

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES



CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF HOPE-PENUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Psalm 55 Verse 22

"Jesus said; 'I am the Good Shepherd';"
John - Chapter 10 Verse 11

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December 28th 2010,

Dear Friends,

It is with great joy and even a sense of awe, that we welcome you into God's house here at Hope-Pennel, and especially now – during the centenary year celebrations.

As 'Samuel John Stone' (1839 – 1900) writes in this wonderful hymn:

'The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord
She is His new creation by water and the Word;
From Heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died'

This hymn would have been comparatively new when 'Hope' was opening for worship, offering the Word and Sacraments to those who came in from the storms of life, to the peace and prayerful fellowship of worship and fellowship, through the eternal hope set before them through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As you continue to read in the historical notes, you will notice when 'Pennel' (1776) joined 'Hope'. One hundred years ago society was so different. Sunday shopping was not known, sports practice for children unheard of on Sundays, travel was so much more difficult and holidays were few. Life centred around the Chapel and Church mostly.

Today we have a very different part to play in our world. No longer can we assume that our neighbour is Christian. 'Political correctness' is very much in our minds, the distractions of life are many. Maybe our part to play is not so different, as our message is unchanging, we just have to find a way of saying the same truths in a different way.

Jesus Christ lives on and His Word is forever the same – as are His promises Holy and true. The book of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus suffered ‘outside the gate’ (Ch. 13, v.12).

The challenge has not changed, but the strength and courage to witness ‘outside the gate’ takes courage indeed. On Him we trust and may the Good Lord bless all and bring them, through His Holy Spirit, in from the storms of life, to find refuge in His peace and strength.

Sincere greetings in Christ Jesus,

Adelaide.

HOPE-PENUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES 1910 – 2010

MINISTERS

Rev. Rhys Davies	1910 – 1925
Rev. D. Stanley Hopkins	1926 – 1953
Rev. Ivor Platt BA	1954 – 1957
Rev. Stuart A. Pryce	1957 – 1962
Rev. P.J. Keith Hawkins BA.BD	1963 – 1970
Rev. Frank Larkworthy	1971 – 1975
Rev. Bruce T. Nelmes BA.M.Sc	1978 – 1981
Rev. Alvan S. Richards-Clarke BA.B.Ed	1982 – 1990
Rev. E. Ritchie Osborne	1992 – 2001
Rev. Adelaide Y. Wheeler-Cocks B.D	2003 –

ELDERS

1931: Messrs. E. Jones, T. Rowe and W.E. Thomas
1942: Mrs. G. Hopkins, Messrs. T.C. Vaughan and W. Cyril Brown
1950: Messrs. W.W. Stokes, L.E. Lewis and D. J. Thomas
1959: Messrs. E. Nock, I. Edwards and R.G. Wareham
1965: Miss F.E. Thomas and Mr. E.J. Williams
1971: Miss B. Salmon, Messrs. P.W.V. Clarke and D. Amphlett
1980: Miss E.M. Thomas and Mr. W. Lavender
1986: Messrs. P.A. Clarke and E.N. Workman
1995: Mrs. R.M. Barnes
2001: Mrs. S.L. Payne
2005: Mr. I. Llewellyn (1965); Miss M.G. Griffiths (1995); Mrs. G. Rees (2001); and Mrs. C. Miller (2001)

SECRETARIES

Mr. J.A. Williams	1910 – 1914
Mr. H.J. Powell	1914 – 1915
Mr. E. Jones	1915 – 1917
Mr. W.E. Thomas	1917 – 1957
Mr. W.E. Thomas)	1957 – 1962
Mr. D.J. Thomas)	1957 – 1958
(Joint Secretaries)	

Mr. R.G. Wareham 1958 – 1959
 (Acting Joint secretary)
Mr. I. Edwards 1962 – 1963
Mr. D.J. Thomas 1963 – 1969
Mr. R.G. Wareham 1969 – 1980
Miss E.M. Thomas 1980 – 1995
Mrs. R.M. Barnes 1996 –

