



Y GADWYN

(The Link)

News of the Toronto Welsh Community

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Dewi Sant Welsh United Church

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“A Christmas Message from Dewi Sant Welsh United Church”

During the last four weeks, we have prayed fervently and hoped devoutly for the Coming of our Lord. We have tried to be faithful in heeding the prophet’s cry “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Not only have we prepared our homes, we have bought gifts for our loved ones, and in all the preparations, we have tried very hard to remember what this holy season is all about: the birth of our Lord.

It has only been during the last few years that I have been dumbstruck, as it were, by who this Lord really is. The Apostle Paul in his Letter to the Church in Colossae writes that “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” The baby in a manger, the homeless, itinerant preacher, the man on the cross: this is where God is to be known. There is nothing supernatural, nothing “almighty” in that baby who grew up to be the man on the cross. Rather, all is powerlessness, all is fragility, a baby’s first cry. That is Emmanuel, God-with-us.

At Christmas, we celebrate God-with-us, here and now. We do not just remember fondly a tale that is thousands of years old, but we celebrate a real birth, a real child; we celebrate the Christ in all that is fragile and powerless.

Our prayer at this Christmas time is that we all may encounter that baby among us. For in the new life of that child lie all the hopes and dreams of this weary world.

Nadolig Bendithiol i Chwi Oll! Have a Blessed Christmas!

(The Rev.) Eilert Frerichs
Intentional Interim Minister.

*Once when the world turned old
On a star of faith pure as the drifting bread,
As the food and the flames of snow, a man unrolled
The scrolls of fire that burned in his heart and head,
Torn and alone in a farmhouse in a field.*

Dylan Thomas. M.

SESSION REPORT TO THE OFFICIAL BOARD

DECEMBER 2010

We have welcomed Rev. Eilert Frerichs as Interim Minister here at Dewi Sant and we look forward to drawing upon his knowledge and expertise to guide us through this transition period in the life of the congregation.

50 Years on Melrose Avenue

We had a wonderful celebration in October to commemorate the 50 years and we were honoured with many people who participated including Rev. Dr Cerwyn Davies who was in Canada for a visit at the time. We also had a great time at the Luncheon for which we have to thank those who organized the event.

Rev. Deian Evans We were sad to say goodbye to Deian and Annette as they moved to their new challenges in Wales and we wish them well in their new venture.

Advent and Christmas This is a busy time at the Church as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Members of the different organizations within the Church are assisting in the morning services with the reading, prayers and candle lighting. We have had our White Gift Sunday which was the first Sunday in Advent and we are looking forward to seeing the children as they perform the Christmas Pageant on Sunday December 12. Christmas Eve will see the Sanctuary filled again this year we hope and we will be celebrating Communion at that service which starts at 8.00 pm.

Welsh Services These services are still being held, despite the fact that we do not have a Welsh Minister at this time and we are thankful for the many members who have readily given of their time to make sure that this continues. There will not be any Welsh Services in January and February as has become the custom, but we will be starting up again in March and the Welsh Learners are in charge of that event.

Shut-ins and members who are sick

During this transitional period we have arranged for these members who are unable to attend are being visited on a regular basis, but these visits are not exclusively being done by the members of the Board, but other members of the congregation have volunteered to visit those close to them and report back to the Board. We thank all who have been involved since the end of September and we hope that this trend will continue.

Food Bank and Women's Shelter We are grateful to those members of the Sunday school who organize this very worthwhile project and we are assisting many people who would otherwise not have the food and other items that we donate.

Sunday Morning Readers

The list that is on the notice board for anyone who would like to read sometimes gets a little empty and we really need more people to place their name on the list. Rev. Eilert is putting the readings in the bulletin the week before, so it is much easier for people to read ahead and volunteer.

Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the sure sound of footsteps Outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear, And I crept to the door Just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold And the dark of the night, A lone figure stood His face weary and tight.
A soldier, I puzzled, Some twenty years old, Perhaps a marine, Huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, He looked up and smiled, Standing watch over me, And my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear, "Come in this moment, It's freezing out here!
Put down your pack; Brush the snow from your sleeve, You should be at home On a cold Christmas eve!
For barely a moment I saw his eye shift, Away from the cold And the snow blown in drifts...
To the window that danced With a warm fires light Then he sighed and he said "Its really alright.

