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Dear Friends

My internet connection has gone down, again! It's so frustrating yet only a couple of years ago we didn't have any internet connection, never mind the super fast broadband that seems obligatory for 21st Century living.

But why do we get so hung up about such things? Communication is so vitally important yet sadly we don't have the relationship with our next door neighbours that our forefathers had, but communication is still an essential function in life. Often drivers get irate at the slightest thing, but if someone passed in front of us whilst out walking we would no doubt both apologise and go happily on our way again. Perhaps this also has something to do with communication, I am told communication is 70% non-verbal, however very little can be communicated from one tin box to another, which is one reason, I would suggest, for the road rage. Essentially our computers are glorified tin boxes too, although I hope they enable greater communication than their cousin tin box, the car. Having said this, emails are notoriously easy to misinterpret.

As communication is so non-verbal, this can make communion with God somewhat difficult at times! When I was Minister at Langley we placed a life size cross in the church grounds every Good Friday and as part of our Easter day morning service at Prestbury, we shall build a cross - made of daffodils and spring flowers celebrating the new life that Jesus has given to us. Through the historic event of Easter, God communicates loud and clear his love for us, in ways that words never could.

Praying that you'll get the message

Yours in Christ's service

Stephen

WHY PRAY ?

Jesus said to his disciples 'when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.' This would seem to be very clear guidance that we all need a regular quiet time for private prayer. Why is this so important and how does it help.

1 Positioning.

From our earliest days we are learning to stand on our own feet, be self-reliant and self-confident. A period of private prayer reminds us that in fact we are God-reliant. It clears our minds and puts us in the right position before God, a position where we can listen as well as talk, where we can 'become as little children' as Jesus told us we should.

2 Offloading.

In our daily lives we often acquire burdens which get heavier as we carry them with us. These can be a sense of failure or of loss, resentment or anger, doubts, anxieties or other problems. Whatever they are they can spoil or even ruin our lives. Prayer helps us to get rid of these things. As the hymn says,

*Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour still our refuge-Take it to the Lord in prayer!*

3 A way of caring for others

When we have concerns for family, friends and neighbours or even people we have never met but are concerned about we can help by bringing them to God in prayer. In so doing we can become a channel of healing and help which is even more important where the people concerned are not able to pray for themselves.

4 A way of asking.

Finally when we pray we are able to ask for ourselves. Jesus said, 'whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith' and so asking for ourselves is an important part of our praying. Perhaps we might pray for more strength, love patience or more of the Holy Spirit to fill every part of our lives.

*O thou by whom we come to God The Life, the Truth the Way
The path of prayer thyself has trod, Lord teach us how to pray*

Nothing is more healing or strengthening than opening ourselves to God in prayer every day.

(This is the third and final of a series of three short articles based on recent sermons at Prestbury. The three sermons are available to borrow on DVD)

PRESTBURY NEWS

Coffee Morning

The coffee morning in February raised £415.91 for Action for Children. This was an excellent result and our grateful thanks to all who helped and attended.

ACF

ACF will meet in our meeting room at 3.00pm on Wednesday 1st April (note the earlier date than usual). The topic will be "Early Ballet Years".

Lent Lunch

The lent Lunch will be at 12.00noon on 1st April. There will be a collection for Christian Aid.

Lent Course and Beta

On Wednesday, 1st April we meet at 7.30pm to continue our course "All shall be well". On Wednesday 8th April we meet for a meal at 7.00pm. After the meal there will be a service, "A Holy Week Reflection".

Service at The Beaumont

Rev. Stephen will be leading a short service at 11.15 am on Tuesday 7th April. Your support is welcomed.

The Craft Group

You are invited to come and join us at 2.00pm on the following Mondays:
30th March Let's be Creative.
20th April Quilling Demonstration.

27th April Quilling and Card Making.

The Rambling Group

This continues every Thursday, meeting at Church at 10.00am. Note the earlier time. All welcome.

Offertory Envelopes

The new envelopes starting 1st April 2009 are now available. Please collect them from the vestibule. Using the envelope scheme is a convenient way of giving regularly to the Church. It can also be very tax effective for both you and the Church.

