

Good things

Sept 5, 1998

come from small beginnings 150 years of Salem Presbyterian Church

By KIM KINCAID
The Lima News

VENEDOCIA—A prayer and \$5 may not seem like much, but the congregation of the Salem Presbyterian Church in this Van Wert village knows great things come from small beginnings. It was exactly that prayer and money that started their church building 100 years ago.

But the congregation is celebrating something more than just a building this year. Members are marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of the church, and in many respects, the village of Venedocia. They began the celebration in March on St. David's Day, and will conclude the special services with the annual Gymanfa Ganu on Sunday.

Wendy Pratt, pastor of the congregation, has joined a group of members on an incredible journey the past few months, delving into the roots of the church.

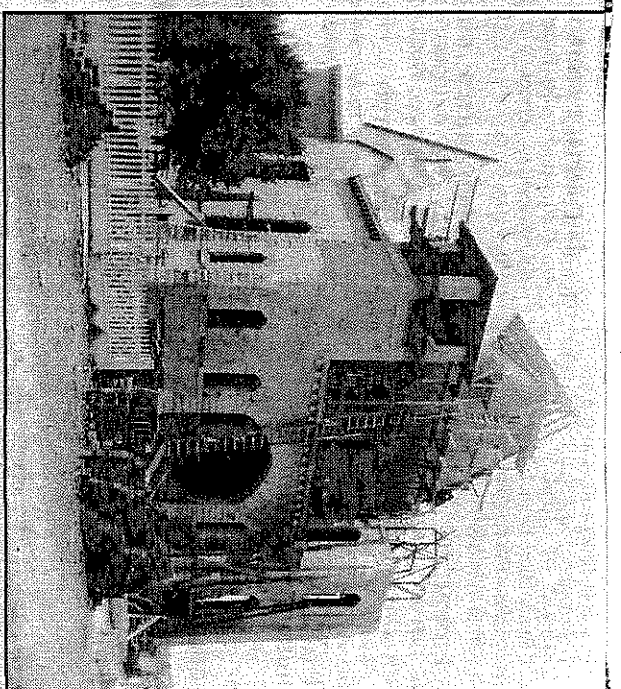
"I'm 72 years old. ... I've lived in Venedocia 70 of those years, but I've found

English. The story goes that one of the founding families, William Bebb, left Wales in a controversy over four-part music, always dear to the heart of a Welshman.

Shortly after coming to the area, in 1848, the families encouraged their families and friends in Wales to join them, which many did. Venedocia was soon solidly Welsh, with that being the predominant language of the village, and the only language in the church.

However, by 1895, an English-speaking Sunday School was organized. Members were eventually resolved to listening to one service each month in English, with the promise of the others being totally Welsh. "That was hard for many of the

members. It was a letting go of their dreams of preserving their Welsh heritage and culture."



□ Photos courtesy of Salem Presbyterian Church

The church was constructed around 1896.

SUNDAY CELEBRATION

WHAT: Annual Gymanfa Ganu

WHERE: Salem Presbyterian Church, Venedocia.

WHEN: 7 p.m. Sunday. A light supper will be served 4 to 6 p.m.

DIRECTOR: Margaret Morris-Lopez. She was raised in the local church and is the daughter of the late M. Lester and Margaret E. Morris. She now lives in New Mexico, where in 1986 she conducted the first Gymanfa Ganu there.

SOLOIST: Mike Evans, with accompaniment

By 1895, the minister in

SALEM/C9

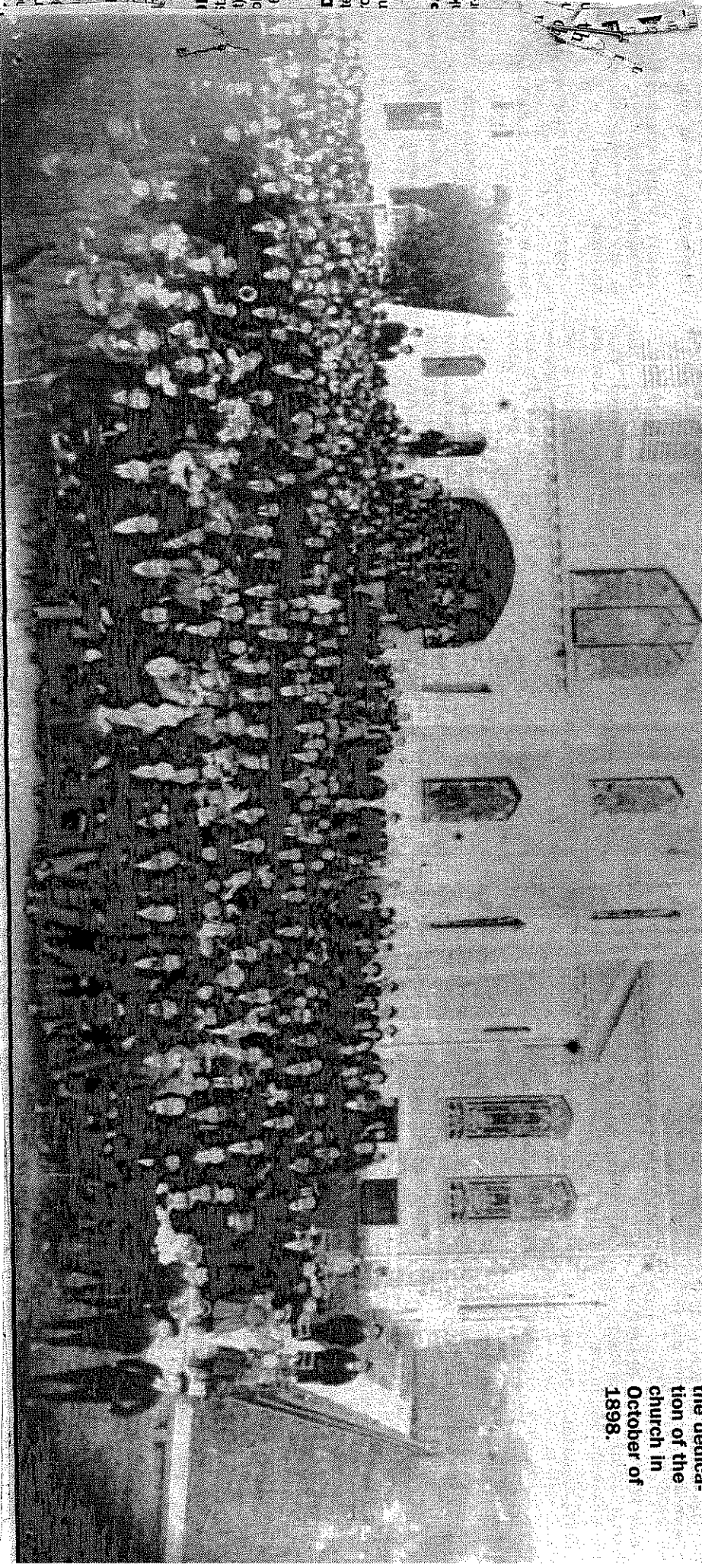
Evans, a historian on the committee. The roots of the church cannot be separated from the roots of the village. Settled by three families from Wales, the village was named Venedocia which means "North Wales."

