



# Y GADWYN

(The Link)

*News of the Toronto Welsh Community*

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## Neges y Gweinidog      From the Dewi Sant Church Pulpit

Advent and Christmas greetings to all the saints from the Dewi Sant Welsh United Church community!

Last week, on my way to a meeting, I stopped for lunch in a small town not too far from Toronto. It was the seventh of November and members of the community were busy putting up the town Christmas tree in an open space along the main street. "Christmas trees, already, at the beginning of November?" I found myself thinking and that leads to a confession I have to make to my gentle readers: I have a very conflicted relationship with Christmas, especially as we observe it in North America. Every year, commercial interests seem to try earlier and earlier to get us into the right mood to buy. As soon as Halloween is over, Christmas decorations come out in the stores and Santa Claus arrives in town around the middle of November.

Oh, I know I sound like Scrooge or the Grinch that tried to steal Christmas. But we do need to remind ourselves in the church continually that, yes, Christmas is all about gift-giving and rejoicing, but that it is God's gift of himself to us in Christ Jesus that brings on our rejoicing and our singing of Advent and Christmas carols. Somehow, the more-or-less wanted and appreciated gifts we give one another pale in comparison to the gift of the Emmanuel, God-with-us. Santa Claus is not and can never be the "real spirit of Christmas."

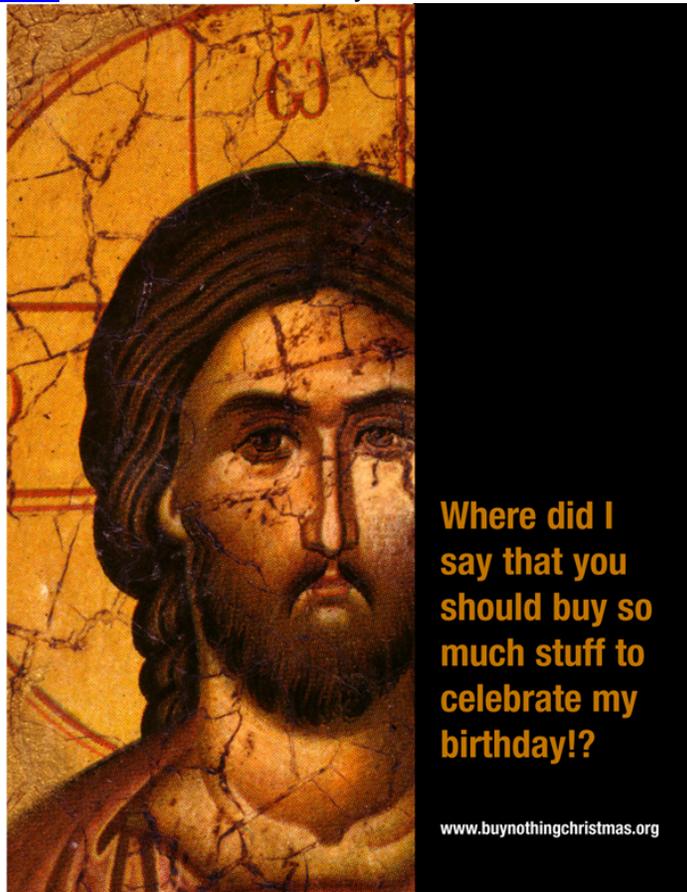
The birth of Christ is not well attested in the New Testament: only two of the Gospels have stories and legends about his birth and they differ in important details. Not only that, but Luke's and Matthew's stories are more a testament to their pious, if vivid, imaginations than to actual historical facts. The other two Gospels and the letters of Apostle Paul contain no reference to the birth of the Christ and the festival of his birth was not celebrated in the Christian church until at least 300 years after the event.

Many ancient cultures had major celebrations during the winter solstice or the beginning of a new year and that is where many of our Christmas traditions originated. The Roman *Saturnalia*, for instance, were held each year in honour of their god Saturn. The festival began in the middle of December and lasted until the first of January. The Romans would decorate their homes with garlands, visit one another's homes, exchange gifts and hold great feasts.

Ancient Scandinavians celebrated the *Yuletide* when the days began to lengthen after the winter solstice. A Yule log would be burned in a sacred fire and a feast would be held. In some areas of Scandinavia, people would tie apples to tree branches as a sure reminder that spring and summer would return. The tradition of the Christmas tree is believed to have its origins in that custom.

