



# Stockport Sunday School

January 2024 Newsletter 45



Janus

As was mentioned in the Christingle service, January, the first month of the year, takes its name from the Roman God, Janus.

He was originally depicted with a head with two faces, one looking back on what we can learn from the past year, and the other looking forward into the New Year.

Twelve months ago we were emerging from the after effects of the Covid pandemic plus the impact of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine and its effect on fuel prices and the world economy in general.

We were hoping that things would improve throughout 2023, but it was not to be. The war in Ukraine is at a stalemate, and we have the horrific events in Palestine to navigate, with its risk of escalation in the Middle East and the wider world.

The future looks dark!

But for people of faith, this is not something new. The Old Testament is full of records of God's people straying from His commandments, and the ways of truth, compassion and care for our fellow human beings, and instead oppressing the poor and weak, - the powerful profiting at the expense of the weak.

However, there is hope even in such circumstances!

As Isaiah prophesied in equally turbulent times, "The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light. For unto us a child is born, and his name will be called - Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

For Christians everywhere, these words are seen to refer to the coming of Jesus, the Lord of the World, and we put our faith in him.

But, what is faith, some may ask?

I often have my breakfast between 9 and 10am and listen to Radio 4. One regular programme is 'In our time', presented by Melvin Bragg. This last week the subject for discussion was the life of the eminent theologian, Karl Barth. Not a name I was familiar with, I must confess. His work was being reviewed by a small group of modern theologians, and it's fair to say, much of it was 'intellectually challenging' for non-specialist listeners.

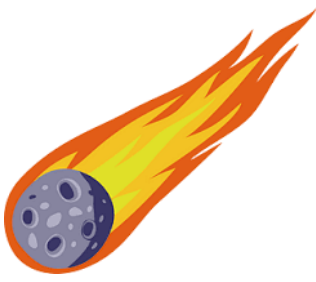
Nevertheless, it was interesting and provided some insight into our relationship with God.



Karl Barth

Barth's view is that faith is based on the individual first accepting that God exists, then making a considered decision to commit ourselves to following Jesus, trusting in Him and basing the way we live our lives on His teaching.

Our experiences and understanding may change as we progress through life. But Barth suggests that if we are prepared to be open to God's presence, He will send us flashes of insight, to guide us and protect us. It is perhaps similar to the recent sighting of shooting stars and comets that we may have seen in the night sky in recent days. They are reminders of the wonders of God's Universe, which may be beyond our comprehension.



Perhaps, as we look back on our lives, we may have had such experiences, and been encouraged in our faith.

Only recently, hearing John's gospel, ch 13, vv 34 being read in church, the words seemed to jump out of the page. Jesus, speaking to his disciples, says " As I have loved you, so you are to love one another ...then all will know you are my disciples. "

As modern day 'disciples', those words apply to us, and are an assurance that despite our failings, Jesus loves each of us.

Barth's underlying message is that faith is not a static state, but a journey of understanding. Not a matter of complying with particular written laws, but making loving our neighbour, whoever and wherever they may be, the core of what we believe and do.

For that was Jesus' message to His followers and applies to us today.

And these flashes of light, if we can be ready for them, will be a source of encouragement and support.

In the words of the modern hymn:

'Longing for light, we wait in darkness  
Longing for truth, we turn to you  
- Christ be our light, shine in our hearts  
shine through the darkness'

May His light be in our hearts throughout the coming year.

With all good wishes for a happy and peaceful 2024.





### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish Happy Birthday this month to

Joan Heald on 10<sup>th</sup> January

and

Ann Mather on 25<sup>th</sup> January

### CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Thank you once again to our 'catering team', Margaret Forster, Joyce Darvil, Judith Curry, Cath Brown, Janet Moore and Judith Hadfield who served an excellent Christmas dinner to eighteen people on December 10<sup>th</sup> and mince pies and tea and coffee after the service.



### CHRISTMAS POST

Thank you to Joyce, Norman and Neil Sellers for sorting the Christmas cards for members posted in our post box. It was well used this year.

### 2024 NEWSLETTER

The annual subscription is now due. The cost of the emailed and printed newsletter will not go up, but as the price of stamps has increased there is a rise in the cost for people receiving their newsletter by post. The charges for 11 copies (no newsletter in August) will be:-

Online per year - £3.50

On paper in School - £5.50

On paper posted - £13.75  
(which includes 11 x 75p 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.