FINANCIAL SECRETARIES

Mr. J.A. Williams 1932 – 1942
Mr. T.C. Vaughan 1942 – 1948
Mr. L.E. Lewis 1948 – 1951
Mr. D.J. Thomas 1951 – 1952
Mr. R.G. Wareham 1952 – 1958
Mr. E. Nock 1958 – 1971
Mr. P.W.V. Clarke 1971 – 2009
Mr. J.J. Barnes 2010 –

ORGANISTS

Miss F.M. Jones 1910 – 1917
Mr. R. Davies 1917 – 1925
Mr. H.H. Vaughan 1925 – 1940
Mrs. Brooke 1940 – 1947
Mr. D.A. Hopkins 1947 – 1949
Mr. L.E. Lewis 1949 – 1969
Miss G.E. Lewis 1969 – 1974
Mr. E.N. Workman 1974 – 1979
Mr. W James 1979 – 1985
Mrs. G. Williams & Mr. E.N. Workman 1986 – 2003
 (Joint Organists)
Mr. E.N. Workman 2004
Miss M.G. Griffiths, Mrs. K. Jones
 & *Mr. E.N. Workman* 2005

PULPIT SECRETARIES

Mr. W.E. Thomas 1917 – 1965
Mr. D.J. Thomas 1965 – 1998
Mr. P.W.V. Clarke 1998 – 2000
Mr. P.W.V. Clarke & Mrs. R.M. Barnes 2000 – 2004
Miss M.G. Griffiths 2005 –

TREASURERS

Mr. W.D. Owen 1910 - ?
Mr. J. Edmunds
 Treasurer of Building Fund 1919
 Joint Treasurer 1927 – 1929
Mr. S.C. Westcott 1929 – 1944
Mr. W.E. Thomas 1944 – 1946
 Acting Treasurer
Mr. W. Cyril Brown 1946 – 1980
Mr. R.G. Wareham 1980 – 1994
Mr. E.N. Workman 1995

A short history of Hope-Pennel Presbyterian Church, Pontyclun *(Hope having been founded in December, 1910)*

Many of our English Churches have their origin in the Welsh side of the connexion. So it is with Hope-Pennel. In April 1829 Zion Calvinistic Methodist Church, Brynsadler was founded largely through the zeal and energy of Richard Evans, Maesyfelin, the brother of the Rev. William Evans, Tonyrefail. Years later, early in 1910, the growing monoglot English speaking population prompted 20 members of Zion to build a new church in Pontyclun. Encouraged by their former minister, the Rev. B. T. Salmon, the work came to fruition in December, 1910 when Miss Maud Thomas, Ynyshtir, opened the new church and the Rev. Rhys Davies, formerly of Penllwyne near Cowbridge, was inducted.

A Sunday School was formed and by the end of 1911 the church had 61 members and the year's income was £333. 11s. 8d. Steady expansion followed and by 1919 it was necessary to build a school room to cater for increasing activities.

Two years later the church left the Monthly Meeting and was admitted to Glamorgan Presbytery East. In 1925, after fourteen years service, the Rev. Rhys Davies resigned. In March 1926 a Call was extended to the Rev. David Stanley Hopkins, Ruabon and Marchwiel, for whom a manse had been built at a cost of £850. For the first time the church now had the services of a full time minister, and the support of the Home Mission and Central Fund was dispensed with. Unfortunately, the years of depression were at hand, and the hardships that followed were survived by holding a series of children's concerts, fetes and performances by the church dramatic society. In spite of the severe financial restraints, two projects were completed in 1932 – the renovation of the heating system and the building of a kitchen. By 1936 the worsening financial situation prompted the decision to engage only one minister per month other than the Rev. Hopkins, and a foretaste of the future. In June 1937, the Minister was appointed Interim Pastor of Trinity Church, Llantrisant.

