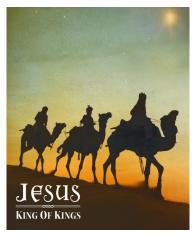


Stockport Sunday School

January 2023 Newsletter 34



By the time you read these notes, the Christmas celebrations will be coming to an end for most of us. We hope you have all been able to have an enjoyable time with family and friends.



While social events usually finish with the welcoming of the New Year, the Christian churches' Christmas season continues on to Epiphany - the twelfth day after Christmas on January 6th, which marks the visit of the Magi to present their gifts to Jesus. So a few more carols to sing!

The actual timing of Christmas Day itself is interesting. It is very close to the winter Solstice, (December $21^{st}/22^{nd}$), the time when the sun reaches its lowest point in the sky at noon. To those watching, the sun may seem to pause momentarily in its path through the sky as it moves over from shortening days to lengthening ones.

Hence the name, 'Solstice', from the Latin 'sol' - meaning 'sun' - and 'stit', meaning 'stopped'.

In ancient times, when the sun was viewed as a god, this was a very significant event. From the solstice onwards there would be more daylight each day until Midsummer. It does prompt the question of how such relatively small differences in time or the position of the sun each day, could be measured by the people of those times. They must have had skills which we are unaware of.

If it's earlier daylight in the morning that you are looking for at the Winter Solstice, to

raise your spirits, there is one small drawback. Initially the increase in daylight each day is the result of the sunset getting later.

Sunrise, on the other hand, continues to get later until the end of December, - so no incentive to get up earlier until then! The significant thing is that the lengthening daylight has a positive impact on our lives in many ways and is generally seen as a power for good.



The dictionary definition of 'light' is "the natural agent that stimulates sight, and makes things visible". This is written in relation to our perception of the physical world around us, but I think it can also be taken to apply to our spiritual life.

At our annual SSS Carol Services, the first and last Bible readings traditionally focus on the concept of light.

Isaiah, prophesying the coming of Christ into our world, writes: 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light'.

Similarly, St John opens his gospel, referring to Jesus, with the words: 'in Him was life, and that life was the light of men,and the darkness could not overcome it'.

If, in the natural world, light is seen as necessary, for growth, then the same is surely true for our spiritual wellbeing.

It is no coincidence that crime, dishonesty and evil depend on secrecy and darkness to achieve their ends.

Spiritual light - the teaching of Jesus, is what stimulates spiritual sight, ie: insight - our understanding of God's relationship with us, and our relationship with one another.

The start of a New Year is traditionally a time when folk give some thought to what the future may hold, and perhaps consider whether there are aspects of our lives that may require improvement, shall we say.

In a world beset with so many problems, this is perhaps more relevant than usual. Events over the last three years or so have reminded us of how interdependent we are on each other when difficulties arise, and the importance of our relationships at all levels.

The 'Light' of our Lord Jesus' teaching in this regard is simple -

'Love your neighbour as yourself'

In seeking to do so, the words of the hymn which we sometimes sing are a useful reminder -

'The Spirit lives to set us free; walk in the light, walk in the light of the Lord,'

But to do so, perhaps we need to check our 'spiritual vision', to ensure we haven't acquired any 'cataracts', so to speak, which may be hindering us as we endeavour to serve Jesus in our daily lives.

So let that be our New Year resolution, as we enter 2023; let's pause, and take the opportunity to do a spiritual 'sight test' to make sure God's light is getting through, as we journey through life together

Looking forward to seeing you all at Compass Point, as we embark on the New Year – and on behalf of the Officials and all our members, we wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.



2023 NEWSLETTER

The annual subscription is now due and will be as follows for 11 copies (none in August):-

Online per year - £3.50

On paper in School - £5.50

On paper posted - £13.00 (which includes 11 × 68p stamps)

Cash or cheque please to be sent to:-

Mrs J Sellers, 5 Baytree Drive, Bredbury Stockport SK6 2PX

or can be given in School.

