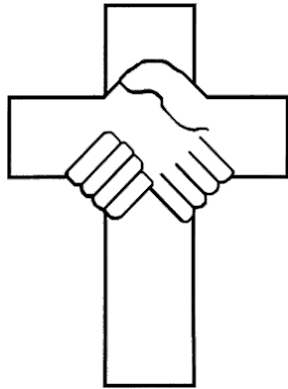


CONTACT

March 2011

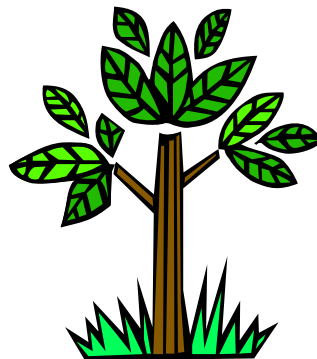
MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY AND OVER ALDERLEY METHODIST CHURCHES

MINISTER REV ANDY HALSTEAD – TEL 01625 424361



“Sharing God’s Love” Weekend

March 4th to 6th



MINISTER’S LETTER



11 Atholl Close
Macclesfield
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01625 424361

Dear All

This contact appears as our Sharing God’s Love Weekend happens. Though the more important question will be – what has it meant in your life and in the life of our church? For the weekend is not the end of the journey, but rather a stage along the way – it is a bit like putting stepping stones across a river, each one is the next step forward. I hope and pray the weekend has and will exceed our expectations.

We also begin this month Lent, the time of self-reflection and examination on our journey to Easter. The Lent courses are run jointly between Broken Cross and ourselves. Maybe during the weekend you have felt challenged about your faith, the church or your relationship with God, the Lent course may be a way of continuing that journey of exploration. They will take place at 10:30am Mondays at Broken Cross and 7:30pm at Prestbury on a Tuesday. Further details are printed later in this issue.

It only remains for me to say that many others and I have been praying for this weekend and asking God to bless and encourage our lives and fellowship. Maybe there are things which you have been challenged by or want to question. Please don’t hesitate to contact me for coffee (and or tea) and a chat, that together we may continue our journey.

Blessings

Andy

PRESTBURY NEWS

The **New Offertory Envelopes** are available in the Hall. Please will all donors collect them.

The Service at Beaumont will be held on Tuesday 25th February at 11.00am. You are welcome to support this.

Lent Lunch – There will be a Lent Lunch in our church on Wednesday March 16th from noon to 1.30pm. Proceeds to Christian Aid. Offers to make soup will be much appreciated. Many thanks.

World Mission Boxes – Please bring these in during this month.

Craft Club will meet at 2.00pm on 7th and 21st March. We will be making Easter items for the March Coffee Morning. Do come and join us - no skills needed.

Annual Church Meeting This will be held earlier this year due to Rev Andy's sabbatical. It will be held on Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm. Nominations for congregational representatives are needed so please give some thought to whether this is something you could do. If any member has any issue they would like raised at the meeting concerning the life of the church, please raise this no later than the week before.

Wanted for the Bric-a-Brac stall at the Coffee Mornings

Any Bric-a-brac, jewellery, unwanted gifts. If needed, can be collected.

The Women's World Day of Prayer this year is on Friday March 4th at St Albans Church in Macclesfield at 11am. This year's service is prepared by the women of Chile and the theme is 'How Many Loaves Have You?' Men and young people are also welcome. People from many different churches in the area will be taking part. Tea and coffee will be served in the Parish Centre from 10am.

Action for Children. A big thanks for everyone who helped at January's coffee morning. We made a total with donations of £427, which I know will be put to good use.

Coffee Morning at Gawsworth There will be a coffee morning on Thursday the 10th March from 10am until noon at Gawsworth Methodist Hall for **Action for Children**. Come along and meet some of the people of Gawsworth at this friendly venue.

Beetle Drive The Friends of Guiding in Prestbury are holding another of their ever-popular BEETLE DRIVES on Saturday, 5th March at Prestbury School from 6.00pm. Whilst this unfortunately clashes with our Lay Witness weekend, if not involved on the Saturday evening, please do come along. Tickets £6 for adults, £4 for children (under the age of 13).

