

CONTACT

July - August 2011

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY METHODIST CHURCH
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(REV ANDREW HALSTEAD RETURNS FROM SABBATICAL IN AUGUST)



Minister's Letter

Dear friends

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Matt 6:26

Well, summer is upon us and the birds are singing. As I write this piece for the newsletter it is pouring with rain outside! Never mind, we had a wonderful spring and it will soon be Christmas!!

Time certainly rushes by and we have to be careful to make sure we enjoy what we are doing now - rather than living in either the past or the future.

As the famous ditty goes, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift - which is why we call it the present."
Author Unknown.

In this country we talk always of the weather. This is a great ice-breaker, especially when we're not sure what to say to people, but it also means that our summers can pass us by whilst we're waiting for the sun to shine. Life can be like this too. We are blessed with so much, and yet we spend so much of the present either dwelling on the past or anticipating the future - be it good or bad.

This summer take the opportunity to put your efforts into the present moment. Reap the rewards of enjoying everything that is around you. Look at the view as if you are seeing it for the first time. When you meet people, look them in the eye and really listen to what they say. When you eat, taste your food.

And all summer long, remember - the grass is only green because of the rain!

David

PRESTBURY NEWS

River Cleaning - Sunday September 4th

Following the success of the activity undertaken in 2008 as part of Hope 08, the Young People of Prestbury Methodist Church, called the Reach Group, will be pulling on their wellingtons in order to clear the River Bollin of rubbish between 09:00 and 13:00 on



Sunday 4th September. The garbage pulled out last time included supermarket trolleys, road signs, bollards, umbrellas and shoes,..... and of course loads and loads of litter! It is open to anyone aged 10 and over. Everybody is welcome, so bring your friends for what will be an exciting and tiring time,

but one which will show how much we care for God's world.

We will be meeting at the Ranger's Hut at Riverside Park, Beech Lane, Macclesfield (near to Tytherington High School) at 09:00 for the giving out of safety instructions and equipment.

Services at the Beaumont

These will be held at 11:00am, Tuesday, 26th July, and 30th August. Your support is welcomed.

Special Services

Please note that the Church Anniversary services are on **July 10th** led by Rev David Stretton, Also, please keep the date free for the Harvest Celebrations on **September 11th**

The Craft Group



The group will meet on the dates below at 2.00pm.

13 June, 27 June, 11 July, 25 July, 8 August, 22 August, 5 September, 19 September, 3 October, 17 October, 31 October, 14 November, 28 November.

Perhaps we could arrange on one or two of these dates to visit a Craft Supplier eg Wilmslow Garden Centre with

afternoon tea and/ or Hobby Craft and come back to Bridle Rd for a cuppa.

Beta

The group will meet in July & August as follows: Wednesdays July 13th & August 10th. On each occasion we shall revisit a different short version of one of the sessions of the Alpha Course. The meal is at 7:00 p.m. and the discussion starts at 8:00 p.m.

HOUSE GROUPS



The **Lunch-Time House Group** has now had a couple of meetings, which are being held every other Thursday, and are being hosted by different members each week. The house group has 'built on' the daytime Alpha Group, but has now extended more widely. The group is currently studying Philippians. Programmes are available in the vestibule, but you will need to see Pews News for venue details. The meetings are from 1:00 – 2:00pm, but people are very welcome to bring their lunch from 12:30pm onwards. Forthcoming meetings are on 14th & 28th July, and 11th & 25th August.



The **Evening House Group** will hold the first meeting on 21st July, starting at 7:30pm, and finish around 9pm...followed by tea and biscuits. We will initially be using Lay Witness Movement material entitled "Exploring God's Love", which follows on from our "Sharing God's Love" Week-End. The group will meet every other Thursday (alternating with the lunch-time group).

Programmes for both groups are available on the vestibule table. All are very welcome, and, although we would hope that people would be able to attend regularly, this is not essential to being able to follow the programme.



CHURCH PRAYER GROUP

Look back to our Lay Witness Weekend in March remember the power of the testimonies of ordinary people just like us . Remember how many of us were challenged that weekend and the inspiring services and House groups we attended.

Why was that weekend so successful? The answer was the PRAYER both here and also the faithful group of people in different parts of the country who were praying for us. We know and have proved that talking to God in prayer can have great results .

