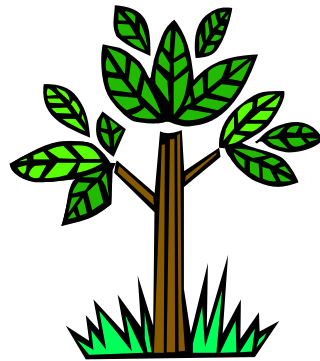


CONTACT *May 2010*

MAGAZINE OF PRESTBURY AND OVER ALDERLEY METHODIST CHURCHES
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Pentecost



*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.
(Acts 2.2 Authorised version)*



MINISTER'S LETTER

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Dear All

This month we celebrate Pentecost the coming of the Holy Spirit. There has been much debate in the church over the years as to how the Spirit works in the life of the church and the individual Christian. For me, and you have every right to disagree with me, the gift of the Spirit is the primary agent in bringing about the new life of Christ within us. Jesus said to Nicodemus, recorded in John's gospel – you must be born of water and of the Spirit. I like the image in Genesis where we are told the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Genesis 2:7). If that is the beginning of life, then God breathing the gift of the Holy Spirit into us is the beginning of our new life in him. Sometimes people believe that the Holy Spirit only comes to those who are holy and 'sold out' for God, who have reached that special level where they have earned it. Yet Jesus was clear that unless we are born of water and the Spirit we cannot enter the kingdom of God. The gift of the Spirit is not the end goal of the new life in Christ it is the start. Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost said "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38 & 39). So the gift is for all of us. There used to be a banner across the drive on Bank Holiday Monday at Cliff College which asked have you received the Holy Spirit? What would your answer be? We need day by day to echo the hymn 'Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me'....that each day our speaking, thinking and doing may be governed and guided by the life giving Spirit of God.

Blessings

Andy

PRESTBURY NEWS

The General Church Meeting is on May 19th at 7.30pm – all members of the Church Family are welcome at this meeting.

Craft Group will be meeting on 17 May The topic will be Calligraphy.

The Beta Group will meet on Wednesdays May 12th & June 2nd at 7:00 pm for a meal. DVD & discussion 8:00-9:30. The subjects will continue with Steve Chalke's "Walking the Way of Christ" and are entitled "Longing" and "Believing". All are welcome.

The April Coffee Morning raised £320.97 for World Missions. Avril Compson wants to thank all who helped on the day.

Thank you to the anonymous donor of money for flowers on Easter Day. All who were there will agree that they formed an important part of the celebration that day.

Christian Aid Week – 9th –15th May – it is worth looking at their website for more information about the work that they do across the world.

A.C.F

The final donation of £322.34p has been sent to the East Cheshire Hospice, where we know it will be put to good use. Thank you to everyone who has helped run the A.C.F. in the past. The accounts will be available from me if wanted.

There will be a Grand Concert featuring the Glenfaba Chorale with soloists from the Isle of Man, conducted by Muriel Corkish ,on Saturday 22nd May at Bollington Church at 7.30pm. The concert is in aid of Action for Children.

Social Events

The Ramblers meet each Thursday at 10.00am outside church for the ramble and 12.noon approximately for a light lunch at the Admiral Rodney. All welcome to join us for both – or just the lunch!

May 6th – The Ramblers group are going to Lyme Park – meet outside church at 10.00am – bring a packed lunch.

Faith Lunch - May 10th – 12.00 for 12.30pm. All welcome.

May 17th – Shugborough Hall – entry £5, coach £10/11, afternoon tea £3, lunch – own choice. Leaving church at 10.00am, leaving hall at 4.00pm.

July 19 – Llandudno – cost of coach £11.

The Ramblers' Group have arranged a trip to Highgrove on August 13. There are currently still 3 seats available. Price is £34. Anyone interested should contact Pam Richardson.

November 22nd - Oswaldtwistle Mill – Deposit £5

Our thanks to the planning group for the preparation for these events – including Faith Lunches.

Items for next month's Contact by May 11th please.

Methodist heritage handbook is launched

The new full-colour Methodist Heritage Handbook is now available. If you are out and about in the UK this summer, you can use it to plan visits to more than 100 different historic houses, monuments, chapels and other places of interest in England, Scotland and Wales that have shaped the story and identity of the people called Methodists.

The handbook will be an invaluable guide to discovering how Methodism grew into a worldwide Christian Church. Methodism

has influenced the nation's spiritual, social and industrial development since the 18th century, and still speaks with relevance to today's world.

Get your free copy of the handbook by emailing hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk.

23 May is Pentecost – the birthday of the Christian Church

The Spirit is the source of all our natural gifts.
D MacLeod

He who has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scriptures in his hands has all he needs.
A MacLaren

We could not pray at all were it not for the Holy Spirit.
D Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Methodism – a bit of history from the editor!