Joyce Sellers





FROM THE TREASURER

In recent weeks, a number of foreign coins have been found in the Sunday collection and the banks will not accept them.

In future, please put them along with your used postage stamps in the box on the table in the entrance hall.

Thank you for your cooperation.

J. Sellers



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish Happy Birthday this month to

Joan Heald on 10th January Ann Mather on 25th January Jean Norton on 29th January

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Once again, a big thank you to all the ladies of our catering group who provided a delicious Christmas lunch which was enjoyed by about twenty people.

We were pleased to see a couple of friends who joined us for the meal and stayed on for the service of lessons and carols.



GOOD TO SEE YOU



We were pleased that Sian was able to bring her mother, Maureen Jewsbury, to the Candle and Carol service, and that Jean Norton was also able to come to the Candle and Carol service and the service of lessons and carols. It was good to see you both and have a chance to chat, we have missed you.

THANK YOU



It was lovely to see angels made by the Knit and Natter group hung on the fence at Compass Point again this year for people to take home. You had all worked hard again this year, thank you, we are sure local people will have appreciated these.



THANK YOU

Once again a big 'Thank you' to Stuart Dean who works hard for the School. On the lead up to Christmas he added a Christmas tree to the front of the School to welcome everyone who attended. People really appreciated this, Stuart. Thank you.



USED CARDS, STAMPS AND FOREIGN CURRENCY

Don't forget to bring in the fronts of your Christmas cards for the Shoe Box Appeal, and all your used stamps and any foreign currency, throughout the year, for Margaret Forster, for The Leprosy Mission. Please remember to cut stamps off envelopes leaving a good border of paper around the stamp. Margaret received a letter thanking everyone for the donations sent in along with the following explaining how the donations 'are transforming lives and shining light into darkness.' for the people who benefit. Included in the letter is the following story of one recipient who has benefitted, a lady called Lami.

"Not long after Lami was married, she started getting nerve pain and repeated ulcers on her feet. She firstly sought help with the local traditional healer. Where there was no

improvement, Lami went to the Leprosy Mission Hospital in Chanchaga Nigeria.......where she was diagnosed with leprosy. Lami was given the vital medicines to cure her of this debilitating disease, but unfortunately one of her legs had to be amputated to save her life. As if all this wasn't enough, once he found out about her leprosy, her husband left her and their 4 children.

".... thanks to your kindness, Lami has had her independence and hope restored. The incredible team at the hospital workshop built a bespoke prosthetic leg for her, helping her to regain her mobility Lami receives healing and support from self-help groups, local churches, and the team at Chanchaga hospital."





FUTURE SERVICES

The next dates for our services are:-

January 8th - Judith Higgins

January 15th - Garth Higgins

January 22nd - Walter Stead

January 29th - Judith Higgins

- short service followed by AGM

February 5th - Bible Sunday - speaker Sandra Woodward

As Walter and Rosie and Judith and Garth have all had covid over Christmas, the Election of Inspectors, which should have taken place on January 8th has been postponed.

2023 CALENDAR

January 1st No Service

January 8th Election of Inspectors

(postponed)

January 29th AGM 3.15

February 5th Bible Sunday

Speaker Sandra Woodward

Week Beginning February 20th Kites Pantomime

March 19th Mothering Sunday

April 2nd Palm Sunday

Committee Meeting 3.15

April 9th Easter Sunday

June 18th Founders' Day

July 2nd Committee Meeting 3.15

September 17th Harvest and Lunch

September 24th Committee Meeting 3.15

October 22nd Anniversary

November 12th Remembrance Sunday

November 19th Shoe Box Service

November 25th Christmas Fair

December 10th Christmas Lunch

Christmas Post

December 17th Candle and Carol Service

Christmas Post

December 24th No Service

December 31st To Be Confirmed



















SERVICES



SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2022

Judith Curry took the service on December 4th, the second Sunday in Advent.

