

Celtic Weekend Features Free Concert and Welsh Hymn Sing.

To celebrate Wisconsin's Celtic heritage, the Welsh Gymanfa Ganu Association of Wisconsin (WGGAW) is presenting a Celtic Weekend For All, on May 6 and 7 at Christ Lutheran Church in Spring Green. Free events include seminars, a concert by renowned Madison-based Celtic performers Turner Collins and Sheila Shigley, literary and artistic competitions, and a Gymanfa Ganu (Welsh and English Hymn Sing).

The Celtic cultures encompass Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, Brittany (in France) and other areas of northwestern Europe. Many settlers came to southwestern Wisconsin from Wales, Cornwall and the Isle of Man, so there is a strong Celtic heritage in our state.

Events kick off on Saturday, May 6 with a seminar on the Manx in Wisconsin at 1:30 p.m. presented by James Hibbard, curator of the National Manx Museum in Platteville followed by Robert Humphries discussing the history of the Welsh in Iowa County and Spring Green.

Following the seminars, there will be a Noson Lawen—an “open-mic” variety show—and Eisteddfod, a Welsh festival of literature, music, and performance. This year's Eisteddfod theme is “Gwanwyn” (spring) and features competitions in the literary and visual arts.

The literary competition calls for a poem (50 lines or less) or an essay (760 words or less) on the theme of “Spring.” To be considered, the poem or essay must be submitted by email with a pseudonym to williamsnorton1858@centurytel.net no later than midnight, April 20. Poems and essays may be written in English or in Welsh.

For the visual arts competition, a work of art, including but not limited to painting, photography, ceramics, sculpture or textiles such as quilts, knitting, crochet or weaving, must be submitted by 11:00 a.m. on May 6, 2017, at Christ Lutheran **Church**. For more details about these competitions, go to wggaw.org/eisteddfod.

As is traditional in Wales, the prize for the literary competition is a chair with a decorative cushion. The visual arts winner will receive a “crown,” in this case an embroidered commemorative knitted cap which will come in very handy next winter in Wisconsin!

Enos Farms will provide a catered supper at 5:30 p.m. Reservations are required for the meal and the cost is \$20. Email Mary Williams-Norton at williamsnorton1858@centurytel.net or call 608 635-4946 by April 22 for a reservation. The optional meal is the only item for which there is a fee, all other events are free and open to all.

The highlight of Saturday activities is a pan-Celtic concert at 7:30 p.m., featuring well-known Madison-based Celtic musicians Turner Collins and Sheila Shigley performing the music of the Irish, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, and Bretons.

Then, the 85th Annual Wisconsin Gymanfa Ganu (Welsh Hymn Sing) will be held on Sunday, May 7. Singing will begin at 2:30 p.m. and will be followed by tea and refreshments.

The Gymanfa Ganu is a free festival of sacred song featuring four-part harmony sung by the audience in English and Welsh. The session will be directed by Danny Proud of Madison. The organist will be Steve Jenson of Milwaukee. Special music will be provided by Turner Collins.

Each year, WGGAW holds a weekend celebration in a different city around the state. It is the largest Welsh event of the year in Wisconsin and attracts visitors from throughout the Midwest. Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy the Saturday concert and seminars and to attend the hymn sing celebrating the Welsh musical heritage. For information, contact the Welsh Gymanfa Ganu Association of Wisconsin at (608) 852-4025 or visit our website at wggaw.org. You can also contact Robert Humphries in Spring Green at (608) 588-9078.