## SERVICES



### SUNDAY NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>



Minnie Haskins

The theme of Judith Higgins' service was light. Her Bible readings were Genesis 1 verses 1 - 5. God created light and saw that it was good, Exodus 13 verses 20 - 23 God led the Israelites through the desert at night with a pillar of fire and Exodus 3 verses 1 - 8 Moses sees the burning bush which is not consumed by the fire. She also read part of Minnie Louise Haskins poem, 'The Gate Of The Year' in which we are encouraged to trust God as our guiding light in life.

Candles play an important part in many religious service. At Diwali, the festival of light, Hindus, Seikhs and Muslims celebrate the victory of good over evil. Our Advent wreath will soon be part of our Advent services. Candles on early Christmas trees represented Jesus, the light of the world. Today candles have been replaced by safer electric lights but as we light up our tree over the Christmas season may they serve as a reminder of the reason for our celebrations, the birth of Jesus, the light of the world.

### SUNDAY DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

Walter Stead led the service on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This Sunday was the first of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day, and is called Advent Sunday. Christmas with all our preparations can be a busy time, and yet the Church asks us to pause and find time to think about the spiritual reasons for our celebrations on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Although it is quite a solemn time whereby we are encouraged to look at ourselves and how to lead our lives. Advent also brings around lots of fine music. The Service of Lessons and Carols from King's College, Cambridge which many of us enjoy each year on television. Churches illuminated by purely candle light produce a very special atmosphere. The dictionary gives the details of Advent meaning the arrival of a notable person or event, for Christians this notable person is Jesus. John the Baptist, an unusual choice, was the person given the job of announcing Jesus' arrival and he is mentioned in all four gospels, although not in the chronological way you would expect. John's appearance was not that of a person you would have expected to be chosen by God to be the one to introduce the coming of the Messiah. Jesus proclaimed to the crowds that John The Baptist was a prophet, in fact the prophet who understood who and what Jesus was, backed up his convictions by his integrity, rejected worldly judgement in respect of what he wore and how he looked, greater than all the prophets before him. Walter then said 'may we not judge



Kings College Chapel,  
Cambridge



others by what they look like, what they wear or eat and like John may we give way to Jesus, our leader and Saviour and in times of doubt may we have our questions answered and our faith" strengthened.

### SUNDAY DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

On 10<sup>th</sup> December, Judith Curry and Judith Higgins ran the Christingle service. Tables had been set out in the hall which contained the elements needed to make a Christingle. The two Judiths told the history of the Christingle and as the meaning of each element was explained members were able to make their own Christingle.

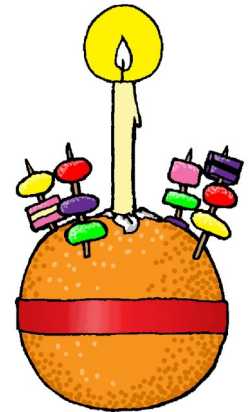
The orange represents the earth.

The red ribbon represents the blood of Christ shed for us on Good Friday.

The candle, Jesus the light of the world and the four cocktail sticks the four seasons (originally a quill from the centre of a feather to represent the birds and animals), the fruit and sweets threaded on them represent the food and good things God provides for us. We also heard a selection of Bible readings and Christmas poem.



tree for our service.



The second candle was lit on the Advent wreath. Thank you, Cath, for making it for us and for the beautiful festive flower arrangement.

The service closed with the singing of the Christingle hymn followed by tea and mince pies.

Thank you to the Pre-School for the loan of their Christmas

### CANDLE AND CAROL SERVICE, SUNDAY DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

This service was run by members of The Triangle, who had decorated the room with lights and candles. The members were seated around tables.

Jack helped his uncle Stuart to light the candles on the Advent wreath.

Several members read the Christmas story. Eileen Harrington read of Gabriel's visit to Mary and then Joseph, Jayne Dean read the shepherd's story and Pam Bowdon read of the visit of the magi. Beryl Barnett led the prayers. Pat Mellor read a poem



that spelt out the word CHRISTMAS.

During the singing of the first carol all the candles were lighted.

The theme for this year's service was candles. Stuart told us of the development of the candle over the centuries from the smoky tallow candle to today's candle. With the introduction of electric lights, candles are no longer used to light homes but many candles are still sold to decorate the home or provide perfume. Candles are also widely used in religious services.

