

THE ASSISTANT PASTOR

April 2024



Volume 66 Number 4



FROM THE
PASTOR

Help is Here

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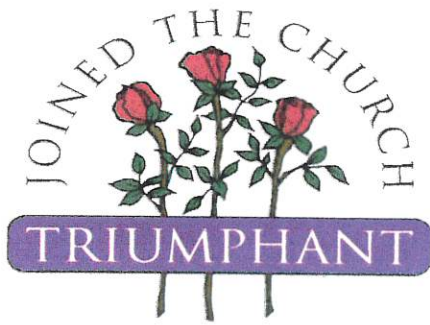
I will send you the helper from the Father. The helper is the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father. When he comes he will tell you about me. And you will tell people about me too, because you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27)

A young man applied for a job, but the potential employer said, "I'm sorry, we don't need much help." This did not deter the candidate who replied, "that's OK, I wouldn't be much help." Ha! Human resource workers will admit that good help is hard to find. When our struggles increase, we often have two problems - 1) we don't like to admit that we need help and 2) good help is hard to find. Well-meaning friends and family don't always bring us the help we need. But I have good news for all of us - help is here in the person of the Holy Spirit! We can face life's challenges with the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Help is Here" is the title of my five week sermon series, starting April 14th and ending on Pentecost Sunday, May 19th. We will be addressing how the Holy Spirit is a helper. Life's transitions can be painful. Bills pile up. Savings accounts go down. Marriages go south. Pandemics rage. Max Lucado writes, "suddenly you feel powerless to calm life's chaos. It's all too much to take on by yourself."

However, as people of faith, we can benefit from the Holy Spirit being with us. A. W. Tozer wrote, "Pentecost did not come and go - Pentecost came and stayed." Every day can be a little Pentecost as we live in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Tozer went on, "our insensibility to the presence of the Spirit is one of the greatest losses that our unbelief and preoccupation have cost us. We have made Him a tenet of our creed, we have enclosed him in a religious word, but we have known Him little in personal experience." Sadly, Tozer's indictment is right on target for most Christians. I'd like to see that oversight corrected. After all, since God is omnipresent, help is not simply on the way, help is here already.

In Christ's Love
Pastor Mo



Monetta Lloyd

April 23, 1929 – March 7, 2024

Monetta L. Lloyd 94, passed away at Kessler Estates on March 7, 2024. She was born in Rimer, Ohio to the late Rollie and Mildred (Deffenbaugh) Bushong on April 23, 1929. She graduated from Vaughnsville High School and went on to marry Ronald R. Lloyd (deceased) of Gomer, Ohio on June 15, 1951. Survivors include their children, Barbara Lloyd, Thomas Lloyd, Nancy (Allen) Clum and Bruce (Vi) Lloyd, 10 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her brother, Lane (Nancy) Bushong and her sister-in-law, Joan Thomas, as well as many beloved nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brothers, Wilton and Herbert (Alice) Bushong, as well as her close friend, Gordon Best.

Monetta was a farm wife who loved to dabble in many things. She drove bus for several school districts including Elida and Apollo and truly loved the relationships she developed with her 'kids'. She was a member of the Gomer Congregational Church and adopted the Welsh love for music, directing the junior choir as well as singing in the senior choir. She enjoyed performing as well as creating programs for the church. She also enjoyed writing poetry and painting and even published a small booklet of some of her favorite poems and artwork. Pie baking was another specialty with people often requesting her prize-winning apple or butter-scotch pies. With her larger-than-life personality, she did not know a stranger and volunteered her help countless times. At Kessler Estates she served as an ambassador and worked to help new residents feel welcome and at home. She was often the life of the party and will be remembered fondly and with a laugh by family and friends.



- | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Apr. 7 | Kim & Bob Roethlisberger | Zoey Diller |
| Apr. 14 | George & Hope Diller | Emma Larimore |
| Apr. 21 | Louie & Jan Siefker | Carson Sunderland |
| Apr. 28 | Brian & Rachel Baker | Morgan Thomas |
| May 4 | Dave & Pam Smith | Rayna Ogle |
| May 12 | Larry & Deb Stewart | Kennedy Larimore |
| May 19 | Brooks Flinn & Martha Britt | Beckett Sunderland |
| May 26 | Willard & Betty Metzger | Beth Ogle |
| June 2 | Bruce & Vi Lloyd | Norah Baker |
| June 9 | Steve & Dina Tadena | Zoey Diller |
| June 16 | Bill Askins and Lori Crider | Emma Larimore |
| June 23 | Cheyenn & Dian Ridley | Carson Sunderland |
| June 30 | Ron & Denise Meyers | Morgan Thomas |



Remember Our Shut-ins

Joan Thomas – The Meadows of Kalida, 755 Ottawa St., Kalida, OH 45853

Bob Jones – Primrose Retirement Community, 3500 W. Elm St. Room 120, Lima, OH 45807

Linda Alger – Wingate, 1070 Gloria Ave. Room 133, Lima, OH 45805

“Do something you really love in the most adventurous place you can and make sure it helps other people.”—Diane Sawyer

The following article appeared in the Ninnau, The North American Welsh Newspaper, March 2024.

Gomer is Singing Again in 2023!

by Michael Hieber

Welsh hymns rung out from the russet-red brick Gomer Congregational Church during their 106th Anniversary *Gymanfa Ganu* this past October 1st. The balmy Sunday evening found a good crowd of enthusiastic singers coming together again for an event this church is so clearly proud of.

Gomer is a pleasant, well-kept town in northwest Ohio, ten miles NW of Lima (pronounced lime – a, not like Lima, Peru). The town was founded by three Welsh families, the Roberts, Watkins, and Nicholas, in 1833 and was laid out in 1850, to then become for decades one of the hubs of the Welsh community in America. It lies on the axis of Gomer Road and the famous old Lincoln Highway, one of the first transcontinental highways in the U.S. designed expressly for automobiles. Formally dedicated in 1913, it runs coast-to-coast from Times Square, New York to Lincoln Park, San Francisco, transversing 14 states for 3,389 miles. Other than its long-standing *Gymanfa Ganu*, another of Gomer's claims to fame came on October 28, 1939, when Admiral Richard E. Byrd's Antarctic Snow Cruiser drove off a small bridge on the Lincoln Highway into a stream just east of Gomer. It made national news and within three days, 125,000 people came to see the crash site.

Paraphernalia of this event but primarily an array of Welsh-related items are on exhibit in the lovely white clapboard house museum directly across the street from Gomer Congregational Church. (Gomer Welsh Community Museum - 419/642-5405). (More about the museum in the July 2023 WNAA *Ffwril* Newsletter)

The evening was dedicated to the loving memory of long-term church member and supporter Teresa Barnes. Martha Britt set the mood with her organ prelude of Varner's arrangement of *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*. Pastor Maurice Dunn gave the Invocation followed by a special welcome sung by Martin Thomas and Tim Larimore.

We'll Keep a Welcome

Far away a voice is calling; Bells of memory chime; Come home again, come home again; They call through the oceans of time.

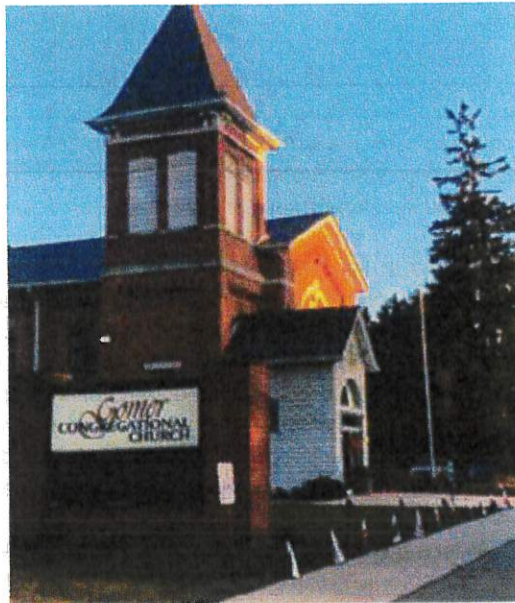
We'll keep a welcome in the hillside; We'll keep a welcome in the Vales; This land you knew will still be singing. When you come home again to Wales.

