



Stockport Sunday School

January 2025 Newsletter 56



Once again, the Christmas celebrations are over for another year. We hope it has been a happy time for you, while realising that for some it may have been a difficult period, due to illness, bereavement or other challenges when life's problems assail us. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Looking forward, the New Year is now upon us, traditionally a time for making 'Resolutions'. For some, this may appear to be 'old fashioned' and not relevant to modern life. But if we called the practice a time for 'Self-appraisal', perhaps it might be viewed differently, and possibly considered of value.

A writer and former Editor of the Bible Reading Fellowship daily notes, Rev. Sally Welch, put it into words much better than I can, - as follows:-



Rev. Sally Welch

'New year's resolutions are often mocked, and equally often taken up only to be swiftly disregarded - apparently the failure rate by mid-February is 80%! But the new year can be a good and productive time, offering as it does an opportunity for prayerful reflection. We can turn our backs on the failures and disappointments of the year gone past and give thanks for all that has brought love, hope and joy into our lives. We can build on all that has been good, rejoicing in our triumphs and taking forward the lessons learnt from our disasters, so that they might not be repeated and so that good fruit might come from them. We can assess our shortcomings, - the gaps in our knowledge and our relationships with God and neighbour, and resolve, if not to fill them, at least to make an attempt to do so.'

So I wish you a Happy New Year and I encourage you to make some resolutions, praying also for the grace to keep them.'

I think that says it all, and hopefully be an encouragement for each of us as we progress into 2025.

With the Best Wishes of all the Officials for the New Year.



May we meet this new year bravely, sure in the faith that while men come and go, and life changes around us, God is ever the same, guiding us with His wisdom and protecting us with His love. - William Temple

OLIVE GOSLING

We were sorry to learn of the death of Olive Gosling just a few days before her 102nd birthday. Olive was the wife of James Gosling who for many years until his death, was our Senior Inspector. Olive supported James in his work for SSS and after his death attended all our special services and was pleased to receive our monthly newsletter.

Her funeral is on Monday 13th January at 12 noon at Davenport Methodist Church. Her family are in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

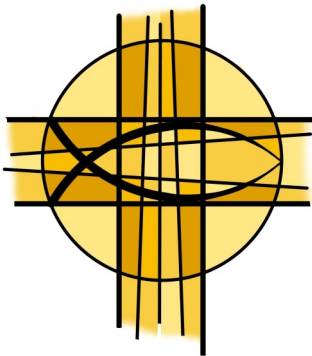


DOUGLAS MANLEY

We were sorry to learn of the death of Douglas, husband of Beryl Manley, after a long illness. Beryl is an active member of the Sunday School, organising the Coffee Lounge, Knit and Natter and Tai Chi. She has also run several charity events. Douglas supported her in her work. Beryl and Douglas were long time members of the SSS Biowling Club and Douglas had been Captain of the men's team and had also been the Chairman.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Beryl and their son, William and his family.

The funeral will take place at the Rowan Chapel on Friday January 24th at 12.15. Family flowers only, but donations can be sent to Parkinson's charity.



THINKING OF YOU

We send our best wishes to all our friends who have not been well over the last month. Judith Curry is currently continuing to care for Don at home and our Secretary, Garth Higgins, was admitted to Stepping Hill Hospital for a week at the beginning of December and was readmitted again on Christmas Day. We hope he will soon be home again.





FRONTS OF CARDS

Please remember to save the fronts of your Christmas cards when you take them down and pass them to Margaret Forster, so that they can be put into the shoe boxes sent out via Teams4u.



THANK YOU

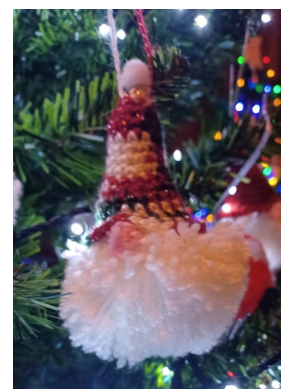
Thank you to Cath and Alan Brown for donating the Christmas tree in the entrance hall and decorating it and to Stuart for the lit up silhouette Christmas tree in the office window.





