

A BRIEF HISTORY OF



1908-2008

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.  
2008

Deacons

Jean Shailer: Ivor Thomas: Eluned Vaughan:  
Jean Nicholas: Ken Slatter

Secretary

Jean Nicholas

Treasurers

Ivor Thomas : Jean Nicholas

Organist

Amanda Lawrence

Sunday School

Jenny Andrews: Stella Phillips



## FOREWORD

It is a privilege to present you with this brief history of Bethel Baptist Church as we celebrate the centenary of the chapel building.

I would like to thank all those who have helped in any way with compiling this information.

It is of great importance to me as the third generation of our family to worship here, that the history of our first one hundred years is recorded as accurately as is possible. If I have made any errors, or omitted anything of great importance to you, then please accept my apologies.

Amanda Lawrence

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

### What is a Baptist Church?

First of all a Baptist Church is not to be seen as a building but as a body of people. Baptists believe that the word "church" was meant by Jesus to mean his followers. On the day of Pentecost (Acts Ch.2 v. 41) when Peter finished preaching, around 3,000 people were baptized and became "the church".

Secondly, our actual building is usually of a plain and simple structure with the focus on the Bible and the preaching of the word of God.

Thirdly, Baptists are very "missionary minded". The Baptist Missionary Society was founded in Northamptonshire in 1792. The first missionary was William Carey. All Baptist Churches support their Missionary Society, as well as other missionary causes.

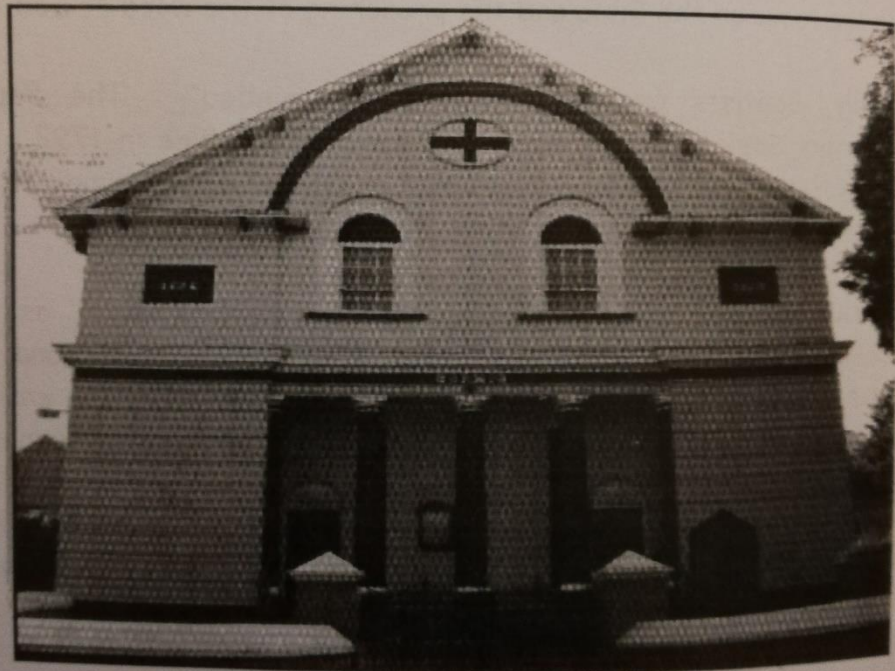
Fourthly, while we may belong to associations such as the Pembrokehire Association, the Baptist Union of Wales and the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, each church is entirely self-governing and relies mainly on its members for financial support.

Baptists, while tracing their roots back to the New Testament, have their origin in more modern times, with the first church being established in 1609, in Amsterdam. The first British Church was formed in 1612.



## THE HISTORY OF BETHEL

The Baptist faith spread to Pembrokeshire in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. A Baptist Church was founded in Rhydwylym, Carmarthenshire in 1668, and it was from there probably, that the movement spread to Pembrokeshire. A group of people met regularly for worship as Baptists in Llangloffan from 1704. A church was founded at Llangloffan in 1745, which became the mother of all the Welsh Baptist churches in North Pembrokeshire. One of these was Hermon, Fishguard, founded in 1776.



In April 1905, forty two members of Hermon thought there was a need for an English Baptist church in Fishguard. The leader of this new venture was Mr. John H. John, from Llanychaer. These 42 members met for worship at first at the Temperance Hall, West Street, which is now Theatr Gwaun. The preacher at the opening service in June 1905 was Rev O D Campbell, from Haverfordwest.

After these first meetings, many people were baptized in the river Gwaun, the first of these Baptisms took place on Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1906 by the Rev. J. W. Morris of Tabor, Dinas Cross.

The church grew steadily in numbers, and in 1905 a site for a new church building was bought. In 1906 Rev D P David, from Mardy, Glamorgan, was called as pastor. During Rev David's ministry the permanent church building was completed. The builder was Mr. Daniel Thomas, from Letterston, and it cost £1,750, with seating for 380.

