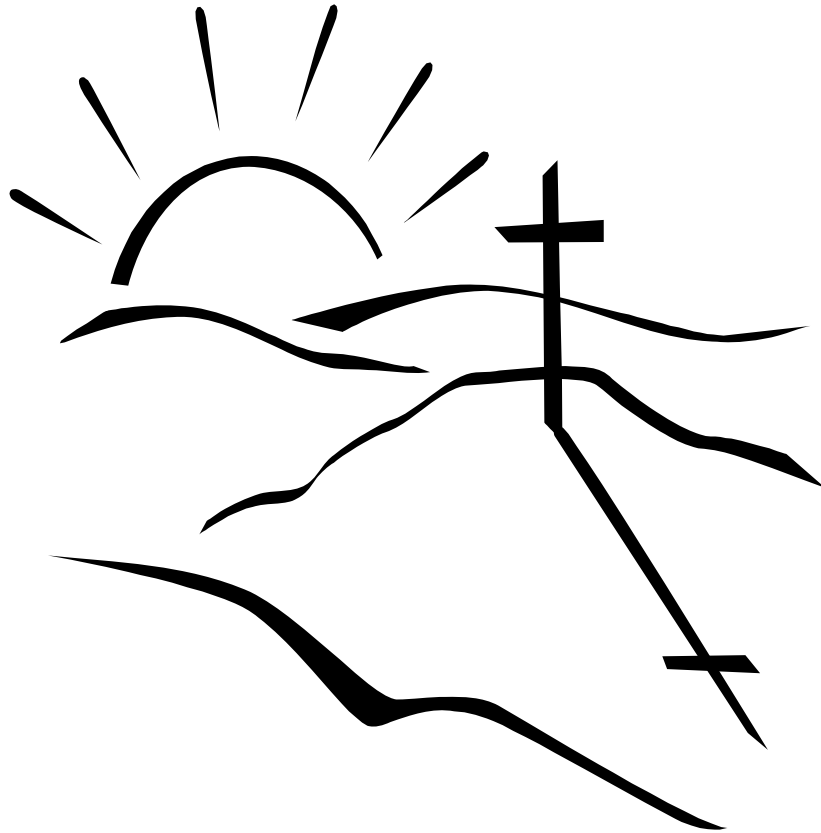


CONTACT APRIL 2011

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY METHODIST CHURCH
MINISTER: REV. ANDREW HALSTEAD TEL 01625 424361



CHRIST HAS DIED

CHRIST IS RISEN

CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

MINISTER'S LETTER

11 Atholl Close
Macc
SK10 3QB
01625 424361



Dear All

Hopefully in this edition of contact there will be some personal responses to the Sharing God's Love Weekend, so I will not dwell on that - but rather on my sabbatical. Sabbaticals are a gift of the

church to its presbyters and deacons, as time for reflection and renewal. We are now expected to take them and they come every 7 years in ministry (except the first which is after 10). Owing to the way in which my ministry has been exercised over the years this will be my first sabbatical (even though I have been in ministry some 20 years). I want the sabbatical to be of use to you, in other words my hope is that whatever I get from it will benefit the churches I serve. I want to discover if modern monasticism has anything to offer the church, so I will be spending sometime living with the Northumbria Community. I have never been abroad in my life and this now gives me an opportunity to see another culture and country- hence we are off to China. I also want to re-read some books that have been on my shelf for a long time, some I have read before - others not: 'On being a Christian' by Hans Kung, which was the first serious theological book I ever read, 'Community and Growth' by Jean Vanier (suggested reading by the Northumbria Community), 'In search of a way' and 'God of surprises' Gerard W. Hughes.

I also want to get some serious gardening done (have chainsaw) and become more competent at using Windows Moviemaker and Power Point – we have the technology so hopefully I can make better use of it. I have a sabbatical support group who have helped in the preparation of the time out and will reflect with me on what the experience has meant as I return to work. Details of how things continue in my absence are contained later in this issue.

So if I don't see you over the next month, may the journey we share through Easter enrich and renew your life in the risen Christ, that in the light of his resurrection power we may know his peace and life. *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians chapter 2 verse 20

Blessings

Andy

PRESTBURY NEWS

Lent Bible Studies on 'The Beatitudes' continue on Monday at 10.30am on 4th and 11th April at Broken Cross Methodist Church and on Tuesdays at 7.30pm on 5th and 12th April at Prestbury Methodist Church. (Same material used at both groups.)

Craft Group will meet at 2.00pm on 4th and 18th April- everybody welcome.

Beta will meet on Wednesday 13th April at 7.00pm. The topic is "The Wilderness Experience".

The Service at Beaumont will be held on Tuesday 26th April at 11.00am. All are welcome to join us.