The first election of elders had taken place in September 1931 but in the years prior to and early in the Second World War a number of founder and long serving members passed to their reward. Thus, the time was ripe for the election of additional elders and in the Spring of 1942 a further three were elected. The post Second World War years were especially fruitful. The front of the church was refurbished in 1948; a son of the manse, Alun Hopkins, offered himself for the ministry in 1949, a pipe organ was installed and three further elders elected in 1950. Little did the church know that the end of an era was approaching. After a faithful and successful ministry of 27 years the Rev. D. S. Hopkins left in 1953 for

three churches in Montgomeryshire – Betws, Aberbechan and Brookes.

In July, 1954 the Rev. Ivor Platt was inducted to the pastorate and much was achieved in a brief ministry, the children's service was remodelled and called the Family Service; special gift services were introduced at Harvest and at Christmas; improvements were made to the church furnishings and in 1955 the Building and Finance Committee replaced the Church Committee. After two and a half years, due to family commitments, Mr Platt left South Wales for churches at Ruthin and Denbigh. A successor was soon found and in September, 1957 the Rev. Stuart Pryce moved to Pontyclun from Caerphilly. A year later three new elders were elected and at the end of 1959 there were 126 members and a Sunday School nearly as great in number.

The Rev. Stuart Pryce, now living at Bridge of Allan, left the church in 1962 to take up an appointment with the Church of Scotland in Greenock. His successor, the Rev. Keith Hawkins came from Rossett in Flintshire. An active and successful ministry of seven years culminated in the building of a Sunday School extension comprising seven rooms and a store cupboard and a new Minister's Vestry.

The building was opened by Mrs Joyce Hawkins in February 1970, followed by a public service of thanksgiving and praise. Church membership was over 130 and that of the Sunday School over 100. In late spring of that year Rev. Hawkins returned to North Wales, on being called to minister to our church at New Hall, Prestatyn. The next incumbent came from the other side of Offa's Dyke, the Rev. Frank Larkworthy being a native of Devon. Four years in 'Wild Wales' prompted him to return to a county more adjacent to his birth and in August, 1975 he left the pastorate for Westbury in Wiltshire.

It was at this time that extensive renovations were undertaken. The church was repainted, a more spacious vestibule built, the pews were cleaned and polished and a central aisle with seats on either side replaced two narrow aisles. For two years the church was without a minister with the Rev. Glyn Parry Jones of Cardiff acting as interim Moderator. In 1978 a call was extended to the Rev. Bruce Nelmes. A native of Llantrisant, he came to the pastorate with a variety of experience; a number of years on the Mission Field in India and considerable acquaintance with computer techniques in industry.

The building of the Sunday School extension and the church renovations have been touched on. In about 1980, aware of the needs of an ageing congregation, an audio system was installed. At about the same time the church embarked on a new venture – the letting of part of the property to a Welsh Nursery school. Use of four classrooms and the kitchen continues to this day and relations between the school and the church remain cordial.

The departure of Rev. Bruce Nelmes in August 1981 presaged a quite new situation. For his successor came to Pontyclun via Montego Bay, Jamaica, London, Bristol University and Cwmbran and was a Baptist. It was a new and stimulating experience to welcome the Rev. Alvan Richards Clarke and his young family into our midst.

Prior to his arrival, in April 1982, the church had the honour of hosting the three day Spring Meeting of the Association in the East. A number of delegates visiting Hope for the first time formed a favourable impression of the church, its witness and hospitality.

The 50th anniversary in January 1961 had been marked by a week of celebration services and a re-union supper. The 75th anniversary followed a similar pattern but extended over the whole month of April, 1986. Three former ministers, the Reverends Pryce, Hawkins and Larkworthy preached on the first three Sundays, the fourth being given over to the Sons of the Manse, the Rev. D. Alun Hopkins of St. Albans and the Very Rev. Alun R. Davies, then Dean of Llandaff. A celebration dinner was held in the Pontyclun Community Centre. During this twenty-five year period eight new elders were elected.

For the last twenty-five years the church has been served by three ministers. In 1990 the Rev. Alvan Richards Clarke left to minister to churches in Pontypridd and Ynysybwl.

After a period of nearly two years the Rev. Ritchie Osborne, a native of Ogmere Vale and a former police officer, accepted a Call and returned to South Wales from churches in Montgomeryshire. Sadly, after just a year with us, he suffered a grievous loss in the death of his wife – Maureen. But the Lord moves in mysterious ways and it was with great joy that eighteen months later he remarried.

