

CONTACT

March 2009

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY AND OVER ALDERLEY METHODIST CHURCHES

MINISTER Rev Stephen Dunn – TEL; 01625 424361

E-mail; dunnythegeordie@hotmail.com

No more tea Vicar.....

Dear Friends

Lent is fast approaching, so my thoughts have again turned to what I might 'give up'. In the past I have tried to be creative and take something on, but given the crazy pace that we live life I think this year I'll conform and cut something out of my life - in order that I create some space for Christ to enter in. Last year I went without tea - well caffeine on block really as I never drink coffee and rarely eat chocolate. Going without tea just for lent wasn't much to ask, I thought - especially when you consider what some folks go Without permanently or

indeed what Christ went through on our behalf. Having said this, I certainly felt under the weather for the first couple of days of lent as my body reacted to a caffeine-free existence.

But why put myself through it? I thought it would be a good, daily (or many times more frequently than that) reminder of the temptation that Jesus went through for my and all our benefits. My simple act of going without prompts me to give thanks for all that Jesus went without as He walked this earth for me, and died in my place. Jesus did all this without my asking for it, and often with very little thanks.

At times I feel, (I guess you have similar experiences) that much is demanded of me, with few 'thanks yous' to boot. I hope that during lent and Easter we might all take the opportunity to say thank you to the multitude of people who work to serve us. When did you last thank the postman, bin man, shop keeper or **Jesus** for all that He has done and continues to do for you,

Last Lent I was seriously considering not going back to tea drinking ever again - but I couldn't resist, maybe this Lent I will be changed for good. Wouldn't the world be changed for good if we all managed a smile and a simple thank you a little more regularly?

Thanks for all **you** do.

Yours in Christ's service

Stephen
PRESTBURY NEWS

Coffee Morning

The coffee morning in January raised £340.30 for Motor Neurone Disease research. Thank you to all who helped and attended.

Thanks

Thank you to all my friends at Church and the village for all your prayers, flowers, cards and visits I received during my recent operation. They cheered me up immensely. Warmest thanks. Margaret Hardy

Beta/ Lent course

Beta merges with the Lent Study Group on Wednesday **4th March**. The meal will be at 7.00pm. There will not be a meeting of the Lent Study Group on 11th March but we will meet on **18th March** at 7.30pm for the study entitled "Faith into Love" and on **25th March** at 7.30pm for the study "The Greatest of These".

ACF

The meeting in March will have a talk given by Sally Williams entitled "Transatlantic Wedding". It will be in our meeting room at 3.00pm

The Prayer Group

We meet for prayer every Sunday morning at 9.55am. in the Upper Room, please join us.

World Mission

Please will those holding boxes for World Mission hand them in during the month

Mission in Britain

Thank you to all of the 12 collectors for this cause. A total for the half year was £99. 15 Your collecting is much appreciated. Note that the Coffee Morning on 28th March is in aid of Mission in Britain. Also there will be a morning service dedicated to this at the end of April

Service at The Beaumont

Rev. Stephen will be leading a short service at 11.15 am on Tuesday 10th March, Your support is welcomed

The Craft Group

On Monday 9th March the group will meet at 2.00pm in the meeting room and continue crafts for Easter.

The Rambling Group

This continues every Thursday, meeting at Church at 10.30am for a local walk

World Day Of Prayer

All are welcome on Friday 6th March to join friends for coffee at 10.00am at the URC Church in Macclesfield followed by a service at 11.00am. This year the service has been arranged by the women of Papua New Guinea. There will also be services at 2.00pm at St. James Church, Gawsworth and at 7.30pm at Langley Methodist Church.

Lent Lunch

There will be a Lent lunch at our Church on 11th March at 12 noon ~ 1.30pm. A collection will be taken for Christian Aid. All are welcome.

