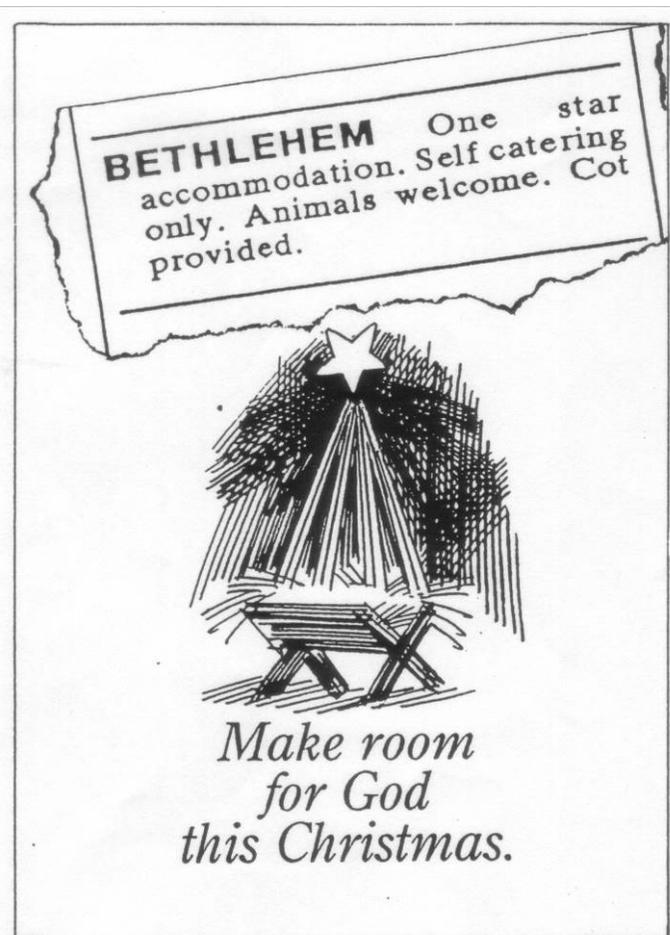


CONTACT

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY AND OVER ALDERLEY METHODIST
CHURCHES
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December 2009 & January 2010

MINISTER'S LETTER

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Hello again

I mentioned in the last contact the idea of doing a section on Books wot I ave read. It is not that I have not read anything it is just having the time to put some notes together – but maybe you have read something. Well remember you can pass it on through Contact, just write a short piece on what you felt about the book and

why you recommend it.

One of my favourite books of all time is Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol. One year on the run up to Christmas my father used to read me a section each night before going to bed. Some may think that a book full of ghosts should not be bedtime reading for a child, but the book then stuck with me. Christmas is for us very much like the book. We think back to times past and sometimes remember absent friends. We celebrate the here and now with those we love and because the New Year is only a few days further on we look forward to the future.

One Christmas, when I was chaplain at St Catherine's Hospice, one of the Day Care patients came to me with a Christmas present. He gave me the gift and said 'I hope you won't be offended it's a bit tongue in cheek and if you don't like it I won't be offended. I was just going round the shop the other day I saw it and thought of you.' I was bowled over and assured Ray that I would not be offended and that I was extremely grateful as he had taken the trouble to get me anything. When I opened the gift on Christmas Day there were two bottles of beer, one was Abbott's Ale and the other Bishop's Finger. Sadly Ray passed away some years ago now, but ever since then I have had two drinks during Christmas, one Abbott's Ale and one Bishop's Finger. Christmas is a time for bringing all that is good into our lives, to bring light into the darkness, joy into sorrow and hope into what seems hopeless- Joy to the world the Lord is come. May your Christmas be full of the love, joy and hope that the coming of Christ brings.

And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us everyone.

Andy

PRESTBURY NEWS

The Church Post Box This will be in place to receive your Christmas cards for other members of the congregation from **29th November** Please note the last date for posting will be Sunday 6th December and the cards will be distributed on **Sunday 13th December**.