Teddies for Tragedies

Calling all knitters - could you knit teddies from your scraps of wool? I have a pattern from the Teddies for Tragedies organization. The knitted bear - along with the fabric bag are used to aid organizations to bring comfort to children who have suffered trauma. In the Isle of Man, the paramedics have them on their ambulances to give to a child who is distressed when they have to take them to hospital. A doctor in Sudan said they did more good than any medicine for many of the children.

Copy Date

The copy date for the May edition of Contact is 11th April.

***When praying, don't give God instructions
- just report for duty.***

Have you walked in the garden of desolation?

Do you know who it's like to fall down? Have you trusted and shared and been rejected, has the broken heart within you turned to stone?

Have you known the pain of misinterpretation, of betrayal by the ones you knew as friends? Have you pleaded that your nightmare might be lifted, just to waken to a night that never ends? Have you walked in the of desolation?

Jesus walked in your garden.

Let him lead you from the garden of your suffering, Let him show you to the place beyond the night. He has overcome the darkness by his death upon the cross. He has won for you his glorious Easter light.

There is life and joy within his resurrection, there is freedom and forgiveness for the past, Let him lead you in the garden of his triumph as he calls your name and offers peace at last

Let him lead you from the garden of your suffering.

What is a Christian?

If you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, or aren't sure, then read on...

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian. Trying really hard to be nice doesn't make you a Christian, and neither does being brought up in a religious family.

According to Jesus, a Christian is someone who has a personal relationship with Him, like a close friend or brother.

Jesus claims to be the Son of God.

The question is, is it true? Many have assessed the claims of Christ and found them justified. Many have entered into a relationship with Him and would gladly tell of the things He has done in their lives. Consider this: Many know that they still haven't found what they are looking for in life. Some feel restless inside. Jesus teaches that our lives will always lack ultimate purpose unless He is allowed to live at the centre. Our determination to keep ourselves at the centre damages us and keeps the One who made us at arm's length. But the death of Jesus on the cross has put an end to the separation that exists between God and humankind for anyone who is willing to surrender control of their life into Jesus' hands.

This is what Jesus offers to us all: "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in." Revelation Ch.3.v 20.

(From 'Closer to God' by Scripture Union)

Bible Study for DUMMIES

I am starting a new Bible study group – its not for 'DUMMIES' but is for those who (like me) don't know everything – but would like to know a little more.

It will be:

Short questions Informal A safe space to ask any

It won't: Assume that you know anything

Put you on the spot and ask you a direct question (although it may cause you to go away and think!)

23rd April

7th May

21st May 8pm – 9pm prompt start and finish

4th June

18th June upper room at church

For more info call

Stephen on 01625 424361

2nd July

16th July

all welcome...

SOCIAL EVENTS

Monday 6th April

Our Faith Lunch starts at 12noon and will be a ham salad provided by the social team. Afterwards, there is a presentation by Hotter Shoes. The cost is £5

Tuesday, 28th April

An afternoon visit to Holly Tree Farm, Tabley. This will be a short visit to their farm shop plus afternoon tea and a short cookery demonstration. The cost is £11.50 and we leave church at 1.15pm. The sausages are fantastic!!

Monday 11th May

Faith Lunch starting at 12noon will be a Ploughman's provided by the social team. There will be a talk and demo about the Costume Museum Please join us and bring a friend. Cost is £10

Friday 26th June

We have booked some tickets to see "Joseph" at the Buxton Opera House. The cost is £32.00 including the coach and we will leave church at 6.45pm.

Monday 6th July

Faith Lunch will be a buffet provided by Beech Tree Catering. The cost is £10

We hope to arrange a visit to the Victorian Baths and Gorton Monastery and also the Shire Horses and Fryer's Roses later in the year. Maybe we shall return to Castleton and Rose Cottage for lunch when it is decorated for Christmas. In July we shall book Gawsworth when we have the programme for 2009.

A step into the unknown

It all started when I read a "Churches Together in Macclesfield" notice on our chapel information board, asking for volunteers for the "Cre8 Garden Project" on the Moss Rose estate. At the time I was at a crossroads concerning how best I should continue to serve the Church before I became really old! I felt that I ought to get out of my "comfort working zone" inside our church and do something which was not me.

Three months later having passed my interview with Rob Wardle (Director of various Cre8 projects), I turned up at St. Barnabas' Church, Moss Row with some apprehension for my introductory shift. I was introduced to two other volunteers and the three lads for whom we were to be "role models". The varied nature of the anticipated physical tasks posed no problems for me, but bonding with the youngsters did.