The fifth candle on the Advent wreath represents Jesus, The Light of the World. Jesus wants us to shine in the world. At the close of the service each member was given a miniature plant pot in which was set a candle. Stuart asked everyone to light their candle on Christmas Day.

The service closed with the singing of the carol Silent Night. Tea, coffee and mince pies were then served.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the service such an enjoyable one, setting out and decorating the room, lighting the candles, taking the readings, playing the organ and serving refreshments.



### SUNDAY DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>

Today we had a service of lessons and carols with members taking part. Walter Stead welcomed everyone and opened the service with a prayer.



Elizabeth Keeling read Micah 5 verse 2 and Isaiah 9 verses 2, 6 and 7, in which the prophets predict the coming of a Saviour to deliver the Jews from oppression. These were written 700 years before Jesus' birth, when the Jews had abandoned God.

Margaret Forster read Luke 2 verses 1 - 20 Luke wrote his gospel for both Jews and Gentiles, the message that God's grace and mercy was for all people. The shepherds were an underclass at that time and yet God chose them to be the first to hear of Jesus' birth. Judith Curry read Matthew

chapter 2 verses 1 - 11. The magi were outsiders, possibly gentiles, also looking for a saviour of the world but by visiting Herod they also put Jesus in danger.

Garth Higgins read John 1 verses 1 - 14. John has a very different style, more spiritual. He did not record Jesus' birth. Jesus came into the world as the Son of God, sacrificed

for others. It was Walter who explained the significance of their readings. From them we learn of faith, hope and love.

We should follow Christ's teaching and support others and love our neighbours.

Walter passed on the best wishes of the Officials for 2024. An inspiring service.



### FUTURE SERVICES

The next dates for our services are:-

January 7 <sup>th</sup>	Officials' Service
January 14 <sup>th</sup>	Garth Higgins followed by Election of Inspectors
January 21 <sup>st</sup>	Walter Stead
January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Judith Higgins followed by Committee Meeting
February 4 <sup>th</sup>	Bible Sunday - Adrian Nottingham

### 1<sup>ST</sup> JAN: THE NAMING OF JESUS

Matthew and Luke tell how the angel instructed that Mary's baby was to be named Jesus - a common name meaning 'saviour'. The Church recalls the naming of Jesus on 1<sup>st</sup> January - eight days after 25<sup>th</sup> December (by the Jewish way of reckoning days). In Jewish tradition, the male babies were circumcised and named on their eighth day of life.

For early Christians, the name of Jesus held a special significance. In Jewish tradition, names expressed aspects of personality. Jesus' name permeated His ministry, and it does so today: we are baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), we are justified through the name of Jesus (1 Cor 6:11); and God the Father has given Jesus a name above all others (Phil 2:9). All Christian prayer is through 'Jesus Christ our Lord', and it is 'at the name of Jesus' that one day every knee shall bow.





# LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL

## *Candle and Carol Service 2023*

The offertory from this service amounted to £164.00 so we will be sending £83.00 to each of the two charities. The Christie and Macmillan Cancer Care.

Thank you to everyone who attended and we look forward to seeing pictures of your tiny candles.

Please send them to [stuart@compasspointstockport.org](mailto:stuart@compasspointstockport.org)



## **Kites Group**

The Kites Group are busy preparing for their February 2024 show 'Dick Whittington' to be held at Compass Point. Tickets are available on [www.kitesgroup.com](http://www.kitesgroup.com) .



# LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



## Recipe

### *Sticky date and sausage traybake*

*Serves 4*

*400g baby potatoes, halved or quartered if large*

*200g Brussels sprouts, halved*

*1 red onion, peeled and sliced into 8 wedges*

*150g dates, pitted and torn in half*

*8 sausages*

*5g oregano*

*3 thyme sprigs*

*65ml olive oil*

*2 tbsp red wine vinegar*

*2 tbsp maple syrup*

*1 tbsp wholegrain mustard*

*2 garlic cloves, grated*

*½tsp ground cinnamon*

*1 tsp nigella seeds*

*1 tsp ground cumin*

*10g parsley, roughly chopped*



Heat the oven to 200C/180Cfan/gas 6. Line a large roasting tray with baking paper for easy clean up. Fill the tray with the potatoes, sprouts, onions and dates. Nestle the sausages on the top, and then sprinkle over the oregano and thyme.

Mix the oil, vinegar, maple syrup, mustard, garlic, cinnamon, nigella seeds and cumin in a small jug. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over the sausages and vegetables, massaging it all with your hands to coat it well.