Carol Singing Please come and join us for Carol Singing at the Beaumont at 2.00pm on Tuesday 15th December. We hold a service at the Beaumont on the last Tuesday of each month so the next one will be at 11.00am on Tuesday 26th January. Please try to support this.

The Rambling Group meet each Thursday – 10.00 outside church. The last date this year is 17th December and we restart on Thursday 7th January. A thoroughly enjoyable morning, all walking abilities welcome. Afterwards we meet at The Admiral Rodney for a light lunch. Please join us.

Network “Anticipating Christmas” at Macclesfield Methodist Church at 2.00pm on Thursday 3rd December. Stories, music, activities and food. Everybody welcome.

ACF will meet on Wednesday 9th December at 3.00pm in our Meeting Room. It will be our usual Christmas Miscellany and mince pies. We will also be having an AGM to decide whether the ACF is to continue in its present form. I hope there will be a good attendance at this meeting.

Cancer Help Group On Tuesday 8th December from 10.00 – 12.00 the Cancer Help Group will be holding a Coffee Morning in our meeting Room. There will be mince pies and coffee. Please try to support this event.

The Craft Group We will be meeting on 14th December at 2.00pm for a Christmas party and will make a Christmas centre piece.

The January meeting will be on 11th Jan. when we will plan our programme for 2010 and make cards - and 25th January when those who wish will make cards - others bring along your own crafts.

Concert in aid of East Cheshire Hospice. The Stockport Accordion Orchestra and Band present a 10th anniversary concert at Broken Cross Club on Friday 11th December at 8.00pm. Tickets (£7)

From the Church Council

We are looking for nominations for two stewards. Who would YOU like to serve you? Anyone can nominate a fellow member but please get their permission for their names to go forward. Perhaps there is someone you would like to suggest but feel they might need a bit of persuasion - then let Rev Andy or one of the stewards know then they can approach them. Nominations will be brought to the church council in February and voted on at the Annual Church Meeting in May. Please pray that God will guide us in this important task.

B

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Beta will meet on Wednesday 9th December at 7:00pm for a meal followed by the fifth in the series on “Christian Life & The Bible” The session is titled “A multitude of approaches”. In January we hope to meet on January 13th at 7:00 pm for the final part of the series entitled “What is the Bible to make of you?”.

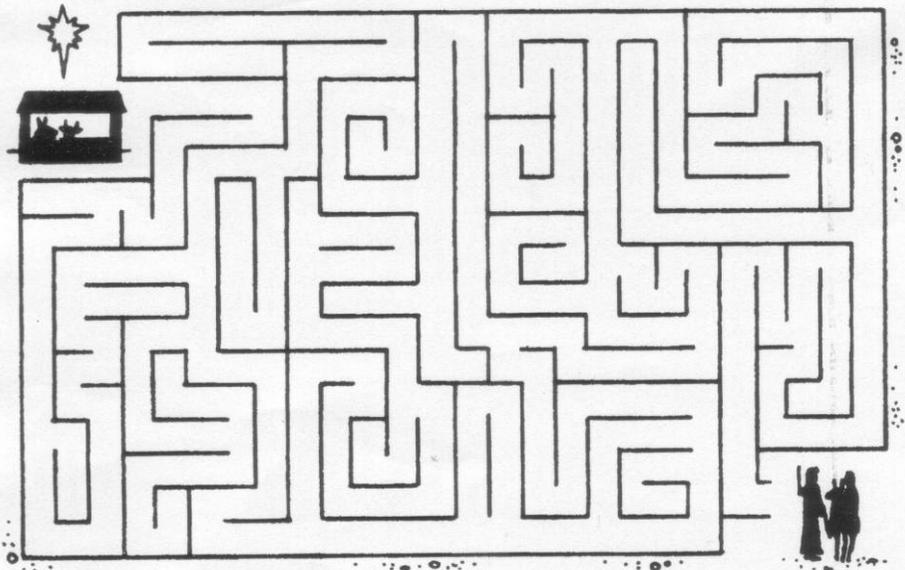
Bible study for Dummies

This will take place in Jan on the 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th starting at 7:30pm. We will be taking a journey through Exodus. All welcome.