Many scholars believe that the Emperor Constantine, after his conversion to Christianity, “baptized” the Roman *Saturnalia*, as it were, by joining these pagan winter rituals with the celebration of the birth of Christ and so bring together both his Christian and non-Christian subjects. This may account for the fact that we now date the birth Christ on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Over time, these non-Christian origins of Christmas were completely forgotten or officially eradicated by the Church- except in folk memory, of course, where they are continued to this very day.

Some years ago, I came across a book called, “Unplug the Christmas Machine: A Complete Guide to Putting Love and Joy Back into the Season”, by Jo Robinson and Jean C. Staeheli (1991). The book is still available and is a useful guide for simplifying our Christmas celebrations without being caught up in the frenetic commercialism of the season. I recommend it highly. I would also commend to you [www.buynothingchristmas.org](http://www.buynothingchristmas.org), a website created by the Canadian Mennonite church.



But, as I said earlier, the only gift that really merits our rejoicing is God’s gift of himself in Jesus the Christ. Having just become a grandfather for the first time in my life, I am filled with even more wonder and awe at the thought that God should have made God’s presence known to us as a newborn, a baby wholly dependent on the care and nurture of his parents. God is no longer the remote Everlasting, Almighty deity who dwells in high heaven, but is one with us. God is one with us in our joys and sorrows, in our trials and celebrations. That’s what Christmas is all about, that is the gift we celebrate. It is indeed the greatest story ever told.

**And that is what we prepare ourselves for during the coming weeks of Advent.  
My prayers are with you for a blessed Advent. Eilert Frerichs Interim Minister**

## **Salute to a brave and modest nation - Kevin Myers , 'The Sunday Telegraph' LONDON**

"Until the deaths of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan , probably almost no one outside their home country had been aware that Canadian troops are deployed in the region. And as always, Canada will bury its dead, just as the rest of the world as always will forget its sacrifice, just as it always forgets nearly everything Canada ever does..

It seems that Canada 's historic mission is to come to the selfless aid both of its friends and of complete strangers, and then, once the crisis is over, to be well and truly ignored. Canada is the perpetual wallflower that stands on the edge of the hall, waiting for someone to come and ask her for a dance. A fire breaks out, she risks life and limb to rescue her fellow dance-goers, and suffers serious injuries. But when the hall is repaired and the dancing resumes, there is Canada, the wallflower still, while those she once helped glamorously cavort across the floor, blithely neglecting her yet again.

"That is the price Canada pays for sharing the North American continent with the United States , and for being a selfless friend of Britain in two global conflicts.

For much of the 20th century, Canada was torn in two different directions: It seemed to be a part of the old world, yet had an address in the new one, and that divided identity ensured that it never fully got the gratitude it deserved.

'Yet its purely voluntary contribution to the cause of freedom in two world wars was perhaps the greatest of any democracy. Almost 10% of Canada 's entire population of seven million people served in the armed forces during the First World War, and nearly 60,000 died. The great Allied victories of 1918 were spearheaded by Canadian troops, perhaps the most capable soldiers in the entire British order of battle.

"Canada was repaid for its enormous sacrifice by downright neglect, its unique contribution to victory being absorbed into the popular memory as somehow or other the work of the 'British.'

"The Second World War provided a re-run. The Canadian navy began the war with a half dozen vessels, and ended up policing nearly half of the Atlantic against U-boat attack. More than 120 Canadian warships participated in the Normandy landings, during which 15,000 Canadian soldiers went ashore on D-Day alone. Canada finished the war with the third-largest navy and the fourth largest air force in the world.

The world thanked Canada with the same sublime indifference as it had the previous time. Canadian participation in the war was acknowledged in film only if it was necessary to give an American actor a part in a campaign in which the United States had clearly not participated - a touching scrupulousness which, of course, Hollywood has since abandoned, as it has any notion of a separate Canadian identity.

"So it is a general rule that actors and filmmakers arriving in Hollywood keep their nationality - unless, that is, they are Canadian. Thus Mary Pickford, Walter Huston, Donald Sutherland, Michael J. Fox, William Shatner, Norman Jewison, David Cronenberg, Alex Trebek, Art Linkletter, Mike Weir and Dan Aykroyd have in the popular perception become American, and Christopher Plummer, British. It is as if, in the very act of becoming famous, a Canadian ceases to be Canadian, unless she is Margaret Atwood, who is as unshakably Canadian as a moose, or Celine Dion, for whom Canada has proved quite unable to find any takers.

"Moreover, Canada is every bit as querulously alert to the achievements of its sons and daughters as the rest of the world is completely unaware of them. The Canadians proudly say of themselves - and are unheard by anyone else - that 1% of the world's population has provided 10% of the world's peacekeeping forces. Canadian soldiers in the past half century have been the greatest peacekeepers on Earth - in 39 missions on UN mandates, and six on non-UN peacekeeping duties, from Vietnam to East Timor, from Sinai to Bosnia.