"What impressed me most about the history of these families was that their first Sunday together in the new land, they held church services," Pratt said.

The three families had emigrated to the United States as a way of retaining their Welsh heritage, which was being threatened in their homeland by the

HISTORY: The Gymanfa Ganu tradition began in the little chapels in Wales as early as 1188 when they developed four-part harmony.

A large crowd was on hand for the dedication of the church in October of 1898.



► SALEM

rom/C7

The community realized a new chapel was needed. He later wrote that after much prayer, a visitor from Columbus handed him a \$5 bill to get the church underway.

After more prayer, the minister told the congregation to come to an evening meeting for something "the likes of which you've never seen before." That night, before a packed congregation, he preached from Haggai 1:4-8, stressing that members had to care for the house of the Lord. At the end of his sermon, he produced the \$5 bill and told members its history and how it came to the church. He then asked those present, "Should I return it or add to it?"

That night, he raised \$5,000 in pledges, with double that amount pledged two weeks later.

By 1898, that first building was dedicated. Twenty years later, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church merged, and it became the Salem Presbyterian Church.

Over the years, three other churches were spawned from the Salem Church: Zion Church, Bethel Church and Horeb Church, none of which exists today.

Salem Presbyterian Church, which anchors the village of 150, has a membership of 220, with 100 attending services weekly. The youth group includes 35 young people from four area school districts.

Pratt, who has served twenty years at the church, has used this anniversary as an opportunity to learn about her congregation. "I have really learned a lot about what makes them tick. I now have more of an appreciation and understanding of the church, especially the significance and importance of music to the people."

However, Pratt and the committee are determined not to live in the past. "Our history gives us strength to face the future. It's not just glorifying in the good old days. It's from our history that we get the confidence to face the future."

In fact, her sermon for Sunday, the culmination of their anniversary, will be "What is Our New Song?"



"CYMRY" SINGING — Welsh singing for the St. David's Day Banquet in The Salem Presbyterian Church, Venedocia, is traditionally in parts. This custom of singing in harmony originated and developed in Wales. The above picture shows the interior of the church and participants during Thursday night's program. (Staff photo)

St. David's Day celebrated

By JEANNINE C. ROEDIGER
Times-Bulletin Staff Writer

If your name's O'Malley, you've got to be Irish, and the month of March is special because of St. Patrick's Day.

But, if your name is Lloyd, Breese, Owens, Evans, Morris, Jones, Davis, Williams, or Bebb, you're Welsh and everyone who's Welsh knows that March commemorates Dewi Sant, or St. David.

St. David was born around 520 A.D. and his death is assumed to be March 1, 589 A.D., and it has been commemorated even in early liturgical calenders.

This saint was dedicated to establishing Christianity in

On or near March 1, St. David's Day has been celebrated in America since 1729, and many communities in Ohio still celebrate the day with banquets and programs. Celebrations have been recently held in Ottawa, Gomer, and Columbus.

IN 1847, the families of William Bebb of Rhiwgriafol, Darowen, N. Wales; Thomas Morris of Dolygweiddil, Trefeglwys, N. Wales; and Richard Jervis of Llanbrynmair, N. Wales, left their homeland with their families. By October of 1897, they began a journey through the Midwest, looking for a place to

Presbyterian Church of Venedocia, published in 1948, tells of life in that early community.

"AT THAT TIME the land was thick with trees, and it was wet and uninhabited. No doubt it had been the hunting ground of the Indians, and the habitation of owls, wolves, and ravenous beasts throughout the centuries. The Indians had departed for some years before we arrived, but rapacious beasts were still here, such as panthers, wolves, and wildcats.

"In regard to traveling conveniences there was no railroad within one hundred miles of us.

Wales in the early sixth century, and founded many monasteries. In 1120 A.D. he was canonized by Pope Callixtus II as the patron saint of Wales.

Wales, a small mountainous country located on the western coast of the island of Great Britain, has been part of the United Kingdom for over 400 years, but has always retained the Welsh language even though English is the official language of Wales.

settle.

They briefly stayed near Rockland, Ill., then traveled to Allen and Van Wert counties in Ohio where they purchased land in York Township in Van Wert County. This was the beginning of the community of Venedocia.

Jervis compiled and translated his recollections in 1894, (from the "Y Cyfaill," or "By a Friend") and the following excerpt taken from the Centenary History of the Salem

The only means of transporting goods to the communities was by the slow boat; and when the canal would freeze at the beginning of winter, everything had to be at a stand still until the ice would melt again.

"There was a good flour mill in Section Ten, which is Delphos today, and there were two stores and a Post Office there. When we had some butter and eggs to sell, we often took them there in a basket. It was about nine miles away, through thick forests, and along wet, winding paths.

"After we arrived there we were given five or six cents a pound for the butter, and five cents a dozen for the eggs in trade. To have any money was out of the question. When we went to the mill, we would start about noontime in order to reach there by nightfall. We would tie the horses to the wagon, and we ourselves would stay in the mill loft until next morning. The flour would be ready by the time it would be light enough for us to return home, so we could see our way through the woods. We always remembered to carry an axe along with us, in case we would want to open a new track so as to escape some of the swamps. Sometimes we ventured too much; the horses could not go on and we had to empty the wagon."

