



Welsh Mission President's report 3rd quarter 2024

**Seeking and serving to make God known
as revived, empowered, disciple-makers.**



Strategic Objective #1 - Revived

Revived members and congregations

Pastor Samuel Semakula is helping members at the Newport church to get back to a systematic reading of the Bible individually and as a church. They are going through the book of Acts, and he has shared how to read portions of text using exegesis vs eisegesis. They have been taught how to read the text by investigating the sociohistorical, political, religious, and financial issues the text was addressing and to understand who the original audience was. Reading the book of Acts is helping the church to understand how the early church went about evangelism and outreach, so they can be biblically informed in their endeavours. They also hope to discover the joys, opportunities and pitfalls of when a church begins to grow as seen in the books of Acts. It was originally planned to have these studies on a Sabbath afternoon at Newport church, but they have switched to Zoom on Tuesday evenings, which has allowed Hereford and Llandrindod Wells members to benefit. Members are now applying exegesis to their personal studies and have said it has enriched their Bible study.

The revival of the Tuesday prayer meetings at Rhyl church has enabled a space for participants to gather, uplift one another and focus on prayer. This initiative has contributed to the spiritual growth of the members, emphasising the importance of spending time together.

Revived facilities

Cardiff is continuing with its refurbishment programme to upgrade the church to bring it in line with current Health & Safety legislation. Three boilers have been serviced, 22 radiators checked, underfloor heating checked and in full working order, men's toilet fully refurbished. Quotes for secondary glazing are in progress with an expectation of potential work being started by mid-

November. Alarm and CCTV systems have been overhauled and are fully functional. The members have all noticed the changes and commented that the work has created a positive atmosphere for the next larger phase of building work to be undertaken.

On 19 September, the Wrexham members under the leadership of Elder Ziva, took the initiative to clean the church premises they rent each Sabbath for worship. The Methodist church praised the members for their willingness to do this.



It also gave them an opportunity to interact with neighbours around the church (dog walkers) and explain about who they are and what they do every

Sabbath in the building and extend invitations to the neighbours to worship with them.

Hereford, Rhyl and Wrexham churches were visited by Crystal Knight, the WM Stewardship Sponsor, during August. Crystal used sermons from the Grateful Living series, encouraging the members to reflect on the unique talents God has given each of them to use for His glory, and to recognise how their own personal testimony can be used as a tool to evangelise and serve the Lord. Members at Wrexham received a message 'Protecting God's Earth' and were challenged to think about how they can help protect the environment around them.

Strategic Objective #2 - Empowered members and pastors

Children's Days

Newport church had a Children's Day on 13 July with the theme 'Little Lights Shine in Newport'. The children, under the guidance of the children's department, led out in the whole Sabbath services. The children shared how they were able to shine the light of Christ to their friends and at school and in their local neighbourhoods. Group and individual songs, memory verses and a

powerful sermon entitled 'Let Your Light Shine' by Tino Makore blessed those attending church. Tino gave different examples of how young people and children from the Bible were able to shine the light of God.

<https://youtu.be/ZHz4qMzfwyQ?si=T-NSq5yLzoMkAVf3>

Hereford church had its Children's Day on 27 July, using the theme 'Fiercely Faithful' with Deuteronomy 7:9 as their key verse. The children made the service very interactive by engaging the whole church. When it came time for the pastoral prayer, they handed out arts and crafts material so those attending could create ladders that were based on the skit they had done at the beginning of the service with a contemporary twist to the biblical story of Jacob's ladder. Each person was invited to use every step of the ladder as a prayer point during the prayer. Five mini sermonettes from different children were well presented and built on each other. Programmes such as these and 13th Sabbath help the children to grow in confidence and makes them feel part of the church.



Eileen and Kenroy Mckenzie led in a Children's Health Expo at Wrexham on 7 September.

They spoke about the Adventist health message and the importance of passing these teachings to our children. Reaction was very positive with church members feeling encouraged to practice the health principles shared.



Stewardship

Crystal Knight has been collaborating with the other stewardship directors and sponsors from the entities within the BUC to prepare for the Stewardship Revival Week at the end of November/early December. The programme will be pre-recorded and available on YouTube. As part of this preparation, Crystal went to the BUC office at Watford at the end of September to record some interviews.



She has been continuing to create PowerPoint presentations for her stewardship sermons based on the Beyond Blessings book and this quarter completed a presentation for the sermon entitled “Does God Need My Money?”

