

God's covenant with Noah did not stop in that time and place of history. It was God's promise for all humanity for all time, even at Peniel Chapel in 2013.

In Genesis 9:11- 17; God said,

“I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said. “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.””

The Welsh immigrants had a strong sense of God's covenant, and were most likely reminded of that when they too saw the rainbows in the clouds. Those who came to America in the mid 1800's to the early 1900's were seeking God's promise of freedom to worship Him in their faith, as well as the hope of work in the mines and fertile cropland. Specifically in Wisconsin, the Welsh were told they could find religious freedom and inexpensive fertile land, reminding them of their homeland. Most began their American journey in eastern states and eventually found their way to Wisconsin.

The Welsh were very family-oriented and brought that sense of community to Wisconsin. They hoped to create their own parishes with Welsh churches and schools, free from other nationalities' influence. As time went on, they needed to learn English and merge into the area school systems. They still kept their traditions of knowing the Welsh language and, of course, singing.

In the area of the Oshkosh Welsh Settlement, Peniel Chapel is at the southern edge, built in 1856, no doubt by families relying on God's promises. Even though the church closed in 1977 for regular worship, the Peniel Gymanfa Ganu Association kept the tradition of music alive with the annual Gymanfa Ganu. They also relied on God's promise to care for the old structure for generations to come.

In 2011, prayers and support led to the decision to renovate the building which was in need of clean up and repair. Monies were available for painting and light maintenance, but where was it to come from in 2013 when a new steel shake roof was needed to replace the leaking roof?

As in Noah's time, Peniel supporters' prayers were heard by God, however few people would truly believe. The amount needed in 2013 for a new roof was unfathomable for a church without regular income. Even more unbelievable was how little time was available to raise the money. A wedding was within 3 months and the area of the leak, the ceiling of the dining room/kitchen, had to be removed by volunteers and a new ceiling installed by professionals. Also, the consultant said a new roof on the entire structure had to be installed before winter. One faithful volunteer even asked, "How is that going to happen?"

God can make anything happen and He did. He reminded four volunteers who were awestruck after tearing down that ceiling. As they were cleaning up, they went outside to see GOD'S RAINBOW in the east! This truly was assurance that God indeed had His hand in the Peniel project.

God continues to remind us of His covenant, even when a rainbow is not present. The Welsh in Wisconsin continue the traditions which God gifted to those before they left Wales. May God's promises through His Son Jesus Christ never be forgotten, and may we always rely on Him when our lives seem insurmountable.