WITHIN THE NEXT few years more Welsh families arrived and the first church was established in 1853. The present church was built in 1897, and in 1918 combined with the Venedocia Presbyterian Church to become the Salem Presbyterian Church.

One only has to travel to the area to see that this Welsh community, with the names of Lloyd, Morris, Evans, etc. is still thriving.

Marvin and Eloise Evans of rural Venedocia traveled back to his homeland of Wales the summer of 1988. They described the country as "beautiful and green" and the people "friendly."

The people of the Venedocia community have retained their pride in their Welsh heritage and continue to hold a St. David's Day Banquet in March and the Gymanfa Ganu, or festival of



LEGACY OF ST. DAVID GIVEN — Dr. Dale Dickey, Bluffton College, presented a message during the St. David's Banquet in The Salem Presbyterian Church Thursday night. Above Dr. Dickey, is the Chancel Cross made entirely of wood. (Staff photos)

(Please turn to Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

sacred song, on the Sunday before Labor Day.

Many travel to other St. David celebrations and Gymanfa Ganu festivals, singing the old songs in the Welsh language.

Many Welsh communities have continued singing and speaking the Welsh language, but as Marvin Evans noted, the younger members of these communities have not learned to sing or read in Welsh, and the custom may be lost.

THE ANNUAL ST. DAVID'S Day Banquet was held Thursday evening in the Salem Presbyterian Church. The banquet, served by the ladies of the church, was attended by 120 people.

Vaughn Morgan, a member of Salem and a Van Wert County commissioner, gave the "croeso" or welcome. Morgan stated that he recalls the banquets have been held since the early 1920s and

have been a continuing tradition for the church.

Pronounced a typical group of Welshman by Morgan, the group was led in Welsh songs by Lee Lare of Venedocia. The Welsh are especially known for their singing, and this group was no exception as they keep their singing heritage alive. Writing in 1188, Giraldus, a historian of the period, spoke of the Welsh skill in vocal music, which they sing in parts, not in unison.

Mr. and Mrs. David Britt of Gomer, provided special music for the evening and Dr. Dale Dickey, a professor of Bluffton College, was the speaker.

Dr. Dickey, a supply pastor for the Presbyterian Church, called the Welsh "wonderful people" and noted the legacy left by St. David.

"ST. DAVID, he said, lived his faith, witnessed wherever he went without knowing the result, and left the rest in God's hands.

This legacy and the rich heritage of the Welsh people are revived each year as this community commemorates St. David's Day and holds the Gymanfa Ganu.

The Welsh, considered a friendly people, invite you to "Deuwch, Canwn I'r Arglwydd," or Come, Sing to the Lord, during their Gymanfa Ganu Festival and "Gaf fi ddymuno i bawb yng Ngogledd America, Dydd Gwyl Dewi Dedwydd," which means A Happy St. David's Day to all in North America!

In Praise of the Humble Leek

By Wendy Hughes

Next month we shall all be celebrating St David's Day, and again that humblest of vegetables, the leek, will be worn with pride by Welsh people throughout the world. But why is a garden vegetable one of the symbols of Wales and when and where did this tradition spring from?

The Origins

The story of the leek begins a long time ago when it was a native of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, and where it is has been cultivated since ancient times. It is thought that when the Romans invaded Britain they brought the leek through Europe into Britain. Some however say that it's connections as an emblem of Wales date back to the times of St David.

It is an extremely easy vegetable to cultivate and because of this it would have formed a major part of the staple diet of the Welsh at that time. We know that St David was a strict vegetarian, and some say that leeks became a main ingredient of his diet and the rest of the nation followed his example. At one time leeks were only available from January to March, but nowadays they are available almost all the year around. It is still used in Welsh homes today in the traditional leek and potato soup, and of course, Cawl Cennin - the traditional Welsh broth whose main ingredient is leeks.

Into Battle

Another legend claims that the leek derives from an event

when the Welsh, under King Cadwaladr went into battle and gained victory over the Saxons. Apparently during this particular battle, the Welshmen put a leek in their hats in order to distinguish themselves from their enemies, whilst others say that the actual battle took place in a field where leeks were growing, and from that day forward the Welshmen wore a leek in honour of the occasion.

Others however believe that the custom relating to the leek dates to the battle of Agincourt, which was fought on a muddy battleground, and the leek was used to identify the Welsh Archers who were covered in mud. Another suggestion is that it identified the followers of Henry Tudor, a Welshman himself, whose coat of arms consisted of the colours green and white the same as the leek. Shakespeare alleges that the wearing of the leek originated at the Battle of Crecy, and there is a relevant quotation from Henry V in the play of the same name when Fluellen says:

"Your grandfather of famous memory, an I pleased your majesty, and your great uncle, Edward, the Black Prince of Wales as I have read in the chronicles, fought a most brave battle here in France. KING: They did Fluellen!

FLUELLEN: Your Majesty says very true, if you majesty is remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow; wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps, which your Majesty knows to this hour is an honourable badge of service. I do believe your Majesty takes no scorn to wear leek upon St David's Day."

Captain Fluellen, who is a

Welsh Officer in King Henry's army is a character with a fiery temper and a thick Welsh accent, and is taunted by Pistol for wearing a leek in his hat. This quarrel provides the play with much comic relief, especially when Fluellen forces Pistol to eat the leek. 'Hence,' says Pistol, 'I am quailmish at the smell of leek.' To which Fluellen replies, 'I beseech you... at my desires, to eat, this leek.' To which he replies, 'Not for Cadwalladr and all his goats.' Then the fiery Fluellen beats him, and does not stop till Pistol has eaten and swallowed the entire leek. Even today the tradition survives amongst soldiers in the Welsh regiments who eat a raw leek on St David's Day.

