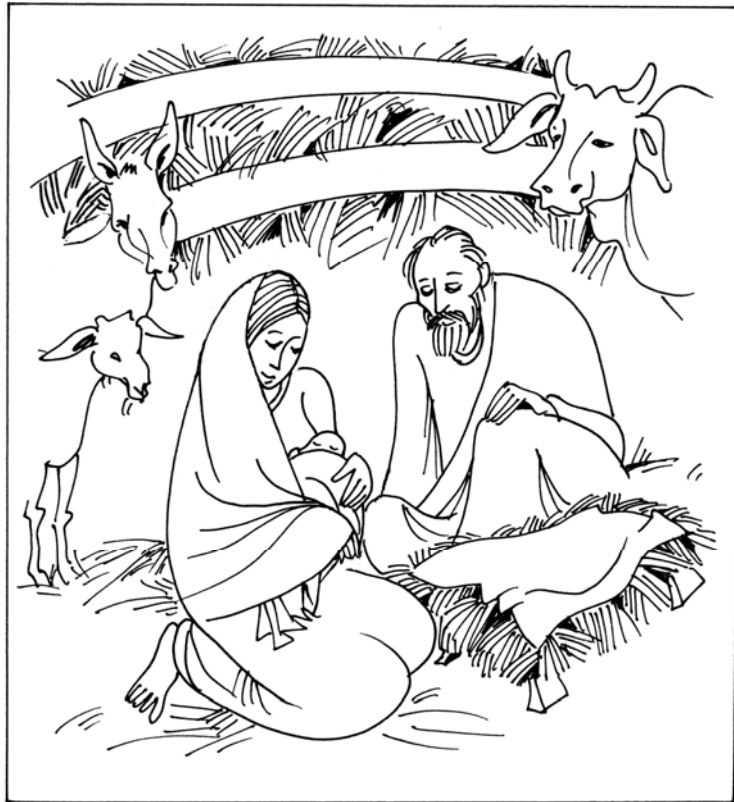


CONTACT

December 2008 & January 2009

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY AND OVER ALDERLEY METHODIST CHURCHES
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MINISTER'S LETTER

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Dear Friends

We are on the cusp of advent and I am feeling even more under-prepared than usual! I think hysteria is about to set in as I frantically dash about and bash the computer's keyboard to get everything into place for the smooth running of this extremely busy and pressurised, yet precious time of the year.

With my two daughters, so many people tell me what a special Christmas I will have as 'Christmas is for Children'. Well this is true, although Christmas is for big kids and beyond too. Certainly my wallet is aware that much of the commercial Christmas is centred around children. Father Christmas, or perhaps you prefer 'Santa', is Good News for any 'good' child. This is a mystical character who manages to be in a Grotto in every high street in every town throughout December, whilst also attending countless millions of Christmas parties at nurseries, pre-schools, toddler groups etc, yet this in nothing when we consider what he will do on Christmas Eve!

How wonderful to have the mind and imagination of a child, it truly is magical, but let's take a moment to get ourselves prepared, after all that's what Advent is for, preparing ourselves for the coming of the King, Jesus. How wonderful it is that this most special of characters, Jesus comes as Good News for good and especially for bad 'children' offering the precious gift of forgiveness. And Jesus offers this to all the world, magically the whole world can receive this gift

simultaneously. Yet the special gift of the Christ child at Christmas is almost nothing when we consider what Christ will do on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.....

Looking forward to seeing you at the Christmas services and beyond.

Wishing you and yours a blessed and happy Christmas and a peace filled 2009.

Yours in Christ's service

Stephen

PRESTBURY NEWS

Church Rotas

For December and January the rotas will not be published in Contact, but will be produced separately. So please note that the rotas for each month will be on the table at church during the previous month for people to collect

The Christmas Post Box

will be out earlier than usual this year so that those going away over Christmas will get their cards in time. The box will be out for 'posting' to members within our congregation on the **30th of November** and 7th of December. 'Delivery' will be Sunday the 14th.

The Network Christmas Afternoon

will be held on **December 4th** at 2.00pm at Macclesfield Methodist church. There will be refreshments and a Bring and Buy stall. A date for your diary!

The Beaumont

The Monthly Fellowship will take place on Tuesday, **9th December** at 11:30am.

Cancer Help

The cancer help Group which meets in our Church will be holding a Christmas Coffee Morning on Tuesday, **9th December**, from 10am – 12 noon. All are very welcome.

