

CONTACT *SEPT 2009*

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY AND OVER ALDERLEY METHODIST CHURCHES

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Greetings

By the time most of you read this we hope to be packed and ready to move, though some of you may not read it till after we move. What a small world Methodism is, for on leaving here Stephen will go to be minister at a church in Wigan where I was once minister. We thought we would say a little about who we are as we come to share in the life and work of the circuit.

Both Diane and I were born and brought up in Preston. Diane currently works as a care manager for a company in Oldham and will continue to do so following our move. I have served in several places in Methodism, Rochdale, Littleborough, Wigan & latterly Oldham. I also served for 5 years as full time chaplain at St Catherine's Hospice in Preston. Following the breakup of my first marriage in 2002 I resigned from the ministry to take stock of what that meant for me as a Christian and a 'minister'; a year later Diane and I were married. Then through the prayer and support of friends I was challenged to reconsider whether I ought to still be in the ordained ministry. As part of that reflection I applied for and was appointed as a lay minister in the Oldham circuit in 2006 and whilst there applied for readmission to the presbyteral ministry. In June 2008 I was readmitted into the ordained ministry and then owing to staffing arrangements was stationed back to the Oldham Circuit for 1 year.

So to Macclesfield, this was our first choice out of all the appointments on offer and so we are really excited about coming. Diane and I have between us 7 children and 2 grandchildren. Diane has four boys and 1 girl and I have two girls; most have now flown the nest. We will bring with us my eldest daughter Vicki and Diane's mum Cath and the dog Bess.

So you know where we live, please don't hesitate to drop in and make yourself known.

Every blessing **Andy & Diane**

Welcome To Our New Minister at Prestbury!

We are very pleased to welcome Rev Andy Halstead and his wife Diane as they join us to serve God in our Circuit.

We look forward to getting to know them both and welcoming them into our church family at Prestbury.

There will be a **Circuit Welcome Service** for Andy and Diane in the **Prestbury Church at 2.30 on Sunday September 6th**, after which there will be refreshments served and time to chat.

Harvest Thanksgiving Service - September 13th

Revd Andrew Halstead's first services with us will celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving. In the morning we shall be joined by the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, whilst in the evening we welcome St Peters to a joint service. As in the past few years our gifts will be taken to the Women's Refuge in Macclesfield and Wellspring in Stockport where meals are provided for the homeless and people in need. Please bring your contributions to aid both these organisations.

Back To Church Sunday - 27th September

Back to Church Sunday is five years old this autumn. Most denominations are now involved, including us, and the increased attendances in participating churches nationally have surprised many - 36,000 new people last year alone. Of these, a small minority have continued to attend church, and a few churches have reported significant growth.

So - how does it work? Very simple: the emphasis is on individual Christians like you giving a personal invitation to people whom you know. All the evidence suggests that this is the most effective way of getting people back into church. Many non-church people simply got out of the habit of going to church long ago; others have occasionally wondered what church is all about, but been

hesitant to attend one on their own. Your invitation will give both of them a chance to try church for themselves.

This autumn, churchgoers are set to personally invite up to half a million people to services on Back to Church Sunday, making the event one of the largest co-ordinated evangelism events shared across the Church in recent history. Up to 16,000 Church of England churches could be taking part, joining congregations from Churches Together in Scotland, the Church in Wales, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed churches nationwide, Elim Pentecostal churches and Anglican churches in Australia, Argentina, New Zealand and Canada.

'Back to Church Sunday' began in Manchester in 2004, spread to Wakefield Diocese in 2005, nine dioceses in 2006, 20 in 2007, and 38 in 2008.

Coming Back to Church: a story from 2008

Celia was invited to St Luke's, Colchester, on Back to Church Sunday 2008. Her friend Carole asked her along to the service. Now Celia is attending regularly, has joined the Worship Team, and hopes to be confirmed later this year. She comments: "I was surprised when I got to the church that morning. It was different to what I'd imagined, and the people were very friendly. I didn't feel like they were trying to shove religion down my throat, they let me make up my own mind. It was a very relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, just like one big family. I would recommend it to others: you never know where it could lead you. My whole life has changed completely in the last year."

So if we can all join in and invite a friend or neighbour to share with us on "Back to Church" Sunday who knows how much difference this may make - God certainly will!