The observing of St David's Day by Royalty has a long tradition. Records show that in 1492, Henry VII gave the Welshmen in his court two pounds to celebrate St David's Day, and there is also an entry in the Household Expenses of Princess Mary in 1544 which includes a gift of fifteen shillings to the Yeoman of the Guard for carrying a leek on St David's Day. It is also recorded that William III won a leek in order to 'bear his Welsh subjects company' on their special day.

Continuing The Tradition

By the 19th century headgear has changed a great deal and was not well adapted to the wearing of the leek, but the sentiment remained and branches of Welsh Friendly Societies carried gilt leeks in processions. This national emblem could



Photo courtesy David Greenslade

also be found, in brass, decorating mantelpieces in many homes throughout Wales on St David's Day.

However despite all the conflicting stories of origin and traditions the leek has remained a firm favourite with the people of Wales, and even as far back as Caxton there is a reference published in the *Manners and Customs of the Welsh*:

'The have gruel to potage, And Leeks fynde to compa page'

And in another reference:

'After meete, and after eke, Her solace is salt and Leeks.'

In the *Cambrian Biography of 1803* it was claimed that the symbol of the leek, attributed to the observance of St David's Day, probably derives from the old custom when the farmers, helping each other to plough, brought their leeks to add to the communal meal.

So whatever tradition you care to believe, the humble leek has been around for a long time and is here to stay. Over the years it has grown in popularity from its superiority in the early kitchens of the Welsh.

St. David's Day

PROGRAM



Friday, March 1, 1946

sponsored by

The Brotherhood

of the

Salem and Zion Presbyterian Churches

Venedocia, Ohio

CROESAW I DE BACH A CHYFEILLACH
Y CYMRU AR DEWI SANT.

*Mary & Gene Lewis from 3rd Avenue
give me this program*

March 1-1946
The
Brotherhood
 Program

5:30 P. M.—7:45 P. M.

DINNER

served by The Salem Women's Association

8:00 P. M.

ORGAN RECITAL

"Welsh Airs," Mrs. J. Alford Breese

"MAE HEN WLAD FY NHADAU"

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

led by Mr. J. Alford Breese

GREETINGS and INTRODUCTIONS. Mr. John E. Morgan, President

SOLO

Mr. David Erwin, Fort Wayne, Indiana

THE HONORABLE CHASE M. DAVIES

Court of Common Pleas

Cincinnati, Ohio

Alford Breese
Erwin
Chase M. Davies
Erwin

HYMN

412 (Stanzas 1 and 4)

BENEDICTION

HEN WLAD FY NHADAU

(Land Of My Fathers)

Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn anwyl i mi,
 Gwlad beidda a chantorion, enwogion o fri;
 Ei gwrol rhyfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra mad,
 Tyros ryddid collasant eu gwaed.

CHORUS:

Gwlad, Gwlad, pleidiol wyi i'm gwlad,
 Tra mor yn fur i'r bur hoff bau,
 O bydded i'r heniaith bar hau.
 The land of my fathers, the land of my choice,
 The land in which poets and minstrels rejoice;
 The land whose stern warriors were true to the core,
 While bleeding for freedom of yore.

CHORUS:

Wales! Wales! favorite land of Wales!
 While sea her wall, may naught befall
 To mar the old language of Wales.

AN EARLY HISTORY OF WALES

At the time of the coming of the Romans, in 55 B. C., the tribes inhabiting Wales were a mixture of the primitive Iberians with the later-incoming Celts. They bore the general name Cymry. After a long struggle these tribes were finally subjugated by the Roman emperor Vespasian, and for many years a measure of peace was attained.

Then came another invasion—this time by the Anglo-Saxons. The invasion by the Anglo-Saxons was in a sense an asset to the country of Wales, for it drove many of the Celtic inhabitants of Britain to take refuge in the Welsh mountains. There they joined with their kinsmen and successfully resisted the invaders.

The country was divided into several states of which Gwynedd, Gwent, Dyfed, and Powys were the most important. Of these, the first two, because of their situation on the eastern frontier of Wales, were constantly engaged in hostilities with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, especially Northumbria and Mercia. Constant warfare also prevailed among the Welsh principalities themselves.

In the years from 1062 to 1064 Harold, the son of Godwin, overran Wales with an English army after defeating Llewellyn and Griffith, King of Gwynedd. Later, William the Conqueror succeeded in forcing the recognition of his sovereignty from the Welsh princes; but this did not prevent the Welsh from constantly attacking the English and raiding the English border. Therefore, in order to protect themselves, the early Norman kings erected a number of feudal lordships with very extensive power. These feudal lords were called, "Lords of the Marchers." The Marchers were a troublesome, turbulent group, but they did succeed in holding the Welsh back from the border.

In 1136 the Welsh gained a great victory over Henry I of England, but were defeated later by Henry II. Llewellyn, Prince of North Wales, fought against Henry III, but after a year or so, submitted to the king. In 1273, however, Llewellyn refused to pay homage to the new king, Edward I, who, in 1276, invaded Wales, and at Rhuddlan compelled Llewellyn to submit to humiliating terms. Again Llewellyn rose in rebellion, this time in 1282. Again he was defeated, and this time forfeited his life. His brother David tried to carry on the struggle for Welsh independence, but he too was captured and beheaded.

By 1284 the English conquest of Wales was complete. Now the process of introducing English law and administration was begun. In 1301 Edward I conferred the title "Prince of Wales" upon his second son. This satisfied the pride of the Welsh since it kept them from feeling like a subjugated people. They remained loyal to the English crown for over a hundred years.

However the national spirit did not die out. It was nourished and fired by the songs of the bards. The bards, so famous in Welsh history, were looked upon with great disfavor by the English, who felt that they stirred up the national feeling of the Welsh.

When Henry IV seized the English throne, a revolt ensued in Wales. This time it was led by the popular hero, Owen Glendower. The revolt assumed formidable proportions by 1402. Henry IV constantly invaded Wales, but the revolt was not suppressed until the death of Owen Glendower in the year 1415.

This was the last national uprising, and in 1536 Wales was incorporated with England, its inhabitants receiving all the rights of English subjects.