Thank you to all who have so generously provided the church flowers on a week by week basis throughout the year. They have enhanced our worship immensely and they are much appreciated by all.

Help Joseph and Mary find their way to the Stable



A Christmas Prayer

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly. Let me stop and listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told. Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus. "Glory in the Highest!! The Messiah has been born!"

Among all the bright sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honor and worship Jesus, my King, The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counselor, Son of God, the Lamb. All your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger. Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity!

anon

SOCIAL EVENTS

Plaza Stockport Operatic Society – Date now changed to Friday, 29th January (not November 27th, as unfortunately the work on the Plaza will not be carried out in time .

Trip to Rose Cottage, Castleton, December 7th (instead of Faith Lunch). Soup and a sandwich and chance to stroll round Castleton – the shops are usually decorated for Christmas. Cost - £16.



Bridgewater Hall – Carols by Candlelight – 7.30pm, Friday, December 18th. Leave church at 6pm.

Faith Lunch is on Monday 4th January. Please join us, all welcome

At October's Coffee Morning we began an experiment to open the church for **quiet reflection** between 10-12. This will be repeated each month. Gentle music and some images will be played and the invitation spread by means of bookmarks given out at the coffee morning. Please feel free to spend a few minutes in peace during the coffee morning, but please note the church may not be up to full temperature for a long stay. (from Worship, Fellowship & Outreach Group)

There is a list of folks I know
 That these names are a part
 Not of the book they're written in
 But of my very heart
 For each name stands for someone
 Who has touched my life sometime
 And in that meeting they've become
 The "Rhythm of the Rhyme"
 I really feel I am composed
 Of each remembered name
 And while you may not be aware
 Of feeling quite the same
 My life is so much better
 Than it was before you came
 For once that you've known someone
 The years cannot erase
 The memory of a pleasant word
 Or of a friendly face

So never think my Christmas cards
 Are just a mere routine

Of names upon a list
 Forgotten in between

For when I send a Christmas card
 That is addressed to you
 It is because you're on that list

Of folks I'm indebted to
 And whether I have known you
 For many years or few
 In some way you have had a part
 In shaping things I do

So every year when Christmas comes
 I just realise anew
 The biggest gift that God can give
 Is knowing folks like you.



Lord Jesus Christ,
 you came to stable
 when men looked in a palace
 you were born in poverty
 when we might have expected
 riches.
 King of all the earth,
 you were content to visit one
 nation .
 From beginning to end
 you upturned our human values
 And held us in suspense.
 Come to us , Lord Jesus,
 Do not let us take you for granted.
 or pretend that we fully understand
 you.

Continue to surprise us
 so that, kept alert,
 we are ready
 to receive you as Lord and do your
 will.

Amen

COFFEE MORNING & BRING and BUY



10.00am-12.00noon in the Village Hall

Saturday, 30th January

for the work of Lubwe

Lubwe (Zambia) Hospital fund is a charity set up to improve the quality of health and health education in Lubwe and other areas of Zambia. Our help includes improving the supply of clean water - "The Wells Project".

. There will also be the usual stalls ~ home made cakes, greeting cards, raffle, bric-a-brac, books etc.

COME & BRING YOUR FRIENDS

WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM.....



Date for your diary

Instead of the usual Faith Lunch on Monday 1st February lunch at The Bridge has been booked

Lets Celebrate Advent and Christmas well this year! We have several special services for you to bring other members of the family to, or to bring friends and neighbours.

Our **Advent Services** begin on **29th November at 10.30am** when the first of our Advent candles will be lit.

A Circuit Advent Service “**Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh**” will be held on Monday 30th November at 7.30pm at Macclesfield Methodist Church.

Sunday 13th December is our **Toy Service** at which you are invited to bring presents of new toys for the children at the Women’s Refuge Centre and also gifts for the mothers.

Sunday 13th December at 6.45pm is our **Carol Service**. This is Carols by Candlelight. Please bring a torch.