Annual Church Meeting is on Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm. Nominations for the Church Council are required.

Thanks very much for supporting the Coffee Morning at Gawsworth. We made £70 for Action For Children and hope to hold another one in October so look forward to seeing you then.

Copy Date for May's Contact is 17th April.



The LAY WITNESS WEEKEND was a special event in the life of our church, and we extend our grateful thanks to our friends from the Lay Witness

Movement, who led the week-end, and shared with us (their photo, which was taken after the Faith Lunch, is on the next page).

The Church also extends its thanks to the LWW Prayer Partners, and all those other friends from within the Circuit, and elsewhere, who offered prayers for the success of the week-end. Our gratitude also to those from the Circuit who helped with the meals and helped with the youth activities. Without their help many Prestbury folk would have been unable to fully take part in the week-end.

There is much now to be done, following on from the week-end, and the planning team has already had an initial meeting to consider the future, and this will be shared with you all in the weeks to come.

In this edition of Contact, we have included a number of comments from people about the week-end. They are spread throughout the magazine, alongside the 'Cross and Hands' logo. The Week-end was enormously encouraging, and we pray that, with God's guidance, much will now happen in the life of our Church, as a result of our special time together.



I thought it very stimulating, thought provoking and life changing. Many thanks are due to all those who organised and conducted a very successful week-end. The true success, however, will be measured by how we as a church use the experience to develop our worship, fellowship and witness in the months ahead.

The hotpot was yummy and the bring and share lunch was great.



Enjoyed the activities on Friday night

What a fabulous weekend, we both felt it was a privilege and joy to share in fellowship with our Church family in such a special way. It was deeply moving to share our stories of prayer and faith, especially in the Saturday morning group.



LENT

Fast from pessimism;	Feast on optimism.
Fast from complaining;	Feast on appreciation.
Fast from bitterness;	Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern;	Feast on compassion for others.

“The main thing which struck me was the sincerity of the visiting team. It was very humbling listening to each of their witness testimonies and hearing just how much they put their trust in God for the whole of their lives. Each one had a different story to tell.”



A PRAYER FOR LENT

Living God,
 remind me of the positive side of Lent;
 the opportunities it presents,
 possibilities it opens up
 and responses it invites.



I nstead of dwelling on what we *can't* do,
help us to focus on what we *can*,
on the way we might better use our gifts,
express your love, offer your service
and do your will.

Show us what you would have us do,
and equip us gladly to do it,
through Jesus Christ our lord. Amen

Putting Jesus back into Easter

I t's hard to believe that, out of the whopping 80 million chocolate Easter Eggs sold each year, not one of them mentions Jesus on the box. Until now that is.



The Real Easter Egg is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate Easter Egg to explain the Christian understanding of Easter on the box. It also supports charity and development projects – buying everything from medical equipment for new mums here at home, to chickens and securing fresh water for farmers in Africa.

The retail price of the Real Easter Egg is £3.99. It is made of high quality Fairtrade chocolate. A number of stores are to stock the Easter Eggs.

Virtual Real Easter Egg Hunter - With demand expected to outstrip supply Google Maps is providing the 'Virtual Real Easter Egg Hunter' which allows people to hunt for an independent shop or church in their area where they can buy the Real Easter Egg. Visit www.realeasteregg.co.uk .

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Bible ( trivia quiz )

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married ?

A. Ruth-less.

Q. Where is the first tennis match mentioned in the Bible ?

A. When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court.

Q. Why didn't Noah go fishing ?

A. He only had two worms.

*From A Bucket of Surprises. J. John and Mark Stibbe.*

Ticking All of the Boxes ~ Following a lovely visit from one of the 'Sharing God's



Love' team of visitors, I was left with an invitation, along with information as to what looked as though it would be a very interesting and soul searching (for me) weekend.

Yes, I was so keen – all of the boxes were ticked without any hesitation! As the time began to bring me closer and closer to the weekend, I looked and looked and questioned and questioned myself. Had I done the right thing – ticking all the boxes?

On reflection, following Sunday's services, followed by saying our "Goodbyes" to the very hardworking 'Lay Witness Team' members - I have experienced an inner deep and knowing message from God that "yes" He had ticked all of my boxes.

Talking (which I did quite a lot!), Sharing and the Worship have affirmed within me this is a Church full of Prayer, Love and Sincerity along with Support and Witness. Yes Lord, you have known of 'ups and downs' that have been there through my life. But now You have given me the invitation, to walk through the door, into your House and experience your unconditional Love.

I first tell my problems how big my God is,  
before I tell God how big my problems are.