Prayer is the powerhouse of the worldwide church Although we can and do pray in our own homes and this is great. We all benefit from our own Quiet times. We need to look at the early church (Acts 1 v.14, 2 v42-47) where meeting together for prayer was so vital. Look too at present day churches up and down the country who have made special times to meet together to pray and see how their churches are GROWING !

For some time now here at Prestbury we have been meeting fortnightly on a Tuesday at 2pm and we would love to have others join us to what is a special time of fellowship together. An evening session is a possibility too.



Don't be afraid to come just because you have never been involved in a prayer group before . There is nothing to be apprehensive about. Usually we start with a short time of

sharing our concerns such as friends, family, church, local and world issues.

Then the leader reads a passage from the Bible or something else which is relevant. We spend the first 5 minutes in silence. This is a time to "Be still and Know that I am God", to just relax and know that God is with us . Then, after a prayer there is the opportunity to pray aloud for our concerns, or to pray in silence. Bring a prayer to read or a prayer written by yourself. It's fine if you wish to pray silently all the way through. Maybe you might like to prompt everyone to say The Lord's Prayer, that's fine. I stress that the atmosphere is relaxed and you can contribute in the way in which you feel comfortable . There will be times of silence , but that does not matter.

Prayer is such an important part of our Christian life and strengthens and deepens our relationship with God, We know that the Holy Spirit is with us . This is a very special time of sharing fellowship with our fellow Christians.

Anyone who would like to come and pray with others either regularly or occasionally is warmly invited to join us. If transport is a problem, we will sort it.

The dates for the July/ Aug. meetings are.

12th July

26th July

9th August

23rd August

There will be reminders in Pews News. It's only half an hour followed by refreshments. Look forward to seeing you .

Members of the Prayer Group (only 4 of us at present)



Social Events



The **Ramblers Group** meet each Thursday at 10.00am outside church for the ramble and 12.15 approximately for a light lunch at the Admiral Rodney. All welcome to join us for both – or just the lunch!

Faith Lunch The next lunch is on 4th July – please bring a photo of yourself as a youngster!

August 15 – Trip to Bridgemere



Just Drop – In

Please Support the following fund-raising events for Just Drop In

Friday 29th July – JDI Fashion Show. A chance to see and buy the latest collections from top boutiques and designers from Macclesfield, Wilmslow and the North West. £5 a ticket and refreshments available. Try and buy. Bring your friends for a wonderful social event at Macclesfield Methodist Church. Tickets on sale now.

Sunday 7th August - Prestbury Village Hall Tea afternoon. Cake bakers needed, tea waitresses, tombola stall volunteers. This event made £600 last year, lets top it.

Methodist Church helps to launch the JustPay Campaign

President of the Conference the Rev Alison Tomlin, announced that the Methodist Church will use its influence as an investor to urge companies to pay the Living Wage. The Methodist Church will from September pay all workers at least the Living Wage - the minimum wage required for a person to live and participate in society.



To a Westminster Central Hall packed with community activists celebrating ten years of the London Living Wage, Alison said: "A company cannot say with integrity it believes its workers are its most important asset and not pay them enough to live on. A politician cannot with integrity say they believe in the family values while not challenging pay levels that ensure some people must work 60+ hours a week merely to meet their basic needs. The Living Wage is an active expression of our belief that human work and endeavour is a spiritually significant thing."

The campaign includes many ecumenical partners and is co-ordinated by FairPensions. Go to www.fairpensions.org.uk to find out how to use your personal investments to put pressure on companies to pay the Living Wage.

In addition, a campaign to lobby FTSE 100 companies to adopt the Living Wage has been backed by the Methodist Church and its

Central Finance Board. People are encouraged to lobby these companies directly at www.activateyourmoney.org.

[From "Methodist News" 19th May 2011]

GIDEONS 2011



On Saturday June 11th, I was "dragged along" to the annual Friends Evening for the Gideons North Cheshire Branch at Tytherington Family worship. I don't reckon to go to "meetings" on Saturdays but we were won over by the offer of a hot-pot supper - followed by desserts

We went along for an excellent supper and instead of the usual invited speaker there were four members or friends of N Cheshire Branch who told us about different aspects of their activities, especially the distribution of Gideon New Testaments. We heard about the friends who visit Styal prison regularly to lead a service, but two speakers in particular stood out to me. Wilmslow High School has recently been consistently hard for Gideons to gain access to present scripture to pupils. All sorts of difficulties have been raised, but the Gideons have persisted. This year the Gideons secretary received a call from the Head of RE asking for a visit and could a total of 600 copies be distributed, as there were three school years now who had not received a presentation. With great joy a visit and presentation was made, the Gideons met the new head of RE at Wilmslow High and she asked them to make sure they booked a return visit as she regretted that before her arrival there had been problems. She

feels that the children must have access to the New Testament message – the punch-line for me was that she is a Muslim.