The history of Wales has been a glorious and valiant one. Even today, the national spirit of Wales is not dead. Over sixty percent of the population still are able to speak their mother tongue. There has also been a great revival in Wales of the cultivation of the ancient Cymric tongue and literature.

OFFICERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD 1945-1946

President..... John E. Morgan
 Vice President..... Palmer George
 Secretary..... Dwight Rhoades
 Treasurer..... Edwin Swygart

Executive Committee:
 D. E. McDonel William Monroe S. D. Grogg

Gerald R. Johnson, Minister

1946

Summer tour set by Dylan Singers

The Dylan Singers, a group of Welsh performers well known to North American audiences, will give several concert performances in the U.S. and Canada in August.

The group, composed of tenor Dafydd Edwards, bass Ifan Lloyd, soprano Delyth Hopkins Evans and pianist Colin Jones, will perform in Ohio, Minnesota and British Columbia.

Dafydd Edwards from Bethania is well known in Wales and around the world as a versatile tenor, noted for his concerts of operatic music, popular classics, ballads, folk songs and penillion. He has visited the United States seven times, including the National ~~Gymanfa Ganu in Columbus in 1986~~. In addition, he's performed in both Africa and Australia

several countries, including German, France and the U.S. She is the conductor of Cor Glannau Ystwyth, a mixed choir, and also conducts numerous cymanfaedd ganu, including the National Eisteddfod's Gymanfa Ganu in 1984.

Colin Jones from Rhos, North Wales has usually been seen in the U.S. as conductor of the Cor Meibion Rhos, a position he held for 30 years. In addition, he conducted the 1986 National Gymanfa Ganu in Columbus, Ohio. He is also internationally known as an accompanist and it is in that capacity that he'll perform with the Dylan Singers.

The Dylan Singers will present concerts of Welsh traditional music; popular classics; penillion and numbers, spoken and sung, highlighting the

1996



COLIN JONES



IFAN LLOYD



DELYTH HOPKINS EVANS

twice and has sung in Hong Kong and Singapore and on the Queen Elizabeth 2.

Ifan Llyoyd from Aberaeron has won many awards at major eisteddfodau including The Blue Riband at the Royal National Eisteddfod. Following that success, he was accepted in Covent Garden. He, too, has traveled worldwide winning the hearts of many with his rich voice and humor on stage. He also soloed with the Rhos Choir at the Columbia National Gymanfa Ganu.

SOPRANO Delyth Hopkins Evans is a native of Pont-rhydygroes, where she still lives. She, too, has won many times at Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol and has toured in



DAFYDD EDWARDS

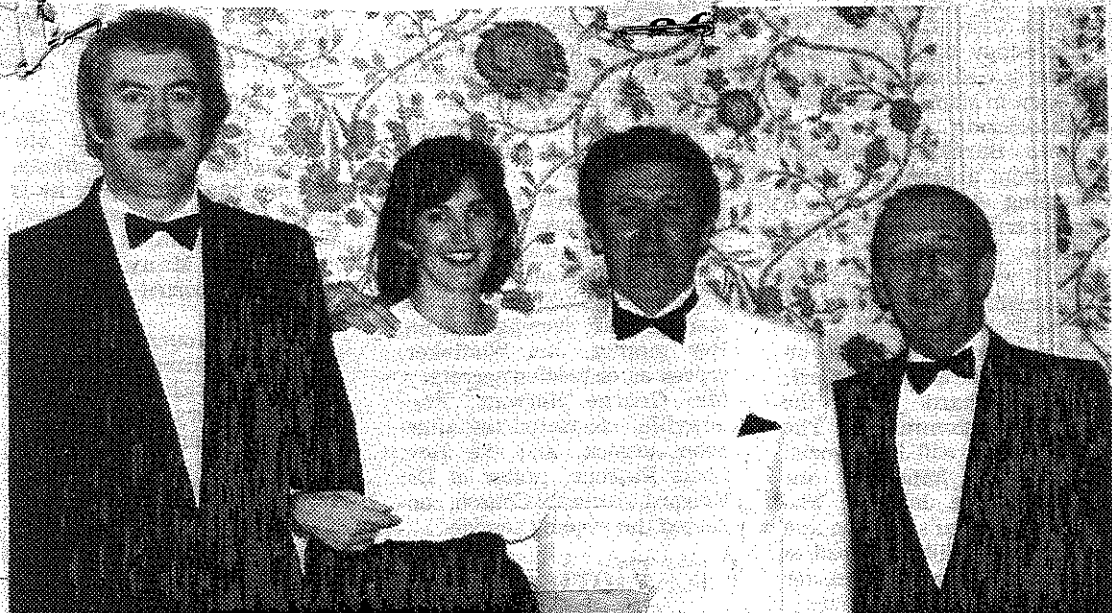
literary contributions of Dylan Thomas.

Concerts by the Dylan Singers are already scheduled in Oak Hill, Ohio, on Aug. 13; Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Aug. 16; and Victoria, British Columbia, on Aug. 20. Contact Mary Morris Mergenthal, 2393 Bourne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 644-1650 for information about other concerts or for details on the Minnesota concert.

For details of the concert in Victoria, contact Yvonne Evans, 2070 Northbrook Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4J5, (604) 656-8885. For details of the Ohio concert, contact Evan E. Davis, 1114 Maria Road, Oak Hill, OH 45656, (614) 682-7589.

Some the same
tend.
And at some, special gather-
ings,
Many happy hours were
spent.
Some have gone to distant
cities,
Some have gone to the

May
drey
presented on China, since
Barbara Morgan was unable to
give her program due to illness
in the family. The program on
China had itself been postponed
due to inclement weather in
February.
Ms. Morgan's program, on
William Morgan's translation



CELEBRATING St. David's Day in Los Angeles: from left, soloist Trebor Evans; Rhianon Evans Acree, music director of the Welsh Church; Dafydd Edwards, soloist, and Colin Jones, piano accompanist, conductor of Rhos Male Voice Choir.

from Dolgellau N. Wales

hand for the festivities, along with Trebor Evans, a velvet-toned bass-baritone from Dolgellau, N. Wales (Evans is the brother of both Tom Evans, past Blue Ribbon winner at the National Eisteddfod, and Rhianon Acree, music director of the Welsh Church.)