ST GEORGE'S CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Thank you to the ladies of the Knit 'N Natter group for providing the lovely tree for the festival. Their theme was 'Driving 'Gnome' For Christmas' and they had created gnomes from large pom poms with knitted and crocheted colourful hats and also cars in various colours. Another lovely tree, ladies and gentleman, much admired by visitors to the Christmas Tree Festival.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish Happy Birthday this month to
Joan Heald on 10th January
and
Ann Mather on 25th January



THANK YOU

Once again, we must say a big 'thank you' to Cath Brown for making our Advent wreath, on which we light a candle each Sunday on the lead up to Christmas.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

A traditional Christmas Lunch was served before the service on December 8th. Thank you to all the ladies for preparing and serving a delicious meal which was enjoyed by all those present. Judith Higgins had knitted crackers filled with chocolates for everyone.

Unfortunately someone lost their cracker on the way home and it was found by a dog walker who placed it on a house wall, where it was found by a little boy who was sure it was left for him by Father Christmas or the elves and it made his Christmas.



CHRISTMAS POST

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

2025 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 - £14.85
(which includes 11 x 85p stamps)

Cash or cheque please to be sent to:-

Mrs J Hadfield,
C/o Stockport Sunday School
96 Nangreave Road
Heaviley
Stockport
SK2 6DQ

or can be given in School.



SERVICES



SUNDAY DECEMBER 1ST

Cath Brown led the service today. She started by making the advent ring then lit the first candle, while Janet Moore read some very interesting items about the traditions of Christmas.



She told the life story of Hildegard of Bergan, a medieval nun who was entered into the convent when she was 8 years old by her parents. A very interesting woman who wrote a great deal of music and also medical books and



Hildegard on Stained glass at Ste Foy Church, Conques, France

books on science. She became the Mother Superior of the monastery in later life. She is also known as a visionary of theology Three advent hymns were sung, 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel', 'The Angel Gabriel' and 'Come Though Long Expected Jesus'. An advent prayer was written and spoken by Cath. Janet read the bible reading, Luke chapter 1 verses 46 - 51, from the Good News Bible.

At the end of the service Cath had made a Scandinavian advent cake which was cut and given out to everyone.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 8TH



Walter led the service today, the second Sunday in Advent. The second candle on the Advent wreath was lit. Advent is a time to think of our faith and set things right with God. In the Old Testament, Habakkuk was worried about the falling standards of the people. Walter spoke of the story in John's gospel chapter 9, where Jesus heals the blind man on the sabbath. The authorities did not accept Jesus as He did not fit in with their beliefs. Jesus said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." The beginning of the



gospel according to John is full of symbolism of the power of light over darkness. What John referred to as 'the word' - that was with God and was God. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. We are aware of the power of light to overcome darkness, symbolic of the triumph of good over evil, the power of love over hate and life over death.

CANDLE AND CAROL SERVICE, SUNDAY DECEMBER 15TH



Once again the members of the Triangle had decorated the hall beautifully with a table of candles and a crib at the front of the hall. Tables had been set out around the hall with a Christmas decoration and candles.

The candles were lit during the singing of the first carol, 'Away in a Manger'.



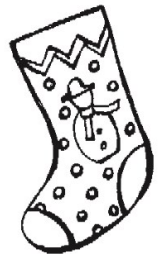
Eileen read the story of how the angel appeared to Mary. Jayne read the story of the shepherds and Pam the visit of the wise men. Beryl Barnett read the prayers and Janet Moore read 'The Night Before Christmas', a poem written in 1833. The theme of the service this year was Christmas stockings and Stuart told us how the tradition of hanging up

stockings started.



At the end of the service everyone present received a hand knitted stocking containing a chocolate coin wrapped in gold foil. Thank you to Margaret Dean for

knitting all the stockings and for everyone from the Triangle for once again making this a very special service.



The collection taken at the service was sent to the Christie.

Mince pies, tea and coffee were served at the end of the service.



SUNDAY DECEMBER 22ND

A traditional service of readings and carols was held and Walter Stead wished everyone present a very Happy Christmas on behalf of the Officials.