The Definite Article

Books come in so many shapes and sizes nowadays; hard- or paperback; pamphlet, journal or guidebook; on-line or via microchip: There is no end to books, as the preacher ruefully observes (Ecclesiastes 12:12). He was ahead of his time. It's hard to imagine what he would make of the plethora of printed matter that surrounds us today. Of course there are some books that stand the test of time and are regarded as classics: a stirring tale by Dickens or Hardy, or a fantasy by C S Lewis or E Nesbit for example. These continue to outsell many a literary newcomer. No doubt you will have your favourite read - a book or books you still return to fondly again and again.

Yet, whereas you will have no trouble at all finding a book in almost any literary genre or on any topic you care to mention, there remains only one that is still called **The Book**; only one book that is prefaced by the definite article. For **The Bible** means just that in Greek - **The Book** - the **Book of Books**: one that Christians claim stands head and shoulders - or should I say cover and spine - above the rest.

Such a claim to pre-eminence does not sit comfortably with the spirit of this age. Surely such a book needs to justify itself with a snappy sound bite, a prestigious award or some stunning reviews. Only something new, so the thinking goes, can be that special; certainly not something that has been around for so long, read continuously, valued by so many and republished so frequently. But surely that is just it! **The Bible's** claim to be **The Book** has stood the test of time. It justifies its definite article in so many ways.

The Bible is the story of stories; the story of God's love for the world and God's rescue plan for its people. It is the story of people discovering what God is like, who they are and who they are meant to be. **The Bible** is the book in which to find not just God's story but our human story too, as we see people's lives reflected in the history of particular individuals. And this is **The Book**, in which we can read a word-portrait of Jesus Christ, whose presence permeates the whole of the story as well as shining out in particular in the gospels. As Jesus himself says to the Pharisees, The scriptures tell about me (John 5:39). Many a book is inspiring. Many a book is informative and indeed encouraging. However

for those who follow Jesus, there is only **The Book** that can challenge and change them. Only **The Book** that can help them hear God speaking directly into their lives. And for this reason it is **The Book** that really does deserve the definite article...and a definite daily opening!

Beta

It just so happens that the current series of Beta meetings is investigating **The Bible**! Perhaps you would like to join in the second of these meetings on September 9th when we meet for our evening meal at 7pm followed by discussion from about 8pm.

A New Hymn

At a recent evening service in August we shared in singing a new hymn only written this year. The smaller congregation present at this holiday time found it inspiring and perhaps you will too:

Little encounters, eternal significance,
places for contact and moments of grace.
Each time of meeting brings new expectations,
looking for Jesus in each neighbour's face.

Love will transform us and grace still astound us.
Humbly we walk where the world fails to go,
reaching in friendship to each of our neighbours,
praying together to thrive and to grow.

Here we will share in the mission of Jesus,
building community, offering care;
reaching the lonely, then working together,
finding God's kingdom is already there.

ACF Meeting - September 9th at 3.00pm in the Meeting Room when members are asked for their contributions of "Musical Memories".

Services at The Beaumont are held on the last Tuesday of each month at 11.15am. Your support will be welcome on September 29th.

The Prayer Group recommence meeting weekly at 4.15pm on Wednesdays in the upper room at church commencing on 9th September. All are welcome.

The Rambling Group meet each Thursday - 10.00am outside Church.

The Craft Group

Come and join us in the Meeting Room at 2.00pm on Monday 14 September for Calligraphy and on 28 September for Card Making - More quilling ideas

We are now making items for the Christmas Coffee Morning and the Shoe Box appeal.

Coffee with other Churches

Tytherington Family Worship Coffee Morning: 10:00 am to 12:00 Saturday 12th September. All welcome.

Prestbury Summer Music at St Peter's

September 6 at 3.30pm - Andrew Burr and friends

September 20 at 3.30pm - Paul Morley (organ)

Admission free

Afternoon Tea available afterwards in the Village Hall

For your Entertainment

A Film: "The Age of Stupid"

On Wednesday 23rd September at 8pm Cinemas in the Heritage Centre Macclesfield is showing the film "The Age of Stupid". Starring Pete Postlethwaite, the film seeks to highlight in a dramatic, challenging but totally scientific fashion the risks to the future of the earth, of God's creation, of failing to act now to reduce global warming. It is a wake-up call to the world, and especially I believe to those of us who are called to be stewards of our world. It is, however, not completely gloomy, and indeed is often very entertaining and funny.

