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Dear All,

Christmas and carols go together. You can't have one without the other. It would require a high degree of ingenuity for anyone to get through the Christmas season without hearing a carol – and probably singing one, too. They're on the speakers in the supermarket, they're on the radio, carol singers come round the streets singing them, and, of course, there's the church carol service.

Most of us could name lots of them:- Hark the Herald, Good King Wenceslas, In the Bleak Midwinter, Away in a Manger, Once in Royal David's City . . . and so on. Some of those carols are very old, some relatively modern. They're perhaps the only Christian songs we actually know the words of – but familiarity can breed if not contempt, then at least inattention.

Occasionally in those familiar lines we sing absolute nonsense: 'In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron' – in Bethlehem? 'Little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes' – so the baby Jesus wasn't human after all? 'And io, io, io by priest and people sungen'? No, not a bad case of the stutters, but a medieval carol writer's mischievous description of the mumbo-jumbo of incomprehensible Latin in church.

We've been spared other bafflement by the work of editors. Charles Wesley's first line was originally 'Hark how all the welkin rings' – no 'herald angels'. 'Welkin' comes from an Old English word meaning 'heaven' and has absolutely nothing to do with shell-fish!

But enough of problems. On the whole carols are wonderfully clear in their message and profoundly moving in a simple and touching way. The last verse of Once in Royal David's City always moves me:

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high.

Trust Mrs Alexander to get it exactly right.

And Christina Rossetti's last verse, asks a question so searching that her meteorological musings fade into thin air:

What shall I give him, poor as I am?
if I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him – give my heart.

I wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Christmas.

Every Blessing



Pastoral Piece

"I just don't believe it!!" How many times have we heard that phrase?

It's really hard to believe that we have already had Summer, Guy Fawkes night and Remembrance Sunday. Now this week we have 'Children in Need'. How time flies – I think this is more so as you grow older! When you are younger twelve months appears to be a long time. It probably is, but believe me that changes.

Some things hardly change – like our dedicated pastoral team. Always on hand when needed, always ready to help when required. Many, many thanks to them all.

Next on the agenda is Christmas. Wow it is coming faster – you think you have plenty of time and before you know it – Wham ! It is only weeks away.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a 'Happy, healthy and peaceful season continuing into New Year'. May God Bless you all.

I leave you with my last verses for 2015

May the days be good to you: comforting more often than crazy and giving more often than taking.

May the passing seasons make sure that any heartaches are replaced with a million smiles and that any hard journeys eventually turn into nice, easy miles that take you everywhere you want to go.

May your dreams do their absolute best to come true.

May your heart be filled with the kindness of friends, the caring of everyone you love, and the richness of memories you wouldn't trade for anything.

May life's little worries always stay small.

May you get a little closer every day to any goals you want to achieve.

May the changes be good ones and any challenges turn out to be for the better.

May you find time to do all the things you've always wanted to do!

And may you be happy ... forever (words by Douglas Pagels)

Margaret Hogan

Craft Club

As usual at Craft Club various projects are in progress, and lots of chat as well as sharing of ideas and talents.

Recently we visited Petty Pool for lunch and to present a cheque for £360. This was raised from our stall held at the Norley Garden Show. Needless to say they were very pleased with our efforts.

On the 4th December we are having a stall at the Kingsley Christmas market from 6pm -- 9pm. Come along and support this event, you just might see the ideal Christmas present.

We are looking forward to enjoying Christmas lunch at the Horseshoe on the 8th December. It will be nice to get 'dressed up' and enjoy ourselves. *June Fay*

Family Worker Report

Peace

Peace starts with each of us.....

'Gifts' is the theme for assemblies this half term and recently I reminded the children about Peace and treating others as you would like to be treated. These are two important rules spoken by Jesus which remind us how God can work through us day by day. May the gift of God's spirit be at work within you, so you grow in God's likeness.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew ch 5 v 9).

We stick with the theme of Gifts for our **Christmas Holiday Club**, on Monday 21st December at Norley Methodist Church from 10-2pm. Open to all primary school children. Cost £6. Ring Andrea on 07749877823 to book a place, and bring your own packed lunch with you.

In November Lewis went (Nov 21/22) with other young people to 3 Generate. This is a national youth weekend run by the Methodist Church near Swindon. They took part in worship, discussions, outdoor activities and much more. I'm sure Lewis can tell you all about it.

In February we are hoping to hold another Prayer Day, look out for more details nearer the time.

May you all have a peaceful Christmas and may you draw closer to God in the coming year.

Andrea Ellams.

Hospital regulations require a wheel chair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital.

After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator. On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him.