Sunday 20th December at the special time of 6.00pm is our Children’s Nativity service acted out by our children

Christmas Eve Communion at 11.30 pm conducted by our minister, Andy. Let’s celebrate Christ’s Nativity in Communion together.

On Christmas Day at 10.30am we shall meet for a short all-age celebration of Jesus’ birth and led by Andy .

COME AND WORSHIP

A Special Pilgrimage

Recently I stood with a group of thirty other pilgrims on the Mount of Olives and looked at the magnificent view of Jerusalem stretched before us. We were reminded of how Jesus wept over the city and how I think He must still weep over such a divided place.

As we walked in Jesus’ footsteps, places, so familiar from our gospel reading, came alive to me in a new and vivid way. The highlight for me was the time spent by the Sea of Galilee. Having my Quiet Time standing in its waters as the sun came up had to be a special moment .We held a Communion Service on the shore and whenever in the future I sing “Dear Lord and Father of mankind” I shall be transported to that spot.

“O Sabbath rest by Galilee
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love.”.

Another moving site was the traditional site of our Risen Lord’s appearance to his disciples when he prepared breakfast for them and gave Peter the pastoral commission to “Feed my sheep” (John 21:9) A place where I would have liked to linger longer was the Garden of Gethsemane. Here close to the ancient olive trees which some botanists claim may be 3,000 years old we held a short service and sang “I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.”.

I loved the visit to Mount Tabor, one supposed site of the transfiguration..Our leader read Matthew 17 and we remembered Jesus in all his glory.

This Christmas as we sing “While shepherds watched “ I will remember the beautiful church built in the shepherd’s fields of Bethlehem.

We walked the Via Dolorosa, visited Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum, the River Jordan, Masada, Jericho and the Mount of Temptation and even floated in the Dead Sea .

Space prevents me from going into great detail but I feel very privileged to have visited the Holy Land. Eight days was not long enough and ideally I would like to return in the future.

However, wonderful though it is to have really walked where Jesus walked, I am reminded of Jesus' words to his first disciples to return to Galilee where he will be waiting for them. So I have had to return to my Galilee – Macclesfield – knowing that he is already here with me still and waiting for me to let him more and more into my life.

Ruth



It's Christmas time at our house and we're putting up a tree.
I wish I could find some simple way to remember God's gift to me.

Some little sign or symbol to show friends stopping by,
The little babe was born one day but he really came to die.

Some symbol of his nail-pierced hands, the blood he shed for me.
What if I hung a nail on my Christmas tree?

I know it was his love for us that held him to a tree,
But when I see this simple nail I'll know he died for me.

It may seem strange at Christmas time to think of nails and wood,
But both were used in Jesus' life to bring us something good.



From manger bed, to crown
of thorns, to death on
Calvary,
God used the wood and nails
of men to set all people free.



“I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me”

The season of Advent is upon us to be followed by the beginnings of a New Year. This is an admirable time for spiritual stock taking. Reflecting on the old Year with all its credits and debits we know that the one true Guide we all have for the future is God revealing his Son Jesus Christ.

May we be reminded of the prayer emblazoned on St. PATRICK'S breastplate:

May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God guard us against the snares of evil and the temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us, Christ before us,
Christ in us, Christ over us.
May thy salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and ever more.

Books wot i've read

Having just typed in the above I was reminded of Andy's request last month for info on books we have read.

The above reminded me of a wonderful meditative book “The Cry of the Deer, Meditations on the Hymn of St. Patrick by David Adam. The author was vicar of the Holy Island of Lindisfarne for 13 years and has written much on Celtic spirituality. I keep returning to this book, a series of meditations which are followed by practical exercises in affirming the Presence of God through prayer. It is not a dull set of beliefs but brings out how God wants a relationship with us which touches every part of our lives. I thoroughly recommend this book .

Ruth

(Please let me have your book reviews for future editions of Contact)

Dago Wesley Methodist Church in Ghana

With the help of **Compassion UK** our church family is now in partnership with Dago Wesley Methodist Church in Ghana. We are sponsoring 18 children attending the Dago Child Development Centre in Gomoa Dago (76 km east of Cape Coast). In sponsoring them we will help them grow physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. 10 of our children are funded by our church giving for overseas and 8 have been funded by individual members and their families. Members have committed to writing to the children and we can support them together in our prayers and giving.

