

Dewi Sant Welsh United Church

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Neges y Gweinidog A Message from Minister

Greetings to you all as we enter the period known as Lent. I would like to take the opportunity to present a short explanation of the background and meaning of Lent to you in this month's message. I decided that I would do this as the result of a conversation I had recently with a friend who believed that Lent was all about eating pancakes, hot cross buns and Easter eggs, something to do with ashes and giving up smoking for a few weeks and praying more than we usually do. I hope that you will be bored with this message, simply because you, unlike my friend, already DO know some if not all about Lent.

Historically the season of Lent has not been well observed in Protestant Churches, largely because it was associated with "high church" liturgical worship that some churches were eager to reject. However by today it has become more fashionable to observe the period in more and more churches. Christians observe Lent, the forty-day period before Easter beginning on Ash Wednesday, ending at Good Friday. Participants try to imitate Jesus, who spent forty days in the desert in prayer and fasting before beginning his public ministry. Observing Lent helps us to cultivate the spiritual discipline that Jesus showed whilst he was in the desert, and we do this by giving up something we value or habitually use for a short period of time. This act is a two-edged sword because it also makes us aware of the fact that there are so many people who have less than we do – and so we 'count our blessings' by voluntarily going without, and so act just like and feel like others who are forced to go without through necessity or circumstance.

Even more to the point, by going without things that take up our time and effort we make time to seek the REALLY important things in life, the things that give our lives true value. Time wasted watching television can be used to connect with family and friends, for example. Not such a bad idea, I would suggest. Yes, it is a time when we try to be more 'like Jesus'. And the surprising thing is that once we try, we tend to carry on doing those 'habitual good things' even when the 'trial' period is officially over and we are free to go back to our old ways.

I am sure that there is a message there somewhere!

Have a blessed Lent, my friends, and a fulfilling Easter as a result.

Bendithion, **Deian**

Pre-Lenten Festivals

Although originally of pagan content, the traditional carnival celebrations which precede Lent in many cultures have become associated with the season of fasting if only because they are a last opportunity for excess before Lent begins. The most famous of pre-Lenten carnivals in the West is Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras (literally "Fat Tuesday").

Fasting and abstinence. Fasting during Lent was more severe in ancient times than today. Socrates Scholasticus reports that in some places, all animal products were strictly forbidden, while others will permit fish, others permit fish and fowl, others prohibit fruit and eggs, and still others eat only bread. In some places, believers abstained from food for an entire day; others took only one meal each day, while others abstained from all food until 3 o'clock. In most places, however, the practice was to abstain from eating until the evening, when a small meal without meat or alcohol was eaten.

During the early Middle Ages, meat, eggs and dairy products were generally prescribed. Thomas Aquinas argued that "they afford greater pleasure as food [than fish], and greater nourishment to the human body, so that from their consumption there results a greater surplus available for seminal matter, which when abundant becomes a great incentive to lust."

However, dispensations for dairy products were given, frequently for a donation, from which several churches are popularly believed to have been built, including the "Butter Tower" of the Rouen Cathedral. In Spain, the bull of the Holy Crusade (renewed periodically after 1492) allowed the consumption of dairy products^[9] and eggs during Lent in exchange for a contribution to the conflict.

Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales* reports that "in Germany and the arctic regions," "great and religious persons," classified the tail of beavers as "fish" because of its superficial resemblance to a fish and their relative abundance. In current Western societies the practice is considerably relaxed, though in the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches abstinence from the above-mentioned food products is still commonly practiced, meaning only vegetarian meals are consumed during this time in many Eastern countries. Lenten practices (as well as various other liturgical practices) are more common in Protestant circles than they once were. In the Roman Catholic Church it is tradition to abstain from meat from Ungulates (meaning roughly "being hooved" or "hooved animal") every Friday for the duration of Lent, although dairy products are still permitted. On Ash Wednesday it is customary to fast for the day, with no meat, eating only one full meal, and if necessary, two small meals also. Current fasting practice in the Roman Catholic Church binds persons over the age of eighteen and younger than fifty-nine (Canon 1252). Pursuant to Canon 1253, days of fasting and abstinence are set by the national Episcopal conference. On days of fasting, one eats only one full meal, but may eat two smaller meals as necessary to keep up one's strength. The two small meals together must sum to less than the one full meal. Parallel to the fasting laws are the laws of abstinence. These bind those over the age of fourteen. On days of abstinence, the person must not eat meat or poultry. According to canon law, all Fridays of the year, Ash Wednesday and several other days are days of abstinence, though in most countries, the strict requirements of abstinence have been limited by the bishops (in accordance with Canon 1253) to the Fridays of Lent and Ash Wednesday. On other abstinence days, the faithful are invited to perform some other act of penance.