A Play: "Origins and Lemons"

On Friday 2nd October at 8pm at St. Michael's, Macclesfield, Riding Lights are putting on their new play "Origins and Lemons". Based on Genesis chapters 1-11 it includes songs, stand-up, stories and sketches exploring issues around "the why of the world, the truth and the conjecture, the Bible and the questions". Suitable for all over the age of 11, the show is a return to the Riding Lights tradition of biblically inspired entertainment, seeking to draw together people of differing persuasions in an atmosphere of warmth, humour and humility, and celebrating the rich and insightful stories which are the heart of these early chapters of Genesis. Being funny, fast-moving and topical it would be an ideal event to which to invite non-Christians. In case you are in any doubt, I can assure you that the clear understanding of Riding Lights, and the play's writers, is that the Bible is the inspired word of God, foundational to our Christian faith, containing the story of God's salvation for human beings. Tickets are £11 and £8 for concessions (or £7 for groups of 10+) and will be available from the St. Michael's office, and the Riding Lights box office on 01904 613000

World Mission and the Sri Lankan Churches struggle with the refugee crisis

The Methodist Church's Fund for World Mission is working with local churches in Sri Lanka to deliver immediate aid and relief. The Church is appealing for people to help alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict there. A £15,000 grant from the Fund for World Mission will be sent to Sri Lankan Church leaders to help assist victims affected by the crisis. The gift follows an earlier £20,000 Fund for World Mission grant made in October after around 200,000 residents in the Wanni region in the north of the country became trapped by heavy shelling and aerial bombing.

Revd Ebenezer Joseph, President of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka, said: "The willingness of the Methodist people in the UK really strengthens us. The demands are increasing as the number of refugees rises. Our needs for the next six months may be something around Rs 20 million (£113,000) at least. "Please continue to pray specially for the people who are caught in between. It's God grace alone that enables us to continue with what could be done without just giving up."

We at Prestbury have helped to support the work of World Mission by donating the proceeds of our July Coffee Morning to the Fund for World Mission (see back page). Also many members have collection boxes in which to regularly place spare cash, and it is now time for these to be collected for counting.

If the recession has hit you hard, take comfort...

The Shepherd's Song

He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much:
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.

Fulness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage:
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan 1622 - 88

Early Morning

In the quiet of early morning
As a new day is unfurled,
It's a privilege to sit and gaze
At the beauty of God's world.

The golden rays of sunshine
The grandeur of the trees,
The nodding of the flowers
In the gentle morning breeze.

A carefully woven tapestry
With joy in every strand,
A vision of sheer loveliness
Created by a master hand.

A Quiet Day Together at Gawsworth

Those of you that know me will know that "Margaret" and "Quiet" don't go together! I am always searching for different experiences to learn more about God and my Christian faith, so thought I would give the Quiet Day a try.

The morning started with coffee and chatter - I was all right with that - then we moved into the peaceful atmosphere of Gawsworth Chapel. Sheila explained that the day would be split up into sessions exploring "Our Journey". During each session we looked at references in the Bible and suggestions were given to guide our thinking in the times of silence. No verbal answers were required. They were to help with a structure for our silent times.

These times could be spent reading, writing, drawing, making a "Time Line" of our own journey or stroll outside enjoying the countryside God has given to us.

The Chapel was always to be a quiet place but the hall and outside could be used for sharing thoughts ideas and of course lunch.

I chose to use the time to look up the Bible references we were given and these led to other readings. I found answers to questions that had been worrying me and yet more questions to be worked out.

The themes for the day were our

Physical Journey - people who have influenced us, events that have shaped us and blessings we have received.

Enforced Journeys - events, happenings in our lives over which we had little control and which forced us to take a certain direction.

Chosen Journeys - had the choices we made at various times taken us to places we least expected and did our choice to follow Jesus and commit ourselves to His way of life influence our choice?

The day closed with us taking Holy Communion together. We thanked God for the day we had shared and remembered His sacrifice for us in the sharing of Bread and Wine.

The day was a very worth while experience thanks to Sheila's thoughtful planning and guidance and one which I will certainly repeat if it is offered again.

Social Events

Gawsworth Open Air Theatre - Many thanks for organizing a very pleasant August picnic and evening entertainment for us. Even the weather co-operated!

Faith Lunches - Mondays:

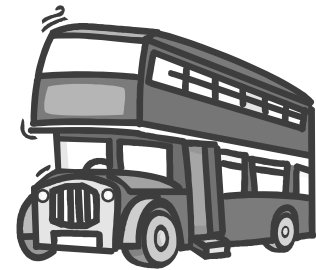
7th September & 5th October

On November 2nd there will be a 2 course lunch at £12



Gorton Monastery and Victoria Baths

October 19th - Coach will leave church at 9.15 approx. - cost £25 includes lunch at Gorton & a cup of tea at Victory Baths.



Oswaldtwistle Mill and Christmas Lunch

November 16th - Leave church at 9.00am.

Cost £23.50.