Friendship Evangelism Seminar

Pastor Sam Ouadjo, the BUC Ministerial Director, led in a Friendship Evangelism Seminar in the Carmarthen church from 19-21 July to teach and empower the church to engage and build relationships with their neighbours, work colleagues, and community. As friendships develop, members have the opportunity of leading their friends to Jesus.

Women’s Ministry

Enditnow® is a General Conference worldwide initiative and has its own emphasis day in the Church calendar which falls on the 4th Sabbath of August annually. This initiative is co-sponsored by other departments of the General Conference: Children’s Ministries, Education, Family Ministries, Health Ministries, Ministerial Association and Youth Ministries with more information found here <https://women.adventist.org/enditnow-initiative>

This year we were privileged to have the resource packet “Go Find My Sheep” written by Joanna Daniels with contributions from Samantha Fessal for the Seminar entitled “The Trauma Informed church” and Children’s story written by Tamara Lawrence. The resource packet was distributed worldwide by the General Conference, so it was an honour to have Joanna choose to stay local and deliver presentations primarily in the Welsh Mission throughout the month of August.



On 10 August Joanna worshipped with the Newport Church for their Women's Day, organised by Women's Ministries leaders Ruth Manyela and Flopper Tshuma where the women were treated to a lunch served by the men.

On 17 August Joanna and Samantha led out at Cardiff Central Church Women's Day, hosted by Esther Chinedu Onyekwere.

The Resource packet includes practical ways in which the Church can make the experience of a traumatised individual less 'traumatic'. The Sermon material reminds us to seek out these hurting people - being a disciple of Christ. The Seminar has an empowering message as it describes 5 ways the Church can help traumatised people heal and find community. These include:

- Having an informed team
- Having awareness of barriers
- The need for effective listening
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Continued support for individuals who have experienced trauma whether inside or outside the church.

It is recognised that the topic is a difficult one - however it is a current worldwide issue - and what was presented was a conversation starter and an awareness building exercise so that members can start to think about how they can be more practical in helping traumatised people to heal, especially as trauma can result from a multitude of experiences not just abuse.

Gratitude was expressed to Joanna for being willing to discuss such a sensitive topic, with the programme being recognised as informative and thought provoking.

Personal Ministries

In July 2024 the WM Personal Ministries started a new website designed to inspire and equip church members to become disciple makers of Jesus Christ. The website includes:

- stories of individuals whose lives have been touched by God,
- news from local churches engaging with the community, under the Reflecting Hope initiative,
- online classes

The link for the website is www.personalministrieswales.org



Strategic Objective #3 – Disciple-Makers

Baptisms

Newport church celebrated the baptisms of two young people during the



summer. On 24 August, Chelsea Nyasha Beni was baptised by Pastor Samuel Semakula after receiving baptismal Bible studies led by Elder Victor Mbvundula. Chelsea's mother, Ruth Manyela, shared how Chelsea has been a prayer warrior since she was a very young child, waking her Mum up to pray for

her older siblings to be able to come to the UK. At the age of 5 she saw God answer that prayer as the family were reunited. Chelsea shared how different struggles over the years made her feel separated from God. This had an impact on her schoolwork, but she then went back to prayer and was able to

feel God's presence in her life again. She received excellent grades in her exams and was accepted into Bristol university. Chelsea mentioned how the weekly Bible studies helped her get closer to God and helped her understand the importance of having a personal relationship with God for herself.

Pastor David Rancic had the joy of returning to Newport to baptise Ziko Nyengani on 7 September. Pastor Rancic had seen Ziko grow from a young child to a youth preparing to start university.



They had made a promise to each other that the day Ziko decided to get baptised, he would call Pastor David to baptise him, and Pastor David said wherever he was in the world, he would honour that request.

Friends and family travelled from as far as Scotland to share Ziko's special day. Strong influences on Ziko's decision for baptism had been a Christian upbringing at home, church life and Pathfinders. The impact of lockdown and not being able to attend church in person began to wear away at his relationship with God, but he was moved by a sermon from Pastor Warren Gillin (SEC Youth Director) and responded to the altar call. Ziko had also been part of the weekly baptismal Bible studies led by Elder Victor. During those studies, he realised even more his need for a Saviour and his deep desire to spend eternity with Him.



On 24 August, Carmarthen church witnessed the baptism of Ileana Stefanescu. Ileana is from Romania and comes from a Christian Orthodox background. While in Romania in 2000, Ileana encountered the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church for the first time and started Bible studies. Her wish was to be baptised, but various obstacles hindered her from taking that step. She

began to watch and listen to God's Word on Hope TV channel and read the Bible at home.