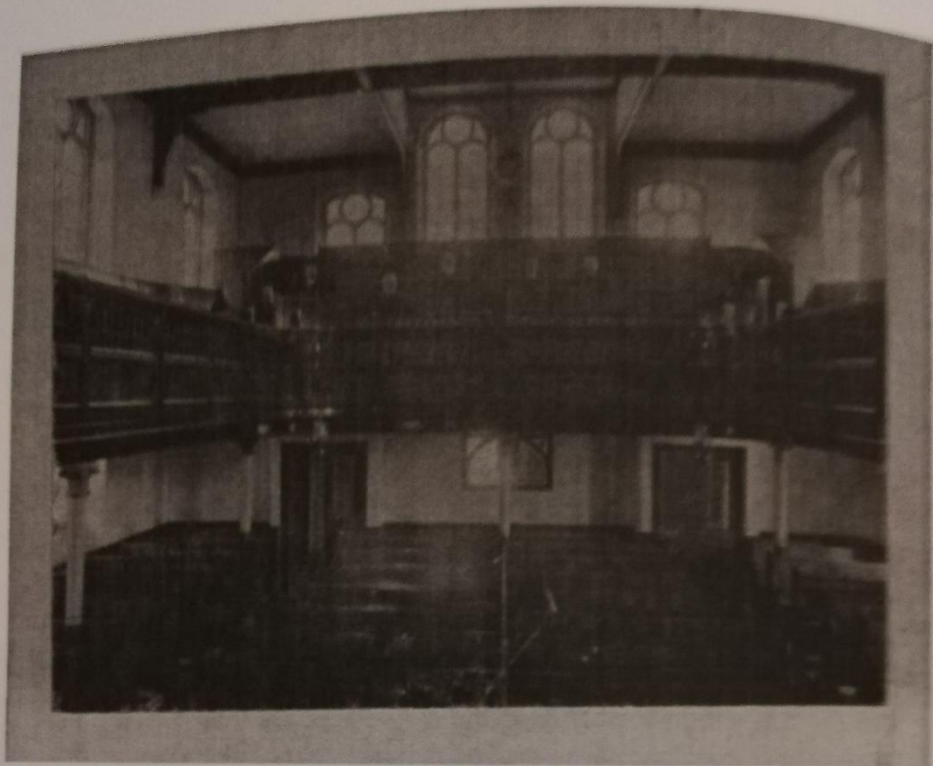
The vestry was first used for worship on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1908. On the following Sunday the Rev. David preached the first sermon in the new building.

The official opening services of Bethel Baptist Church were held on Tuesday and Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1908, when the pastor was officially inducted. Other ministers taking part were Rev. David Davies, Brighton, Rev. Charles Rees, Abercarn and the Rev. Aaron Morgan, Blaenffos. Very large crowds attended these services and it has been recorded that there was considerable religious fervour.

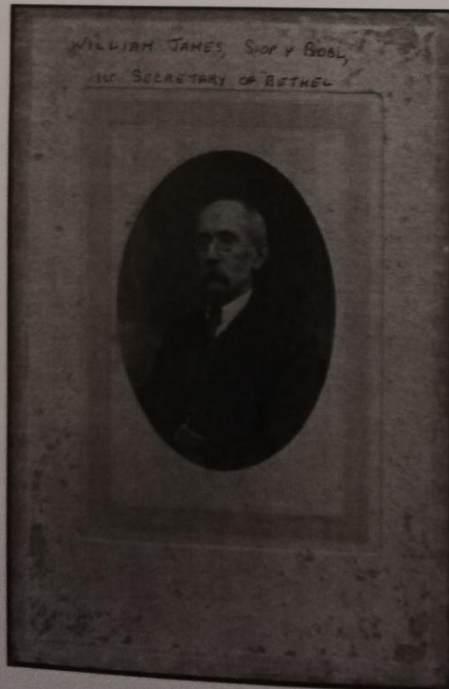
Mr. William James, Siop y Bobl, was the first secretary of Bethel, and through his commitment and energy many local business firms were persuaded to support the cause.

The first deacons of Bethel were John H. John, William Jenkins, Charles Edwards, Walter L. Williams, Joseph Ayres, F. J. Harries, William Rowe, John Griffiths and Cuthbert Thomas.

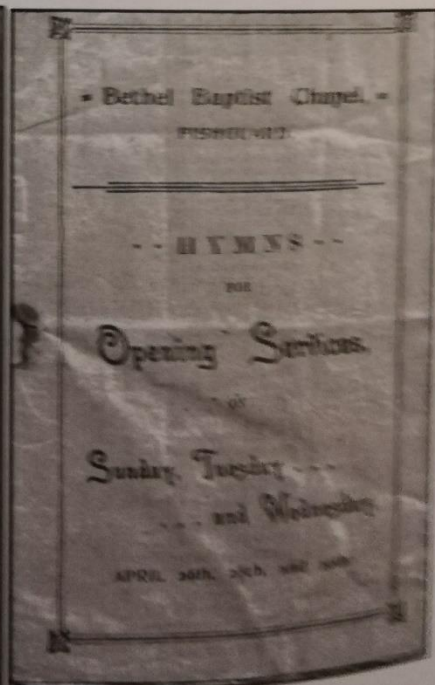




*The completed chapel in 1908*



*Mr. William James, Siop y Bobol*



*Opening Services Hymn Sheet*

Solemnization of Marriages therein, under 6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 85, Sec. 18.