The closing of Ebenezer Church, Miskin around 1990 reduced the pastorate to four churches – Hope, Pontyclun; Penuel-Trinity, Llantrisant; Babell, Groesfelen and Bethania, Pendoylan. The churches at Zoar, Bonvilston was approached and agreed to join the pastorate in time to participate in the election of the Rev. Osborne. It was as a pastorate that two trips abroad were made, the first in February, 1995 to the Holy Land and the second in March, 1997 to Jordan.

Between these two overseas ventures, in the summer of 1996 an exchange visit – the first of its kind – took place. For two months in July and August the Rev. Osborne took charge of churches in Oklahoma, U.S.A., whilst we as a pastorate welcomed to our pulpits the minister of those churches, the Reverend David Davis.

Late in 2000 the Rev. Osborne, having seen in the new millennium confirmed he would be retiring in the late Spring of 2001 and for the next two years the church was again without a minister. Guided in its deliberations by the interim Moderator, the Rev. Glaslyn Bowen, the pastorate decided to break with tradition and to extend a call to its first lady minister. In the early Autumn 2003 our current minister, the Rev. Adelaide Wheeler-Cocks, who hails from the Emerald Isle and whose roots lie in the Church of Ireland joined us from English speaking churches in Carmarthenshire.

Reference has already been made to Trinity Church, Llantrisant. However Calvinistic Methodism's roots in Llantrisant can be traced back to 1776 when Penuel Church was founded and where services were naturally conducted in Welsh. In the 19th century as the population expanded with an influx of English speakers a new English speaking church, Trinity – was opened in 1898. Both causes prospered until the post Second World War period when, due to a decline in church attendance, a decision to amalgamate the two churches was made. This was confirmed by Presbytery in October 1959 and the new church – Penuel & Trinity was formed, meeting in the Penuel building. The new church formed with Hope, Pontyclun, a pastorate under the care of the Rev. Stuart Pryce. The well organized and friendly congregation flourished for nearly forty years but the continued decrease in church membership and an ageing congregation, coupled with maintaining a deteriorating old building meant that the problems became insurmountable and in 2004 a unanimous decision was made to unite with Hope, Pontyclun. Financially, the church remained very sound.

The birth of the new Hope-Penuel church took place on the 1st January, 2005. On Friday, 17th December 2004 Penuel & Trinity church officially closed in a service of deconsecration conducted by the Rev. Adelaide Wheeler-Cocks in which she administered Holy Communion to the members of both churches. The Rev. Keith Hawkins, then Clerk to Glamorgan Presbytery Easy also addressed the meeting and spoke with affection of the happy memories he had of serving this – his first pastorate, forty years earlier. At the end of the service an elder carried the open Bible to Hope, Pontyclun, where a second service dedicating the new Hope-Penuel church – was again addressed by the Rev. Hawkins, who stressed that this was a new beginning and encouraged members to look forward to the new challenges and opportunities which faced them in the new united church.

The new church remained part of Glamorgan Presbytery East which, in 2009, became part of the newly organized South East Wales Presbytery. The eight elders from Hope, together with the four from Penuel and Trinity automatically

became elders in the new united church, although three have since gone to higher glory. Three elections for Hope's elders were held during this period – in 1986, 1995 and 2001. Six people were elected but two decided not to let their names go forward for ordination.

The decline in church membership has been matched by a similar decline in Sunday School numbers. It will be recalled that in 1970 there were over 100 in Sunday School, necessitating the building of extra classrooms. Over the next thirty years Sunday School had moved from an afternoon service to a morning one, but even this could not halt the drift. Never before had the Sunday School had to compete with so many outside activities – junior and mini rugby on a Sunday morning, judo, swimming, computer games and so on. In the late nineteen nineties both Felicia and David Thomas retired as Sunday School superintendents; both had given over fifty years service. Sunday School Nativity plays and tableaux, Anniversary services and Summer outings remain a blessed memory. The Christmas party continues to this day but the annual visit to the pantomime has now ceased. But thanks to the sterling work of the current superintendent, Mrs. Sally Payne, Sunday School continues and only closes in the month of August. For the few scholars who chose to remain there were a number of activities organized by Presbytery, in which children and young people could join the swimming gala, the Trefeca youth weekend and the Summer barbeque to name but three.