This land of song will keep a welcome; And with a love that never fails; We'll kiss away each hour of hiraeth; When you come back home to Wales.

We'll keep a welcome in the hillside; We'll keep a welcome in the Vales; This land you knew will still be singing.

When you come home again to Wales.

Gomer's *Gymanfa Ganu* traditionally starts with the Star-Spangled Banner, and rousing four-part harmony is evident from the opening chords, which continued with their traditional opening hymn of *Rachie* (1). Formal introductions followed from the Church Moderator, Sue Grusenmeyer. The guest conductor was Truman Littler, the organ accompanist Martha Britt, and the two pianists,



Gomer Congregational Church

Joyce Larimore and Sue Grusenmeyer.

Truman Littler came to the stage saying how very honored he was to be asked to lead this *Gymanfa Ganu*, his very first, after being a part of the special music presentations in 2022. Mr. Littler is the choir director at nearby Elida Middle School and recently served as Assistant Director of the Stambaugh Chorus of Youngstown, OH. Hymn Set One included *Diadem* (14), *Milwaukee* (6), *Calon Lon* (66), and *Bryn Calfarfa* (3).

For many years, at this time in the evening, former long-time church member and enthusiastic Welsh American Ross Thomas reveled in singing the Welsh National Anthem in both Welsh and English. His son Martin Thomas has filled this role admirably since the passing of Ross in late 2021 carrying on the family tradition by singing *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*. The group 4 *Praising* (Cathy Woodard, Kevin Reeks, Deb Imbrock, and Truman Littler) then graced us with a very moving, beautifully harmonized acapella special number, a version of "Precious Lord, Take My Hand".

Mr. Littler moved from this to lead Hymn Set Two which started off with *Deemster* (29) and *Huddersfield*, two Gomer favorites. The set was completed with *Rhosymedre* (4) and *Penpark* (26). During the Offertory, Martha Britt impressively played Perk's "Celtic Blessing" which had a great pedal part. The Memorial Hymn was *Sandon* (27).

A unique, long-standing tradition at Gomer is to ask partici-

pants to identify where they have come from for the event. Over the years, this has ranged from as near as Gomer and Venedocia to as far as California and Wales. After this geographic rollcall, the final set of hymns consisted of *Blodwen* (60), *Pen Y Byrn* (46), *Arghwydd, Dyma Fi* (96), and *Cwm Rhondda* (40). Pastor started the closing of the events with a Benediction, followed by everyone singing *Parting Hands* (117) and concluded with an Organ Postlude by Martha Britt of Phillips' "Postlude on Amazon".

It should be noted that considering this was Truman Littler's first conducting of a *Gymanfa Ganu*, he did an exceptional job of honoring the tradition and helped foster the *hwyl* that was felt throughout the evening. It was evident that he enjoyed the experience as well, as at one point early on he commented about how good the part singing was, which is something he tries to teach in his youth choirs. At another point he mentioned how he appreciated the attentiveness of the singers to his directions, as this was something he could not always count on in his role working with youth.

In an energized two-hour timeframe, we sang 19 hymns (including every verse and frequent repeated refrains), two anthems, hear stirring special music, and had personalized moments that all added up to an enriching experience. *Diolch yn fawr* to Mr. Littler and to all those many contributors from the Gomer Congregational Church and community who helped make this such a fine night of singing and worship.



Gomer Museum



The Welsh Society of Northwest Ohio will hold a Ladies Tea on Sunday May 5th from 3-4:30 PM in the fellowship hall of Gomer Congregational Church. LuAnn Everett, a long-time collector of

vintage clothing will present "The Secret World of Ladies Unmentionables." Everett will have samples of the types of undergarments worn by women in the past. She will also explain the "multi-layered" and lengthy process involved in a lady's attire. Bring a tea cup and join us for the traditional Welsh Tea. Cost is \$10.00 and reservations can be made by contacting Deb Thomas at 419-230-4344 or Sue Grusenmeyer at 419-236-0289.