Colin Jones, conductor of the Rhos Male Voice Choir, was their piano accompanist. Equally comfortable at the keyboard or commanding the baton, the versatile Jones acted not only as accompanist, but played several solos, including the exciting virtuoso piece, "Rustles of Spring," by Norwegian composer Christian Sinding.

Welsh Revival

By BARBARA THOMAS
O'BRIEN

The third annual Saint David's Day dinner of the Welsh Society of Greater Cincinnati was held Feb. 28 at David's Buffet in Cincinnati. The celebration included a tribute to the past and a call to action for the future.

The Welsh settlement of Ohio was the subject of our featured speaker, Judge Chase Davies. Judge Davies, who was born in south Wales, was a judge in Cincinnati for many years and is also a former president of the Cincinnati School Board. His speech was both a lesson in history and a testament to the living Welsh spirit in America.



CHASE M. DAVIES

Judge Davies focused on Venedocia, Ohio, a community about 125 miles north of Cincinnati. Venedocia was founded by three families that came from Wales in 1847. Ohio was wilderness then. The families took shelter from the weather and wild animals in a deserted log cabin, then cleared a small area and constructed log cabins of their own.

FAR FROM ANY church, these isolated people held their own regular worship service, said Judge Davies. "They took turns meeting in each others' homes, and they would read the Scripture — in Welsh, of course — say prayers, and then give a sermon. . . from a book of sermons that they had."

The wilderness was cleared away. Venedocia grew and

century by "a magnificent edifice," Judge Davies said.

"I remember, going there, the music," he continued. "When you went into the church there were no choirs. They had a leader, and they had a fine organ. The leader got up in front. The tenors sat in one place, the bass singers in another, the sopranos and altos in another, and they all sang as a choir. It was magnificent. They sang in Welsh. The sermons were in Welsh.

"Little by little, the Welsh gave out so that they had partly Welsh sermons sometimes, and partly English. And it wasn't long until it was only English. I was up there last year. There's no longer a Welsh minister. The music is good still but nothing like it used to be. They sing the old Welsh songs, but in English.

"WHAT HAPPENED there happened . . . in all the other communities the Welsh assembled. In Cincinnati — I have lived here since 1906, when I was eight years of age — there were three Welsh churches. . . and they preached in Welsh. And the same thing happened here that happened in Venedocia. Little by little, they had two sermons, one in English and one in Welsh, by a Welsh minister, and it wasn't long before there was an English minister and no longer any Welsh.

"In 1909, the male choir of Venedocia, Ohio, went out to Washington where the National Eisteddfod was held, and took first place. There's no longer a male chorus in Venedocia that sings in Welsh.

"The Saint David's Society (of Cincinnati) was quite active in the early part of this century. But little by little you could see that interest in it was diminishing. . . to the point that there no longer was a Saint David's Society. It had ceased to exist. But the interest in the Welsh was still there, dormant, and it needed to be revived."

AND REVIVED it was, as witnessed by the near-overflow crowd that had assembled to celebrate the feast day of Saint David. After congratulations to our founder and president, Glyn Long, and the other officers of the Welsh Society of Greater Cincinnati, Judge Davies ended his address with a challenge:

"If each one of us could get just

Cincinnati Hears of Welsh Revival

(Continued from page 1)

to do it, this could turn out to be as fine a Saint David's Day group as you can find in the country.

"You all get NINNAU — why, that's a fine thing. I never realized how many Welsh societies and organizations existed throughout this country. And it looks as if there's a revival among all of them, as there is here.

"I know that revival is going to continue. I just hope that you and every one of us — and that includes me, and I pledge myself to do what I can — see that this Welsh society of Greater Cincinnati becomes one of the finest in the country."

The entertainment that followed Judge Davies's address revealed the depth of talent

within our society. Music was provided by the choir, Cor Gwalia Ohio; soprano soloist Gwen Owens; and harpist Diane Hughes Schneider. The singing, we are proud to say, was entirely in Welsh.

We witnessed the debut of the Dylan Thomas Players, who performed an excerpt from "Under Milk Wood." The Players consist at this time of Glyn, whose stage experience includes productions of Shakespeare in Cincinnati, and Audrey Williams. Mrs. Williams is an accomplished actress who had the experience of appearing with Richard Burton when he was a novice. If the growth of the Players parallels the rest of our society, they will soon be a legion

ON MARCH 6, Cor Gwalia Ohio traveled by bus to Oak Hill, Ohio to sing at another Saint David's Day Dinner. There should be an account of that celebration elsewhere in these pages. We do want to report that the spirit of Welsh singing is alive and well in Ohio!

We were especially moved by the group singing at the end of the evening's celebration. Mr. Roger Williams, with Peg Thomas on piano, briskly led us through several pieces in our gymbarnu hymnals. The people of Oak Hill sang in Welsh as well as English and handled the harmony parts beautifully. One of our brought-up-in-Wales choir members was overheard to say wistfully, that it reminded her of the singing at home. High praise

Welsh Revival

By BARBARA THOMAS
O'BRIEN

The third annual Saint David's Day dinner of the Welsh Society of Greater Cincinnati was held Feb. 28 at David's Buffet in Cincinnati. The celebration included a tribute to the past and a call to action for the future.

The Welsh settlement of Ohio was the subject of our featured speaker, Judge Chase Davies. Judge Davies, who was born in south Wales, was a judge in Cincinnati for many years and is also a former president of the Cincinnati School Board.



CHASE M. DAVIES

His speech was both a lesson in history and a testament to the living Welsh spirit in America.

Judge Davies focused on Venedocia, Ohio, a community about 125 miles north of Cincinnati. Venedocia was founded by three families that came from Wales in 1847. Ohio was wilderness then. The families took shelter from the weather and wild animals in a deserted log cabin, then cleared a small area and constructed log cabins of their own.

FAR FROM ANY church, these isolated people held their own regular worship service, said Judge Davies. "They took turns meeting in each others' homes, and they would read the Scripture — in Welsh, of course — say prayers, and then give a sermon. . . from a book of sermons that they had."