'I don't know,' he said. 'She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown.'

First Wednesday Walks

In September with just a small group of eight (many walkers were absent due to holidays, sickness and other commitments) we decided to stay local and walk the Norley Wildflower Memorial Walk to commemorate the 12 Norley victims of the Great War. The walk started from the Chapel and visited all 11 plaques around the village plus the graveyard at St John's Church - a total of approximately three miles with a coffee stop at Stable End. Attempts were made to identify all the wildflowers on show - with varying degrees of success. We finished by having our picnic in the Chapel grounds and admiring the small wildflower garden planted there. We were very grateful for all those who had contributed to setting up this walk and look forward to repeating it in future years when the flowers are expected to be even more impressive.

Words and picture Richard Ramsbottom

October's walk was led by Vaughan and Garry. With very foreboding weather twelve of us set out clad in our waterproofs expecting the worse. One member's attempts to don a pair of over trousers several sizes too small was interesting to watch, if unsuccessful. Cheered by the spectacle we began the 4-ish mile adventure.

Having parked near the Leigh Arms we made our way up a hidden footpath to join a canal, and walked in the Barnton direction. Not content with rambling and chatting (often the same activity) some participants wanted to know fine detail like the name of the canal. As the leaders were bemused by such a trivial question we relied on our own version of Wikileaks ... Brucieleaks to come up with the answer.

So, enlightened, we walked along the Trent and Mersey canal, accidentally missing our footpath to High Leigh (most didn't notice), and eventually joined the Weaver Navigation, which like the above canal has the sort of gradient we could comfortably manage. Heading back towards Acton Bridge we passed locks, a caravan site and waterside bungalows, all very interesting to see from this aspect.

The rain stayed away and we enjoyed a very pleasant lunch at the Holly Bush joined by Ruth, Sheila, Betty and Tony.

Words (including those deleted by the editor) and Picture by Garry Wynne

November's Wednesday Walk was led by Peter and Sheila and was a gentle 4½ mile walk in the Vale of Llangollen, attended by eleven walkers. We started with some confusion over car parking, as the authorities had signed a new car-park, designated 'Long stay' some ½ mile from where we wanted to be, now calling the old car-park 'Short stay only'. After some discussion we concluded that this meant 'no overnight parking', and was designed with those hiring canal boats for the week in mind, so we parked there, where we had always intended, alongside the Trevor basin on the north side of the Pontcysyllte aqueduct. Leaving the car-park, we crossed the basin and then the Llangollen Canal (twice) before picking up the Offa's Dyke path, passing over fields and the A539 before ascending into Trevor Hall Wood on a steadily rising path. After a stop to feed Polo mints to a horse and have a coffee break at the high point, we descended through the wood and into the open, where we enjoyed fine views over the Vale of Llangollen. The autumn colours, although by now past their best, were still fine, even in the absence of sun. At least we had no rain.

After a good lunch at the Sun Trevor Inn, we returned to Trevor along the canal towpath. Reaching the basin, we enjoyed ice cream (in November!) before driving back to Norley.

Words by Peter Hills. Picture Ruth Lane

Future walks are planned for

Wednesday Dec 2nd (around Cuddington with lunch at the White Barn and mince pies at John and Sylvia's)

Wednesday Jan 6th

Wednesday Feb 3th

Meet at church at 9.45 for a 10.00 am departure each month – we hope to see you there.

Bruce

Looking back.....

Harvest

For the first time for many years, we had a harvest supper on the Saturday. The event was well-attended and enjoyable with excellent food made by the members. As usual the church was beautifully decorated and very many thanks to everyone who demonstrated their excellent flower arranging skills ahead of the Flower Festival we will be having at Harvest 2016. Peter and Sue Levitt ensured our harvest services were a joyful celebration. Peter led the morning service when very generous donations were made for the Young People's Support Foundation in Manchester, and at the evening service Sue rededicated the Pastoral Visitors during the Communion service.

Shoe Box Sunday

Denise Harding led our worship on 'Shoebox Sunday'. Thirty one bulging shoe boxes were collected for Operation Christmas Child and were rapidly sent on to the processing depot to enable them to reach needy children in time for Christmas.

Very many thanks to everyone for their generosity yet again – the shoe boxes are greatly appreciated.

Remembrance Sunday

This year the Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and many parents paraded from the Tiger's Head to church on Remembrance Sunday. There was standing room only in the church (at least 140 people) for a very moving service led by Sue Levitt and based on the wounded soldiers who were treated at Dunham Massey during the First World War. Richard Ramsbottom spoke very eloquently about the hospital and told us all about one of the soldiers who was a patient there, and the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers read poems written by the soldiers whilst they were recuperating.