"Yet the only foreign engagement that has entered the popular non-Canadian imagination was the sorry affair in Somalia , in which out-of-control paratroopers murdered two Somali infiltrators. Their regiment was then disbanded in disgrace - a uniquely Canadian act of self-abasement for which,





The next ladies event is the **Advent** service on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>. It is a beautiful service of readings and carols, Holy Communion and Merched Dewi taking part. There are goodies and a cuppa downstairs afterwards. Please make an effort to attend.  
**Myfanwy**

Dewi Sant's Christmas Bazaar was a resounding success once again this year thanks to all of those who dedicated themselves and donated their time, effort and items for sale and raffle. Without your assistance, this event would not be possible. The final tally is not in, but, proceeds are expected to be in excess of **\$3,500**. A special thank you is extended to Les Kerr who stepped in last minute to represent our resident Santa Claus who was unfortunately was unwell at the time. We wish you a speedy recovery Ed and look forward to seeing you "suited-up" at the Christmas Dinner. A big thank you also is extended to the members of the congregation who came out to support the bazaar. Your presence and support was much appreciated.  
**Donna Morris**



## **Advent and Christmas at Dewi Sant Welsh United Church**

**Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm**  
The Annual UCW Advent Service with  
Holy Communion

**Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:00am**  
The First Sunday in Advent  
**Guest Minister**

### **\*\*\*\*\*7:00pm Y Gwasanaeth Cymraeg/The Welsh Service\*\*\*\*\***

We are asking all those interested in the continuation of the Welsh Language Service to arrive **at 6 pm**. There will be a meeting downstairs. This is an important meeting. We are a WELSH Church and should have services in Welsh. If you can not attend please send in your ideas to the office and we will share them at the meeting.

**Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 11:00am**  
The Lunch Bunch will be providing lunch for a small fee (yet to be decided). Bring your smile and enjoy time with your friends.

**Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am**  
The Second Sunday in Advent  
White Gift Sunday  
Holy Communion

**\*\*\*\*Congregational Meeting re: The Pastoral Relationship\*\*\*\***



They say that it takes a village to raise a child. That village becomes especially vital if you are a single parent, living in poverty, with no family support, no access to child care, and suffering from your own health or emotional problems.

Mission and Service allows us to be part of the village. Centenary-Queen Square Care Centres in Greater Saint John, New Brunswick, use Mission and Service funds to operate a child development centre for socially and economically disadvantaged children.

Families living in poverty cannot always provide proper nutrition so that their children develop physically, emotionally, and cognitively. Centenary-Queen Square provides a well-balanced breakfast, hot lunch, and afternoon snacks, and its child development program has a positive and lasting effect on these young lives.

How important are your Mission and Service gifts for this work? The need is great: statistics say that despite great improvements one in eight children in New Brunswick still live in poverty. Children make up more than a third of those served by food banks.\* Mission and Service helps cover the difference between the fees for a child development program and the provincial daycare subsidy. Your gifts to Mission and Service make sure that kids in Saint John have a chance at a better life.



## Seniors DO have a sense of humour

**LONG-TERM COMMITMENT** : Recent widow who has just buried fourth husband, looking for someone to round out a six-unit plot. Dizziness, fainting, shortness of breath not a problem.

**SERENITY NOW** : I am into solitude, long walks, sunrises, the ocean, yoga and meditation. If you are the silent type, let's get together, take our hearing aids out and enjoy quiet times.

**WINNING SMILE** : Active grandmother with original teeth seeking a dedicated flosser to share rare steaks, corn on the cob and caramel candy.

**BEATLES OR STONES ?** I still like to rock, still like to cruise in my Camero on Saturday nights and still like to play the guitar. If you were a groovy chick, or are now a groovy hen, let's get together and listen to my eight-track tapes.

**MEMORIES** : I can usually remember Monday through Thursday. If you can remember Friday, Saturday and Sunday, let's put our two heads together.

**MINT CONDITION** : Male, 1932 model , high mileage, good condition, some hair, many new parts including hip, knee, cornea, valves. Not in running condition, but walks well.

\* An old man was asked, "At your ripe age, what you prefer to get: Parkinson's or Alzheimer's?" The wise one answered, "Definitely Parkinson's. Better to spill half an ounce of good rum, than to forget where you keep the bottle!!"