[To be Signed in duplicate by Twenty Householders at the least.]

**DIRECTIONS**  
for filling up  
this Form.

(1) Insert here the name by which the Building is generally known.  
(2) And here the Religious Denomination to which it belongs.  
(3) Insert here the name of the Civil Parish in which the Building is situated.  
(4) Insert here the name of the administrative County.  
(5) Insert here the name of the Sub-District.  
(6) Insert here the name of the Registration District.  
(7) Insert here the day of the month and year when the Building was certified according to Law as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship to the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England.  
(8) Insert here the date when the Building was certified according to Law as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship to the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England.  
(9) Insert here the name of the Proprietor or one of the Trustees of the Building.

WE, the undersigned, being severally Householders, and in number not less than Twenty, do hereby certify, That a Building named (\*) Bethel  
Baptist Chapel  
belonging to the Religious Denomination called (\*) Strict Particular  
Street Baptists is a separate Building, situated  
at (\*) West Street  
in the Civil Parish of Fishguard  
in the administrative County (\*) of Pembrokeshire  
in the Sub-District of Haverfordwest, Fishguard  
in the Registration District of Haverfordwest and that on or about  
the first 28<sup>th</sup> day of February March 1910  
the said Building was certified according to Law as a Place of Meeting for Religious  
Worship to the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England.

and that the certification thereof has been duly registered or recorded as in that behalf required. And we FURTHER CERTIFY that the said Building has been used by us, during ONE YEAR AT THE LEAST NOW PAST, as our usual place of Public Religious Worship, and that we are desirous that the same Building should be reserved for the solemnization of Marriages therein.

Witness our hands this 1<sup>st</sup> day of March 1910

Signatures of Householders	Signatures of Householders	Signatures of Householders
<i>[Faint signature]</i>	William Evans	J. D. Symonds
<i>[Faint signature]</i>	Benjamin Thomas	William
<i>[Faint signature]</i>	J. Webb	Taughan Davis
<i>[Faint signature]</i>	J. Richards	Dr Owen Thomas
<i>[Faint signature]</i>	Thomas Myles	L. Edwards
<i>[Faint signature]</i>	<i>[Faint signature]</i>	David Davies
Thomas Lewis	J. G. M. [?]	H. Bristow
Blunth	R. D. Griffiths	C. Jenkins
DR Reynolds	R. G. Leobalim	G. Davies

(g and h) This Certificate must be countersigned by the Proprietor or by one of the Trustees (see

Countersigned by me (g) Morgan James  
(h) Trustee ~~[Signature]~~  
of the above mentioned Building.

Bethel became a certified building to register Marriages and Deaths on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1910 as reported by both The County Echo and The London Gazette.



The Rev. David remained as minister from 1906 to 1916 when he left to become minister of Miskin Baptist Church, Gwent.

In April 1919 the church called Rev. J. A. Davies, from Machen, Gwent, to the pastorate. During Rev. Davies' ministry the membership increased from 52 to 175. He left for Mount Pleasant, Pembroke in 1928, but was re-called to Bethel in 1929, and stayed until 1932, when he accepted a call to Roch, Pembrokeshire.


**FISHGUARD.**

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**AN - EISTEDDFOD**

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WILL BE HELD AT

 **BETHEL CHAPEL**

— ON —

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 10th, 1930.**

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President : Rev. DAN DAVIES, Hermon.  
Conductor : Rev. GLYNFAB WILLIAMS, Dinas Cross.

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Adjudicators :

Music : Professor J. T. JONES, L.R.A.M., Newport, Pem.  
Literature : Rev. J. T. JOB, M.A., Pentower.  
Recitations : Mr. J. J. EVANS, M.A., County School.  
Prize Bags : Mrs. T. H. NARBETT & Mrs. WALTER V. EVANS.

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Accompanists : Mrs. GIBBS & Miss MYRA AYRES.

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Chairman of Committee: Mr. D. B. PHILLIPS (Briallydd).  
Treasurer: Mr. J. AYRES.  
Secretary: Mr. E. P. GARNON, "Belvoir," Heol Dyfed, Fishguard.

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Doors open at 5, to commence at 5.30.  
Admission: Front Seats, 1/6; Second Seats, 1/-; Children, Half-price.  
Proceeds in aid of Bethel Church Funds.  
Programmes, 1½d. each (by Post, 2d.), to be obtained from the Secretary.

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Arrangements made for late Buses to Dinas, Newport & Goodwick.

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"ECHO" Printing Works, Fishguard.

*Evidence of Cultural Events during the 1930s*



MR. W. E. MATHIAS-WILLIAMS.

The third pastor was Rev W E Mathias Williams, who came to Bethel from Myrddin College Carmarthen in 1935. He stayed at Bethel for four years before receiving a call to Hanbury Road Church, Bargoed. Mr. Williams was welcomed as one of the guest preachers at the church's Jubilee services in 1958.

Bethel Vestry was taken over by the Military for the accommodation of troops on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1940. Monies raised through providing this accommodation were invested into the building fund. Many years later one of the soldiers billeted at Bethel left a generous donation to the church in his will in appreciation of the kindness shown to him at that time.

On Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942, thanksgiving services were held to celebrate much hard work and dedication under the untiring leadership of secretary, Mr. E.P. Garnon, which resulted in the church finally being free of debt. The preacher was the Rev. J.A. Davies, Roch.



From 1939 onwards there were several preachers who ministered at Bethel, although not officially inducted. Rev. Davies, a missionary, assisted in the ministry as did Mr. A. D. Foulkes one of the deacons. Help was also received from two students from Cardiff Baptist College, Graham Davies and Robin Davies.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1958 large congregations met at Bethel to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. The services were opened by the Rev. W.E. Mathias Williams, then of Newport, Gwent.

During the afternoon some 120 Sunday School pupils took part. A flannel-graph depicting 50 years of the chapel was shown by children, where possible, whose parents or grandparents had some connection with the opening of the church.

BETHEL, FISHGUARD	
<p>JUBILEE SERVICES TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE CHAPEL</p> <p>SERVICES</p> <p>SUNDAY, APRIL 27<sup>th</sup>, 1958 at 10.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. <i>Guest Preacher</i> : Rev. W. E. Mathias Williams, Newport, Mon. 2 p.m. Sunday School</p> <p>MONDAY, APRIL 28<sup>th</sup>, 1958 at 2.30 and 6.30 p.m. <i>Guest Preacher</i> : Rev. I. D. E. Thomas, B.A., B.D., Llanelly Tea at 4 p.m. in Chapel Vestry</p> <p><i>Speakers at Tea-Table :</i></p> <p>Rev. A. Glyn Davies, Pembroke Dock <i>Vice-President Pembroke-shire Baptist Association.</i></p> <p>Rev. Wynn Owen, Hermon, Fishguard <i>President Fishguard Free Church Council</i></p> <p>Mr. E. D. Griffiths, <i>Church Secretary.</i></p> <p>Mr. A. D. Foulkes, Cardiff will preside at the Services on Sunday and Monday.</p> <p>[4]</p>	<p><i>A Message from . . .</i></p> <p>THE PRESIDENT OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE</p> <p>DR. THOMAS RICHARDS, M.A., Bangor</p> <p>It is refreshing to hear of the Jubilee of your Church at Bethel, Fishguard. I heard a good deal of your activities when I was at the Fishguard Undeb in 1956 : if I remember rightly the Historical Society held its Annual Meeting there. I beg to thank you for the names of the devoted series of ministers and church leaders who never despaired of the success of the cause.</p> <p>I can assure you, on behalf of the Baptist Union of Wales, not only of its good wishes, but of its whole-hearted admiration of the good work already done, and of your ever-going forward under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, Her Lord</p> <p>[5]</p>

Rev Emlyn Rowe-Griffiths accepted to spiritually oversee the ministry of the church on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1959. During the summer months he baptized 25 young people at Bethel. He then agreed to preach on two Sundays of every month during the early 1960s.

After a break of 25 years on June 28<sup>th</sup> 1967 the Rev T Ivor Davies was inducted as minister. Rev. Davies was a native of Haverfordwest and came to Bethel from Church St., Tredegar. Again the Rev. W. E. Mathias Williams conducted the morning service, with the new pastor conducting the evening service. Unfortunately the Rev. Davies died only two years later on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1969.



*Rev. T. Ivor Davis*



*Rev. H. Bartlett*

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1971 the Rev Harold Bartlett accepted a call from Calvary, Treforest to Bethel.

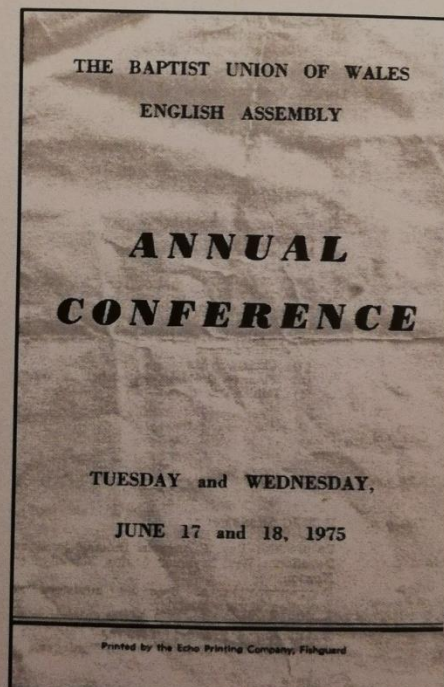
A native of Neath, the Rev. Bartlett studied at the South Wales



Baptist College and took an active interest in the welfare of young people. His wife, Dorothy, was a youth leader and proved to be a tower of strength to her husband in his ministry, in addition to being a talented artist.

The induction service was presided over by the Rev. R.W. Richards, Llangwm, with the new minister presiding over the evening service. During the evening the Rev. D. Osborne Thomas of Hermon, Fishguard preached the sermon.

During the Rev. Bartlett's time at Bethel, in June 1975, the Church were the proud hosts of the Annual Conference of the Baptist Union of Wales.



After six happy years at Bethel, at a deacons meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> 1977 Rev. Bartlett gave notice that he intended to retire in three months, moving to Penarth. However members of Bethel rejoiced when the Rev. Bartlett and his wife returned once more to Fishguard in 1987, and were greatly blessed by his membership, friendship and

preaching during the latter years of his life. Mrs. Bartlett currently resides at Torestin Rest Home, Tiers Cross, Pembrokeshire.