Recently we have had a variety of services, some, like Remembrance Sunday and the service about Rose Queens, looking back. At the Anniversary, we looked forward and backwards. At the Shoe Box service we looked forward to the excitement of children across the world as they opened their shoe boxes.



During Advent we look forward, waiting and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

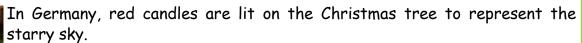
Elizabeth lit the second candle on our Advent wreath, the Bethlehem candle representing faith.

Judith told us of some of the ways Advent is celebrated across the world.

In Ireland a large red candle in a hollowed out turnip is placed in the window to guide the holy



family to shelter.



The 'Advent Images' representing Mary and Jesus carried round the village by a poor woman in the North of England who would receive a halfpenny when she showed them to a household.

In Italy in the last day of Advent, bagpipes are played before Mary as the shepherds played their pipes when they came to the manger. In schools

and churches, there is excitement as they rehearse for the nativity play.

Judith read John Betjeman's poem, 'Advent' (printed on the next page) and Gervaise Phinn's 'Nativity Play'.

Her Bible reading was Mark 1 verses 1 - 8.

Thank you, Judith, for an interesting service and to Cath for making a beautiful Advent wreath for us again this year.



<u>ADVE</u>NT

John Betjeman

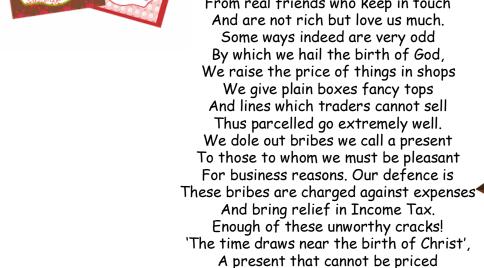


The Advent wind begins to stir With sea-like sounds in our Scotch fir, It's dark at breakfast, dark at tea. And in between we only see Clouds hurrying across the sky And rain-wet roads the wind blows dry And branches bending to the gale Against great skies all silver-pale. The world seems travelling into space. And travelling at a faster pace Than in the leisured summer weather When we and it sit out together, For now we feel the world spin round On some momentous journey bound -Journey to what? to whom? to where? The Advent bells call out 'Prepare, Your world is journeying to the birth Of God made Man for us on earth.'

And how, in fact, do we prepare For the great day that waits us there -The twenty-fifth day of December, The birth of Christ? For some it means An interchange of hunting scenes On coloured cards. And I remember Last year I sent out twenty yards, Laid end to end, of Christmas cards To people that I scarcely know -They'd sent a card to me, and so I had to send one back. Oh dear! Is this a form of Christmas cheer? Or is it, which is less surprising, My pride gone in for advertising? The only cards that really count Are that extremely small amount From real friends who keep in touch And are not rich but love us much. Some ways indeed are very odd By which we hail the birth of God, We give plain boxes fancy tops And lines which traders cannot sell Thus parcelled go extremely well. And bring relief in Income Tax. Enough of these unworthy cracks! A present that cannot be priced Given two thousand years ago.

Yet if God had not given so He still would be a distant stranger And not the Baby in the manger.







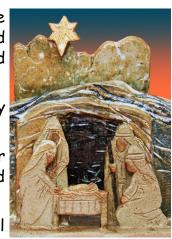
CANDLE AND CAROL SERVICE, 11TH DECEMBER 2022

Our traditional Candle and Carol service run by members of The Triangle was held on December 11^{th} . Once again they had decorated the front of the hall with a crib and candles and Stuart had arranged spotlights around the hall.

Members of The Triangle read various parts of the Christmas story and Beryl Barnet read a prayer for Christmas.

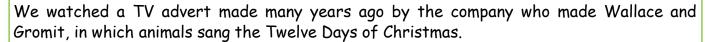
Stuart said it has been a difficult year internationally, with the war in Ukraine causing ripples around the world. The fuel crisis had caused a rise in prices and the threat of covid had not gone away.

