My Testimony of Faith by Lynette John (Neath Port Talbot Circuit)

In her on-line pastoral letter to the circuit last Sunday (July 19th) our minister, Rev. Rosemary, wrote of how Jesus never shied away from telling stories - some sad, some happy, some serious, but each one telling us that we should share our life stories with those who care to listen; (preferably before they hear them at our funerals) !

So I’d like to tell you mine (though 90 seconds isn’t nearly enough time!

I was nine when I embarked on the rocky road to discovering Jesus, God the Father, and the Spirit who was to become my Comforter and friend.

A Gospel Hall had started in our neighbourhood where we children were urged to attend. I went with an older friend who told me they gave you sweets at the end. (Well, wouldn’t *you*?)

I came home, with not only sweets, but a small booklet that took me through the simple steps in getting to know Jesus as a friend; and thankfully, long after the sweets disappeared I found I was saying my prayers, with just that tentative feeling that Jesus was a friend I just couldn’t do without. Now, at the age of seventy-one, I still feel the same (only not quite so tentative.)

I became a local preacher in my fifties, & soon after, ill-health began to follow me - two brushes with breast cancer, a hysterectomy, a bowel tumour (thankfully all with successful outcomes.)

God kept tapping me on the shoulder, to get on with what he’d asked me to do years before, and that’s been my aim ever since - to tell my story so that others can know him too.

So I did. My local preaching was a wonderful platform to announce how God had pulled me through some of my darkest moments. What more need I do - I was content.

Then, in 2014, horror struck again. I started to lose my ability to speak. ’Never mind,’ I thought, ‘I can use sign language’, and with the help of worship leaders I still managed to preach, but slowly I got worse.

In 2016 I was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. The months of tests that followed were agonizing, but I still kept calm, and knew God was working his purpose out for me - helping me cope with each step.

By 2018 I couldn’t walk, and my balance was compromised. I asked God, “Well, what now? How can you possibly use me in this feeble state?”

Still, his loving, immeasurable care endured - he has shown me that he uses *all* of us, however ‘feeble’ we think we are.

He blesses us with gifts we thought we never had - in my life I have my wonderful husband David, and my home family, a church family, and a motorised wheelchair. With modern technology I can read and write, and use a computer, so I can still communicate.

My cup overflows, and with grateful thanks I urge you to look back on your life, and with pen and paper to hand, see where God has over the years helped you over the dark days as well as the good.

I have lots to thank God for - every day. And so do you.

Write it down for everyone to know who you are and what you and God have done together.

Will you?

*A message from Neath Port Talbot circuit:*

*Although Lynette now has no speech at all, she is still on the circuit plan to lead two services each quarter. She prepares them, writes them, (including prayers) chooses the readings and hymns) Her sermons are written in the first person singular, and though they are delivered by a worship leader, they require a minimum of editing (mainly so that an elderly male preacher doesn’t speak as if he’s the mother of three daughters!)*

*The churches in the circuit are always delighted to welcome her, and enthusiastic about being involved in helping her to lead worship. Afterwards, they say almost inevitably how moving and uplifting the service has been, and that they want her to come back again.*

*But the most moving thing is always seeing Lynette herself sitting in the church, blessing everyone there with the biggest smile in the world. We are very blessed to have her.*