Many modern Protestants consider the observation of Lent to be a choice, rather than an obligation. They may decide to give up a favorite food or drink (e.g. chocolate, alcohol) or activity (e.g., going to the movies, playing video games, etc.) for Lent, or they may instead take on a Lenten discipline such as devotions, volunteering for charity work, and so on. Roman Catholics may also observe Lent in this way in addition to the dietary restrictions outlined above, though observation is no longer mandatory under the threat of mortal sin. Many Christians who choose not to follow the dietary restrictions cite 1 Timothy 4:1-5 which warns of doctrines that "forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth." **Liturgical year**

Holy Week and the season of Lent, depending on denomination and local custom, end with Easter Vigil at sundown on Holy Saturday or on the morning of Easter Sunday. It is custom for some churches to hold sunrise services which include open air celebrations in some places. In the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and many Anglican churches, the altar linens and priest's vestments are violet during the season of Lent. On the fourth Sunday in Lent, rose-coloured vestments may be worn in lieu of violet. In some Anglican churches, a type of unbleached linen or muslin known as Lenten array is used during the first three weeks of Lent, and crimson during Passiontide. On holy days, the colour proper to the day is worn.

Myfanwy.

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U C W

Merched Y Capel.

Well here are the ladies all ready to go for the 2009 season.

First of all thanks to all the faithful ladies and gents who unfailingly provide tea and goodies after the worship services on Sundays. It is a fairly easy task and there are always people ready to help with good advice etc. You do need to provide **milk** and **cream**, and whatever you'd like to bring for a snack.—it does not have to be elaborate.

On Sundays when there is a Welsh language service in the morning **two ladies** will to make that tea. For the second set of tea we need **others**. They will find that the cups are out and the kettles simmering. That is of great help. Once a year should do it if everyone who is able, pitch in to help.

Thank you----**Myfanwy and Joy.**

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Spring Sale. May 23, 2009 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

We have decided to change the format slightly. This Spring we are concentrating mainly on baked goods, jams , preserves etc.. Gaynor Mc Connell will once again coordinate this stall. We are asking for gently used china, figurines etc, knitted goods, Welsh goods including tapes etc. Tables are available for a small fee.

We do not want any clothes or electrical goods. There will **not** be a white elephant stall this time.

When you bring in your donations please put your names on the bags, boxes etc.

It is very labour intensive and frustrating to have to take car loads of damaged goods etc. to the dump

There will be a raffle, so if you have something to donate for that we would be thankful.

The Spring Sale coordinator will be **Nina Smith Morris Tel: 416-488-6445**

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**Wanted**

The knitters of Dewi Sant have run out of wool. As you know, we knit baby blankets for the Women's Abuse Centre and lap blankets for the Carefree Seniors' Home. We are desperately in need of four-ply wool. Could you please help us? If you have any wool available or if you would care to contribute to purchasing more wool, please contact me through the Church." Thank you **Catherine Otley.**

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**Good Friday**

The U C W ladies will be serving a **hot** home cooked dinner between the afternoon worship service and the Annual Gymanfa Ganu. We will be making all out effort to see that you get a good hot meal, and **plenty** of it. There will also be a delicious Sherry trifle afterwards!

We are charging \$12 for the meal, which you would not be able to get in the local restaurants at that price. We are encouraging you all to eat with us that afternoon. Know that you are also supporting Dewi Sant when you do so. Tickets are being sold in advance to help us cater realistically for you. Get your tickets from Maureen Davies, Myfanwy Bajaj and the church office. Please support us rather than the local restaurants.

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*One year, a husband decided to buy his mother-in-law a Cemetery plot as a Christmas gift. The next year, he didn't buy her a gift. When she asked him why, he replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year!" And that's how the fight started.*













