



the unitarians



GELLIONNEN UNITARIAN CHAPEL

HISTORY

Gellionnen Chapel was built in 1692 at a crossroads where four roads meet leading from Swansea to Brecon, and Ammanford to Neath.

It is known locally as the white chapel and is located on Mynydd Gellionnen above the Swansea Valley town of Pontardawe. Gellionnen when built consisted of the chapel only, a kitchen and toilet were added much later to bring it up to date of the time. Gellionnen has a graveyard spread around three sides of its building. There are a few notable local characters buried here providing very interesting history.

Gellionnen's position on the mountain is nothing short of awesome with views of the surrounding mountains and from the back of the chapel views towards Mumbles and Swansea Bay. The latter being a favourite of newly married couples for photographs. It is surrounded by farms where animals graze all year round so linking the chapel well and truly with the environment.

Gellionnen has a very good relationship with the residents of Pontardawe and Clydach resulting in two special services a year, where the chapel is filled to capacity.

CONGREGATION

Gellionnen has a membership of just 18 but it is hoped we can increase this number in the future. Attendances to services has been higher than this over this past year especially considering the restrictions of Covid.

When we were holding services in chapel our track and trace book showed that we were booking in 20 to 30 people each service. During lockdown our services are held over zoom, we then experience visitors from across the UK and beyond.

Our weekly services are services of celebration. We see our beliefs as relevant to all aspects of life, encompassing all religions and beliefs.

We invite speakers from all walks of life to lead our services and encourage members of our own congregation to take part or even lead services once a month when we hold a congregation service.

The age group of the congregation ranges from 2 years old to 83 years. A youth group has recently started at Gellionnen, they are already well established and have given themselves the group name of “#Blessed”. The work they undertook helping vulnerable members of the community over the Christmas period is to be commended.

We consider ourselves a family at Gellionnen, we look out for each other at all times not only on a Sunday. Our social life is active throughout the year and we take great pride in welcoming visitors into our group. Throughout the year we involve the community in walks and litter picks around the mountain. We hold Barbecues and day trips away during the summer and even indulge in a weekend away just before Christmas time. We work as a team and any decisions made involves the whole Congregation. We have an active Social Events group as well as a worship Group that discusses the future pulpit plan and the calendar of our annual services held.

We have a website with contact numbers and email addresses listed for enquiries: www.gellionnen.com. We also have a Facebook page where information of forthcoming services and events is listed.

CURRENT SERVICE PATTERNS

A Pulpit Plan is arranged and drawn up every three months. For three/four Sundays in the month a speaker is arranged and on the fourth/fifth Sunday we have a congregational service, where a member of the congregation will lead service.

Alternatively, a congregational member will open and close the service with congregation members contributing readings etc.

We have had a Student Minister this past five months and the pattern has been that of, two Sundays led by the Student Minister, one invite from outside and one Congregational service.

Gellionnen is registered for Same Sex Marriages and throughout his time at Gellionnen the Student Minister has undertaken all Rights of Passage.

We have several festivals that we celebrate with special services throughout the year: January we welcome the Mari Lwyd for the traditional New Year Celebration. We remember the dreadful happenings of the Holocaust also in January. March is Saint Davids Day, May we celebrate Pride week, August is our folk Festival when the local Pontardawe folk club join us with their instruments and voices (Gellionnen chapel is well known for its wonderful acoustics.) Remembrance Sunday is in November. This brings us to Christmas, we have a special Christmas Carol Service in December but on Christmas Eve we hold our Plygain Service, this is a candlelit service starting at 11 o'clock and finishing at midnight welcoming in Christmas day. Once again, the surrounding community join us, with their instruments and voices. The chapel is packed. This is the highlight of the year and very special.

Just the chapel, kitchen and toilet comprise our building so we do not let any part out to rent. We encourage people to come into the chapel grounds to experience the peace and tranquillity it offers. The walking groups make use of the grounds to have their lunch and in the near future it is our intention to add more benches for people to use when visiting.

EXPECTATIONS OF A MINISTER/ WHAT THE CONGREGATION SEEKS

To lead services on two Sundays a month

Pastoral care (to be discussed)

Conduct Rights of passage

Welsh Speaker preferable or advanced in learning the welsh Language.

The Basis of the Ministry would be part time at Ten Hours per week.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: Tuesday 16th March 2021