The Craft Group

The group will be meeting on Monday afternoon **10th December** from 2pm including coffee and mince pies. The group will continue to meet fortnightly in the New Year (see Pews News for dates)



Christmas Gift Wrapping

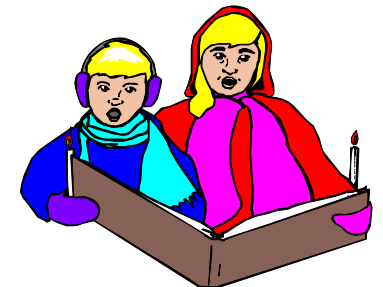
Grosvenor Centre Macclesfield - We have a slot on Thursday **11th December** 4.45pm to 6.30pm.

The Beaumont (Again!)

The Annual Carol Service will be on Tuesday, **16th December**. Please come along and join in.

Just Drop In Christmas Carol Service

This year JDI is holding a Carol Service in Christ Church, just opposite our premises in Great King Street on Friday **19th December** at 6:00 p.m. We are hoping that the young people will be taking part in this service. You are also welcome to drop in yourself for Christmas Refreshments at 33, Great King Street from 4:30. We would like you to come and sing alongside young People who may not have been in Church since they were baptised.



Hope 2008 - Christmas Day Care & Share

Tytherington Family Worship are hosting a Care & Share Tea on **Christmas Day** between 4.30 and 7.30pm for anyone who will be on their own. Volunteers are required to help with transport, food, entertainment, presents and setting up. If you'd like to help in any way for all or part of the time, please see the poster on our Church noticeboard.

New Year's Day Walk

Stephen is leading a **New Year's Day** walk up Shutlingsloe leaving Trentabank car park at 9.30am; followed by refreshments in Langley Church Hall - also available for non-walkers from 11am.

Ramblers Group

The group continue to meet weekly on Thursdays. Walkers meet in the church car park at 10.30am and non-walkers at 12noon at the Admiral Rodney.

Coffee Mornings

The Coffee Morning in September raised £286.10 for Macmillan Cancer Care. Thanks to all who helped and supported.

Contact Magazine

We all value the contribution Contact has in the life of the church and appreciate the work that has been done over the years. We are in the process of reviewing how it is produced. Do you have computer skills which could be used to set up the mastercopy? Would you like the opportunity to give Contact a new look? We are looking to setting up a team made up of editors, printing and distribution organisers - On the basis of more hands make light work - please speak to the stewards if you feel you can contribute

SOCIAL EVENTS

Monday 1st December 2008

Lunch is booked at the Bridge Hotel at 12 noon~ instead of our Faith Lunch.

Wednesday 5th December 2008

Tatton Park.. We shall be leaving church at 4.15 p.m. prompt for our meal at the Dun Cow.



Wednesday 17th December 2008 .

We shall be leaving church at 6 p.m. for our trip to the Bridgewater Hall for the Christmas Gala..



Monday 5th January, 2009

The committee will be providing Soup and a Pud for the Faith Lunch - cost £3.50 each.

Saturday 10 January 2009

Bridgewater Hall

Tickets £25.10, Nutcracker - Russian State Ballet . Cost of coach t.b.a. and paid beginning of January.

We hope to have a trip to the **Trafford Centre in February** date to be advised.

Please make a note that at the **April Faith Lunch** we are having a Presentation by Hotter Comfort Concept (shoes), so hope you can all make it.



A big thank you to everyone for their support during 2008, especially the social team, and to all the other ladies who help to make our faith lunches run smoothly. We have had some memorable outings and theatre trips , including trips to Frodsham and Leek markets followed by lunch. We hope to have some enjoyable trips in 2009 and to share fellowship and good company which we are so fortunate to have. We wish everyone a peaceful and happy Christmas.

May God bless you all at this special time

The Hopes and Fears of all the Years

These words come from Phillip Brooks' familiar Christmas hymn, 'O little town of Bethlehem.' In four lines Brooks reminds us that in the birth of Jesus the salvation of the world was being played out in Bethlehem.

In thy dark street shineth / The everlasting Light / The hopes and fears of all the years / Are met in thee tonight.

The word 'Christmas' comes from the old Anglo-Saxon; from 'Christ' and from 'masse' meaning 'mass' or 'celebration.' So the word 'Christmas' means 'Christ's celebration,' and it was because Christians from the earliest times believed that Christ was God incarnate that his birth was celebrated.