It was following the departure of Mr. Bartlett in 1978 that a decision was made by the diaconate to sell the current manse, "Angorfa", High Street, Fishguard due to the monies needed to bring the manse up to a good state of repair. It was also agreed at this time to look into the matter of joining with another church for the purpose of obtaining a minister with a Baptist Union grant. In April 1980 the deacons of Bethel Fishguard met with Bethesda Goodwick, and agreed to join in partnership as sister churches with a view to securing a joint pastorate.

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1980 a call was give to Mr. Bryan Willetts, a student at Memorial College, Swansea. This call was accepted, a manse was secured via the Rev. Mary Davies of Walsall, who offered her property at 20, Vergam Terrace, to the church for rent, and on July 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 1981 the Rev. Willetts was ordained and inducted as minister of Bethel. The services were presided over by the Rev. Malcolm Barrett, the Rev. Harold Bartlett, the Rev. R.W. Richards and the Rev. B. G. Willetts with sermons being given by the Rev. Malcolm H. Hopkins, the Rev. Principal W.T. Pennar Davies, and the Rev. Alan J. Petty. It was during the preparations for the Induction in June 1981 that the communion silverware was unearthed. Thought to have been put in a safe place during the Second World War, the silverware was cleaned up and appropriately displayed in a cabinet made in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Byron Griffiths.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Willetts the church raised funds for a new organ, a new heating system, a heater for the baptismal pool, redesigned the front of the chapel to accommodate a communion table and celebrated 75 years with a special service, when the Rev. Frank Lee was the guest preacher.





*Rev. B. G. Willetts*

There was also a series of Baptisms during this pastorate, including one occasion which was described as the "Minister's Dream" in the local press, when nine people were baptized in one day. In total the Rev. Willetts baptized 22 new members. In 1984, under the careful organization of Mr. Clive Young, a flower festival depicting "The life of Christ" proved to be a resounding success. The Rev. Willetts accepted a call to Siloam, Killay in June 1986, and subsequently became pastor of Providence, Cosely, Wolverhampton, twice, stopping only for a brief retirement in between. The church is very pleased to welcome Rev. Bryan and Mrs. Valerie Willetts as special guests at the Centenary services.

In March 1994 the church was able to call Rev. Ray C. Roberts, of Beulah, Newbridge, Gwent, to the pastorate. The Rev. Roberts accepted and was inducted on Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup> 1994. The Rev. Emlyn Jones, the Rev. B. G. Willetts and the Rev. Ray Roberts presided at the services with sermons being preached by Rev. David Earnshaw, and Rev. Glyn Morris. During the Rev. Roberts' ministry the "King's Kids" club and "Chocolate Bar" brought many young people

into the church during the week. Holiday Clubs were also a new venture, and an office created in the vestry. Due to the financial position of the church, the ministry of Rev. Roberts came to an end during 1999. Sadly, the Rev. Roberts passed away in 2002.



*Rev. and Mrs. R. Roberts*

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Bethesda Chapel closed its doors for the last time, with the result of the majority of the remaining members transferring their membership to Bethel.

Now in its Centenary year, Bethel holds services every Sunday morning, these services are led by a wide variety of ministers, male and female, Baptist and Non-Baptist, Clergy and Lay-Preachers, each providing us with a varied diet of services and sermons.

Each message helps us to prepare our way forward into the next 100 years at Bethel, remembering that what lies ahead could be greater than what has gone before.

Jesus said, "I am with you always, to the end of time."  
(Matthew Ch. 28, V. 20)



### Ministers at Bethel

Rev. D.P. David : 1906-1916

Rev. J.A. Davies: 1919-1928, 1929-1932

Rev. W. E. Mathias Williams: 1935-1939

Rev. T.Ivor Davies: 1967-1969

Rev. H. Bartlett: 1972-1977

Rev. B. G. Willetts: 1981-1986

Rev. R.C .Roberts: 1994-1999

### Secretaries of Bethel

William James

Joseph Ayres

E.P. Garnon

Byron. D. Griffiths

Emlyn Williams

Oswald Ayres

Lorna Griffiths

E. M. Jones

Judith Evans

Jean Nicholas

Lorna Griffiths

Jean Nicholas





### Treasurers of Bethel

W.C. Thomas  
Charles Edwards  
W.O. Thomas  
D. Gibbs  
J. Underwood  
George Harries  
Emlyn Williams  
Elwyn Evans  
David Tonge  
Elwyn Evans/ Lorna Griffiths  
Ivor Thomas/ Jean Nicholas

### Bethel Church Organists 1940 - 2008

Mrs. B. Thomas  
Mrs. Tarlin  
Miss. L. Gronow  
Mrs. Spencer James  
Mrs. J. Nicholas  
Mrs. Mc. Gaskill  
Miss. E. Lloyd  
Mrs. O. Richards  
Mrs. V. Morse  
Mr. C. Toms  
Mrs. A. Lawrence.