In 2019, Ileana's daughter sent an email to Pastor Adriana Fodor expressing her mother's wish for an Adventist pastor to conduct her funeral when the time came. Pastor Fodor visited Ileana and they started Bible studies together.

Several times Ileana mentioned her desire to be baptised as she knew the teachings of the SDA church are based on the Bible and she had accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour. Twenty-four years from her first encounter with Adventists, she was finally baptised. Her story is a testimony to the grace and power of God. Ileana is 88 years old but although she may have been preparing for her death, God was preparing the way to give her eternal life.

Cardiff church has started a weekly baptismal class with 7 candidates being prepared for baptism. They have also decided to start a second prayer meeting on Wednesdays at the church building, to run in tandem with the online meeting.



The night shelter at the Cardiff church is now able to offer more help to homeless individuals, due to more resources being invested in this ministry. There are now 24-40 people turning up every Sunday for meals, showers, clean clothes and a little social time.

Newport church took advantage of the short breaks of sunshine during the summer and went to Barry Island to enjoy beach football, the sea and the nearby amusement park. This trip allowed the church to connect outside of the church walls and get to know one another on a social level.



Music Ministry

Telford Ghana church had a 'Choir Day' on 14 September to celebrate the choir of the church and the evangelistic work they continue to do for the district. The day was primarily an attempt to connect with the neighbouring churches and to evangelise them through the medium of music. The feedback was positive and their pastor, Lawrence Ofei, shared a word of encouragement on the importance of praise and gratitude.



The Wrexham and Llandudno Junction groups collaborated to

host the Good Christian Ensemble, a choir visiting from the Philippines, who were competing in the World Choir Competition at the Eisteddfod at Llangollen. The choir had been scheduled to perform on a Saturday afternoon, so they chose to forfeit their slot to honour the Sabbath. The organisers accommodated this by rescheduling their performance to 10 pm. The choir were able to spend Sabbath providing a beautiful music concert for the church members and their friends at a Methodist church in Wrexham.

Holiday Bible Schools



Two churches ran Holiday Bible Schools during August. Newtown church ran their school from 12-16 August. They chose the Children's Health Expo theme to guide their activities, introducing the children to eight natural laws. Through banners, games, and crafts, the children experienced each law as it works in nature – nutrition,

exercise, water, sun, temperance, air, rest and trust. The health expo, designed for 7–11-year-olds, aimed to help them apply these laws to their lives.

Pictures of animals engaged in different activities, helped the children understand how the laws affect the animals' way of life and a visit to the Small Breeds Farm on Thursday was not just a fun outing but a highly educational experience. An exciting obstacle course on Friday helped provide an emphasis on exercise. The children were having so much fun that even the adults couldn't resist joining in! Each child received a medal for attendance and participation.



For Ystrad Mynach, it was their first Holiday Bible School, led by Elder Jane Wells, the Children's Ministries Leaders. Six community children joined the activities during the week. This was part of the follow up to the May Family Fun Day in the local park.

Community Health Fayre & Food Festival



The Telford Central church, working in partnership with Shrewsbury & Telford NHS Trust, presented the first of their very own annual Community Health Fayres on Sunday, 14 July at the Millenium Village, Telford. They invited other health agencies to collaborate with

them, so there was a good number of organisations promoting health and wellbeing on the day.

Members from Newtown and Shrewsbury assisted in the effective delivery of educating people on how to live a healthier lifestyle by introducing them to the eight laws of health and healthy food demonstrations. The smoothie bike is always popular as it combines exercise with a delicious smoothie. Copies of The Eight Laws of Health magazine and the book Ministry of Healing were distributed.



The church has made significant progress in establishing meaningful relationships with various agencies and members of their communities. This has become evident in members of the police force attending the church unannounced on a Sabbath, the police's invitation to be a part of local community police meetings, and agencies being willing to attend future events.

The members have worked together to plan and support these community outreach endeavours and have been encouraged by the significant numbers of community people who attended. This has served to raise awareness of the SDA church within their communities.



Newtown church members participated in the local Newtown Food Festival on Sunday, 8 September.



Youth



The summer was a very busy time for the youth department as they provided opportunities for the young people to attend Youth Congress in the Netherlands, camping trips in Slovenia and Ireland, plus supporting the NEC at Aberdaron youth, teens and family camps.

There has been an increase in young people asking about baptism. Six churches are now running dedicated Bible study classes for the youth in

preparation for baptism. Four churches have committed to incorporating their youth into departmental teams as training for leadership.