The Church Council

The October church council approved the accounts for the year presented by John Bell.

The budget for the coming year was reviewed following the moving of the Flower Festival to the 2016/17 financial year, and alternative income generating activities were approved to fill the gap – a coffee morning and sale of items (on Dec 5) and a New Year party (on Jan 30) and the idea of a sponsored walk by the walking group.

The property check list and property report presented by Bruce Lane were approved, and the proposed property expenditure on the rest of the garden work and the church gutters was authorised.

Dates were set for the 2015 Safari Supper (June 18), and it was decided to return to Beth Eden in 2016 for a Church Weekend away.

Currently the church has 49 members.

Songs of Praise

The recent Songs of Praise based on hymns from the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book (MHB), and Hymns and Psalms brought many happy memories to those present and also introduced some interesting hymns to those who weren't brought up on the MHB.

Very many thanks to everyone who told us their favourites – if yours wasn't included it was because your favourite hymn has endured the test of time and is in Singing the Faith. So of course we must now have another Songs of Praise with hymns **just** from Singing the Faith! It is lovely that we have so many people who love hymns and hymn singing.

Church Family Weekend

The Church Weekend returned to Beth Eden after a 7 year gap. We had exclusive use of the guest house, and were well looked after by David and Margaret Sales and their staff. A great time was had by all 24 of us attending. Unfortunately Olive had to drop out, but Michelle took her place at the last minute.

The main lounge worked very well socially and the food was excellent as well as the fellowship. Thanks are due to Alison for the programme, which included a concert organised by Saro, and a walk along the invalid's path and a later walk on the Orme itself organized by Bruce. Prologues and Epilogues were led by Philip, Ruth and Alison and the Sunday morning service was led by Sue & Peter. All in all a most memorable weekend.

Bruce

The Choirs at Norley Church

Both choirs contributed to the Harvest services in the surroundings of a beautifully decorated church. The Harmony choir sang the anthem "Sing to The Lord of Harvest" by Joseph Barnby. Their voices blended beautifully with thankful and joyful hearts. My special thanks to John for mastering with precision the base part that was challenging both in terms of timing and accidentals.

The Band of Hope and Joy sang a lively song with the women singing the words: "Who paints the skies into glorious day?", with the powerful male voices responding "Only the splendour of Jesus." They sang with gusto and brilliant diction.

Saro Jesudason

Church Weekend Away 2016

We are returning to **Abbot Hall, Grange-over-Sands**

from **Friday 7 October to Sunday 9 October 2016**

Book the dates in your diary now. Booking forms and deposit requests will be distributed at the beginning of January – so be prepared. We visited here last year and in 2012 and 2010 – it has been a firm favorite.

Bruce

Financial Report – steady as she goes!

The October Church Council meeting approved the audited Church accounts for the Connexional year September 1st 2014 to August 31st 2015, with our gratitude to Richard Ramsbottom who very kindly acted as the independent examiner for another year. The accounts and Standard Forms were duly despatched to the Circuit Treasurer – and Norley once again won the gold award for the first submission!

At £10,869, the balances in the accounts were healthy at the year-end, a little more than last time, and almost giving us the level agreed to be held as a reserve in case of emergency. The Methodist Church requires all churches to have and declare a reserves policy.

With an income in the year of £27,461 and expenditures of £25,567 we were usefully able to add to the level of reserves. Several items, mainly of property-related costs, came in at less than budget, thus giving a saving in the year. During the year, we were thrilled to be able to install and dedicate the new front doors. We are most grateful to everyone who gave so generously to enable the full costs of £2215 to be met exactly after gift-aid was reclaimed.

As the Treasurer often reminds the Church Council however, our income is hugely dependent on special events which demand lots of work and commitment from various people – the Safari Supper (£1254 in 2014-15), Carol-singing (£455), Open Door lunches (£957) and, from time to time, celebratory festivals – in 2014-15 the Christmas Tree Festival (£857) and New Year Party (£218). Thus some £3741 was raised from special events – a major contribution to sustaining the Church's financial viability. Also, the investment in the solar panels gave an income of £1723 and gift-aid reclaimed netted £4675 (including the amount on front door donations).

A realistic balanced budget was prepared for 2015-16, with income and expenditure of £24,400 or so. Various special enjoyable (and fund-raising) events are being planned for the year so that we may achieve this, but also to begin to save up to £1000 per year for a few years to build up a reserve to cover the costs of the external redecoration of the Church buildings within the next 5 years .

The message is 'steady as she goes!'