I'm out here by choice, I'm here every night. it's my duty to stand At the front of the line,
That separates you From the darkest of times. No one had to ask Or beg or implore me.
I'm proud to stand here Like my fathers' before me. My gramps died at 'pearl On a day in December,"
Then he sighed, "That's the Christmas 'Gram always remembers,"

"My dad stood his watch In the jungles of 'nam, And now it's my turn And so, here I am.
I've not seen my own son In more than a while. But my wife sends me pictures; He's sure got her smile."
Then he bent And he carefully from his bag, The red, the white, and blue...An American flag.
"I can live through the cold And the being alone, Away from my family, My house and my home.

I can stand at my post Through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a fox hole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight Of killing another, Or lay down my life with my sister and brother.
Who stand at the front Against any and all ,To ensure for all time That this flag will not fall."
"so go back inside," He said," harbour no fright, Your family is waiting And I'll be alright."

"But isn't there something I can do, at the least, Give you money" I asked "Or prepare you a feast?
It seems all too little For all that you've done. For being away From your wife and your son."
Then his eyes welled a tear That held no regret, "Just tell us you love us, And never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home While were gone, To stand your own watch, No matter how long.

For when we come home, Either standing or dead, To know you remember We fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, And with that we will trust, That we mattered to you As you mattered to us."

Kieran Steward.

I have joined several stanzas in order to conserve space. Capital letters have been left in appropriate places. M

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A Child's Christmas in Cwmgiedd

When the editor of Y Gadwyn asked me to write about my childhood memories of Christmas, I must admit I was stumped for a while. What do I remember? Not a lot. Compared with the current excesses, our celebrations were extremely simple.

Deciding on Christmas gifts for my four grandchildren has become a nightmare, as it seems to me that there is almost nothing that they do not already have. It was so different in my day. (Get out the violins!!) Due to the war everything-and especially non-necessities like toys- was in short supply. I did have two dolls, a teddy bear called Arth and a knitted Golliwog called Parddu Ddu (totally politically incorrect today!)

One memorable gift was a doll's house made by an uncle. Unfortunately I saw him carrying it to our house a few days before Christmas so the surprise was spoiled. Dolls' clothes were always a delight and somehow they always fitted my two dolls perfectly. One Christmas I got up unexpectedly to visit the bathroom, only to catch my mother

frantically knitting a pink outfit for “Alice”. She turned bright red and quickly explained that Mary Christmas had asked her to help out because she was so busy.

Books, both in English and in Welsh, were the favourite presents. As I was an only child and an only grandchild with my grandmother and maiden aunt living nearby, I was probably more indulged than most. I certainly have no recollection of feeling deprived of anything, despite rationing and the shortage of the exotic fruits that we take for granted today. I know that my family saved up their ration points so that I could have chocolates and sweets in my stocking. All of that I took for granted- spoilt little brat that I probably was.

Attending the Plygain service early on Christmas morning was something that I loved when I grew older. Yorath Chapel in Cwmgiedd played a very important role in my life, not only at Christmastime. Dewi Sant has now taken over that role, for which I am extremely grateful. As a family we are now busy making new memories, and I hope that my grandchildren will look back with love and gratitude at the wonderful Christmases that we have together.
Nadolig llawen a blwyddyn newydd dda i bawb.

Hefina Phillips.