*Bethel Diaconate C1930*

*Mr. W.B. Williams, Mr. V. Morse, Mr. B.D. Griffiths, Mr. H. Evans,  
Mr. E. Radford, Mr. S. Duggan, Mr. Morris, Mr. W. Williams, Mr. M. James.*



*Bethel Diaconate 1956*

*Mr. J. Underwood, Mr. E. Radford, Mr. B. D. Griffiths, Mr. W. Francis,  
Mr. W. B. Williams, Mr. H Evans, Mr. A. D. Foulkes, Mr. S. Duggan.*





*Bethel Diaconate - 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - 1983*  
*Back Row: Mr. A. John, Mrs. A. Toms, Mr. H. Coldrick,*  
*Mr. C. Perkins, Mr. E. Evans,*  
*Front Row: Mr. E. Williams,, Rev.. H. Bartlett, Rev. F. Lee, Rev. B. Willetts,*  
*Mrs. M. Jones, Mrs. L. Griffiths, Mrs. E. Vaughan.*

## BETHEL SUNDAY SCHOOL

"Train up a child in the way it should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it"

As we look back over the history of Bethel, mention must be made of the contribution the Sunday school and its many hard working and loyal teachers and superintendents have made to the life of the church. Many adults are able to recall and reflect on happy times, stories told, songs sung, performances given and of course, the annual outing.

No historical details about the history of the Sunday School were recorded for the purpose of Bethel's Jubilee Services and it is therefore difficult to report any accurate historical facts. However there certainly was a Sunday School in existence from around 1909 as this picture suggests.



Sunday school trip to Goodwick Beach, c. 1909. The unidentified group is posed against the wall to the left of the photograph at the top of this page. A footpath ran alongside the railings allowing pedestrian access to the Fishguard Bay Hotel via the steel bridge.



Other pictures suggest outings and King's Jubilee celebrations. By the late 1920s there is also evidence of a Band of Hope being in existence, pictured here presenting a play.



The Leader & Children of the  
Band of Hope, presenting a Play  
entitled, "Japanese Holiday".  
Back Row (L to R) Maw Phillips,  
Morfydd Thomas, Beryl Griffiths,  
Edwina Allen & Leader.  
Centre Row (L to R) S. J. Violet  
Thomas, Olive Williams, Gwen Wms,  
Ida Llewellyn & Linda Gronow.  
Front Row (L to R) Olive Morgan,  
Morfydd Llewellyn, Hilda William,  
Betty Griffiths, Beryl Maurice,  
Nellie Llewellyn, Betty Morris,  
and Ellen Harries.



Bethel Young People's Day Out (1920-1924)



*Violet Griffiths and daughter Jean at a Bethel Party at the Drim, Goodwick*

In 1939 the Sunday School superintendent was George Owen. At this point the vestry in its entirety was taken over by the Armed Forces.

When the Church celebrated fifty years in 1958 the Sunday School Superintendent was Mrs. A. Howells. At that time there were 112 pupils on the register, 13 teachers and 3 reserves! The Sunday School also sponsored two leper boys, one in Mandalay and the other in Hong Kong.

Former Sunday School teachers from this period such as Miss. Elizabeth Morris and Mrs. Jean Nicholas refer to their former superintendent, Mrs. Howells with great love and respect and have many happy memories of fun-filled experiences, such as trips to Porthcawl, and concerts in the Convent Hall.



1952

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

*Train up a child in the way it should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*

*Superintendent : Mrs. D. Howells*

*Secretary : Mrs. J. Nicholas*

*Treasurer : Mrs. Spencer James*

*Leader of Infant Dept. : Mrs. Ace*

*(assisted by 10 scholars from Senior Class by rota)*

*Organists : Misses V. Ace, A. Wilson, M. Roberts*

*Number of Scholars : 112*

*Teachers : 13, plus 3 reserves*

*Cradle Roll : 11 Members. Babies who receive birthday cards until old enough to attend school.*

*Two Leper Boys : One in Mandalay, and one in Hong Kong have been adopted by the School.*

*Flannelgraphs are used frequently.*

*Classes take turns each week in conducting the school : one scholar acting as Chairman ; one scholar leading in prayer and reading the scripture. Occasional solos and duets.*

*Family Services are held periodically.*

*Social Hour during week (October—March) for both Seniors and Juniors, organised by Mrs. Howells assisted by the Teachers.*

*Many a special service when the children have taken part will remain in our minds for the rest of our days. We are greatly indebted to the teachers who have and still do give of their time and talents to prepare lessons from Sunday to Sunday.*



*Christmas C 1994*

Today our pupils are few in number, however they still enjoy a similar mix of activities to the pupils who were here 100 years ago, and contribute on a regular basis to the Sunday services. We hope and pray that the vestry might once again be full as we move forward into the next one hundred years in faith, and extend our grateful thanks to Jenny Andrews and Stella Phillips for all their hard work and perseverance.