A group of Gideon Friends from St James and Emmanuel Church in Didsbury were touched three years ago by issues relating to trafficking of young women to this country. They were aware that there were a number of “massage parlours” in Didsbury so they prayed what to do. On Valentines Day 2009 the female members of the house-group started visiting these places taking a rose and a hand-made card for each of the ladies who worked there, followed at Easter, Harvest and Christmas with relevant gifts and cards. These visits have continued, they are invited in, and the working ladies welcome this compassion and care. Earlier this year, one of them asked whether they might receive gifts of New Testaments, so the local Gideons were approached, happily donated 40 copies and these have all now been given by the visitors to the ladies in the establishments. Isn't that wonderful!

In all last year the North Cheshire Gideons placed 1984 copies of scripture – either Bibles or pocket New Testaments – including 10 giant print and 18 large print copies. All 8 local High Schools in Macclesfield, Wilmslow & Poynton received them, Styal prison and many hotels and guest-houses in the area.

I was so glad I went to the meeting! I thought you would like to read these good-news stories as well.



EXPLANATION OF GOD

'One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'

'God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

'God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.'

'Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.'

'Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.'

'His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he

helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.'

'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'

'You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong, and besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.'

'If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.'

'But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

And... that's why I believe in God.'

(Circulated on the Internet. It was written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, California. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to 'explain God.' I wonder if any of us could have done as well?)



Introducing the New President of the Methodist Conference, Leo Osborn

The Rev Leo Osborn begins his office as President of the Methodist Conference on Saturday 3 July when the Conference meets in Southport. His answers to these questions give you an impression of the man behind the role.

How and when did you discover faith in God?

I was privileged to be brought up in a Christian home and going to church was second nature to me. But it was at the age of 13 that I made a commitment to Christ in response to an invitation made by David Sheppard, then test cricketer and later Bishop of Liverpool. I recognise now that all that had happened up to that point was preparing me for that time and was hugely significant.

Who has most inspired you on your Christian journey?

I wish I had a whole page for this one! Of course saints with a capital 'S' come to mind and Barnabas is a special favourite for his gift of encouragement and Cuthbert, too, from Lindisfarne in my own district. But saints with a small 's' have been hugely important too: my mother and aunt who both showed me Jesus; Mary who prayed for me each day; George who didn't despair of me as a trainee local preacher and Herbert who lived everything he believed. I have been immensely privileged to have known them and so many others.

Why have you chosen your theme - "Caring as Disciples of Jesus"?

It really springs from the words in Colossians 1:17 where Paul tells us that "In Christ all things hold together". One of the best ways

in which we can model that to a fragmented world is through the quality and breadth of our care. But it will only ring true when,

within the church, we are holding on to each other and being held together by Christ in our discipleship.

What are your hopes and dreams for the Methodist Church?

There is so much that excites me about being a Methodist Christian. Sometimes I think we tend to be envious of other Churches who we think excel in worship, preaching, evangelism, concern for the poor and marginalised and so on. But often a Church may be strong in one of these areas and weak or unconcerned in another. Yet we want to say that all these things and more besides are important, and although we don't always get it right I value so much a Church that has helped to shape me as I hope a 'rounded' Christian. I wish we could celebrate this 'roundedness' a bit more!



What do you think are the greatest challenges facing the Methodist Church today?

We are still sometimes afraid to take risks lest we get things wrong and are not always ready to trust those whom God through the Church has called to lead us to do so! But perhaps the

greatest challenge is how to proclaim the gospel we sing that 'we have ... to proclaim' in a world that is changing more rapidly than many of us care to admit. Because I still believe this gospel is worth proclaiming, I hope this year to learn from those who are doing so in new and creative ways.

What book (apart from the Bible) has been a source of inspiration to you?

Pilgrim's Progress would probably be top of the list but *Three Men in a Boat* reminds me that it is good to laugh at oneself (and of course okay to laugh at the Church too!) More recently I've been both challenged and helped by the writings of Brian McLaren.

As 2011 is the Year of the Bible what is your favourite Bible verse and passage? Why?

