

Neath Port Talbot “Contact” – September to November 2014

This year marks the centenary of Neath Methodist Church, still known locally as “Penny Brick”. After a very successful Flower Festival in June, the main centenary events take place in September, with an exhibition (3rd – 14th), the launch of a commemorative book “Pennies for Heaven”, a centenary dinner (3rd), and a special centenary celebration service with Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair of the Wales Synod of the Methodist Church in Wales) (6th). You are most welcome at any of these events and details are included in the “Dates Across the Circuit” section of the plan. There will also be a Sunday evening Circuit Service (5th October) at which the story of the church will be told in words, hymns and songs. In the autumn there will be a series of services led by visiting ministers who have had connections with the church in the past. Please pray for our friends at Neath Methodist Church as they celebrate all that God has done among them and look forward to new things to come.

For me this is a reminder that we must never cease to seek growth, whether this is spiritual or numerical, as we continue our life together. St Luke paints a wonderful picture of the life of the early church, in which both elements of growth were taking place, in Acts 2: 42-47. The passage opens with spiritual growth: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” The passage ends with numerical growth: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

There are plenty of examples of these things happening around our circuit. The churches at Cymmer and Glynneath have publicised their existence and their acts of worship to the local community. Skewen have formed a “think tank” group, to consider ways of engaging in mission. “Messy Church” will start at Sandfields in October. North Cornelly have re-started their Bible study. Glyncorrwg held a community coffee morning with children’s activities earlier this year. At Taibach it is hoped to develop their links with Eastern Primary School. Jersey Marine have started a new midweek craft group and hope to form a new Bible study group in the autumn. Please remember all these initiatives, and others, in your prayers for the life of our circuit.

This coming quarter includes Harvest Festivals in all our churches – times of celebration for God’s faithfulness and goodness. It will also include Remembrance Sunday – a particularly poignant occasion this year as we mark 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War. May God continue to bless us in our times of celebration, remembrance and mission.

Chris Gray