Blessed are you

The Beatitudes receive little attention, lamented novelist Kurt Vonnegut. "But, often with tears in their eyes, [Christians] demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And, of course, that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard [anyone] demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere." Jesus' Beatitudes have much to teach about selflessness, mourning, peacemaking and more. Jim Berger, author of *Being Sermon on the Mount Christians*, explains that those teachings were once "viewed as a mandate for the faithful." Post-Reformation, they became less law-like and more of a "liberating directive." Berger writes, "For Jesus, being and doing are inseparable. The Sermon is at once theory and praxis. It is not enough to read it or hear it. Jesus intends it to be how we live."



There will be a clean-up day at the church on Sat., April 6 at 10:00am. The rain date is April 13 at 10:00am.



**Saturday, April 20
4:30 to 6PM**

**At Gomer Congregational Church
7350 Gomer Road
Carryout only Tickets \$12
For tickets call 419-642-2681**

Dinner includes half a barbecued chicken by Chuffers, green beans, applesauce, roll and butter and homemade cookies



The staff and students of Heritage Elementary would like to thank you for all the food you donated to our school food pantry. Your kindness and generosity is greatly appreciated.

With love,
Heritage Elementary Staff and Students

The family of Monetta Lloyd would like to thank everyone who helped in some way with the service for our mother. It takes many people to make things run smoothly and we appreciate your efforts. A special thank you to those who provided food after the service. Mom loved her church family and we appreciate your help in honoring her.



The Stewardship Committee has selected Family Promise for the April project.



Trustees Meeting

MARCH 2024

Members present: Matt Nusbaum, Jim Siefker, Bob Ritchey, Deb Thomas, Bob Roethlisberger, Jeff Weis.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman, Matt Nusbaum. Pastor Dunn led the group in prayer, giving recognition to victims of the recent tornado in the area. He quoted scripture and provided a Lenten lesson on love, noting that Love is a creative affinity and a powerful predictor of our eternal destiny.

The March financial report was presented by Dina Tadana. A motion to accept the report was made and approved.

Bob Ritchey reported that County Electric was called and disconnected the old heating system timers.

Bob also reported that an estimate had been given for repair of the electric sign in front of church. A quote of \$21,790.00 for small replacement repair and \$25,490.00 for maximum total repair. No motion followed.

Date for Spring Clean of outside church and parsonage was set for April 6 at 10:00 a.m. with a rain date of April 13.

Matt reported that a thorough inspection was made of the stain glass windows and that they were deemed in terrific shape. Recommendations were made for future ventilation and repainting of certain areas with a quote forthcoming. Replacement of some caulk was also recommended but they were given a clean bill of health!

NEW BUSINESS

Officers for the new church year were assigned. Matt Nusbaum will remain as Chair, Jim Siefker will be Vice-Chair and Deb Thomas is continuing as Secretary. A motion was made and approved. Matt noted that he felt it had been an exceptional year for the church and appreciated the cooperation and efforts involved by all the Trustees and members of the Church.

The members of the library remodel committee

were recognized and appreciation given for their efforts. They were Sue Grusenmeyer, Hope Diller, Donna Martin, Deb Thomas, and Bob Roethlisberger. Additional efforts were given by Carol Sunderland as the new Church Librarian. The dedication of newly remodeled Library will take place on Sunday, May 5th.

Bob Ritchey presented the option for getting quote on new door closure for back door near kitchen area. Motion was made and passed for this to occur.

The motion to adjourn was presented and passed.

Respectfully submitted

Deb Thomas Secretary

Mighty metaphor machine

While moving to a new parish, Rev. Watt A. Hardworker lost his metaphor machine. His friend, Rev. Hesa Goodpastor, wondered how Watt could preach without metaphors. Another pal, Rev. Bloomingwhere I.M. At, remarked, "There isn't enough skill in all of us clergy to preach week after week without some metaphors! The 'Old, Old Story' has been told so often that people tune it out without metaphors to help them hear it afresh." He suggested organizing a metaphor collection to sustain Watt.