We should now be sending off our first letters and Christmas cards and getting to know the children as they reply to us.

We hope to set up a notice board in the meeting room to enable us to share news from the children, photos, letters and our own experiences.

We have details of 7 more children who would benefit from sponsorship.

Date for your diary

Don't forget ,Church Council will meet on Wednesday 10th February at 7.30pm

Copy Date for the February edition of Contact will be January 17th .

Our October Coffee Morning was one of the best attended ever. Over a hundred and twenty people! 'Just Drop In' is supported by the churches in Macclesfield. The total raised was £618.70 which will help towards the work the centre does with young people in the area.

A big thank you to all our helpers. We are in need of some new people to help either on a regular or occasional basis.

Just Drop In wish to thank everyone who helped and supported .

STOP PRESS

Christmas Wrap - Dec 10th

As in previous years, the churches of the Macclesfield area are getting together to wrap Christmas presents for passers-by in the Grosvenor Shopping Centre, Macclesfield. Our church, along with St. Peter's of Prestbury have been allocated the slot of 4.45pm to 6.30pm on Thursday December 10th.

If you can offer your wrapping skills for all, or part of this time, please add your name to the list in the church vestibule, We need at least 5 volunteers from our church. Or if you can't be available for our allotted time slot, I'm sure the other churches would welcome your support for one of the other slots on the list. This super outreach activity is a simple way of demonstrating the true Christmas message - that of a free gift of love given to anyone who wants to receive it. Many thanks.....



RECIPE FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR



Take twelve whole months. Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate and jealousy. Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or thirty-one different parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once. Prepare it, one day at a time, out of these ingredients.

Mix well, into each day, one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work.

Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness,

generosity and kindness. Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation, and one good deed. Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play, and a cupful of good humour. Pour all of this into a vessel of love. Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness, unselfishness and cheerfulness. You're bound to have a Happy New Year.

(Author unknown)

A PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE IN THE NEW YEAR

On the edge of a new year, Lord, teach us again to order our priorities and number our days and hours. And teach us to trust life, history, one another, and most of all You. So that even in the grey and the gloomy days, when the ceiling is low, we may trust the star that enabled wise men of old to live in hope and proclaim the divine promises which call us on in Jesus Christ.

Guide us and prepare us in 2010 so your will will be done.



SMILE LINES

A Christmas sign on a reducing salon: '24 Shaping Days until Christmas.'

Reindeer: horses with hat-racks.

A turkey crossing the road is poultry in motion.

First colleague: 'I made a fool of myself last night at the office Christmas party.'

Second colleague: "Did you? I noticed nothing unusual."

Updating Scripture.

At a school nativity play in Derby, three six year boys were cast as the Kings.

Presenting their gifts at the stable the first said, "Gold your Majesty". The second, "Myrrh your Majesty", and the third, "And Frankie sent this".



Begin the New Year meditating on these encouraging Bible verses chosen to inspire a fresh walk with God and a deeper commitment to living the Christian faith.

New Birth – A living Hope

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3

Hope for the Future

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope". Jeremiah 29:11

A New Creation

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH 2010 ?

How will you spend 2010? All those hours, days and weeks that lie ahead of you.....

The Bible says 'make the most of the time' (Ephesians 5:16). That doesn't mean speed up your life. It doesn't mean more rush. In fact, rush is a hazard to this process.

It means that as this brand new year of 2010 begins, we are called to take time to plug into God's plan for us - NOW. It means becoming obedient to his revealed will for our personal life, our work, our marriage, our priorities.... - NOW. It means prayerfully discerning the divine and eternal opportunities before each of us - NOW. Yes, now. 'For Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of Salvation'. (2 Corinthians 6:2) So today, let us hear his voice, let us harden not our hearts.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our readers.

God knows - He loves - He
cares
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.