Church Council

There will be a meeting of Church Council at 7.30pm in our meeting room on 11th March

Friends of Guiding in Prestbury are holding a FAMILY QUIZ NIGHT, with PLOUGHMAN'S SUPPER, from 6.30pm on Saturday 7th March. Wine, beer and soft drinks will be available. Price: £6 for adults, £4 for children (under 13).

The copy date for the April edition of Contact will be 10 March.

00PS!!! Lot's Wife

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mummy looked back once, while she was driving, he announced triumphantly, and she turned into a telegraph pole!"

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

COME TO A SERVICE
At 11.00am

On 6th MARCH

At the URC CHURCH IN MACCLESFIELD
Arranged by the women of Papua, New Guinea

Women's World Day of Prayer is a global, ecumenical movement of informed prayer and prayerful action, organized and led by Christian women who meet on the first Friday in March each year to observe a common day of prayer. The service is written by a different country each year and that country then becomes the focus of the world's prayers on the day itself, which begins as dawn breaks over the islands of Tonga in the Pacific and continues until the last services of this special day are held back in the Pacific, on the island of Samoa, circling the world in prayer for 36 hours.

The symbol of the Women's World Day of Prayer was designed in 1982 for the service prepared by women of Ireland, both north and south, and then adopted as the International logo. The design comprises arrows converging from the four points of the compass, four figures kneeling in prayer, the Celtic cross and a circle representing the world and our unity through all our diversity.

WHY READ THE BIBLE?

(The 2nd of 3 articles derived from sermons delivered at Prestbury on the basics of Christian Life)

In his second letter to Timothy St. Paul writes 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God.' If as Christians, we share that view then it would seem necessary and valuable for us to read the Bible regularly for learning and guidance. It is helpful to us because it is:

A Purpose Book.

As we read through the Bible we can see that in the sweep of history, God's Purpose is always being worked out. He is Alpha and Omega and always has the last word. This gives us confidence that God is in control. As we journey through life, and particularly as we face tough challenges, reading the Bible can therefore, be a blessing to us by giving us an anchor and the reassurance we need.

A People Book.

The Bible is full of personal stories. Hundreds of people pass through its pages. From the Old Testament characters of Abraham, Moses, David etc. through to the New Testament where we meet the Disciples and lots of needy folk that Jesus helps. These personal stories are all reminders of God's Grace which can inspire and challenge us and sometimes help us to see ourselves more clearly.

A Prayer Book

When we pray we need to remember that it is like using a telephone in that we have to listen as well as speak. The Bible is God speaking to us and it is, therefore, a good place to start when we wish to pray. It is also full of prayers addressed to

God which we can use for ourselves but which can also help us to articulate our own current concerns as we pray. Many prayers can be found in Psalms (see 25 and 51 as examples) and Paul's letters(see Ephesians chapter 3)

If we are not reading our Bibles regularly let us take this opportunity to start doing so and as we open the pages say with Charles Wesley;

*Come, divine interpreter
Bring us eyes thy book to read
Ears the mystic words to hear,
Words which did from thee proceed
Words that endless bliss impart,
Kept in an obedient heart...*

SOCIAL EVENTS

Faith lunch

We meet at 12.30 for our Faith Lunch on Monday 2nd March.

Bakewell Market

We leave church at 9.00am on Monday 16th March for our outing to Bakewell with lunch at The Eyre Arms. The cost is £ 18

Forward Dates

Monday 6th April

Our Faith Lunch starts at 12 noon 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. I hear the sausages are fantastic!!

Monday 11th May

Faith Lunch will be a Ploughman's provided by the social team. There will be a talk and demo by Notty Hornblower of 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

Please give names and money to any committee member should you wish to join us on any of these events. 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 Gawsorth when we have the programme for 2009. Do you really want to go to Bury again'?!!!!

For all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives, read on. At a computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated, "If GM had kept up with technology like the computer industry has we would all be driving 25,000 dollar cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon.