Beaumont Worship

On the last Tuesday of each month at 11.00am, Rev Andy leads us in an act of worship at the Beaumont Nursing Home, Prestbury. A few from the congregation join the residents in the lounge. 'Choose a hymn' is a great success with the elderly, regardless of tradition. Hymns are the common denominator we can all share and it is a truly 'happy hour' singing God's praise. Do join us if you can.

THE BEATITUDES This year the Beatitudes will be explored in the Lent Course. Two weekly meetings will be held ~ Starting on **10:30am, Monday 21st March** at Broken Cross Methodist Church, and **7:30pm, Tuesday 22nd March** at our Church. Both groups will run for four sessions, and will cover the same material.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Faith Lunches – March 7th and 4th April.

Trips to –

Port Sunlight – March 21st – 9.30am at church - £16

Masson Mill – April 11th - 9.30am at church - £16

National Memorial Arboretum – May 16th – 8.00am at church - £27.50.

Ramblers' Group – meet outside church each Thursday at 10.00am. All welcome. The ramble always finishes at the Admiral Rodney pub for lunch at about 12 – 12.30. Non-walkers are welcome to join us there!

An extended ramble in Derbyshire is being planned on September 8th. This will include an overnight stay.

A little boy's prayer: "Dear God, please take care of my daddy and my mummy and my sister and my brother and my doggy and me. Oh, and please take care of yourself, God. If anything happens to you, we're gonna be in a big mess."

Soul Survivor 2011 Christian Youth Festival. Fri 29th July to Tues 2nd Aug 2011

This will be our third camp at this annual event. It is 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

CIRCUIT NEWS

The Macclesfield Messenger

You will have seen the first edition of the new Circuit Newsletter – The Macclesfield Messenger. The circuit leadership team are keen to see it develop as the church families in the circuit begin to see the benefits it brings as we all learn more about each other and the activities around the circuit. It would be good to see articles written by church members – so get out your pens – or switch on your computers and start writing. We have so many things worth sharing.

2011 – The Year of the Bible

The Handwritten Bible Project

All circuits across the UK are being invited to take part in producing a handwritten Bible. Our sections are 2 Kings 24 and Acts 25 v 1-12. The writing must be completed by the end of May. The Circuit Leadership Team discussed ways of approaching this project and it was agreed that the Girls Brigade at Gawsorth and the Cubs/Scouts at Macclesfield would undertake the writing of our allotted sections. We have already received the specially produced paper, which is to be used. The plan is to try to organise a special event so look out for dates.

20 and Out!

It seems incredible to think that the Christmas concerts, under one name or another, have been going for 20 years or so. The start was from very humble beginnings in the old chapel, when we would put the concert together on the Saturday afternoon from items we had collected from many different sources.

From this, over the years through the 1990's they grew and in 1995 we took the bold step to use the village hall for the first time. We were astounded when we sold out, and so added first the Friday, and then the Thursday evening shows. The money raised helped to finance the new church, and latterly we have always supported two charities, including the East Cheshire Hospice. We estimate that over the years we have raised well over £30,000.

However, the attendance at, and the participation in, last years concert was well down on previous years. There were a number of reasons for this, including the weather, the recession and other commitments, and reduced attendances were experienced at many Christmas concerts given by choirs and other organisations locally.

At the "wrap-up" meeting of the concert committee recently, we discussed the best way forward. The feedback from people who did attend was extremely positive, and it was no doubt one of the best ever. But, we don't want the concerts just to fizzle out, and we don't want to lose the special atmosphere which the concerts generated within the cast. But with declining support within the church, and lower attendances, we have had to consider the future of the concerts very carefully.

We have therefore decided that there will not be any concert in 2011, and that we will review this in January 2012 to discuss the longer term future. If you have any views, please feel free to pass them on to any members of the concert committee and these can be discussed at our next meeting early next year.

Thank you to everybody who has helped to make these concerts a very special highlight event of our church calendar over the years.

COFFEE MORNING & BRING and BUY



10.00am-12.00 noon in the Village Hall

Saturday, 26th March

for the work of **Overseas Missions**

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

COME & BRING YOUR FRIENDS

(April's Coffee Morning will be supporting
Network – Women's World Missions)

Marriage advice

'I'm in a terrible fix,' moaned Mark. 'I'm in love with both Susie and Maria and I don't know which to marry.' 'No problem,' said Sean, his Irish friend, 'I know you're not a Catholic but I think the Church could help you. Call in St Patrick's on the way home tonight, kneel down and ask God for help - that should solve your problem.' Next morning Sean found Mark grinning from ear to ear. 'It worked. It's a miracle,' Mark enthused. 'I walked in, knelt down and there it was written in red across the altar cloth: AVE MARIA!' (Parish Pump)

Copy Date for the April edition of Contact will be March 14th.