Stuart looked back on some of the themes used at Candle and Carol services:-





- Christmas cards
- Christmas around the world
- Christmas trees
- Christmas crackers
- World War I
- TV adverts
- Robins
- Mince pies



In a Candle and Carol service during the lockdown, members of The Triangle sang The Twelve Days of Christmas, with each member taking a different day. Stuart played it for us again at this service, which we all enjoyed.

the twelfth
day of Christmas
My true love gave to me
12 drummers drumming
10 lords a leaping
9 ladies dancing
8 maids a milking
7 swans a swimming
5 gold rings
4 calling birds
3 french hens
turtle doves
and

1 After the carol, events to remind us of the
19707109 to send
\$19707109 to send

After the carol, everyone was given a small cloth bag of pear drops to remind us of the partridge in the pear tree.

In 1984, an American bank calculated that it would cost \$19707109 to send all these gifts.

Gifts do not have to be costly: we could try to be a good neighbour, provide a shoulder to cry on or be a good listener.

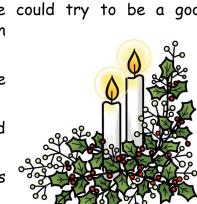
Tea and mince pies were served at the end of the service.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the wonderful service.

The collection was sent to St Anne's

Hospice and Macmillan.

partridge





Photos From Candle and Carol Service









SUNDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2022

On December 18th, we held a service of carols and readings. Walter led the service and we all agreed with him that music is a key component of our worship. Several hymns and carols can be sung to more than one tune.



During the service, we sang 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' to the traditional well known tune written by Vaughan Williams. Walter asked Ken to play a tune and asked if we recognised what it was written for. We did not recognise it but it was written by the American composer, Richard Storrs Willis in 1857. It is quite a sombre tune, perhaps reflecting the period when it was written. As we look at our world today, perhaps we can have the same feeling with covid, the

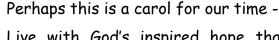


war in Ukraine and global warming. But there is a message of hope in the words of the hymn, 'It Came Upon The Midnight Clear', written by Sears.

He bids us to:- 'Listen to the angels

Listen for the voice of God

Seek the guidance of God'



Live with God's inspired hope that His Kingdom will come, His will be done, in His good time.

Let us pass on the Christmas message of God's love for His people, using whatever 'tune' will be most effective.

Thank you Walter and all those who took readings and prayers.



LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Tuna, Leek and Rice Gratin

Serves 4

1 teaspoon sunflower oil
1 large leek, sliced finely
400g tin canned tuna, drained and flaked
175g cooked long-grain rice
295g can condensed mushroom soup
4 tablespoons milk
25g breadcrumbs
25g Cheddar cheese, grated
Salt and freshly ground black pepper



Preheat oven to Gas mark4/180°C/350°F/160°Fan.

Heat the oil in a frying-pan and sauté the leeks for 2-3 minutes. Stir in the tuna and rice. Mix together the soup and milk and fold into the tuna mixture. Season, to taste.

Spoon the tuna mixture into a gratin dish. Mix together the breadcrumbs and cheese and sprinkle over the top.

Bake for 25 minutes.



Kites Group

Tickets are now available for our 2023 production, 'Kites through the decades past and present', on www.kitesgroup.com.



SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMORIES

When sorting out a cupboard recently, I found my Mum's 'Baby Memories Book' and amongst lots of fascinating comments and information, (for me, at least), was written:

'June 22nd 1941. Took Margaret to Heaviley Sunday School in the Beginners Dept. for the first time.' That means, that my association with Heaviley Sunday School and, more recently, with Stockport Sunday School, has lasted for 81 years and 7 months, up to now!

My earliest memories of the Beginners at H.S.S. are of the lovely little chairs which we all sat on, and the birthday cake, which, I think, was cardboard, and the excitement when it was my birthday and everyone sang for me. I also loved the annual bulb-planting and singing 'Little brown houses, now what do you hold? Treasures of purple and crimson and gold.'



HEAVILEY SCHOOL.