The readers were:-

- Joyce Darvill, the Old Testament prophecies in Micah and Isaiah, about the leader who was to come from God to be born in Bethlehem
- Margaret Forster, the story of the shepherds from Luke's gospel
- Janet Moore, the story of the wise men from Matthew
- Margaret Jones, John 1, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God



FUTURE SERVICES

The next dates for our services are:-

January 5 th	Judith Higgins
January 12 th	Walter Stead followed by Election of Inspectors
January 19 th	Judith Higgins
January 26 th	Service followed by Committee Meeting Future services to be arranged

NEW YEAR 2025

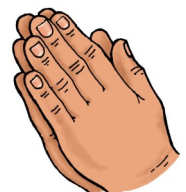
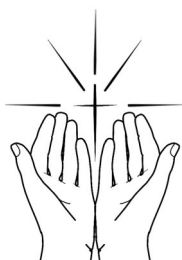
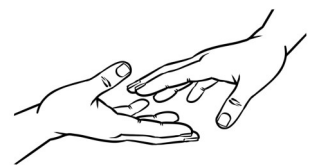
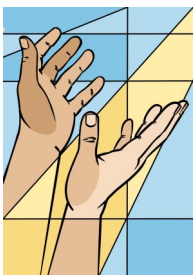
If we put our hand in God's hand
As we enter this New Year
Not knowing what the future holds
But that our Friend is near.

We shall not fear what lies ahead
If He is by our side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If He will be our guide.

The Sinless One from heaven came
To dwell with us on earth,
He sought and bought us with His blood
And offered us new birth.

Now as we travel through this year
He knows the things He's planned,
So let us trust and know just this -
Our times are in His hands.

By Megan Carter



2025

LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Spinach and mozzarella gnocchi

Serves 4

*875ml whole milk
800g shop-bought potato gnocchi
280g baby spinach leaves
80g finely grated parmesan
2 tsp finely grated lemon rind
Sea salt and cracked black pepper
2 x 125g fresh mozzarella, drained well and torn*

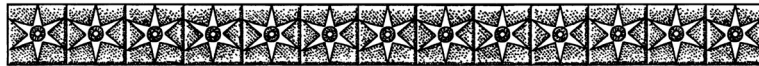


Place the milk in a deep ovenproof frying pan and bring to a simmer. Add the gnocchi and cook for 3 minutes or until just soft.

Heat the oven grill to high.

Stir through the baby spinach, 60g of the parmesan, lemon rind, salt and pepper.

Top with mozzarella and remaining parmesan. Grill for 8-10 minutes or until golden and serve.



Kites Group

The Kites Group are busy preparing for their February 2025 show *Cinderella 2* to be held at Compass Point. More details and tickets are available on www.kitesgroup.com.

Candle and Carol Service 2024

The offertory from this service amounted to £102.11 so we have sent £105.00 to The Christie.

Thank you to everyone who attended and here is a selection of stockings.

If anyone has yet to send their photo, please send them to stuart@compasspointstockport.org



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

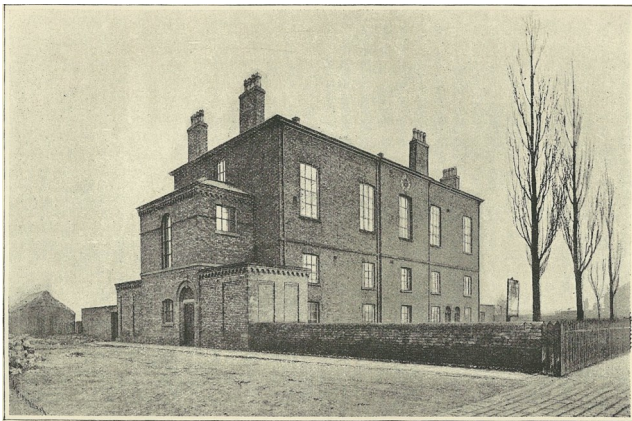


As New Year 2025 fast approaches, my mind goes back to the very many New Year celebrations which are tucked away in my memory. I'd like to share a few of them with you.

My earliest one is of a New Year celebration spent at a Social Evening at Heaviley Sunday School, with my friend, Mary. For many teenage years, on New Year's Eve, all dressed up, we trotted along to Sunday School. We watched the M.C's demonstrating the dances - waltz, quickstep, fox-trot (very difficult), Veleta, St Bernard's Waltz, Barn Dance, and our favourite - the Mississippi Dip!! We were hoping that one of the boys in the Young People's Department would ask us to dance, and if not, it was fine to dance together! The 'smash and grab' quickstep was a great favourite with us,



as was the 'Elimination Waltz', where, if you were lucky, you won a prize at the end. It was always a great evening, but when it came to midnight and everyone rushed around kissing each other, Mary and I beat a hasty retreat, grabbed our coats and escaped!