The Welsh Mission (WM) youth department has been collaborating with their counterparts in the other entities within the BUC to enable the young people to come together more often for fellowship. The WM partnered with Area 2 of the SEC to host a joint youth day in Cardiff, which was a huge success, despite having to switch venues after lunch. They managed to move 300+ youth across town with no issues.

Pathfinders and Adventurers

On 20 July there was an investiture at Swansea church where young people received their class achievement certificates and awards for work completed earlier in the year.

From 23-26 August, Newtown and Telford Pathfinder clubs camped together in the Welsh countryside. Several activities were planned for the weekend, as well as many awards for both Adventurers and Pathfinders. The rain over the weekend tested the children's ability to camp in rainy weather but the food that was served provided enough energy for the kids to enjoy the camp.

Ziko Nyengani, a Pathfinder from the Newport church, had the wonderful opportunity to attend the once in 5 years International Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming, USA. The theme for the camporee was 'Believe the Promise'. Ziko commented that "coming to Gillette has been a life changing experience and has helped deepen his love for Pathfinders and my relationship with God."



The main event of the quarter was World Pathfinder Day, held in Carmarthen on 21 September. Pathfinders from across the Welsh Mission gathered in the main High Street

where the focus for the day was outreach through book and literature distribution. God answered their prayers for dry weather – the rain came only when the last car left! In total 150 Steps to Christ and other pieces of literature were given out.

There was a positive response from the public, some of whom even requested prayer right on the High Street. A 74-year-old resident of Carmarthen commented that she had never experienced anything like the Pathfinder event. As well as literature distribution, the Pathfinders visited two Care homes where they sang and interacted with residents.



Presidential matters

After a lengthy search and recruitment process, we welcomed two new pastoral team members to the Welsh Mission in July.



Pastor Anton Botha and his wife Thea with their children Tiaan and Antonette joined us from South Africa where he has been pastoring for the past ten years. They are serving the Telford/Shrewsbury/ Newtown district.



Lawrence Ofei graduated with his master's degree from Newbold College in the summer and has begun pastoring the Telford Ghana and Wrexham congregations. He replaces Pastor Louis Amakye at the Telford Ghana church who retired at the end of June.



The pastoral team took part in some archery and Nordic games to get to know Anton and Lawrence.

We also had a picnic in the beautiful grounds of Hampton Court Castle.



On 30 July I gave an official welcome and devotional for the opening of the UK & European Ghanaian SDA Churches Camp Meeting held at Aberystwyth University.



Every 5 years all pastors across the Trans-European and Inter-European Divisions attend a European Pastors Council (EPC) where workshops and plenary sessions assist with professional development. The

chance to fellowship and network with several hundred colleagues was a real blessing. EPC took place in Serbia at the end of August.

I continue to preach and provide pastoral encouragement, along with Pastor Adriana Fodor, to a group of Christians who meet at the Zion Chapel in Ynysybwl.

WM Day of Fellowship

We held our annual Day of Fellowship in the beautiful facilities and surroundings of Rougemont School on 28 September.



Dr Kayle de Waal from the Trans-European Division was our guest speaker and gave two presentations on discipleship in the morning and a presentation with a prayer focus in the afternoon.



1st presentation on discipleship

<https://youtu.be/HyBfDJCJRbE?si=Orm3Av1H8ZlbCXft>

2nd presentation on discipleship

https://youtu.be/Uebnsn8UXnl8?si=Odu0AWY8_ybrCwy1

3rd presentation on discipleship and prayer

https://youtu.be/npSAB_vG4t0?si=OChcnSfwX3aGPLHV

Martin Walters coordinated the praise team and musicians who were excellent, and we were blessed to have SEC media assisting with the audio.



Eileen and Kenroy Mckenzie, with the support of a dedicated team and parents, led out in a programme for the children. Kenroy spoke to the children about God as their protector, and Eileen and Paris Mckenzie spoke about Jairus' daughter. Sarah Mwamuka from the Newtown church gave a special presentation to the children about prayer.



Pastor Samuel Semakula spoke to the teens and Pastor Jeremy Johnson led activities for the youth during the first part of the morning. Attendance was good and the feedback we have received has been very positive.

Special mention was made of the members from Llandudno Junction in North Wales who hired a coach and set out at 5 am to be present for the Day of Fellowship. In the afternoon they were among several individuals and groups who blessed us with songs.





Graham Allcock
Welsh Mission President