Even though we can't be sure of the exact month of his birth, much less the day, yet his coming into the world was such a mighty event that the instinct to celebrate it is in harmony with the New Testament. Even the calendar reminds us of his coming, for we divide history into the time before his coming, BC, and the time since his coming, AD. In just three verses in Luke's Gospel, the meaning of Christmas is spelt out so simply and so vividly. 'Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy... For all the people. There is born to you today a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord' (2:10,11). Luke's words still thrill us with their timeless good news! 'Don't be afraid ...I bring good news...great joy.. for all the people.'

Nothing in our world this Christmas can compare with that! No need to be fearful! The news is good! There is great joy for all who will believe it!

And then he tells us what the good news is: a Saviour is born! He is Christ the Lord! But as well as this Christmas Message Luke has a Christmas Miracle for us: 'This will be the sign to you: You will find a baby.' God's answer to the needs of the world was to send a baby! People everywhere were looking for a deliverer, perhaps another Moses; for a king coming in the glory and splendour of a Solomon; for a potentate like Cyrus to bring peace to the nations; for a long-promised Messiah. And God sent a baby!

Let's have a less wasteful Christmas this year

Amid all the rejoicing at Christmas, it is easy to forget our good intentions about recycling. Overwhelmed by a mountain of discarded packaging, tinsel, food scraps and other rubbish, we have so much to distract us. But it's worth giving some thought to ways in which we can minimise the waste that is created during the festivities. An estimated one billion Christmas cards and 85 square kilometres of wrapping paper will have to go somewhere. Turkey foil wrap alone will create 3,000 tons of waste.

Also looking for a home will be loads of old electronic gadgets (displaced by new ones). Thousands of mobile phones will be exchanged as gifts (15 million are replaced in the UK each year). According to a survey, each child will expect to receive ten presents, on top of those from parents – and 40 per cent of the toys will be broken within three months.

Hardly any batteries are recycled despite the toxic substances they contain. Although green and blue recycling bins are becoming a familiar sight, the UK still lacks an extensive recycling infrastructure. The nation still creates 150 million tons of rubbish each year, of which 80 per cent is buried. Landfill space is rapidly running out.

The good news is that this year over a million Christmas trees will be recycled and turned into ash or mulch by local authorities, many of which will arrange collection. But that still leaves six million that will be thrown out with the rubbish or left to rot in back yards or gardens. So what can we do on an individual level? If you have an old mobile phone lying around, you could give it to Community Fonebak, a scheme that recycles phones or repairs and redistributes them around the world (Tel 01708 683436). The project will also give donations to your favourite charity. Christmas cards could be taken to the special bins provided in (or outside) supermarkets. "Think before you throw" is a good motto for all of us.

What is the meaning of life?



Alpha

Join this 10-week Alpha Course to explore the Christian Faith. The meetings will take place on THURSDAYS from 15th January at 7pm at Broken Cross Methodist Church. The meetings are for those who don't attend Church as well as those who do and cover topics such as 'Who is Jesus?', 'How can I be sure of my faith?' and 'What does the Holy Spirit do?'.

Each evening will run as follows:

7pm	Meet and share a meal together
7.45pm	Watch Alpha DVD by Rev Nicky Gumbel
8.15pm	Discussions and Coffee
9pm	Finish

All are welcome - come along yourself and invite your friends! It would help us to know roughly how many people are coming, so please phone Stephen (424361) if you plan to take part or if you want some more information.

Over 40 of us have done Alpha over the past couple of years and would really recommend it to you, your friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues - come along and find out more.

1 CORINTHIANS 13 - THE CHRISTMAS VERSION

(Author unknown)

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas puddings, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtimes, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata, but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the children to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Computer games will break, cashmere jumpers will wear out, golf clubs will get lost.

But giving the gift of love will endure.

Happy Christmas!

What are angels like?

Try asking school children that question...

I only know the names of two angels. Hark and Harold. - Gregory, 5

Everybody's got it all wrong. Angels don't wear halos anymore. I forget why, but scientists are working on it. Olive, 9

It's not easy to become an angel! First, you die. Then you go to heaven, then there's still the flight training to go through. And then you got to agree to wear those angel clothes. Matthew, 9

Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has to do something else. Max, 7

My guardian angel helps me with maths, but he's not much good for science. Henry, 8

Angels don't eat, but they drink milk from holy cows. Jack, 6

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The basic message is where you went wrong before you got dead. Daniel, 9

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath, somewhere there's a tornado. Reagan, 10