A Story from "The Buzz" Issue 90

"Good News Stories from UK Methodist Churches"



WORSHIP - New cross for church tower unites village.

From: Burton Joyce Methodist Church, Nottingham East Circuit.

"For several years the local council put a large illuminated cross on our church tower as part of the Christmas decorations for the village.

"It shone down Main Street and was an important marker for Advent and Christmas", Eventually, the old cross became too decrepit and the council could not afford a replacement

so our very small, ageing congregation decided that we had to raise the £1,000 necessary to replace it. We thought it would be difficult but within three months we had our £1,000. Donations were received, from the very small to the quite large, from many diverse members of the village community for whom the cross, with its message, was enormously important, even though church is not. A complete stranger thrust £40 into my hand and said "that cross - my family think it's so important!" and rushed off before I could thank him properly.

Our cross shone out from the first Sunday in Advent and throughout the Christmas period and, as it is now a permanent installation, we can use it for Easter or at other times. We feel so blessed by this and have learned a great deal from the whole experience.

THE BUZZ is a great resource that brings the whole Methodist Connexion together and allows us to share what's happening in our districts, circuits, churches and church groups. We can advertise church, circuit or district events and news on the Connexional Notice board on the Methodist Church website. See www.methodist.org.uk/local

So what's so special about Lent, anyway?

Lent begins on 9th March with Ash Wednesday, which always falls in the seventh week before Easter. Lent is widely observed by Christians as a time of fasting or meditation.

Why 'Ash Wednesday'? What do ashes have to do with anything? This recalls the Old Testament custom of putting ashes on oneself as a symbol of repentance. (e.g. Esther 4.1; Jeremiah 6.26). When the early Church began to observe Lent as a period of preparation for Easter, repentance played a key part. Therefore the wearing of ashes was adopted as a proper external sign of this inward attitude of remorse and repentance.

Especially during the Middle Ages, Christians began Lent by imposing ashes on the heads of the clergy and the people. Nowadays any ashes used come from the burning of the palm crosses from Palm Sunday during the previous year's Lent. Some churches continue this theme of repentance by the symbolic use of purple clerical dress during Lent. What about the custom of giving up things? Lent is based on the period of 40 days spent by Jesus in the wilderness before the beginning of his public ministry in Galilee. Jesus fasted for 40 days, and so his followers were encouraged to do the same thing. The early Church recommended a fast of two or three days, but by the fourth century, people were encouraged to fast for the full 40 days.

The precise nature of this 'fasting' varied. In general, the western church understood 'fasting' as a reduced intake of food, and encouraged Christians to spend time in devotional reading or attendance at church rather than fasting.

What about the length of Lent? The period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day is actually 46 days. Why not the 40 days that Jesus fasted? In the early Church, every Sunday was regarded as a celebration of the resurrection of Christ - so fasting was forbidden on a Sunday! So the period of 46 days thus consists of 40 days of fasting, plus the six Sundays which fall between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day.

Finally, just before Ash Wednesday, we have Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Tuesday. This reflects the many thousands of Christian housewives down the centuries who cleared out their larders immediately before the fast of Lent. The simplest way of using up all their eggs, flour and milk was to make pancakes. In some countries the day is known as Mardi Gras, and is marked by major carnivals, most famously in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

(Parish Pump)

These are The Holy Alphabets, just for you

Although things are not perfect

Because of trial or pain

Continue in thanksgiving

Do not begin to blame

Even when the times are hard

Fierce winds are bound to blow

God is forever able

Hold on to what you know

Imagine life without His love

Joy would cease to be

Keep thanking Him for all the things

Love imparts to thee

Move out of "Camp Complaining"

No weapon that is known

On earth can yield the power

Praise can do alone

Quit looking at the future

Redeem the time at hand

Start every day with worship

To "thank" is a command

Until we see Him coming

Victorious in the sky

We'll run the race with gratitude

Xalting God most high

Yes, there'll be good times and yes some will be bad, but...

Zion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!