Memories—Atgofion. Christmas in Castell Haidd, Pembrokeshire in the 1940’s was very very different to Christmas in Richmond Hill-2010!!!! We began making Christmas decorations in November or so! It was labour intensive! There was so much for a little child to do. We made paper chains out of the silver papers dropped by low flying planes during the war. Tiny silver bells were made out of milk bottle tops. Of course us country children would have to barter with some country treasures like acorns or feathers etc. from city children to get these. Nothing green was allowed inside the house except during the Christmas season. I would cycle with other farm friends up and down narrow winding lanes, through muck and stones and whatever else might be on our rough paths. Sometimes it would be anxious cows ambling on their daily walk to be milked, or an occasional tractor, or a noisy, nosy sheep dog. These journeys were always exciting with some adventure involved! We might come across a snail, or a rabbit hopping across our path or an owl disturbed from its nap. We would rob the holly bushes, which grew in abundance here and there along the hedgerows. We knew exactly where to find these treasures. Back home we would struggle with our prickly bounty. Usually the branches were placed over the top of the picture frames. If we were lucky there would be a couple of brightly coloured paper chains from Woolworths’ to add “glamour”. We thought that these were wonderful. I never remember having a Christmas tree, but my grandfather’s sock was at the ready for days, waiting to be hung by the chimney. Christmas morning would arrive, and despite trying NOT to sleep, with “chestnuts” in my bed, good old Father Christmas would have caught me napping!! What excitement! There would always be a banana, an orange and an apple and, of course a piece of coal! Coal was the most important carrier of good luck for the coming year. One year there was a wonderful surprise. A tiny rag doll dressed as a nurse. I was, beyond, being happy. Then came our Christmas **dinner**. (Only posh townsfolk had lunch!) A big fat “greasy” goose served with mashed turnips, parsnips, brussel sprouts and potatoes; all from the garden. To top it all off was sage and onion stuffing and gravy. Nothing fancy, just plain homegrown food. There would be a flaming Christmas pudding, although no alcohol was kept in the house-except for medicinal purposes! (The goose grease would be carefully collected and stored- to be smeared on strips of Data’s old Welsh flannel shirts and wrapped around my throat when the harsh colds of winter attacked. Ach a fi!

After a rest with some sleep for the grownups **Teatime** came early with the Christmas cake and mince pies and tea in china cups and saucers!

Once the cows had been milked there would be a **supper** of cold ham, goose, pickled onions, beetroot, bread and butter and tea. The table would be over laden with far too much food. (Indigestion was had by most of us since the food was all so rich!!!) The bicarbonate of soda packet came out and we all drank a potion of that vile stuff before going to bed!

Now, 2010, there are a few quick visits to the store (Costco!) and everything that we can possibly need is wheeled out to the car and driven home. We might buy a few sprigs of **real** holly for umpteen dollars and then we are all set. Some now even buy ready stuffed turkeys! The basement is raided for boxes labelled “Christmas.” Within a few hours all is set up, decorations up, gifts, under the tree and empty wallets. We can even tune into a channel on

television and watch logs burning in a fireplace 24/7! Yes it is very different in 2010, but most of us still remember what we are celebrating. **The birth of Jesus Christ our Saviour.**

One never to be forgotten Christmas I was given an elephant, made from a neighbour's old plush coat. At the time he was the ninth wonder of the world and went with me everywhere! Ianto bach was secretly tucked into my college trunk, for good luck and to keep away the old pangs of hiraeth for one away from home for the first time. The only time that I ever saw Christmas trees was when they were brought to the chapel vestry for the annual Christmas party for the Sunday school children. They would be decorated with tiny candles clipped precariously to the branches. It is little wonder that we were not burnt alive in that vestry. It was all so exciting and so very long ago. M

This week I had two phone calls. One was from Marjorie Williams and the other one was from Tom Edwards. They both informed me that those silver strips that fell from the sky were dropped by planes to confuse the radar equipment. It could have been very low flying enemy planes that were dropping them! At those times we did not dare look up. Whenever we heard a plane we hit the ground with great speed and did not move a muscle until the planes were many miles away. Sometimes this was used as a good excuse for being late for school!

A month of my life.

I spent a month on a Coastal Command base in Pembrokeshire in 1945. It was between Solva, a lovely little hill – sheltered, coastal village and St. David's. Saint Davids is a small city, site of the beautiful 12th century cathedral of the same name. I was not yet 19 and recovering from acute rheumatism. I was supposed to stay a week. It became a month and I enjoyed meals that rationed citizens never could have imagined.

My stay was quite illegal but made possible by my uncle Will. He was there in charge of entertainment for the troops. I befriended an Italian prisoner of war who cleaned Will's office and one day I was invited to his "place" for dinner and was introduced to spaghetti that didn't come out of a can, and minestrone. The prisoners were happy. Most of them did manual work, many on farms, rather than be confined to camp. They had the run of the county and the local ladies loved them.

