

CONTACT

WE'RE BACK!

After a long spell of absence, it's great to be able to welcome you back to this latest issue of our newsletter, Contact. Production difficulties and then the Covid-19 pandemic knocked the feet from under us but now we are rearing to go again with a bright new look. Contact, first published in March/April 2014, is designed to help you feel connected with the Association and its constituent churches and to feature news that is of importance to you. It's also a means by which you can communicate news to the rest of us. We plan to produce Contact at least three times a year and, in particular, we wish to feature "good news" stories about what God is doing in your corner of His vineyard. Stories (no more than 200 words) and pictures should be sent to Geoff Champion who can be contacted on 07889 798314 or on gwentba@gmail.com

A big "thank you" to Andrew Carey who has stepped down from designing and production duties and to Laura Moody who is now responsible for this work.

Ordination of The Revd. Richard Miles
 Saturday 15th October (2pm)
 Upper Trostant Baptist Church
 Lower Bridge Street, Pontypool NP4 6JU.
 Act of Ordination: Revd. Marc Owen.
 Preacher: Revd. Mark Thomas (Blackwood).
 Refreshments afterwards.



Cymanfa Bedyddwyr Gwent
 Gwent Baptist Association

SUMMER OF FUN!



Children, teenagers and older people at Abertillery were drawn to two successful summer outreach campaigns run by Baptist churches in the town – Ebenezer and Blaenau Gwent. While the emphasis was on people having an enjoyable time, the events provided great platforms for promoting the Gospel. See more on Page....

Keep up to date with us at:
www.gwentbaptists.com

EXCITING TIMES AHEAD!

What a welcome return Contact is, and I must start with a huge “thank you” to all those who have been a part of getting it back up and running. Behind the scenes, emails have flown, meetings have been held, and dear Geoff has been busy editing away.

It is largely thanks to all this hard, behind-the-scenes, work that you now have a copy of this quarter’s Contact in your hand. The behind-the-scenes bits rarely get the limelight, they are often overlooked when the main event begins.

The GBA officers, and in particular John Forman, felt a call to commit to a period of prayer as an Association; not a day, nor a week, but multiple years of commitment to have a focus upon prayer, the background work of the faith.

So whilst we welcome back Contact, we haven't really ever been away as an Association. We have been praying faithfully in the background, trusting that God has been at work beyond the reaches of our Covid restrictions.

It really is with great excitement that I look forward to hearing the stories from behind- the -scenes as we begin our next chapter of Contact, of life as an Association and our walks with Jesus.

Every blessing
Tim
GBA President



MAKING WAVES...

Children and young people from the ages of 5 to 17 attended this year’s successful Summer Bible Club which ran from 26th- 29th July. The theme was “Making Waves”.

It was the first time that the energetic team of leaders and young people from the United States were able to return to Wales in person following the Covid-19 pandemic. Among churches taking part were Bethesda, Rogerstone; Tabernacle, Newbridge, Bethany, Six Bells, Castleton, Cardiff and York Place, Swansea.



SUMMER OF FUN...

STAY AND PLAY

During August, Blaenau Gwent Baptist Church, Abertillery held three family Stay and Play sessions. The aim of these sessions was to create a free space where families and friends could gather together during the summer holidays and engage in family-focused activities including parachute games, bear hunts, craft, simple cookery and face painting.

It was great to continue to build relationships with those connected with us as a church. We also had the joy of connecting with new families that came to each session and were hoping to come to our toddler group in September.

During the final session we had an interactive story time of how Jesus loves children. Jesus is never too busy to spend time with us and we should come to Him just like little children.

One of the goals of the event was to bless families that came by giving out simple breakfast packs and serving lunch boxes at each session. It was this part of the session that we were thankful to the Gwent Baptist Association who gave us a financial gift towards the food.

As a church we were very encouraged by the sessions and loved seeing Jesus blessing the community around us.

The Revd. Jonathan Forman



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Puppets, live music and free refreshments with a good sprinkling of the Gospel. That was the recipe for the outdoor 2022 Summer Mission run by Ebenezer Baptist Church, Abertillery.

Inclement weather meant the first of the three Thursday evening events had to be switched to the church hall but the Kids Puppet Show attracted about 100 people including mums and children. The second event held in the town's Jubilee Square drew 200 people who enjoyed a night of live music. The final event – again in the Jubilee Square – featured Rockin Revelation whose singer is Paul James, son of the Revd. John James, former minister at Tabernacle, Penarth, who ensured there was a strong focus on evangelism and the call to salvation.