Hesa was open to the idea but worried that, with Easter approaching, Watt would be at a total loss. "What a catastrophe, especially starting out in a new church," said Bloomingwhere. "How can the poor pastor possibly preach Easter without any metaphors?"

Hesa added, "No 'butterflies emerging from the cocoon,' no 'awakening of daffodil bulbs after the long winter,' no 'flight of the Phoenix,' no 'resurrection as an image for a fresh start.'"

"He'll be left with nothing to say but that Jesus arose from the grave," Bloom exclaimed. "Just imagine!" —Stan Purdum

Congratulations to Micah and Ellen Brentlinger on the birth of their daughter, Roberta Lou. She was born April 21, 2024 and weighed 7lb. 1oz and was 20 3/4 long.

Proud grandmother is Carol Sunderland.



It's a Girl!

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Senior Usher



BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Bryan Evans
- 2 Sue Wannemacher
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- 3 Sue Grusenmeyer
- 5 Kimberly Stewart
- 6 Richard Bok
- 7 Brock Burden
- 9 Carol Fitzgerald
Cynthia Neubert
Brigitt Roberts
Emily Siefker Hollar
Christopher Thomas
- 11 Ethan Ballard
- 12 Katie Siefker Battershell
- 15 Joe Siefker
Darlene Herriott
Betty Fogt
- 16 Suzanne Metzger
Heather Nusbaum
- 17 Brent Lloyd
Ethan Roberts
- 18 Debora Reichert
- 22 Brionna Jackson
Jeanette Frysinger
Amy Garman
Andrew Griesdorn
- 23 Pat Kohn
Tara Roethlisberger Counts

- 24 Keisha Larimore
- 25 Steve Tadena
Virginia Bok
Kathleen Larimore
Madison Nicklaus
Chad Schwatzengraber
Sarah Wilkins
- 27 Matthew Metzger
Pam Evans
- 28 Janet May
- 29 Jennifer Nichols
Kenzie Koontz

**Penblwydd Hapus i chwi!
(Happy Birthday to you in Welsh)**

ANNIVERSARIES

- 5 Maurice & Leanne Dunn
- 17 Lisa & Michael Coonfare
- 22 Mike & Pat Kohn
- 25 Jim & Susan Siefker
- 27 Denise & Ron Myers
- 29 Heather & Dana Koontz

SPECIAL DAYS

Administrative Professionals Day, April 24, 2024
 "The cross is both the symbol of our salvation and the pattern of our lives." —Brennan Manning
 "Blossom by blossom the spring begins." —Algernon C. Swinburne



Bible Quiz



What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples — twice — when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?
 A. "Love one another as I have loved you."
 B. "Peace be with you."
 C. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."
 D. "I am risen!"

Christian symbol

VICTOR'S CROSS — Also called the conqueror's cross, the victor's cross is composed of the Greek cross, recognized by its four equal arms, adorned with Greek letters in each quadrant.
 The top left letters stand for *Jesus* and the top right letters stand for *Christ* (the horizontal lines above them indicate that they are abbreviations). The four letters across the bottom spell the Greek word for *conqueror*.



Answer: B (See John 20:19, 21.)

A wakeup call

God — let me be aware.
 Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,
 Just getting somehow safely through the days,
 Not even groping for another hand,
 Not even wondering why it all was planned,
 Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,
 Soul never aching for a wild-winged flight,
 Please, keep me eager just to do my share.
 God — let me be aware.
 God — let me be aware.
 Stab my soul fiercely with others' pain,
 Let me walk seeing horror and stain.
 Let my hands, groping, find other hands.
 Give me the heart that divines, understands.
 Give me the courage, wounded, to fight.
 Flood me with knowledge, drench me in light.
 Please — keep me eager just to do my share.
 God — let me be aware.

—Miriam Teichner

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The joy of Jesus

The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.



This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*