Not being a chatty person nor a soccer fan, I planned to keep a low profile and work along side them, letting the task in hand be the vehicle of conversation. It worked! It did not take too many shifts before I was getting banter and giving it when opportunity arose. A year has now elapsed and I've learnt that engaging the lads in conversation and answering their questions honestly is very much appreciated by them.

My experience has not all been one way. Besides my giving of time, energy etc as a "grandfather role model," I have also benefited. Not wishing to sound presumptuous, many a time whilst driving home after a shift, I have felt contented about my decision to do something outside my comfort zone. Also, getting to know something of the lads' situations has made me more appreciative and thankful for my own situation. Besides helping with the Garden Project I have branched out. Three months ago I discovered help was needed with the Club Night, particularly on the aero modelling table, I succumbed to my boyhood pursuit - I even get homework!

A Brief Background of Cre8

2005 Spring. Group of people met under the auspices of CTM to consider the possibility of initiating a community based project in the Moss Rose estate.

2005 August. Pilot project ran based at St. Barnabas Church.

2005 September. The Cre8 Youth & Community Project set up with its own Local Management Group.

2007 Due to the success of various projects permanent managerial organisation became essential.

2007 September. Cre8 Youth & Community Project became the Macclesfield Branch of the national Christian charity "Worth Unlimited". (Rob Wardle being recruited as Project Director).Funding remaining the responsibility of the Local Management Group..

HE IS RISEN

The joy of the Resurrection is something we must learn to experience, but we can experience it only if we first learn the tragedy of the cross. To rise again we must die. Die to our hampering selfishness, die to our fears, die to everything which makes the world so narrow, so cold, so poor, so cruel. Die so that our souls may live, may rejoice, may discover the spring of life. If we do this then the Resurrection of Christ will have come down to us also... the Resurrection which is joy, the joy *of life recovered*, the joy of the life that no-one can take away any more! The joy of a life which is superabundant, heaven itself reflected in its sparkling waters... It is not only with our hearts but with the totality of our experience that we know the risen Christ. We can know Him day after day as the Apostles knew him. Not the Christ of the flesh... but the everliving Christ----- Christ, once risen, is ever alive, and each of us can know him personally. Unless we know him personally we how not yet learnt what it means to be a Christian.

Archbishop Anthony Bloom

CHILDREN'S PAGE

What kind of shoes do spies wear?

Why did the maths book look sad?

What do you call a rabbit with fleas?

Where did the king keep his armies?

What kind of lights did Noah use on his ark?

What kind of writing pays best?

What do you get if you pour water down a rabbit hole?

Answers: Sneakers - It had too many problems - Bugs Bunny -
Up his sleeves - Flood lights - Ransom notes - A hot cross bun

**Rabbit and Tortoise had a race. You know the Tortoise
won and Mr Rabbit come in last. A little hot cross bun.**

Smile Lines - Hymns for Professionals

Dentist Crown him with many crowns

Contractors The Church's one foundation

Obstetricians Come labour on

Golfers There is a green hill faraway

Politicians Standing on the promises

Librarians Let all mortal flesh ~keep silent

Why Easter chocolate and Wine are good for you

As Lent comes to an end, and you reach for your Easter chocolate, here's some great news: eating chocolate and drinking wine or tea can improve your memory.

In recent research, people who regularly consume modest amounts of all three performed best in a series of brain tests. Apparently chocolate, wine and tea all contain micronutrients called flavonoids, which may reduce the risk of dementia.

But - the bad news is that the positive effects of wine level out after just half a glass, while all your brain needs is four squares of chocolate. Most depressing. Better put the kettle on....

STAY ALERT!

Here are some simple tips to keep your mind active:

- 1 Each night, spend a few moments recalling the events of your day. Write them down, if you like. Then - try to remember what happened yesterday
- 2 What was the sermon about last Sunday?
3. Read on a regular basis - it keeps your language skills active.

4. Mix with other people. Too much prolonged solitude can even lead to confusion.

5. Eat fish, nuts, fruit, vegetables, chocolate they all boost mental reaction times.

Jesus said: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die”. John 11:25-26

***Are you wrinkled with a burden?
Come to Church for a facelift.***