John Bell, Treasurer

Diary

Unless otherwise stated in the notices the following group meets weekly at Norley

Craft Club Tuesdays 10.00am – noon in the Norley Open Door Room

December 2015

Wednesday	2 nd	9.45a m	First Wednesday Walk
		7.30p m	Café Church led by Avis Palmer of Kelsall
Thursday	3 rd	4.30p m	The Hurst Messy Church
Saturday	5 th	10.30a m	Christmas Coffee Morning
Sunday (Advent 2)	6 th	10.45a m	Mr Ken Jackson of Caldby Valley + Sunday School (Hazel)
		6.30p m	Prof Neville Ford of The Hurst
Monday	7 th	4.00p m	Kelsall Messy Church
Wednesday	9 th	8.00p m	The Hurst Café Church
Thursday	10 th	12 noon	Open Door Christmas Lunch
Sunday (Advent 3)	13 th	10.45a m	Rev'd Sue Levitt – Sacrament + Sunday School (Bruce)
		6.30p m	No Service at Norley
Wednesday	16 th	5.00p m	Tarvin Messy Church
Saturday	19 th	10.00a m	The Hurst 'Too Busy to Stop Day' until 6pm
Sunday (Advent 4)	20 th	9.00a m	Norley@9
		10.45a m	No Service at Norley
		4.00p m	Candlelit Carol Service
Monday	21 st	10.00a m	Christmas Holiday Club until 2pm - Andrea
Tuesday	22 nd	6.00p m	Carol Singing

Wednesday	23 rd	3.00p m	Frodsham Tea then at 4pm Christingle with Rev'd Neil Stacey
Thursday	24 th	12 noon	Wesley Chester Carol singing in the Coffee Bar
(Christmas Eve)		12.15p m	Wesley Chester Family Nativity Rev'd Christine Dutton
		6.00p m	Carol Singing
		6.30p m	Kelsall Rev'd Sue Levitt - Sacrament
		11.30p m	Tarporley Watchnight service Pastor Nic Willis - Sacrament
Christmas Day	25 th	9.30a m	All Age celebration Rev'd Sue Levitt
Sunday	27 th	10.45a m	Mr Philip Garner of Norley
		6.30p m	No service

January 2016

Sunday	3 rd	10.45a m	Robert Swettenham of Chester + Sunday School (Hazel)
		6.30p m	Rev'd David Speed of Saltney
Wednesday	6 th	9.45a m	First Wednesday Walk
		7.30p m	Café Church led by Philip Garner
Thursday	7 th	4.30p m	The Hurst Messy Church
Sunday	10 th	10.45a m	Rev'd Sue Levitt – Covenant Service - Sacrament
		6.30p m	No service at Norley
Monday	11 th	4.00p m	Kelsall Messy Church
Tuesday	12 th	2.00p m	Church Leadership Team Meeting at Howell Croft
		7.30p m	Flower Festival Meeting in the Open Door Room
Wednesday	13 th	12 noon	Open Door Lunch
		8.00p m	The Hurst Café Church
Sunday	17 th	9.00a m	Norley@9

		10.45a	Dr Ruth Lane of Norley
		m	
		6.30p	Rev'd Sue Levitt - Alternative Worship
		m	
Wednesday	20 th	5.00p	Tarvin Messy Church
		m	
		7.30p	Local Preacher's meeting at Kellsall
		m	

January 2016 (continued)

Sunday	24 th	10.45a	Mr Edgar Gregory of Frodsham + Sunday School
		m	(Bruce)
		4.00p	Chester Cathedral Service
		m	
Thursday	28 th	12	Open Door Lunch
		noon	
		1.15p	Thursday Club
		m	
Saturday	30 th	6.00p	New Year Party at Church
		m	
Sunday	31 st	10.45a	Miss Heather Rowland of Ashton + Sunday School
		m	(Bruce)
		6.30p	Rev'd Denise Harding - Sacrament
		m	

February

Monday	1 st	4.00p	Kellsall Messy Church
		m	
Wednesday	3 rd	9.45a	First Wednesday Walk
		m	
		7.30p	Café Church
		m	
Thursday	4 th	4.30p	The Hurst Messy Church
		m	
		7.00p	Church Council meeting
		m	
Sunday	7 th	10.45a	Mrs Elizabeth Holmes of Frodsham + Sunday
		m	School (Bruce)
		6.30p	Mr Andrew Ellams of Frodsham
		m	
Wednesday	10 th	12	Open Door Room Lunch
		noon	
		8.00p	The Hurst Café Church
		m	
Sunday (Lent 1)	14 th	10.45a	Rev'd Sue Levitt - Sacrament + Sunday School
		m	(Hazel)