I enjoyed the Primary Dept. too and all the 'weather' songs.

There was 'Father sun', 'Who has seen the wind?', 'Down came the raindrops', 'Whether the weather be fine', 'Look out, look out, Jack Frost is about' and 'See how the snowflakes are falling'. Of course, who could ever forget 'Hear the pennies dropping' sung and played for our collection? I still think of it as 'my collection' even though, at my

church, it is referred to as the 'Offertory'.

Someone recently asked me for some details of H.S.S. and S.S.S. and was fascinated to

hear about our system of Beginners, Primary, Juniors, Intermediates and then the Young People's Dept. I mustn't forget the custom of females on one side of the Large Room, and males on the other, and, of course, the Ladies Class, and Young Men's Class (most of whom were not particularly young!!)

Another lasting memory of H.S.S. was the custom at the end of the Sunday afternoon service, for most adults, weather permitting, to gather outside on Nangreave Road to socialise and have a chat (there was no coffee lounge

in those days). The children were meant to keep themselves occupied for 10 mins until Mums, Dads, Grandmas and Grandads had caught up with the news. I was invariably in trouble, as, dressed in immaculate

hat, coat and 'best' shoes, I always seemed to navigate to either the dust-bins, the boiler room or the coal-shed, for 'Hide and Seek' with my friends, and, would, of course, emerge not <u>quite</u> so immaculate as when I went in, much to my Mum's annoyance.

Three of my favourite hymns in my younger days were from the Sunday School Hymnary. They were, 'Little modest violet blue', 'Give said the little stream' and 'Joybells ringing'. My hymn book was a treasured possession and was a 'Roll of Honour' prize in 1949 and my Bible - 'Roll of Honour' prize in 1946, both of which I still have in my book-case.





I think that I enjoyed the hymns far more than some of the sermons, which we listened to, as we got older, in the Large Room. I seem to remember counting the organ pipes over and over again to pass the time!

However, my life was certainly shaped by H.S.S. and the patient teachers who put up with a very lively and often mischievous little girl (who was it who pulled the chair out just as Geoffrey Preston was about to sit down, only to see that a very grim-faced Mrs P was standing behind, watching?!)

So many memories and always, from me, the most grateful thanks for my Mum, who introduced me to H.S.S. at such an early age, and to the teachers who imparted so much love and faith to me and were 'important' contributors to my life as a Christian.

Margaret Morris-Jones



6TH JANUARY: GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH FOR THE INFANT JESUS

Epiphany is also known as 'Twelfth Night', or the last night of the Christmas festival. According to the song, it is also the day when that over-enthusiastic 'true love' of yours dumps no less than 78 presents on your doorstep, among them a dozen leaping lords of the realm and a final partridge - to go with the 11 you have already been given.

In many parts of the world, 6th January is celebrated as Christmas Day. As we Western Christians are packing away our tree, the Greek Orthodox world and Catholic Spain are giving presents and celebrating the wise men, or magi. For what better time to give presents to each other, than on the day the wise men presented gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus?

What do we make of these presents? Gold is for kingship, proclaiming a royal child. Frankincense carries a feeling of worship about it: it was used in the temple worship and indicated access to the presence of God. Frankincense is thus for worship and incarnation.

The third gift, myrrh, finds it place at Calvary. After the crucifixion,

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea prepared Jesus' body for burial, using myrrh as an embalming fluid. Thus, when the wise men visit the baby Jesus, the shadow of the cross already falls across the crib. But myrrh is also symbolic of love, so you could say that the third gift is about adoration as well as death. And Christ's death on the cross is for love of the Church, His bride.

As for the magi, they were not Jewish grandees, but foreign Gentiles. And so it was clear, from as early as the manger in Bethlehem, that Jesus was not just the Messiah for the Jews, but the Saviour of the whole world.



REMEMBERING LEWIS CARROLL, CREATOR OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND

by Tim Lenton

Just 125 years ago, on 14th January 1898, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an English author, poet, photographer and mathematician, died of pneumonia. His pen name was Lewis Carroll, and he was best known for Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Through the Looking Glass and the poems Jabberwocky and The Hunting of the Snark.