My new friend had been a trumpeter at the La Scala in Milan before the war and was captured in North Africa in the early days of the war and never regretted it! Many of his fellow prisoners asked to be allowed to remain in the U.K. after the war and many stayed. One worked on a farm for two Lewis sisters, not relatives of mine, and became part of the family. He stayed and when he died, he was buried in the Lewis section of the cemetery. I must add a tale of these two sisters. Earlier during the war an excited neighbour came running in to say a German pilot had parachuted onto the Lewis land. One sister took a shotgun and brought the man back to the farmhouse where he was immediately offered a cup of tea. He probably was happy to be alive; for him the war was over. Not having a phone, the other sister and the neighbour walked to the nearest police station to report the incident, leaving the two others alone.

While on the base I was introduced to hard liquor, on which I took a pass, and also to a very nice female from the cafeteria who invited me to afternoon tea at her nearby Solva home. With no one else there I soon realized that I was being offered more than tea and crumpets! I beat a hasty retreat back to the base.

VE Day, May 8, 1945. The war in Europe was over. I think everyone got drunk.

All good things come to an end and I had to leave. I travelled by bus to Haverfordwest and by train to Llanelli. Uncle Will had paperwork to complete and would take a later train. My parents were away at a cottage on the Gower and so I went to Will's home and explained to his wife why he'd been delayed. The phone rang. It was the base. My Italian friend had found my beloved uncle dead at his desk.

Will was 45 years old.

Years later I searched for the base. One would never know it had existed.

Vaughan Lewis.

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Jingle Bells “Dashing through the snow on a one-horse open sleigh, Over fields we go – laughing all the way.”
A Risk Assessment must be submitted before an open sleigh is considered safe for members of the public to ride. The Risk Assessment should also consider whether the use on only one horse in appropriate – particularly if passengers are of larger proportions Permission from landowners must be gained before entering any ‘Open Fields’.

To avoid offending those not participating in the venture, it is required that only ‘moderate’ laughter is used and not at a noise level likely to be of nuisance to others!

At Christmas time – as we give thanks for the birth of Jesus Christ – we remember the other things in life for which we are grateful .From “**Radical Gratitude**’ by Mary Jo Leddy This **Morning Prayer** is suggested as one of the beginning steps in gratitude: ‘The beginning of each day is a marvellous opportunity to become more conscious of the awesome mystery of our beginnings in God

Let me awaken into You Let me lift my arms in praise.
I thank You for this once more, this day, this resurrection.
Let me throw off The covers of sleep. I trust You will Wrap me round with goodness.
Let me place my feet Down on You who are Ground. Grace. Stability of Earth. Bear me. Bear with me
Bear me forth into this once more day this time of my life You have given me. Bless me, O Creator Of my beginning

“Radical Gratitude” by Mary –Jo Leddy Published by Orbis Books, Maryknoll , New York in 2002.Copied by permission.

‘It is in the evening before we go to sleep that we are offered the opportunity of letting go,.....In a culture dominated by the ethic of control, letting go into the mystery of each night, perhaps entering into the mystery of love, helps us learn how to live more trustingly during the day and to trust that our lives, in the end, will be carried through the ultimate night.’

Let me go with You Into Your Good Night. Loosen my grip On the length of this day
Lift off the clothes of these my cares Unbutton my worries one by one
untie the knots of not being good enough. Undo the one who is undone.
Cover me with Your Love Enfold me once again, Into Your hands I commend my spirit.
Watch over my dear ones the near ones and the far ones Eyes of my eyes.
Hear the strangers who cry Ears of my ears
Hold them all close while I am asleep Heart of my heart Mind of my mind
Mind them. Mind me. Mend us all in the great womb of Your dear darkness once again.

Nest Pritchard.

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Change of Address

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Thank you, for your contributions. Please send them to me, making your cheques out to the church.

Again if I left off any names please let me know. Dioch, Myfanwy.

We wish all those who are under the weather a speedy recovery. Have a great Christmas everyone and don't forget the Christmas Eve service at 8pm.

The deadline for the next Gadwyn is January 15th. **Please help me fill these pages!** As you see, I am two sides shorter this time.

Have a blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year. myfanwy@rogers.co. 905-737-4399