The wilderness was cleared away. Venedocia grew and

century by "a magnificent edifice," Judge Davies said.

"I remember, going there, the music," he continued. "When you went into the church there were no choirs. They had a leader, and they had a fine organ. The leader got up in front. The tenors sat in one place, the bass singers in another, the sopranos and altos in another, and they all sang as a choir. It was magnificent. They sang in Welsh. The sermons were in Welsh."

"Little by little, the Welsh gave out so that they had partly Welsh sermons sometimes, and partly English. And it wasn't long until it was only English. I was up there last year. There's no longer a Welsh minister. The music is good still but nothing like it used to be. They sing the old Welsh songs, but in English."

"WHAT HAPPENED there happened . . . in all the other communities the Welsh assembled. In Cincinnati — I have lived here since 1906, when I was eight years of age — there were three Welsh churches. . . and they preached in Welsh. And the same thing happened here that happened in Venedocia. Little by little, they had two sermons, one in English and one in Welsh, by a Welsh minister, and it wasn't long before there was an English minister and no longer any Welsh."

"In 1909, the male choir of Venedocia, Ohio, went out to Washington where the National Eisteddfod was held, and took first place. There's no longer a male chorus in Venedocia that sings in Welsh."

"The Saint David's Society (of Cincinnati) was quite active in the early part of this century. But little by little you could see that interest in it was diminishing. . . to the point that there no longer was a Saint David's Society. It had ceased to exist. But the interest in the Welsh was still there, dormant, and it needed to be revived."

AND REVIVED it was, as witnessed by the near-overflow crowd that had assembled to celebrate the feast day of Saint David. After congratulations to our founder and president, Glyn Long, and the other officers of the Welsh Society of Greater Cincinnati, Judge Davies ended his address with a challenge:

"If each one of us could get just

Cincinnati Hears of Welsh Revival

(Continued from page 1)

to do it, this could turn out to be as fine a Saint David's Day group as you can find in the country.

"You all get NINNAU — why, that's a fine thing. I never realized how many Welsh societies and organizations existed throughout this country. And it looks as if there's a revival among all of them, as there is here."

"I know that revival is going to continue. I just hope that you and every one of us — and that includes me, and I pledge myself to do what I can — see that this Welsh society of Greater Cincinnati becomes one of the finest in the country."

The entertainment that followed Judge Davies's address revealed the depth of talent

within our society. Music was provided by the choir, Cor Gwalia Ohio; soprano soloist Gwen Owens; and harpist Diane Hughes Schneider. The singing, we are proud to say, was entirely in Welsh.

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Daffydd Edwards and Gwawr Edwards

55th Anniversary Celebration Central Ohio Welsh Celebrate St. David's Day

Peggy Morgan Speakman

Despite inclement weather, 181 sturdy Welshmen/women braved the elements (snow and ice) to attend a most enjoyable St. David's Day celebration in honor of our patron Saint and our Welsh Heritage.

The festivities began at 9am with a "Little Welsh Language Course", conducted by Kara Lewis, Director of the Madog Center for Welsh Studies, at the University of Rio Grande. When the eager group of learners completed the mini course at 2pm they had a good basic knowledge of conversational Welsh. They said it was lots of fun and are looking forward to the next one.

The Welsh Language course was followed with two fun and enjoyable seminars conducted by Bob Penry, WSCO's very talented and knowledgeable lecturer, musician/troubadour, teacher of Welsh history and WSCO's treasurer. Dressed in a renaissance period costume, Bob told amusing Welsh folk stories, sang Welsh folk songs and gave us interesting and knowledgeable information on Welsh History.

The annual business meeting was held following the seminars and a social hour and good Welsh fellowship was enjoyed by all. The banquet fare was not only delicious but artistically and tastefully presented. A huge beautiful cake in celebration of

WSCO'S 55th St. David's Day Anniversary was shared by everyone.

Following the banquet we were treated to one of the best evenings of pure Welsh music and talent that we have ever had the pleasure of hearing. Our special musical guests from Wales were Dafydd Edwards, one of Wales best-known and popular tenors, and his beautiful daughter, Gwawr Edwards.

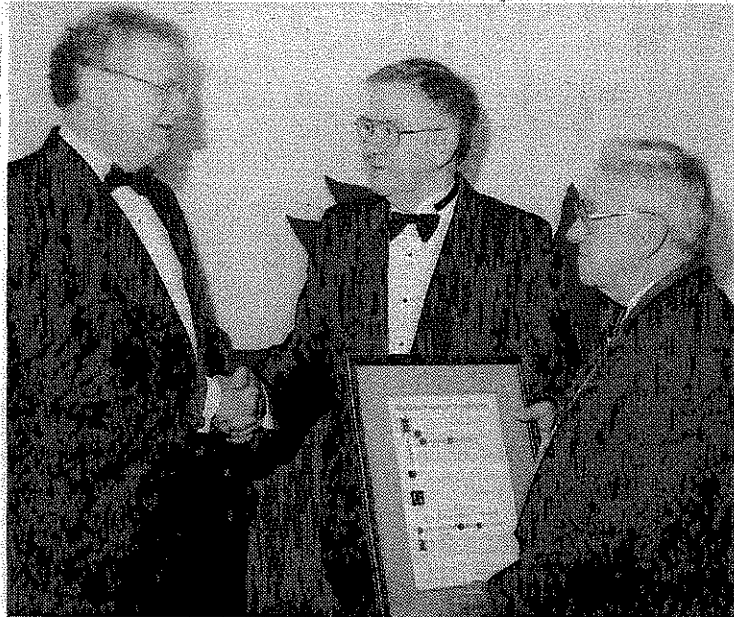
Dafydd has been a winner at the National Eisteddfod on several occasions, and is a regular performer at concerts, not only in Wales and England, but also in North America. He is also a familiar voice on TV and radio in Wales.

Gwawr (pronounced Gwower), a lovely and superbly talented 19 year old Welsh soprano won her division in the International Eisteddfodau and the Welsh National Eisteddfodau in 2002. She is also an accomplished harpist and favored us with several lovely songs on the harp as well as with her beautiful soprano voice. It was a lovely treat for our children and grandchildren as well as the adults.