Plaza Stockport Operatic Society

Friday November 27th 2009 "Thoroughly Modern Millie"

Cost £17 including coach

Bridgewater Carols by Candlelight - 7.30pm Friday, 18 December

Cost tba.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER GROUP

The group meets at member's homes at 9.00am on Wednesdays throughout September

Church E-mail Directory

This is to remind you (or let you know) that the Church maintains an e-mail directory, and to invite anyone who is not yet on it to be included. The object is to enable people to keep in easy touch on-line, and to circulate church related information from time to time. Pews News is e-mailed to the group each week, as well as the quarterly plan.

The more people in the directory the more useful it becomes, and we are aware that more and more people are going on-line all the time.

The directory will be e-mailed to those who are on it, and kept updated with changes/new entries. No-one will appear on the directory who hasn't specifically said so, so if you would like to be included please have a word, or e-mail me at dave@thebaron.force9.co.uk.



Church Website

The website is continuing to be developed, and you can find it at prestburymethodistchurch.org.uk. In the next month or so, we hope to include more information about church activities. At present, you can find information of church services, and copies of Contact magazine. In particular, you may like to pass the address on to folk who have moved away, so they can keep in touch with what the church is doing.

Answers to July/August Crossword

The answers were:

ACROSS 8 Assyriologist 9 Sue 10 Innocence 11 Motif 13 Defrock
16 Attalia 19 Lord's 22 Prophetic 24 Mac 25 Contraception

DOWN 1 Ransom 2 Ascent 3 Fruitful 4 Joined 5 BOAC 6 Sign to
7 Streak 12 Out 14 Full cups 15 Cud 16 Alpaca 17 Thorns 18 Attack
20 Remain 21 Second 23 Hurt



THE RIGHT TIME

It is harvest time now. I suppose we think of harvesting wheat, corn, things like that; but do you think of sugar? A lot of the sugar we use in this country is home produced. It comes from sugar-beet which is harvested at this time of year. The roots are taken to factories where they are washed, sliced and crushed. The juice is carefully heated in a huge container and at exactly the right moment a tiny spoonful of powdered sugar is added to the boiling liquid. This tiny amount turns the whole batch into sugar crystals. The right thing and the right time coming together to make a complete change.

Moses told God that he wasn't very good at anything; others were much better, more clever than him. He said 'please send someone else' (Exodus, chapter 4) but God's reply was 'I will be with you'. With God everything is possible. God helps the impossible change into the possible – and God uses the most unlikely people and things to do it.

SWEET WORDS

Can you rearrange the letters to find the sweet things? Answers at the bottom of the page.

1. LLLYO
2. DUGEF
3. CEIRQULIO
4. ETFOEF
5. CLOTACHEO
6. LYJEL ABBY
7. ATREES GEG
8. MIPPETPENR
9. EIC MAREC
10. HALARMSLOWM



Why did the chewing gum cross the road?

Because it was stuck to the chicken!

What do bees chew?

Bumble gum!

What's a toad's favourite sweet?

Lollihops!



ANSWERS: 1 Lolly 2 Fudge 3 Liqueur
4 Toffee 5 Chocolate 6 Jelly baby
7 Easter egg 8 Peppermint slice cream
9 Marshmallow

COFFEE MORNINGS

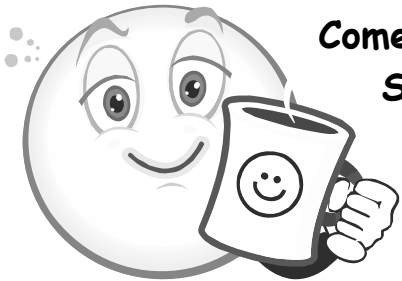
The Friends of Guiding's 'Big Crunch' Coffee Morning in June raised £620 net.

The Friends would like to thank everyone who supported the event, whether with donations for the raffle or tombola or, much more importantly, in attending and sharing in the social fellowship, enjoying the Brownies' home-made cakes - and, of course, in spending their money on cakes and cards, etc.

Thanks also to our Methodist Church for giving up this Saturday each year so that the coffee morning can be run by and for Prestbury's Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

The money raised will help tremendously with the costs that FoGiP incur, not just in maintaining the Guide Hut in Bollin Grove but also in paying for coaches for outings and pack holidays, new tents for the Guides, and such like.

At our July coffee morning for the work of the Methodist Church Overseas £261.62 was raised despite many people being away on holiday. Thanks to everyone who helped and supported the event.



**Come to our next Coffee morning on
Saturday, 26th September
10.00am-12.00noon
in the Village Hall
in aid of Wellspring**

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