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In the book "**Unplug the Christmas Machine,**" authors Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli write about the seductive psychology of the American pattern of acquiring more and more stuff (most of which we don't really need or want) each Christmas . Reverend Eilert also made





Thank you to Y Gadwyn Donors. Your donations are appreciated. If you hand in a cheque during the Sunday collection, please make sure that it is clearly marked **GADWYN**. A few people have mentioned that they gave donations without specifying that they were for Y Gadwyn.



**On the Move** David Stephens, P. O. Box 1301, Gravenhurst, Ontario. P1P 1V5

**TWMVC A message to our loyal audience:**

Our upcoming concert line-up is now complete to April, 2013, and we'd like to share it with you:

Sun, Nov 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm - St. Paul's United Church, Brampton (Free to the public) \*\*

Sun, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1 pm & 3 pm - Xmas at the Distillery, Distillery District, Toronto (Free to the public)\*\*

Sat, Dec 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm - Sacred Heart Church, Ingersoll

Sat, Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm St. Aidan's Anglican Church, Beaches, Toronto

Sat, Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm - Trinity St. Paul's United Church, Toronto (Prostrate Cancer Charity concert)

Fri, Apr 12<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm - Metropolitan United Church, Toronto (Believe in Kids Charity concert)

To purchase tickets on-line for the Nov 25<sup>th</sup> concert, please go to <http://www.ticketweb.ca/snl/Search.action?query=welsh>

or order tickets for any concert by telephone at 416 410-2254 or toll-free at 877 410-2254 (in 905/705 calling areas only) or purchase tickets at the door, depending on availability

Also, please check out our website at <http://welshchoir.ca/> for more information about us, our upcoming performances, and how to become a sponsor of our choir. Your donations can be sent to TWMVC, 33 Melrose Ave., Toronto, ON M5M 1Y6

We are looking forward to seeing you at our concerts, **Al Sadegursky**, Director of Publicity,

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*I don't know if you would call this a coincidence or not, but it gave me quite a shock/ surprise! I had gone on a bus tour with a group of Welsh friends to see where Hedd Wyn was buried. We stopped at the Mennen Gate and walked around. Out of the blue I said, "my grandfather's brother was killed in Ypres." We searched through the names engraved on the Gate and there were several **Johns** there. That meant nothing to me as I did not even know his first name. On the way out I saw a small niche where there were some folders. I looked and lo and behold there were the **Johns** again. This time their addresses were there. I found the young man who had given his life at eighteen. I knew it was him by the address. My great grandmother's name, the name of the cottage, and Castell Haidd, Pembrokeshire were all there!*

*What made me even think about him was a mystery. It was only a name that I'd heard "grown-ups" talk about when I was very young. How and why it came back to me I'll never know! We ended up with*



*Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway.*

*One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.' I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me. !*

*A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said:\*\*\*\*\*Keep off the Grass.'*

*The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.*

*The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.*

*A backward poet writes inverse.*

*In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.*

*When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.*

*If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine .*

*A vulture carrying two dead raccoons boards an airplane. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'*

*Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, 'Dam!'*

*Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.*

*Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says, 'Are you sure?'*

*The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'*

*Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root-canal? His goal: transcend dental medication.*

*There was the person who sent ten puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.*

**These are punishment for NOT sending me more articles! Be warned... have lots worse than these.M**



### **From The Kitchen.....O'r Gegin.**

*The other day I found a loose sheet of paper in one of my cookery books, a recipe from the late Lowri Taylor.*

#### **Coconut Tarts . (A la Lowri.)**

Make small pastry tarts and fill them with a teaspoon of raspberry jam.

Filling---2 ounces of sugar, 2 ounces of butter, 1 egg—beaten, 2 ounces of shredded coconut, 3 tablespoons of self raising flour.

Cream the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Add egg, beating well. Fold in the flour and the coconut. If very stiff, add water---but not too much. (dropping consistency.)

Fill each tart shell with a good teaspoonful of this mixture. Bake at 375 for twenty minutes or until a light golden brown. All that is left is to eat them and enjoy. **Lowri**

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***A big thank you, diolch yn fawr to all who have helped with the stamping, addressing and mailing. Thank you Lou Ann for finding some of my mistakes! Also thanks to Reverend Eilert for his contributions every month. My next deadline is December.16<sup>th</sup>. I really would like to get it out way before Christmas.  
A wonderful Thanksgiving to all our American readers. Myfanwy.***

Blin yw caru yma ac acw,  
Blin bod heb y blinder hwnnw;  
Ond o'r blinderau,blinaf blinder  
Cur annifyr, caru'n ofer.