## Sunday School Superintendents 1939 - 2008

Mr. G. Owen  
Mrs. O. Richards  
Mrs. T.D. Williams  
Mrs. A. Howells  
Mrs. S. Coldrick  
Mrs. J. Evans  
Mrs. V. Willetts  
Mrs. A. Toms  
Mrs. P. Roberts  
Mrs. J. Andrews

### Child Sponsorship

Bethel Sunday School has a long standing tradition of supporting children less fortunate than themselves. As reported above, fifty years ago it is recorded that two leper boys were being sponsored. In 1977 Mr. Elwyn Evans began to sponsor a child via the Child Sponsorship Scheme run by the Bible Lands Society. The children of the Bible Lands have suffered greatly as a result of economic, social and political conditions and many of them are deprived of a normal home life. Others are disadvantaged mentally or physically and need special care and attention. All of the schools assisted by the Society are Christian led, but, children are accepted on the basis of need only, irrespective of race or religion. The children sponsored have mainly been pupils at the Armenian Evangelical Guertmenian School, which was founded in 1931.

Mr. Evans helped Sunday School pupils raise funds for these children by organizing jacket potato lunches. As his successor in this project Mrs. Toms worked hard to arrange events such as carol singing and a sponsored walk.

Today the project is overseen by Gaynor Edwards, who has followed the long standing tradition of giving church members regular updates

on the child's progress and sending Christmas cards and small gifts to the children. She too has organized fund raising events in the form of concerts and Christmas Bazaars.

Children Sponsored: 1977 - Eva, 1981 - Tamar, 1986 - Rita, 1999 - Tsoler, 2007 - Palig.

#### Bethel Choir

During 1983, with Rev. B. G. Willetts as pastor a choir was established at Bethel. The choir was initially made up of Bethel members and conducted by Mr. Toms. Soon friends from neighbouring chapels joined and assisted the choir in performing a variety of songs and also more challenging ventures, such as small musicals. One of the most memorable concerts was the performance of the Easter Musical, "Then came Sunday...". The main conductor during this period was Mr. Aneurin Lewis and the accompanist Mrs. Susan Williams.

#### Fellowship Meetings

Regular prayer/bible study meetings have always been held at Bethel. The success of any church depends on its "power house" - the prayer meeting. At present a Fellowship meeting is held on a Tuesday night and on a Wednesday afternoon, these meetings are led by a church officer or member. During these meetings Bible study and prayer help to guide and build the church.

#### Charitable Work - Baptist Missionary Society

BMS World Mission is a Christian mission organisation, working in around 40 countries on four continents. It was founded by William Carey in 1792 and has longstanding relationships with partner organisations, umbrella mission agencies and local church unions in the countries in which it works. At Bethel our support of the BMS is consistent, and takes place mainly through the distribution of collection globes and church donations



In addition to supporting the BMS as a Church, we also support the Leprosy Mission and Christian Aid, as well as many other worthwhile causes.

### Church Legacies

During Bethel's first century many, many families have made generous donations in memory of loved ones who have been loyal church members. Some families have made specific requests to use the money to buy something to place in the chapel as a constant reminder to that family of days gone by.

Rose Bowl -	Lorna Griffiths
Lecterns -	Rev. H. Bartlett
Communion Chairs -	Mr. R. Shailer
Organ Hymn Books -	Mr. W. B. Williams (the Pearl)
	Mr. Perkins' parents
Communion Table -	Mrs. E. M. Jones
Communion Cups -	Mr. E. Evans
Portable Communion Set -	Mrs. E. M. Jones
Communion Cabinet -	Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Griffiths
Hymn Number Board -	Mr. & Mrs. Jack Mathias, Hamilton Street
Communion Trays -	The Choir of Haymakers, J. Lewis Jones, Conductor, Morgan James, Secretary
Chapel Clock -	Francis James Harries & Mary Anne Harries
Bibles -	Mrs. A. Howells, Mrs. M. Jones' parents, John John, Iscoed, Llanychaer, Mrs. Price, Mr. Perkins' parents, Mr. E. Evans
Pulpit Bible -	Mr. O. Ayres & Mrs A. Ayres

## Bethel Baptist Church - A Personal Journey.

My first memory of attending Sunday School is being transfixed by the bulging of the back of Mr. Perkins' neck in front of me, as he led the singing from the front seat with enough gusto for all of us put together! I later, along with many, learned to admire his weekly buttonhole, and, as the years went by, was privileged to accompany him as he sang with great reverence some of his favourite hymns, such as "Hold, thou my hand," to the tune Rhys, and "The Old Rugged Cross".

Many of my earliest memories are formed by my close relationship with my grandmother and her love of singing. She seemed to me to sing continuously, whether she was walking to "Strawbridge's" to pick up a "Batch", or doing a mound of ironing. It is probably her love of singing that has led me to occupy the organ seat for some 27 years on and off! As the Annual Haverfordwest Singing Festival approached she would cajole me into helping her practise the hymns which she loved. At the age of seven or eight it was "Just play this one..... now let's try this one....", as you can imagine, I soon became a good sight reader!

At around this age I can first remember Rev. Bartlett as my minister. I can't say that I hold any particular memories of this period, however, when he returned in 1987, I, as all who knew him, grew to love and respect him as a quiet, calm and wise gentleman, with a keen sense of humour. I am also the privileged owner of one of Mrs. Bartlett's water colour paintings.

Mrs. Coldrick was my Sunday School superintendent and led our classes with a very thorough approach. It is her I have to thank for giving me the opportunities to build my confidence through encouraging me to stand out the front and recite or sing in a group. She worked hard to provide me with a suitable poem or reading for every church occasion, and also helped us to present many memorable Christmas dramas.