## Rev. Andy will take Sabbatical Leave May-July 2011

The Methodist Church requires its Ministers to take sabbatical leave every seven years. Andy Halstead will take his leave during the months of May, June and July. The purpose of a sabbatical is to provide Ministerial staff with some 'Time Out' for reflection, study and refreshment.

I was unable to get to all of the sessions due to other family commitments but I really



enjoyed the bits I did attend - I found it very uplifting and faith-strengthening. The frank and open telling of personal stories of how our people had been touched by our loving God was definitely the highlight for me, followed closely by some great hymns and the raspberry cheesecake (or was it strawberry?).

What did the Lay Witness weekend mean to me? So much. The testimonies of the team made me realise that my faith had reached a comfortable plain and that I needed to



move on and perhaps move out of my comfort zone. I think it has given me a kickstart to move forward.

I need God in my life so much and I am learning to spend more time with Him.

It was a wonderful weekend, worship in the church and then the small group sessions where people were able to open up and say things that they felt they needed to say. The questions were deep and sometimes hard to answer and we really had to think before we could say anything. There was a great thankfulness in my heart at the end of the weekend.

The weekend was a great success and talking with people at lunch on Sunday just



reinforced how positive it had been for those who were involved. I think for myself 'it was a time for quiet reflection about my life', it also offered the opportunity to meet and talk with members of the Church family. Quite often there isn't time to do either.

Glad I attended, great speakers. Discussion groups gave one opportunities for "self searching" and "just listening"

## COFFEE MORNING & BRING and BUY



10.00am - 12.00noon in the Village Hall

**Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> April**

for the work of Network (Women's World Missions )

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

COME & BRING YOUR FRIENDS

Swallowing of pride seldom leads to indigestion.

*Anon*

**February Coffee Morning** This was a great success. The total raised was £558 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association for their work and research. A big thank you to all helpers, stall holders and those who donated baking and

gifts and also to those who came along to meet their friends.

### Soul Survivor 2011 Christian Youth Festival.

Fri 29<sup>th</sup> July to Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2011

This will be our third camp at this annual event. It's held at the Staffordshire Show Ground. Excellent for youth groups, a well equipped venue for young people (school year 7+) to spend time together in an enjoyable, and safe environment. For more information see the Soul Survivor website:

[www.soulsurvivor.com/uk/ss2011/weeka](http://www.soulsurvivor.com/uk/ss2011/weeka)

### SOCIAL EVENTS

**Faith Lunch**, we meet at 12.30 on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April

Trips to -

Masson Mill - 11<sup>th</sup> April - 9.30am at church - £16

National Memorial Arboretum - 16<sup>th</sup> May - 8.00am at church -  
£27.50

Lunch at Buxton - 20<sup>th</sup> June

Ramblers - 10.00am Thursdays outside church, all welcome.



If you ever think you are too small to be effective,  
you've never been to bed with a mosquito.

### Smile Lines.



There was a man trying to understand God, so he asked him, "God, how long is a million years to you?"

God answered, "A million years is like a minute."

Then the man asked, "God, how much is a million pounds to you?"

God replies "A million pounds is like a penny."

The man thought for a short time and asked, "God, will you give me a penny?"

"In a minute", God replied.

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YouTube Psalm reading: Bishop and pupils join King James Bible Trust record attempt

Next time you go on YouTube, you can see the Bishop of Oxford and pupils from a Church of England primary school recording the first all-age Bible reading for a worldwide project. It aims to capture the whole of the King James Bible on YouTube. See them at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btHPRm4znwA>

The reading marked a double celebration as the National Society was founded 200 years ago to provide education for all through Church schools and the King James Bible was first published 400 years ago.



I thought it was lovely to see so many people there and some new faces (morning and evening don't usually mix) and the hymns were great and the

singing was the best I've ever heard in church-- more of those modern hymns would be nice.

Firstly, thank you to the team for organising such a wonderful weekend. It gave me the



time and opportunity to really focus and reflect upon my relationship with God. At times it felt challenging but with everyone's support the experience of music, discussion, listening and prayer was very meaningful .

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From a personal point of view, there were so many good things about the weekend – the sharing of the meals, the fellowship, the singing, the discussion groups – that it is difficult to single out a particular highlight.



What struck a special chord were the moving and inspiring testimonies given by the members of Lay Witness team. Each had different experiences on their journeys with God but what came home to me was that no matter where we are in our personal pilgrimage, God will never turn us away.

Throughout the weekend, there was a real sense of community and love. There was something for everyone and I hope and pray we can build on this foundation to come even closer to each other and to God.

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Oops !!!

Lot's Wife

The Junior Church teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mummy looked back once, while she was driving", he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telegraph pole!"