In response to Bill's comments General Motors issued a press release stating: If GM had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

- 1 . For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a manoeuvre such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
5. Mackintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive but would run on only five percent of the roads.
6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights

would all be replaced by a single "This Car Has Performed An Illegal Operation" warning light.

7. The airbag system would ask "Are you sure?" before deploying.
8. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.
9. Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car
10. You'd have to press the "Start' button to turn the engine off

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 Informal A safe space to ask any questions

It wont: 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 4th June

18th June 2nd July 16th July

8pm – 9pm prompt start and finish in the upper room at church

For more info call Stephen on 01625 424361

all welcome...

Wake up to the Bible

There's one in just about every home on a shelf behind the TV, or up in Grannie's room, It's normally only got out when a crossword clue needs to be solved, or someone's got a question wrong on 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' It may be the world's best selling book, but if it is, it's the world's least read best seller. Even regular churchgoers tend to keep it for Sundays, not for the rough and tumble of everyday life.

And that's a pity, because for Christians the Bible is the primary key to understanding ourselves, the world we live in, and our Creator. It is the story of our search for God, and his search for us. Slowly, painfully, and with dawning clarity the picture emerges.

First one tribe, then a nation, record in its pages their experience of God. They don't always get it right, but it's an honest search and God rewards it. Because, while people were searching for God, he was searching for them. That's the Bible's story, which reaches its amazing climax in the coming of Jesus, the Son of God. As John's Gospel puts it, 'No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known' (1:18).

See the Bible like that and many of the problems people raise about it are answered. Yes, there's a lot of violence and bloodshed. But there is also the thrill of the search and the wonder of discovery - above all, the amazing idea that the One who made us, loves us.

Perhaps the time has come to rescue that copy of the Bible from the bookshelf and take it seriously enough to read it, There are many helps for those who want to start reading the Bible regularly, including daily readings and notes. But the main thing is the intention. Many people will say that they'd like to find out what's in the Bible 'one day'. Well, if it is what it claims to be - the key to the search for truth - then it would be a tragedy to have it in our homes and not even bother to find out what it says. Perhaps 'one day' is now?

A SENIOR MOMENT

I made a list ~ I checked it twice ~ I left it at home.

There's probably no God. But then again.....?

Most people have heard about the new atheist bus campaign recently launched in Central London. Many bendy buses carry the slogan: "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life" all over London.

The following are some Christian responses:

A Roman Catholic newspaper:

I think it's great to get people thinking. I love the idea of this bus winding its way through the streets of London, someone stopping to think, "Mmm... Maybe there is no God.... But maybe there is... My only sadness is that these posters betray a negative view of religion as if religious believers are walking around oppressed by worry all the time.... Hard-line atheism doesn't make sense. It's simply not rational to say, for

example, that there is no ultimate cause behind the whole universe, or that there is no deeper meaning to our lives. I like this advert because it is so hesitant, and in its own casual way it opens you up to very serious religious questions.

For the Methodists, the Rev. Jenny Ellis says "We welcome the atheist bus campaign as an opportunity to talk about the deepest questions of life. The God many atheists have rejected is not the God we recognize and this campaign has opened up a dialogue between Christians and atheists which allows these types of misconceptions to be challenged."

One Christian summed it up well: "Isn't it great these rich atheists are using their own money to put the name of God on the sides of buses across London?"

COFFEE MORNING & BRING AND BUY

SATURDAY 28th MARCH
10.00am - 12.00noon
IN THE VILLAGE HALL

home made cakes& scones,
greeting cards, bric-a-brac, books,
raffle and plants

Come and bring your friends

Proceeds for Mission in Britain

Don't criticise too quickly. Even a clock that doesn't work is right twice a day.