HEAVILEY SCHOOL.

Another New Year's Eve, which is tucked away in my memory is one at Judith Curry's house. We

played lots of games and there was a cousin there who liked playing weird tunes by running a damp finger around the edge of his wine glass!

After we were married, Derek and I had parties of our own with friends and neighbours and we always played games - usually very active ones! When our children were old enough to take part, even more games were introduced and New Year had to be let in properly with Dad going out of the back door with a slice of bread, a piece of coal, and a glass of wine. We always sang 'Auld Lang Syne' and to this day, I get very frustrated when people don't 'do it properly' or insist on joining hands too soon!



When I was 21, my friend, Betty, had introduced me to C.H.A. holidays, later to become H.F. (Holiday Fellowship). We had the most wonderful New Year celebrations at various H.F.

centres, which Derek and I and, later, our children, all enjoyed for many years. They were very traditional, often preceded by the guests taking part in a Pantomime, and after the ceremony, a wonderful Scottish meal of haggis, neeps and tatties and then - best of all, dancing the night away to the Eightsome Reel, Strip the Willow, Dashing White Sergeant and ending, of course, with a rousing rendering of 'Auld Lang Syne'.



This year, 65 years later, my son, who, in his school holidays, leads the walks for H.F. has decided to take me to Glencoe Centre (where Derek and I and Mary and Peter, spent the Millenium celebration). I have yet to discover whether the celebrations will be traditional or not, - here's hoping! I'll let you know next time!

In the mean-time:-

"And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak' a right gude willie waught,
For auld lang syne."

P.S. There are 5 verses, but, I'm afraid I only know 2!!



P.P.S. My maternal grandmother was half Scottish and half Welsh, so, I think that some of the ancestry has rubbed off on me!

Margaret Morris-Jones

SMILE LINES

In place of cabbage

On Sunday after the church service, a woman told the minister that when she had sent her husband to buy a cabbage for lunch, he had fallen and broken his leg. "That's terrible!" said the minister. "What did you do?"

"I opened a can of peas," she replied.



Bible

A father was approached by his small son, who told him proudly, "I now know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and asked him to explain. "It's easy. It stands for Basic Information Before Leaving Earth."

Labels

I have my own system for labelling homemade freezer meals. I no longer bother with labels like 'chicken casserole' or 'lasagne' or 'steak and ale pie'. Instead, I use 'Whatever', 'Anything', or 'I Don't Know.' That way when I ask my family what they want for dinner, I always have it to hand.



Good idea

A young theologian, fresh out of university, thought it would help him better understand the world if he served as a policeman before going on for ordination. At the police interview he was asked: "What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He promptly responded, "I would pass around an offering plate." He got the job.

Collection

A minister in a rural church had been having trouble with the collections. One Sunday he announced, "Now, before we pass the collection plate, I would like to request that the person who stole the chickens from our local farm please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. The Lord doesn't want money from a thief!"

The collection plate was passed around and for the first time in months, everybody gave.



PUZZLES

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



Sudoku

WORDSEARCH

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



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

Gifts of the Wise Men

What about their **GIFTS** of **GOLD**, **FRANKINCENSE** and **MYRRH**? One Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation. He was the Rev John **HENRY HOPKINS**, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote the much-loved Christmas **CAROL**, 'We **THREE KINGS** of **ORIENT** Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king.

Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they **WORSHIP**ed God in the **TEMPLE**. Myrrh was a **SPICE** that the **ANCIENTS** used in preparing **BODIES** for **BURIAL**.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, **HONOURED** Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as **DIVINE**, and with myrrh, because He would also become a **SACRIFICE** and **DIE** for His people. The Wise Men were the very first **GENTILES** ever to worship Jesus. What **FAITH** they had!

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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

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



SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS



...Joshua says he's very sorry - but it's something to do with the recent weapons procurement review...



"It's worth getting to church an hour early to grab a pew by the electric socket."