As I approached my teenage years some members of the Sunday



School formed a guitar group, which we named the B.B.G.G, or Bee Gees! This stood for "Bethel Baptist Guitar Group"! We were called upon to entertain at chapels and old peoples' homes, and, of course, induction services.

I don't think I realized that Church life could be quite so lively until the arrival of Rev. Willetts and family in 1981. In the words of Mrs. Jones, the secretary at the time, "in walked a young man, full of joy and full of spirit". Many changes were made to chapel life during this time, we formed a choir and fundraised to buy a new organ which was put into a new position, a flower festival and jacket potato lunches were held, and the baptismal pool was heated sufficiently to persuade me to get into it!

It was during the 1980s that I became aware of the presence of Mr. Elwyn Evans. I always think of him when I play the hymn "Take my life", as he would always refer to this as the "Treasurer's hymn", due to the words, "Take my Silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold." If anybody lived out the words of this hymn, he did. Mr. Evans, or "Skip" as he was fondly known, was generous with both his time and money, and we have him to thank for the careful handling of the finances of the church through difficult times. He was a keen gardener, and something of an expert on Fuschias, his hanging baskets were superb and often adorned the chapel during the summer months, being replaced by fresh versions when dead heading was required.

When I left Bethel to go to college in 1987, members such as our dedicated secretary at the time, Lorna Griffiths encouraged me with my studies, always showing interest in my activities. Lorna was a member whose quiet strength and time commitment led Bethel forward for a number of years.

Sadly, during this time, one of the Church's deacons lost a ten year battle with Leukemia. Ron Shailer was respected not only for his courage, faced with deteriorating health and continuous medical treatment, but also for the way in which he gave courage to others through his firm Christian beliefs.



Returning from college gave me the privilege of working along side Mrs. Toms, in the place where I feel most comfortable, the Sunday School. Her preparation was thorough and meticulous, she refused to use the photocopier and would handwrite several copies of songs or verses in preparation for weekly services!

Also on my return, I was able to become involved once more in the District Singing Festival, joining the committee with my mother and, along with Jenny Andrews and members of other churches, helping to develop the children's festival into a more modern format, "Crazy Praise".

Mr. Douglas Lloyd is one of the members whose treasured memory is still very much alive in many of our hearts. He was well loved by adults and children alike, with his pocket full of sweets for the Sunday School and his "down home" accent. One of his favourite hymns, like many of us, was "How Great Thou Art". There was no pomp or ceremony about Doug, but what he did, he did from the heart.

As a small band of members today, we try to pull together and share the load, a load at present, with no minister, borne by the deacons, Mrs. Eluned Vaughan, Mrs. Jean Shailer, Mr. Ivor Thomas, Mrs. Jean Nicholas and Mr. Ken Slatter. At this time of celebration we offer our grateful thanks to these dedicated people for not only keeping the doors of Bethel open, but making sure that there is life inside. There are also many other members of our fellowship who are not deacons, but who help to share the work and whose care and concern for others makes Bethel the warm and welcoming environment that it is today. If the definition of the word "Church" is "a body of people", then without you we have no church.

Of course, where there is a Church with no minister, there is inevitably a secretary holding the fort, a role at present held by my mother, Jean Nicholas, following in her father's footsteps, Mr. Byron Griffiths. My grandfather I sadly do not remember, however the type of man that he was became obvious to me even as a child when watching people's faces as they talked so fondly of him. Today I am fortunate to be able to read his careful script in the Church log book.



and learn of the way he powerfully led meetings in prayer.

As a child, for me, coming to Sunday School, or not, was not an option. My mother insisted that I, along with my brother and my sister, and many others, had Sunday shoes, a Sunday coat and Sunday dresses, shirts, ties etc.. By the time these items were considered fit for daily wear they were too small for me anyway! I'm so glad that the dress code is now more relaxed, both for the sake of my children and my pocket! Of course it wasn't only our clothes which had to be perfect, my sister and I often joke of the hours spent on a Saturday night with curlers in our hair and a bag on our head, attached by a long plastic tube to one of the first portable hair dryers ever invented!

I very rarely missed a Sunday as a child, I can remember vividly the feeling of horror at being told to stay home one Sunday morning. The fact of the matter was I had just fainted as my mother, in the process of removing a thorn from my thumb, had dug the needle a little too deeply and knocked me out cold with the pain! When I came round, I was quite indignant that I should have to miss Sunday School and the all important attendance mark! As with many people I'm sure, it is my mother, along with my father and the rest of my family, whose ear is ever open and whose words of encouragement help to keep me focused on the way ahead.

In looking back at the hard work accomplished by our forefathers, we are grateful for their vision, their dedication and their commitment. Looking forward, we must try and emulate that same vision, as we learn to appreciate that with faith, each day we can create history which will formulate the proud reflections of the next generation.

I hope that by sharing my memories with you, I have helped to prepare the way forward into the next 100 years, not just for me and you, but for my children, your children, our grandchildren.....

"I can do all things through Him who gives me strength"  
Philippians, Ch.4 V.13

Amanda Lawrence April 2008

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