Hebrews 11-13 are wonderful chapters and I think I could preach from them forever! Faith, women and men of faith, perseverance, worship, practical Christianity – it's all there! When I was in Crusaders as a teenager it took as its motto Hebrews 12:2 "Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (AV). If I'm allowed to place alongside it Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" then I will be content!

What do you do to relax?

The obvious answer would be watching Aston Villa (mostly on television) but it's not been at all relaxing this season! Warwickshire cricket is in the same category! So walking, listening to The Archers and J S Bach will have to do. (And an occasional break at our cottage in Norfolk doesn't come amiss either!)



COFFEE MORNINGS & BRING and BUY



10.00am-12.00noon
in the Village Hall

Saturday, 30th July

To support Methodist homes for the Aged

&

Saturday, 27th August

In aid of the Macclesfield Hospital MAST Appeal

Home made cakes, greeting cards,
raffle, bric-a-brac, books etc.

COME & BRING YOUR FRIENDS



MARY MAGDALENE

Mary Magdalene is one of the most important women associated with Jesus during his ministry.

Mary, who came from the village of Magdala on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a devoted follower of Jesus, part of the close group of those taught by Jesus during his ministry. Jesus had healed her of seven devils. She was with Jesus during his travels and followed him to the end, witnessing his crucifixion when others had fled, and his burial. According to all four Gospels, she was the first person to see the Risen Christ in the garden on the very first Easter Day.

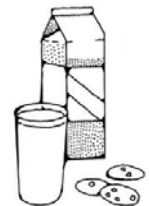


She is often shown in pictures holding a pot of ointment because she was among those women who brought ointment and linens to the tomb of Jesus. For this reason, in the Eastern Orthodox Church she is called a Myrrh bearer.

M-WORDS

All the answers to this quiz begin with the letter M. Which M is...

1. A Canadian police person in a red jacket?
2. A mixture of water and earth?
3. A type of pasta?
4. A black and white bird?
5. A white drink?
6. A hairy, extinct elephant?



- 7. What you do with a ruler?
- 8. A wall painting?
- 9. Not the beginning or the end?



What did the monster say to the grand piano?
Darling, you've got lovely teeth.

What do moths study in school?
Motheletics.



What is a dog's favourite musical?
The Hound of Music.



Answers:

1.Mountie 2.mud 3.macaroni 4.magpie 5.milk 6.mammoth 7.measure 8.mural 9.middle

Is it Shakespeare, Dickens, The Beatles, Tony Blair or the Bible?

New research has found that while people still value the Bible, they're confused about where some familiar English phrases come from – such as 'my brother's keeper' and 'a drop in the bucket' – was it Dickens, Blair or the Bible? A recent ComRes poll for Bible Society revealed the following:

'My brother's keeper' (Genesis 4:9): 56% rightly identified the phrase as originating from the Bible.

'A drop in the bucket' (Isaiah 40:15): Half of all people (49%) didn't know where the phrase was from, but an equal proportion said that it originated from Tony Blair (12%), Shakespeare (14%) and Charles Dickens (12%). Only 7% correctly identified the phrase as coming from the Bible.

'The writing on the wall' (Daniel 5:5-6): The same proportion of people said that the phrase originated from the Beatles (18%) as that saying it was from the Bible (19%).

'Eat, drink and be merry' (Luke 12:19): The greatest percentage of people (41%) said that the phrase derived from Shakespeare, while just one in ten (9%) said that it originated from the Bible.

'Filthy lucre' (1 Timothy 3:3): One quarter of all people thought the phrase was from Shakespeare (23%) while one in ten (10%) said that it came from the Bible.

The poll also asked how important knowledge of the Bible was for appreciating culture, history and politics. On the whole, people thought it was significant, with nearly half of people believing it important for the vision arts, literature and history, but only 24% thinking it important for an appreciation of classical music.

A Few Smiles to finish.....

School children were asked "What are angels like?" and gave some imaginative replies....

- Angels have a lot to do and they keep very busy. If you lose a tooth, an angel comes in through your window and leaves money under your pillow. Then when it gets cold, angels go south for the winter. *Sara, 6*
- Angels live in cloud houses made by God and his son, who's a very good carpenter *Jared , 8*
- All angels are girls because they have to wear dresses and boys didn't go for it. *Antonio, 9*
- My angel is my grandma who died last year. She got a big head start on helping me while she was still down here on earth. *Katelynn, 9*
- What I don't get about angels is why, when someone is in love, they shoot arrows at them. *Sarah, 7*