The program this talented father and daughter presented received standing ovations; we just didn't want it all to end.

The whole evening was outstanding and the 55th anniversary of WSCO'S St David's Day Celebration will be a very pleasant memory indeed.

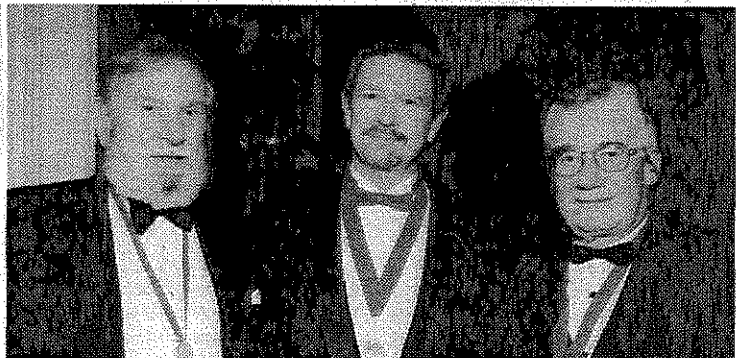
Sir Howard Stringer H the Welsh Society of Ph



At the 275th Banquet of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, President Charles D. Wenzel presents the Robert Morris Award to Sir Howard Stringer as Dr. Arturo Roberts congratulates Stringer.



Sir Howard Stringer shares a conversation with Phyllis J. Jones, first woman member of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, and with Dr. Jean Roberts, first woman President of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia at the 275th Annual Banquet honoring St. David; the organization was founded in 1729



Past Presidents of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia celebrating the 275th Anniversary Banquet. L to R: David J. Jones, Jr. of Newtown Square, Pennsylvania; Jack R. Williams, Jr. of Wayne, Pennsylvania; David A. Walker of Philadelphia.

Menna and Gwawr Edwards, daughters of Dafydd Edwards, have built a solid following in the past few years. Menna holds a degree in musical accompaniment from the University of Wales, Cardiff and has accompanied her father on concert tours and on innumerable recordings. She is a popular solo performer at concerts and eisteddfodau and she has accompanied many Welsh male voice choirs including the Cor Glannau and the Powys. She has recently completed a concert tour in Germany and Brittany.

Gwawr, just 13 years old, has studied harp for five years and singing for 11 years and has mastered the very difficult "penillion" singing form that is unique to Wales. In 1996, the sisters accompanied their father on a very successful tour.

A chicken barbecue will be served from 4-6 p.m. before the concert. Tickets are available in advance or at the door for \$5.

For more information, contact Jean Owens at 238-6639 (work number) or 667-3523 (home number). The address is 13373 Jonestown Road, Van Wert, Ohio 45891.



Dafydd Edwards

Venedocia church marks its centennial

VENEDOCIA — The Salem Church of Venedocia will end a six month long celebration in honor of its 100th anniversary on Saturday, Sept. 26 with a concert of Welsh music which will begin at 7 p.m.

Dafydd Edwards is one of Wales best known and most popular tenors, noted for his concerts of classical music, popular ballads and traditional "penillion," singing to harp music. Much of his formal training was under professor Redvers Jones at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

He has been a winner at the National Eisteddfod on several occasions and is a regular performer at concerts not only in Wales and England, but also in North America. He has toured in Australia, Africa and in the Far East and is a familiar voice on TV and radio in Wales.

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Salem Presbyterian Church, Venedocia, Ohio

Salem Church Celebrates 100 Years

By Jean Owens

The Salem Church of Venedocia, Ohio is celebrating their 100 years of history with a six month long calendar of events which will end with a special Gymanfa Ganu on Sunday, September 6 and a concert with Dafydd Edwards and his two daughters, Menna and Gwawr on September 12.

In May of 1847, three families left Wales to begin a new life in the United States. After weeks of dangerous and very difficult travel, they arrived at what is now Venedocia, Ohio. The area was wild with thick woods and swamp land and there were panthers, wolves and wildcats which often kept them awake.

From the very beginning, they faced many hardships but from the first Sunday they arrived, they met to worship God and to sing. This began a rich tradition which has been kept alive.

Margaret (Morris) Lopez

and Margaret's daughter

for 11 years, and has mastered the very difficult "penillion" singing form which is unique to

who is a native of Venedocia, will return to direct the Gymanfa Ganu on Sunday, September 6. A light supper will be served from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. with the Gymanfa beginning at 7:00 p.m.

On Saturday, September 12, a chicken barbecue supper will be served from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. with the concert by Dafydd, Menna and Gwawr Edwards beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Many former Venedocia residents will be present and performing special music on Sunday morning, Sept. 13.

Dafydd Edwards is one of Wales' best known and most popular tenors, noted for his concerts of classical music, popular ballads and traditional "penillion" singing to harp accompaniment. Much of his formal training was under professor Redvers Jones at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

He has been a winner at the

Continued on page 3

cutters & roof of Church



Lee Lane
Carolyn
Meredith
Swindle

Church, Venedocia, Ohio,

100 Years

(419) 667-2408; or Jean Owens, member of the Anniversary committee, 13373 Jonestown road, Van Wert, Ohio 45891, (419) 238-6639.

Wooden replicas of the church are available for \$15.00 plus shipping cost.

They were repairing gutters & roof of Church

*Ronald Richards
Mrs. Richards
Wife*

Lee Lane

*Carolyn
Morgan
Kivett*



Members and friends pose in front of the Salem Presbyterian Church, Venedocia, Ohio, after celebrating St. David's Day.

Salem Church Celebrates 100 Years

Continued from page 1.

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Wales. In 1996, the sisters accompanied their father on a successful U.S. tour.

The public is invited to attend these special programs. For more information, contact Rev. Wendy Pratt, the Salem Church minister, at 15258 Main Street, Venedocia, Ohio 45894, tel.

(419) 667-2408, or Jean Owens, member of the Anniversary Committee, 13373 Jonestown Road, Van Wert, Ohio 45891, tel. (419) 238-6639.

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