John and Charles Wesley were both Anglican clergymen. The story of their Aldersgate experience and conversion is well known and often mentioned from the pulpit, as is the fact that John travelled the country on horseback, preaching in and around the Macclesfield area on more than one occasion. Charles's hymns are still popular and full of wonderful messages for both old and young. Another well-known fact is the close links they had with America. They worked there before their conversion and maintained the links afterwards. There is a large Methodist Church in the USA.

What is perhaps less well known is what happened as a result of their conversion and the preaching and teaching they introduced. The nickname 'Methodists' was earned because they sought to bring order, structure and discipline into the Anglican Church. They were positively revolutionary at the time! They did not want to break away from the Church of England but the Anglicans refused to accept their changes and condemned John's out of doors ministry. As a result the final split from the Church of England was sealed in 1795 with the 'Plan for Pacification'. So the Methodist Church was formed with John setting up the Connexional structure which still forms the basis of the Church today. Methodist churches had a tight organisation and structure. In order to offer support members were allocated to a 'class', each of which had a leader who offered pastoral support. They met weekly for study and prayer.

However that is not the end of the story! As time went on differences of opinion on styles of worship and management began to emerge which resulted in several groups emerging. The main ones were the Primitives, the Wesleyans and the Independent. The Primitives (Prims) felt that the church should focus on and be led by lay people, that its buildings and worship should be simple and it should not be afraid to enter into political debate. The Wesleyans meanwhile believed that leadership should be by ministers, were wary of entering into political debate and liked their churches and worship to be more 'grand' and along the lines of the Anglicans.

All the societies merged in 1932 as the 'United Methodist Church'. Churches did not close as a result of the merger but all became members of one circuit in their own area.

So where are we now? Many churches have closed but we still have one united Methodist Church in covenant with the Anglicans and regular conversation and ecumenical activity with many other denominations – all united in Christ. I am sure the Wesleys would have some searching questions to ask but would be delighted to see us in conversation with the Anglicans.

Measuring success

After the local Churches Together meetings had concluded, the four ministers were discussing the results with one another.

The Methodist minister said, "The meetings worked out great for us! We gained two new families."

The Baptist pastor said, "We did better than that! We gained three new families." The URC minister said: "That's nothing – we gained five new families!"

And the Anglican vicar smiled in contentment. "Well, we did best of all. We got rid of our 10 biggest trouble makers!"

Books wot I ave read

I just finished reading 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' by Henri Nouwen. The story of the book begins thus 'One day I went to visit my friend Simone Landrienas we spoke my eyes fell on a large poster pinned on her door.' The poster was a reproduction of Rembrandt's painting of the return of the prodigal son. It began a spiritual journey for Nouwen which he describes as a homecoming. In the book he talks about the impact the painting had on him and his vocation as a priest and a Christian. He looks at the characters he sees in the painting and who appear in the gospel account of the parable Jesus tells. It is a very challenging and inspiring book. It is published by Darton Longman Todd. *Andy Halstead*

Ascension Day parting

Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: "When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and *blessed* them."

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with his return to his Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless his disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: "*While* he was blessing them, *he left them* and was taken up into heaven." (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: "I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God..." (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have him look on you with love. No wonder, then that Luke goes on: "they worshipped him - and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God." (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! "I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

Astronauts sink into insignificance beside this ascension! *V Havner*

Christ was taken up into heaven, not to enjoy blessed rest at a distance from us, but to govern the world for the salvation of all believers. *J Calvin*

In the Name of Jesus

Lord, I just want to say THANK YOU,
because this morning I woke up and knew where my children were.
Because this morning my home was still standing,
because this morning I am not crying because my husband, my
child, my brother or sister needs to be dug out from
underneath a pile of rubble,
because this morning I was able to drink a glass of water,
because this morning I was able to turn on the light,
because this morning I was able to take a shower,
because this morning I was not planning a funeral,
but most of all I thank you this morning because I still have
life and a voice to cry out for the people of Haiti.
Lord I cry out to you, the one that makes the impossible
possible, the one that turns darkness in to light,
I cry out that you give those mothers strength, that you give
them peace that surpasses all understanding,
that you may open the streets so that help can come,
that you may provide doctors, nurses, food, water, and all that
they need in a blink of an eye.
For all those that have lost family members, give them peace,
give them hope, give them courage to continue to go on!
Protect the children and shield them with your power.
I pray all this in the name of Jesus!!!



**Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
Some poems rhyme,
This one doesn't.**

Not my Favourite Things

(With apologies to Rogers and Hammerstein!)

Facebook and Bebo and Ebay and Twitter
Texting and typing – they won't make you fitter,
Sore eyes and fingers are all that they bring,
They're not remotely my favourite things!

Viruses, Trojans, and spamming and phishing,
Data on laptops that seem to go missing,
Sitting on trains when a telephone rings,
These aren't exactly my favourite things!