Recent months have given a glimmer of hope. Two young men have been confirmed and it is pleasing to see them worshipping regularly with us on a Sunday morning. The Rev. Adelaide's Saturday morning Art Classes seem to be bearing fruit and have attracted a number of young ladies into the church. These are early days and it has to be recognized that the generation gap remains wide, for we have no members between the ages of 20 and 50 who are actively involved in church affairs.

The Sisterhood and Ladies Sewing Guild have long since vanished but there are a number of activities organised on Hope-Penuel's premises which remain open to the whole pastorate. 'Spare Rib', a women's fortnightly meeting on a Monday will celebrate 25 years in 2011. Here the ladies of the pastorate, together with adherents and outsiders, meet for an evening of relaxation and enjoyment, which can include guest speakers, demonstrations and so on.

The Trinity Prayer Room, opened in 2006, gives an opportunity for meditation and reflection in the quiet stillness of one of the classrooms at the back of the church. 'Alpha' classes in 1999 have given way to fortnightly Bible study

sessions. Social activities remain the preserve of the Pastorate Social Committee, on which Hope-Penuel is well represented. The Rev. Adelaide's June weekend retreat to Ffald-y-Brenin remains extremely popular.

The last twenty-five years have seen many changes, as people who had given decades of loyal service to the church passed from the scene; notably Raymond Wareham, Felicia and David Thomas and Cyril Brown. All four had a combined service of two hundred years as elders and their loss is still keenly felt. Both Cyril Brown and David Thomas served as lay Moderators of Glamorgan Presbytery Easy in 1987 and 1989 respectively.

Cyril Brown, treasurer of the church for over thirty years and whose eldership extended from 1942 to 2004, had given valuable service to the connexion as Treasurer of the Pensions and Grants Committee of the General Assembly; Raymond Wareham had acted as church secretary, church treasurer and Sunday School teacher. There is a tablet in the church dedicated to his memory, monies having been gifted by his widow, Joan, for improvements to the church windows.

The link with founder and first members continues to this day. Happily, Miss Elvira Thomas – at 94 years- is still with us. A former church secretary and the sister of David and Felicia Thomas, her mother, grandmother, aunts and uncle were founder members in December, 1910 and her father, William Edmund Thomas was church secretary for over forty years from 1917. Wyncham and Phillip Clarke are the grandson and great grandson of T.L. Vaughan, who was one of the first members of the new church. Both hold elderships, the second father and son to do so. At 95 years, Mrs. Iris Workman is the church's oldest member having been confirmed in 1929 by the Rev. D.S. Hopkins and at 12 years of age, George Thomas, the youngest, having been confirmed in September, 2010 by Rev. Adelaide Wheeler-Cocks.

Hope-Penuel continues to play its full part in Christian witness within the community. The annual Lenten lunches held on the six Saturdays prior to Holy Week are well supported and the church always hosts one of the Saturdays. In recent years the May interdenominational Christian Aid service has taken place in our church. On Remembrance Sunday in November we always join the other churches and dignitaries at the Cenotaph in Cowbridge Road for a short Commemoration Service. Also, we host the Women's World day of prayer service on the first Friday of March each year. We also meet at the Cenotaph for an open air Ecumenical service on Good Friday.

Every effort is made by our minister and elders to attend the meetings of the South East Wales Presbytery, which are held every three months in Ystrad Mynach. Our church's support for Christian Aid and the Bible Society remain as strong as ever.

As we celebrate one hundred years, Hope-Penuel strives to uphold the beliefs and traditions of its founders and to be true to our Lord. We pray that God will continue to bless this church with the gift of the Holy Spirit and to give us the tools to continue our work in this small corner of His vineyard.

Unto Him be the praise and glory for ever.