		6.30p m	No service at Norley
Wednesday	17 th	5.00p m	Tarvin Messy Church
Sunday (Lent 2)	21 st	9.00a m	Norley@9
		10.45a m	Mr Philip Garner of Norley
		6.30p m	Rev'd Sue Levitt – Alternative Worship
Thursday	25 th	12 noon	Open Door Lunch
		1.15p m	Thursday Club
Sunday (Lent 3)	28 th	10.45a m	Mr John Bell of Cuddington + Sunday School (Hazel)
		6.30p m	Rev'd Sue Levitt - Sacrament

March

Wednesday	2 nd	9.45a m	First Wednesday Walk
		7.30p m	Café Church
Wednesday	9 th	12 noon	Open Door Lunch
Sunday	20 th	9.00a m	Norley@9
Thursday	24 th	12 noon	Open Door Lunch

Carol Singing Dates and Routes 2015

Date	Route	Meeting Place and Time
Monday Dec 22nd	Car route starting at Chapel and singing at houses in the village where the occupants are connected with the Chapel	6.00pm at the Church for a prompt start. Finish at 9pm.
Christmas Eve Dec 24th	Car Route starting at James' on Gallowscrough, and ending on the Town Farm Lane barn conversions.	6.00pm at the James' on Gallowscrough. Finish around 9pm.

Looking Ahead.....

Advent is always a time of preparation both at home with presents and food ready for celebrations with family and friends, and at church where each individual prepares him- or herself for celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The Christmas Open Door Lunch will start at noon on December 10th and will be followed by a Christmas Sing-Song. Everyone who wants to attend should let Ruth (01928 788071) or Joan (01606 301198) know by December 6th.

The candle lit Carol Service on December 20th will start at 4pm and it is hoped that the church will be full with friends and family as we relive the stories round Jesus' birth.

There will be two carol singing evenings – December 22nd and 24th (Christmas Eve). Details on the routes we will follow are given elsewhere in Outreach. Do come and join us as we take the good news of Jesus' birth around the village.

On Christmas morning Sue will lead our worship as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

In the new year the Covenant Service, which is a time of rededication, will be held on January 10th at 10.45am.

January ends with a party at church on January 30th kindly hosted by John and Joan Bell. Reserve the date in your diary now as it is a laughter and fun filled event.

You may not believe it, but Lent starts in mid-February – doesn't time fly!!!!

CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

Saturday December 5th at 10:30am

BRING A FRIEND
& BUY SOME PRESENTS

OPEN DOOR CHRISTMAS LUNCH

on Thursday 10th December at Noon

Please contact Ruth on 01928 788071
or Joan on 01606 301198 if you would like to attend.

DECEMBER 20th

CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE

4PM

EVERYONE WELCOME

CHRISTMAS DAY

9:30am FAMILY WORSHIP

Come and celebrate with us.

OPEN DOOR LUNCHES

We do hope you are planning to join us for the big Christmas Lunch on December 10th. Lots of fun as usual and carols for all to enjoy. Please give your name to any of the team by December 6th as there will be lots of extra shopping to do that week!

There will be plenty to look forward to in 2016 and our early dates are:

Wednesday January 13th	Thursday January 27th
Wednesday February 10th	Thursday February 25th

From all at Open Door Lunches

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2016

Joan Bell

NORLEY METHODIST CHURCH CAFE CHURCH

Come and enjoy fellowship, worship and refreshments in a cafe atmosphere in the church at 7:30pm on the following Wednesdays:

2nd December led by Liz Holmes

6th January led by Philip Garner

3rd February - TBA

COVENANT SERVICE

JANUARY 10th at 10:45am

THURSDAY CLUB

1:15pm to 2:30pm

in the Open Door Room on

January 28th

February 25th

March 24th

ALTERNATIVE EVENING WORSHIP

led by Sue Levitt

on

January 17th

February 21st

at 6:30pm

NEW YEAR PARTY 2016

SATURDAY January 30th

Norley Methodist Church

6pm to 9pm

We do hope you will be able to come and join us for a fun evening of games and supper. Please let us know by Saturday 24th if you are coming, as this will help us with catering.

We look forward to seeing you.

Joan and John Bell

Flower Festival 2016

There's excitement in the air as there are plans to hold a Flower Festival at harvest time next year from **Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th September**. The theme for the festival will be based around significant times, events and activities in our church.

A meeting of people interested in being involved in the Flower Festival, from those who are willing to do easy tasks under instruction to those who will be creating the main arrangements, will be held on **12th January at 7.30pm** in the Open Door Room. Please do come and find out what is being planned and see where your interests and talents lie.