When they break down, when they spam me,
When they make me mad.....
Then I remember how things used to be –
And then I don't feel so bad!

Letters from loved ones in handwritten packets
Walks in the park with no 'phones in our jackets,
Capitals used when a sentence begins,
Those were a few of my favourite things!

For those old days, and those old ways,
I am feeling sad,
Then I switch off my i-phone and my PC,
And then I don't feel so bad!

(borrowed from Broken Cross Contact)

Methodist President and Vice-President affirm Commitment to a Covenant Relationship with the Church of England

The president and the vice-president of the Methodist Conference addressed the Church of England's General Synod last month, expressing the Methodist Church's commitment to a covenant relationship with the Church of England and answering questions from synod members in a discussion following their address.

The Revd David Gamble and Dr Richard Vautrey said that the Covenant was a "serious, deeply committed relationship" and "not an irrelevant extra". They said that responses to the challenges of the Covenant should be driven by a desire for mission.

However, the president's comment that attracted the most attention was that the Methodist Church is "prepared to be changed and even to cease having a separate existence as a Church if that will serve the needs of the kingdom". This follows the Anglican-Methodist Covenant signed in November 2003, which was approved by Methodist Conference, after debate and votes at all district synods and circuit meetings.

There is a letter available in the Vestry which gives more detail about this.

Dads

Three girls in the school playground are boasting about their fathers. The first girl says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him £50."

The second girl says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him £100."

The third girl says, "I can beat both of you. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon. And it takes four people to collect all the money!"

Methodists raise over £70,000 to help the Victims of the Cumbria Floods

Methodist fundraising appeal has raised £74,432 to help victims of the floods which struck Cumbria in November.

The floods destroyed businesses and homes in the county, particularly in Cockermouth, which was badly hit by the devastation.



The Revd Richard Teal, chair of the Cumbria District, said, "This money will make an enormous difference to people. Cockermouth has been going through a sense of bereavement. All the media attention has subsided and people are left with the reality of it."

Cockermouth Lorton Street Methodist Church is opening from 10am to 12pm, six days a week to offer people free coffee and advice. The Mana Credit Union is also using the church as a base to help people with debt management.

The Sermon Preparation

A girl was watching her father, a minister, write a sermon.

"How do you know what to say?" she asked.

"Why, God tells me."

"Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"

Join us at the May

COFFEE MORNING

To be held in the Village Hall

On

Saturday

May 29th 2010

10.00am – 12.00 noon

In aid of the

Macclesfield Live at Home Scheme

which aims to provide the support needed to allow people to continue to live at home.

Cake stall Bric a Brac Books Cards

Raffle Plants



UNDER THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the month of May we can remember two very different men who fought under the sign of the cross.



On the night before a great battle, the Roman Emperor Constantine dreamt of a cross in the sky and the words 'in this sign conquer'. After his victory, Constantine ended 300 years of persecution and Romans were allowed to become Christians. Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Constantine died on 22nd May in the year 337.

Some 1,500 years later, Jean Henry Dunant (who was born on 8th May 1828) was horrified to see the dreadful suffering after the Battle of Solferino. He spent the rest of his life working for the casualties of war, fighting under the banner of the Red Cross to relieve world-wide suffering.



WHAT'S IT FOR?

What would you do with these things? All the words are in the Bible but are rarely heard today. Answers at the bottom of the back page.

- | | | | |
|----------|--|-----------|--|
| 1. KNOP | a) polish it
b) eat it
c) harness it | 3. HYSSOP | a) carry it
b) cultivate it
c) dig with it |
| 2. DARIC | a) herd it
b) sharpen it
c) spend it | 4. SHOFAR | a) drive it
b) play it
c) prune it |

Living is Loving

Loving is letting go, surrendering becoming one.
Love is openness, commitment.
To love is to make yourself vulnerable,
An interplay of pain and joy,
Of poverty and riches.
Love is being available,
Helping, rendering a service,
Saving the other from disappointment.
To love is to create space,
Where the other can be himself/herself.
It is enabling all their finest qualities to flower.
Love is communication, partnership, exchange.
To love is to encourage, to value,
To accept the other as she/he is,
With all their weaknesses and strengths.
Love is not judging by what one sees,
By achievements, successes and results.
Love is not asking:
'What can you give me?'
But, 'What can I give you?'
Love is,
Goodness and sorrow,
Happiness and pain.
Love is unfathomable,
Inexhaustible,
A mystery.
To love is to become the other.

(from a service at Prestbury, led by Rev. Howard Booth)

Answers to 'What's it for':

1. a) polish it, it is an ornamental knob, part of the lamp-stands in the tabernacle.
2. c) spend it, it's gold coin.
3. b) cultivate it, it's a type of plant.
4. b) play it, it is musical instrument made from a ram's horn.