Cover with foil and roast for 30 minutes. Remove the foil and toss the tray to shuffle everything around, and then increase the heat to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Cook for another 25-30 minutes or until sticky, golden and charred at the edges.

Top with a sprinkling of parsley and serve straight from the tray.



## BAKING

I've recently returned from a U3A 'get together' in Offerton, and was quite overwhelmed by the talent of our hostess. She had produced numerous pies, flans, cakes and desserts, the table was overflowing and lots of people were sitting around, enjoying the feast. As someone who has never had any 'culinary expertise', I was very impressed and found this poem, which I wrote some time ago.

Sing a song of baking  
of sugar, flour and spice  
Mix them altogether, and  
you'll turn out something nice!

Some folks are really good at this -  
they wield their rolling pin  
and tarts and flans appear each week,  
all yummy, crisp and thin!



But some poor souls don't have the knack,  
to make delicious pastry -  
their cakes don't rise, they burn their pies,  
they're certainly not tasty!

Sing a song of baking,  
of lovely currant buns,  
But cooks beware! Don't leave them there,  
They'll end up in our tumms!



Oh! How I wish that I could bake,  
with fruit and glaze cherry.  
I sit and cry, for though I try,  
I'm not a Mary Berry

But, never mind, I have a friend,  
In fact, I've two or three  
they'll help me make delicious food,  
And I'll end up on T.V.!!!



# PUZZLES

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



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.

### Wise Men and St Paul meet Jesus

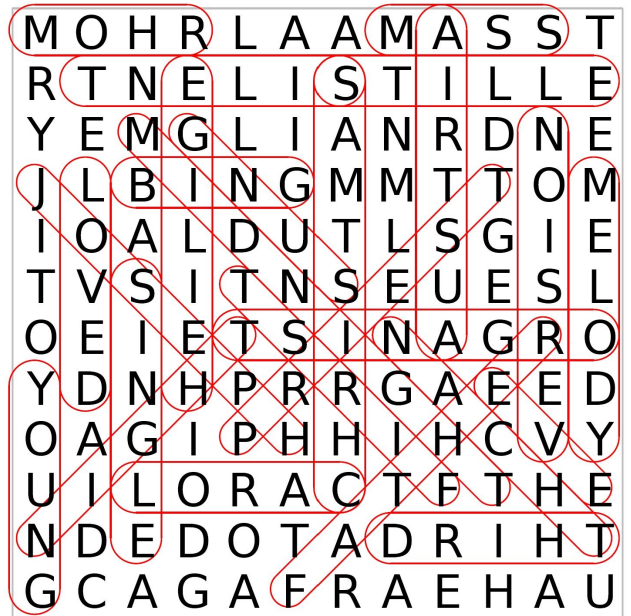
The **WISE MEN** and St **PAUL** were both on **TRIPS** when they first **ENCOUNTERED JESUS**, but how **DIFFERENT** those trips were! The Wise Men, whom we remember on **EPIPHANY** (6<sup>th</sup> Jan) were **SEEKING** the One for whom the **STAR SHONE**, and came to **BETHLEHEM** to worship him. St Paul, whose **CONVERSION** we remember this month (26<sup>th</sup> Jan), was on his way to Damascus, seeking to **KILL** those who worshipped Jesus. When the Wise Men encountered the **BABY** Jesus, they worshipped Him and gave Him **GIFTS** of **GOLD**, frankincense and myrrh. When St Paul, the **PROUD**, fanatical Pharisee, encountered Jesus, he fell **BLINDED** on the **ROAD**, and then worshipped Him by giving Him the rest of his life. St Paul endured years of **SUFFERING** and hardships in his work as the great **APOSTLE** to the Gentiles. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

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



## ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

4	<b>9</b>	5	3	7	<b>2</b>	6	1	<b>8</b>
<b>8</b>	1	2	5	4	6	<b>3</b>	7	9
3	6	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	9	8	2	<b>4</b>	5
1	3	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	8	5	9	2	<b>7</b>
5	8	9	2	<b>6</b>	7	1	3	4
<b>2</b>	7	4	9	1	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	8	6
7	<b>4</b>	3	6	2	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	5	1
6	5	<b>1</b>	8	3	4	7	9	<b>2</b>
<b>9</b>	2	8	<b>7</b>	5	1	4	<b>6</b>	3



### SUDOKU ANSWERS

### WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

