreciated; and so is our singing!

TUESDAY – SISTERHOOD 2.30 – 4.00 pm in the Hall

All ladies are welcome to join us every week for fellowship over tea, coffee, cake and biscuits, and to hear God's word and sing and pray together.

2nd	NO MEETING
9th	Sharing Together
16th	Lunch at the Harvester
23rd	Pastor Richard
30th	Anmarie

9th– 7.00 pm: **MEN'S FELLOWSHIP MEETING** in the Hall

(Please note: No Christians Against Poverty Prayer Meeting this month.)

WEDNESDAY – PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

3rd	6.50 for 7.00 pm	Phil
10th	1.50 for 2.00 pm	Anmarie
17th	6.50 for 7.00 pm	Pastor Richard
24th	1.50 for 2.00 pm	Jill

THURSDAY – CUP PRAYER AND PRAISE MEETING

25th – 7.00 pm at Upper Trosnant

SATURDAY – TEATIME @ TROSNANT

27th – 3.00 pm in the Hall

ROTA for April

	Reading	Door	Teas AM	Flowers	Teas PM
7 th	Ena	Barbara	Janet J	Janet P	Liz and Jane
14 th	David	Anthea	Clare	Pam	Janet J
21 st	Lorraine	Ena	Rhoswyn	Rhoswyn	Clare
28 th	Richard H	Anthea	Lorraine	Sandra	Lorraine
Communion: 7th: Barbara 14 th (pm): Clare					

Prayer Page: Yes – and Amen!

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen!" is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1: 20)

Do you say, Amen, when you are praying at home? Or is it just a word that you use at the end of the prayers in Church? We say it so often that it is easy to forget the very important meaning of this little but powerful word.

Praising God

In the Old Testament, Amen is used in praising God. For example, *'Then all the people said "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!"* (I Chronicles 16:36). There are many prayers of praise we can affirm with our own Amen.

- Praise God for the seasons, and for new life in Spring.
- Praise God for the salvation that we have through Jesus.
- Praise God for our church at Upper Trosnant, and for our fellowship and Christian friends.
- Praise God for our daily bread – food, shelter, rest.

Affirming God's justice

'Amen' is first used in the Bible in the book of Deuteronomy. In Chapter 27 Moses announces penalties for breaking God's laws, and after each line we read, *'Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"* There are many situations in our world where we can affirm our desire for and trust in God's justice and peace:

- In war zones – especially Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan...
- Where there is political unrest or religious persecution – Haiti, India, Afghanistan...
- Where we desire to see godly government, change for the good and help for the needy – in our own country and local area.

Declaring our confident hope

When we end our petitions and requests with 'Amen' we are expressing our trust in the Lord that he has heard and will answer our prayers.

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (2 Timothy 4:18)

Please Pray For...

- Pray for all the events and meetings at Upper Trosnant during the month of April. Ask the Lord that many will hear and believe the Good News and turn to Jesus for salvation. Bring before him those you love whose faith has grown cold, that they will turn to Jesus once more.
- Pray for Pastor Richard and the leadership team. Ask the Lord that they will have all the strength and wisdom they need as they work for him and care for our fellowship.
- Praise God that our dear sister Doreen is being cared for at home; ask him to bless her and her family richly as they celebrate her birthday.
- Remember our missionary friends Margaret and Roy Collins-Reese in Toulouse, and Sue and David Verwey in Japan. Ask the Lord to protect them from all dangers, including antisemitic attacks on the Jewish community in France, and earthquakes in Japan.
- Pray for Dale Norman, and for Naomi and Felicity, as he concludes his final term of study at Cardiff Baptist College and waits on the Lord.
- Remember all those in care homes, including Ron Saunders and Ann Stephens. Ask the Lord to bless the monthly ministry to Ty Ceirios and to the Regency.
- 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, Tom Wildy and Julie Blake, Dave Breese, Pam Charles, Doreen Dixon, Lindsey Firth, Keith Fordham, Liz Harris, Audrey and Eric Jones, Jean Miles, Jill Morley, Helen Norman, Jeff Parry, Judith Parry, Janet Pollard, Alwyn Stephens, Linda Swires-Hennessy, Greta and Derek Wagg, Marion Webb.

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. **Amen** (Ephesians 3:20–21).*



**You are
invited**

**UPPER TROSNANT
BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Teatime
@Trosnant
27th of April
at 3.00pm**

**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