The Revd. Jason Wilkins, Ebenezer minister, said: "Our Summer Mission comprised 'bridging events' aimed at giving the church a stronger presence in the community and an opportunity to build relationships with people who would otherwise never come into a church building. We are encouraged because now some new people are attending other church events."



BYE BYE LA HELLO AB

Abersychan near Pontypool is 5,332 miles from Los Angeles, California but that is the gulf the Revd. Jeff Kim and his wife, Linda, have crossed to serve the Lord in Wales.

Apart from the physical distance, the South Korean/American couple also have made a long journey of faith seeking the Lord's will in terms of future ministry and mission since 2014. That chapter finally came to an end in July when Jeff accepted a unanimous call to be pastor at High Street Baptist Church, Abersychan.

Jeff officially began his ministry at the church on Sunday, 4th September. The date of his induction service will be Saturday 3rd December. The High Street fellowship, established in 1824 with its church building being erected three years later, has been faithfully led by church secretary Mrs Barbara Tucker over many years. Now it can look forward to a bright future after, at one time, facing the threat of possible closure.

"We believe God has pointed us to the right church, in the right place at the right time after much prayer and soul-searching" Jeff said. "We know God has a plan for this church even in these challenging days and that He will do amazing things for His glory.

"The foundation of the ministry will be based upon prayer and solid Bible preaching and teaching. We want to introduce new people in the community to Jesus and His saving power."

Jeff and Linda have participated in various ministries for more than 20 years and travelled to more than 40 countries on mission work.

The couple, who had lived in Los Angeles since 1988, are commissioned by the First Presbyterian Church of Orange County, southern California with whom they maintain strong links. They thank God for the tremendous joint support they have received from the Baptist Union of Wales (BUW), the Gwent Baptist Association and its member churches.



ERSYCHAN

Jeff and Linda first came to the UK in 2014 serving for a spell at West Drayton Baptist Church near London Heathrow Airport. God subsequently placed on their hearts the need of mission work in Wales – a conviction that became even stronger following contact with the Revd. Peter Cho, pastor at Tabernacle Baptist Church, Newbridge.

Two visits to Wales in 2015 and 2019, when they met the Revd Simeon Baker and the Revd. Marc Owen (both of the BUW), resulted in God confirming in their hearts that He wanted them to serve in Wales.



After arriving in Gwent at the end of July last year, the couple spent a six-month “induction” period under the guidance of Peter Cho – first at Tabernacle and then wider afield – learning about Welsh culture and church life in the South Wales valleys. The couple are also grateful to the Revd. Richard Harrison, former deacon at Upper Trosnant Baptist Church, Pontypool for his godly advice and help.

Jeff received a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Sociology from the University of California Los Angeles, a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Multicultural Education from National University, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from Talbot School of Theology and a second Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from the International Reform University and Seminary.

He enjoys drinking good coffee and among his interests are running and playing the guitar in praise and worship as well as expository preaching and teaching and seeking to hear God’s voice through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

TIME TO ENGAGE TOGETHER



Church ministers and leaders in Gwent and throughout Wales have taken part in a two-year journey of missional training with Cameron Roxburgh (Forge Canada).

Some churches from the Baptist Union of Wales and beyond and individuals have been doing the more intensive fortnightly programme called Ethos via Zoom whilst others have been following the monthly Explore track sharing in conversation and discussion.

One key feature has been the desire to see the church here in Wales grow in its confidence to join God in mission. Now the plan is to continue the missional journey through Engage. As the name suggests, Engage is all about taking appropriate steps to see if what has been learned together can help the church to reach out beyond the church walls into our local communities with the love of God. The Engage “theory into practice” online meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month.

The Rev Simeon Baker, BUW Director of Mission, said: “I know that leading any church these days is challenging, especially when it is engaging in mission in ways that look different to how we’ve always done it. But if the church is to move beyond the ‘Sunday service’ model in a post-Christian Wales we are convinced we need to do this together, if we are to do it at all.”

Please pray for this exciting ongoing initiative and that new people, young and old, will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

GRANTS FOR MISSION WORK

Is your church active in community outreach and mission? Then why not apply to the Gwent Baptist Association for a special Association grant.