Two connected thoughts came to mind as I reflected on the Church Weekend. Firstly, how ordinary, in the most positive sense, the visitors were. They were not evangelists,



or superstars of the Methodists or Anglicans, they were ordinary people like the rest of us, with very strong faiths which were constantly being challenged, as evidenced by their testimonies.

Secondly, as we shared the sessions together, there are people within our church who have equally compelling stories about how God has worked, and is working, in their lives, and it would be wonderful and uplifting to be able to share these on occasion with the wider congregation of our church.

It's a Funny Old World

Funny how small our sins seem, but how big 'their' sins are.

Funny how we demand justice for others, but expect mercy from God for ourselves.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have any difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

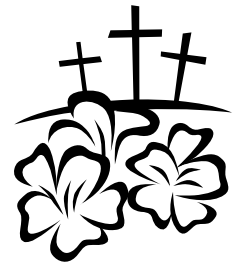
Funny how we are so quick to take directions from a total stranger when we are lost, but are hesitant to take God's direction for our lives.

RECIPE FOR PERFECT LOVE

John 3 v 16-17

TAKE

the only sinless man,
the unfair trial of a love-filled life
a crown of thorns,
several lashes from a whip,
a jeering crowd,
four piercing nails,



one wooden cross,
a cup of vinegar,
a scattering of frightened disciples.

Add a group of weeping women,
two bewildered, dying criminals,
one dark afternoon,
a torn temple curtain, one painful death,
an all forgiving heart for a sinful world,
one piercing sword,
and a river of blood.

Mix it together and leave it
for two nights in a borrowed tomb.

Then serve on a Sunday morning garnished

with an empty grave, rolled back stone,
and a folded shroud.



This recipe has only been made once,
But the result is everlasting!
It is the most precious dish.....

of Perfect Love.

*(The author is a Christian nurse working in a Hospice.
This is an extract From her book 'Faith Hope Love'.)*

MOTHERING SUNDAY 3rd April

The old Gospel reading for this Sunday was about the feeding of the 5,000 so it was originally called Refreshment Sunday. This Sunday became linked with family reunions and gatherings and became



Mothering Sunday.



Mother's Day, which in this country is on the same day as Mothering Sunday, is an American invention started in 1906. Mother's Day is directly connected with the mother of the family but Mothering Sunday is more connected with Mother Church, the family meaning has been added on.

MOTHER'S DAY CARD

Nice cards for Mother's Day can be rather expensive so why don't you make your own? You don't have to be an artist to make a lacy card. You will need some coloured card, glue and a paper lace doily.

Cut a piece of card twice as big as the card you want and fold it in half. Cut your decoration from the doily, some have lovely patterns of hearts, flowers and leaves. Put a very small amount of glue on the back of the 'lace' and press it onto the card. Finish by writing a nice message inside.



Why was the Egyptian girl worried?

Because her daddy was a mummy.

What stories do the sailor's children like to hear?

Ferry tales.

Did you hear about the little boy that they named after his father?

They called him dad.

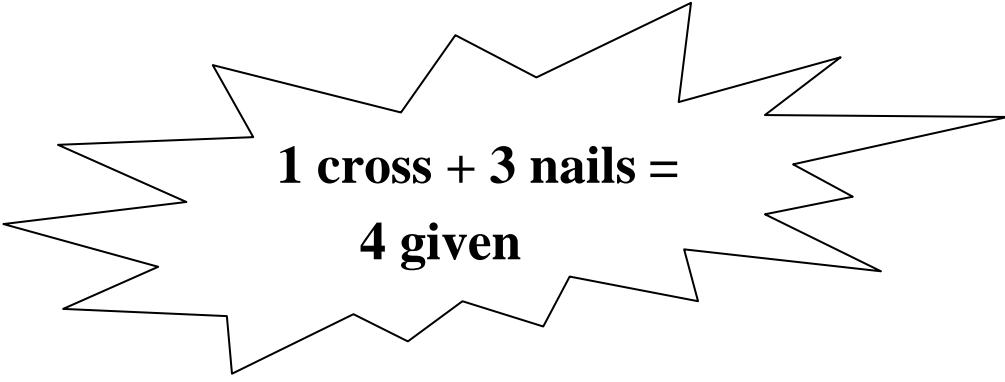
How did your mum know you hadn't washed your face?

I forgot to wet the soap.

Happy Easter!

A happy and blessed Easter to you! Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! He has risen indeed! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in his joy!

The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will be still 'growing' in their Christian walk with God.



**1 cross + 3 nails =
4 given**

Signs outside church

The Nails Didn't Keep Jesus On The Cross -
His Love For You Did.

Running low on faith? Stop in for a fill-up.

Let's meet Sunday.....face-to-faith.
God

(From A Barrel of Fun J.John & Mark Stibbe)