A brilliantly inventive writer, Carroll was also a deacon in the Church of England, and a firm Christian - some have even claimed

that Alice is a biblical allegory, with the Cheshire Cat as God. (Carroll was born in Cheshire.)

Carroll was a maths lecturer at Oxford, and Alice Liddell - who provoked the story of Alice - was the daughter of one of his colleagues. She had two sisters, Lorina and Edith, who were also close to Carroll, a bachelor who remained celibate throughout his life. He was known to be good with children, unsurprisingly for an eldest son with eight younger brothers and sisters - and at one point was invited to entertain two grandchildren of Queen Victoria.



The book Alice in Wonderland and its sequel have been subject to huge numbers of unlikely interpretations, ranging from drug use to being the outpouring of migraine aura symptoms. But most people continue to regard them as masterpieces of fantasy literature, produced by a highly intelligent and sensitive man.

The Alice books might never have seen the light of day, had not novelist Henry Kingsley come across the first version on a visit

to the Liddells, and urged Alice's mother to persuade the author to publish it. Carroll consulted another author -- his friend George Macdonald, whose son Greville, aged six, apparently said he "wished there were 60,000 volumes of it".

By the time of Carroll's death, the two-volume Alice was the most popular children's book in England.



Kindness is a hard thing to give away.

It keeps coming back to the giver.

Ralph Scott

If Jesus were born one thousand times in Bethlehem and not in me, then I would still be lost.

Corrie ten Boom

The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable.

R Sockman

PUZZLES

	5			6				
		1					9	
					7			4
2	4		9					
		8				6		
					5		3	7
7			8					
	9					2		
				3			1	



Sudoku

WORDSEARCH

Can you find in this grid the words shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** in the Bible passage below? The words can be found in any direction.

The Coming of the Magi

'Where is the One who has been born KING of the JEWS? We saw His STAR in the EAST and have come to WORSHIP Him.' So Matthew tells of the coming of the MAGI, or WISE MEN, to the BABY JESUS. Today we remember it on **EPIPHANY**, on 6th January. Did they come from ARABIA FELIX - nowadays southern Arabia? How many came? No one knows, but by the 6th century they were named GASPAR, MELCHIOR, and BALTHASAR. Why GOLD, FRANKINCENSE and MYRRH? Gold stands for KINGSHIP: Jesus was King of the Jews. Frankincense stands for DIVINITY; Jesus was to be worshipped. Myrrh stands for **DEATH** and burial; Jesus would become a sacrifice and die for His people. The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. ISAIAH foresaw this response to Jesus: 'NATIONS will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi wanted to worship Jesus; HEROD wanted to kill Him. But the Jewish leaders who knew about the PROPHECY of a Messiah born in BETHLEHEM did not even bother to visit to Bethlehem. And it is only six miles from JERUSALEM!

I G A M J G I P I H S R O W
Y E E E C A R M S F R R X I
I N W L I O S E E U K R R S
R S A C P E B L N R S M Y E
A E A H B N I A A P P E E M
I I E I P X T S I P R H J H
D C R O A I A U B I I E A E
Y C A R O H P R A H E L E R
S S P N T K L E R S S H A O
I A S L I O O J A G T T S D
F R A N K I N C E N S E T B
E B G Y T I N I V I D B A R
I D E A T H H T L K W B M B
G O L D A P S M H U Y L E N

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

9	6	5	3	4	2	8	7	1
7	3	4	9	8	1	6	5	2
2	1	8	5	7	6	4	9	3
6	7	9	2	1	3	5	8	4
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ORSHO						9	Ţ
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CPRIS	Ò	N	Ε	R	S	Т	Ε
EROKA		M	V	В	1	Y	Н
HNFEN	S	Ε	Ε	N	Α	R	T
SGMOD	E	E	R	F	H	Α	Α
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SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