Funds are available to support initiatives which are clearly based on mission - initiatives to go out into the world and spread the Gospel message. Grants are normally made for up to £1,000 in any one year.

Past experience has shown that people interpret “mission” in different ways so to help potential applicants the Association has an easy-to-understand Mission Grants Form. This form must be used to make the applications and it highlights the supporting information required before such grants can be approved.

The Association must have signed confirmation that the request for grant support has been agreed by a church members’ meeting and the completed application form must be accompanied by the latest audited church accounts.

Copies of the application form can be obtained from the Association Secretary, Geoff Champion on gwentba@gmail.com

Grant applications can be considered at any time of the year.

Among churches who have benefited from Association mission grants in recent years are Blaenau Gwent Baptist Church (Summer Family Outreach); Ebenezer Baptist Church, Abertillery (Summer Mission) and Hope Church, Gilwern (Christmas festival).

AROUND THE CHURCHES

- Well done to the Revd Richard Miles who has successfully completed his studies at Cardiff Baptist College and he will be ordained as a Baptist minister at Upper Trosnant Baptist Church, Pontypool on Saturday, 15th October.
- Congratulations also to Dale Norman, of Upper Trosnant Baptist Church, who is studying for a M.Th. degree at Cardiff Baptist College. He was awarded the annual prize for Biblical Studies. Dale is currently on placement at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Blackwood.

GWENT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AUTUMN COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 20th October 2022
7 for 7.30pm

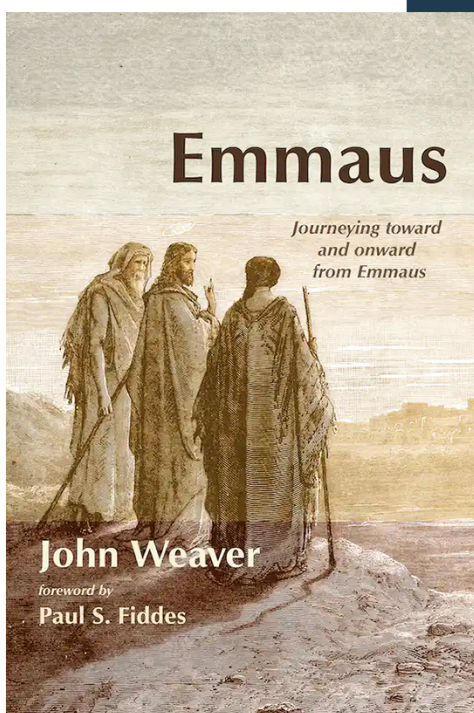
Guest Speaker: Dr Cynan Llwyd
Tearfund Wales Team Lead

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
Cefn Road, Blackwood, NP12 1PR
(also available via Zoom)

Come and hear how the Association supports churches as they seek to spread the Gospel in their local communities.



Cymanfa Bedyddwyr Gwent
Gwent Baptist Association



EMMAUS

Journeying toward and onward from Emmaus

(WIPF & STOCK Publishers, July 2022, paperback, £16)

This new book, written by John Weaver, former principal of the then South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff, adopts as its central theme the post-resurrection account of Jesus meeting two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35) and shapes our reflection on the ways in which God calls and equips Christians in their life journey. Copies can be ordered via email orders@wipfandstock.com

ANDY'S HAPPY HOMECOMING!

The Revd. Andy Baker has been inducted as the full-time pastor at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Blackwood 35 years after leaving his home town.

Andy was born in Markham and his wife Julie, originally from Cefn Fforest, were married at Mount Pleasant in September 1986. Boys Brigade and youth work eventually led to Andy's call to the ministry a year after the marriage and he went on to study at Spurgeon's College, London. The couple served the Lord for 23 years at a church in the Wiltshire village of Downtown, near Salisbury. Andy has been the pastor at Woodley Baptist Church, near Reading since 2014. The couple have a son and daughter and two grandchildren with another on the way.

The Revd. Mark Thomas presided at the induction service on 3rd September while the Revd. David Hibbin (Yeovil Baptist Church) preached and the Revd. D. Marc Owen (Ministry Coordinator, Baptist Union of Wales) led the act of induction.

From left, Andy Baker, Julie Baker, Sandra Bray (Mount Pleasant Baptist Church secretary) and Mark Thomas.



GEMS OF TRUTH

"But they who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31