**OPEN DOORS
The International Christian Charity**

The charity, founded by Brother Andrew, is organizing a global youth prayer event for the estimated 60 million young Christians around the world who face persecution every day. Called Shockwave, young believers from more than 50 countries are expected to participate over the weekend of 6-8 March 2009

Shockwave (www.odshockwave.org) encourages young Christians to make a particular point of praying for the Persecuted church - 60% of which is aged under 18 - during those days. They can take part either singly, or in groups, and for those wanting to pray in large numbers, prayer centres have been set up, in Aberdeen, Oxford and Manchester or Bradford, where many hundreds of young people will gather to plead for persecuted Christians.

Prayers will focus on young persecuted believers such as 16 year old Iraqi girl Asya (Maria) Ahmed Muhammad, who has just been released from prison in Northern Iraq, having spent two years inside for killing her Muslim uncle - in self defence - as he, her grandfather and cousin attacked her after Asya's immediate family converted to Christianity.

Last year, thousands of individuals and groups across the UK took part in Shockwave 2008. This year, numbers are expected to swell significantly. Young Christians from 50 nations will be participating in 2009, as opposed to only 30 in 2008.

Shockwave has three aims
to stimulate prayer worldwide, uniting people in seeing God act for his suffering church; to raise awareness of the persecuted church; and to challenge peoples' faith

PRAY for those whose lives are being shaken

PRAY for those whose faith to under attack

PRAY for those for whom the world has become an alien and hostile place

PRAY that we shall be firmly established In the grace of God

PRAY as Paul did for the Ephesians that
"being rooted and established in love, we may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love... (Ephesians 3 v 17-19)

PATIENCE

A lonely man decided life would be more fun if he had a pet. So he went to the pet store and told the owner that he wanted to buy an unusual pet. After some discussion, he finally bought a centipede which came in a little white box.

He took it home, found a good location for it, and decided he would start off by taking his new pet to the bar to have a drink. So he asked the centipede in the box, "Would you like to go to Frank's with me and have a beer?"

But there was no answer from his new pet. This bothered him a bit, but he waited a few minutes and then asked him again, "How about going to the bar and having a drink with me?"

But again, there was no answer from his new friend and pet. He waited a few minutes more, thinking about the situation, and decided to ask him one more time.... This time putting his face up against the centipede's house and shouting, "Hey, in there! Would you like to go to Frank's place and have a drink with me?"

A little voice came out of the box: "I heard you the first time! I'm putting on my shoes."

Adam and Eve were talking one day in the Garden of Eden. "Adam, you've got really shabby - you'll have to do something to smarten yourself up", "Don't worry," replied Adam, "I'm thinking of turning over a new leaf!".

PRAYERS FOR THE MONTH

Lord,
I'm not always eager to do your will.

I'd often much rather do my own will. Please be with me on this Lenten journey and help me to remember that your own spirit can guide me in the right direction. I want to "fix" my weaknesses but the task seems overwhelming. But I know that with your help, anything can be done. With a grateful heart, I acknowledge your love and know that without you, I can do nothing.

Creator of my Life, renew me: bring me to new life in you. Touch me and make me feel whole again. Help me to see your love in the passion, death and resurrection of your son. Help me to observe Lent in a way that allows me to celebrate that love. Prepare me for these weeks of Lent as I feel both deep sorrow for my sins and your undying love for me.

Lord, it's good to know you are with me,
in all the strains life brings,
in the disappointments and difficulties
let me feel your presence.
And, Lord, help me to share this with others.
Make my presence with them your presence.
May your Spirit in me encourage and strengthen.
And as I recognize Jesus walking beside me,
may others see something of him in me.
Lord, thank you,
because you are always here.

From the writings of Eddie Askew

HUGS

And why God made them

Everyone was meant to share
God's all abiding love and care,
He saw that we would need to know
A way to let these feelings show.

So God made huge a special sign
And symbol of his love divine,
A circle of our open arms
To hold in love and keep out harm.

One simple hug can do its part
To warm and cheer another heart,
A hug's a bit of heaven above
That signifies his perfect love.

Author unknown