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Dear All,

"I was here first!"

I can remember our children saying this so often as they competed for the best seat in front of the television or the front seat of the car (when the children were the only passengers, of course). And as they got older and wiser, the eldest of the siblings would make the same claim justifying it by the fact that he was born first!

I remember attending a demonstration session of 'Godly Play'. A group, were introduced to the familiar story of the birth of Jesus. The story teller does this by using simple figures which are placed carefully on a large circle of fabric on the floor as the story is told and then offers the listeners a time in which to 'wonder' and talk about what they have seen and heard. The figures represented the baby Jesus in the manger, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, wise men and animals.

Often there are new insights as a result of the story being told in this way.

What was unusual for me was that the story teller placed the figure of baby Jesus in the manger in the circle of fabric at the beginning. For a brief but important moment I saw the child in the manger alone, with his arms outstretched to the world which was represented by the circle of fabric.

Often when we tell the story of Christmas, we give first priority to the more 'attractive' characters and features – the angels, the wise men and the shepherds. It is sad to say but I have even known a nativity play in the past at which we had to scratch around at the very last minute to wrap a towel shaped appropriately in a blanket for the part of the baby Jesus because no one had remembered to bring a doll to take the part!

In the Bible, the start of John's Gospel is a challenging one to understand but it does remind us that

"In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John chapter 1 verses 1 & 2)

and if we think of 'the Word' as being Jesus, then we cannot help but get the priorities right this Christmas as we seek to put Jesus first. But as someone pointed out to me once, 'putting Jesus first' doesn't mean putting him first ahead of family or ahead of a career or ahead of a hobby, it means putting Jesus first in family and in career and in your hobby.

So whether you are reading this at the beginning of the advent season as we begin to prepare to celebrate Christ's birth again or nearer to Christmas day itself remember that Jesus was here first.

Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to you all,

Every Blessing

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue".

## ***Pastoral Piece***

Mararet is unwell – so she has not been able to produce a Pastoral Piece this time and we will miss her poetry.

Instead, this space is devoted to our new Norley residents.

## **Welcome...To our new neighbours in **Kingsleigh Close****

A warm welcome to the village from Norley Methodist Church. We hope you will rapidly settle into the community, and look forward to seeing you in the future.

## **The Choirs at Norley Church**

We celebrated our Harvest festival combining it with our flower festival this year. As such it was decided that the choirs would not contribute to the services, considering the members were involved in the floral contributions.

The verses from Psalm 146 were chosen as our theme.

"Praise the Lord O my soul

I will praise the Lord as long as I live I will sing praises to my God while I have being."

The choirs, of course, continue to be part of the outreach at Norley church, in addition to those activities mentioned in the Methodist recorder article.

*Saro Jesudason*

## **In Praise of Norley Craft club and what we get up to on Tuesday mornings**

Little did I know that when I volunteered to accompany my husband whilst driving a minibus full of ladies to Abakhan Fabrics some years ago, that it would lead to my introduction to such a warm, friendly and talented group of likeminded people as the ladies of Norley Craft Club.

Since then I have been fiercely protective of my Tuesday mornings, only giving way to the delight of occasional grandparental duties. My introduction to this industrious bunch of ladies, some retired and some still juggling with work and play, with many varied careers past and present, was a much welcome relief at the commencement of my retirement, when the transition from my demanding role as company director of a landscaping company in Manchester gave way to my new role. Suddenly I was just a 'plain old housewife' no job title other than this, and whose daily duties forthwith included the total responsibility for the recycling of cans, plastic bottles and

newspapers for Cheshire West (unpaid of course !!!!). The realisation of my new 'career' was upon me!! and I was left wondering how I would fill all the hours and the impending lack of companionship.

Suddenly I was welcomed by the members of Norley C.C. whom I now regard as friends, such is the camaraderie offered by the Norley ladies.

Tuesday mornings commence with a lovely cup of coffee and are alive with shared stories of local happenings and events, holidays, life experiences, family stories and of course the inevitable ailments, when sympathy is in abundance and problems are shared. It can get quite noisy sometimes with much chattering and laughing with the exchange of knowledge and knitting patterns, the teaching of new skills such as crocheting, calligraphy, and the exhibition of the latest completed items such as quilted bags, cushions, soft toys, baby clothes and jewellery . We do have our quiet moments however when all you can hear is ticking of the clock – times when concentration abounds!!

Recently we experienced a very enjoyable minibus trip and had lunch at Bridgemere Garden World and enjoyed a little retail therapy and a wander around the garden centre. Another week we visited The Petty Pool Trust for the Education of Young adults with Learning Difficulties which is one of our chosen charities. We were joined by Jane, the Chief Executive, for coffee and toast made and served by the students, which was much enjoyed by all. A cheque was presented to Petty Pool from our fundraising for their cause which was well received. We have again been invited to assist with making Christmas cards and decorations when an adult social services group visits there in December. Throughout the year our talented group busies itself in the making of lovely things to sell for this charity and also makes cot blankets and hats for the premature baby ward of a local hospital amongst other causes.

As most readers will be aware, the Craft Club members contributed to the making of the swags over the church door for this year's Flower Festival and also made the various bits and pieces inserted into the beautiful flower arrangements by Bea, our knowledgeable Craft Club flower arranger, who earlier this year gave the ladies of the Craft Club a lesson in how to make fresh flower buttonholes.

Next year we will be celebrating twenty years of the Craft Club – here's to the next twenty and may it continue to bring joy to its members. *Doreen Law*

## **First Wednesday Walks**

In September, five dusky maidens accompanied me on the walk around Delamere Forest led by Di. We encountered Gruffalo & Stickman (statues) on a glorious day in the Sept sunshine. Our picnic lunch was taken on the tables & benches provided by the Forestry Commission. People were very curious as to why we were collecting nature items throughout the walk, but all was made clear when they saw Heather's Walking Group display at the recent Flower Festival.

At the time of writing this, Di is in Liverpool Hospital & I should like to send our very best wishes to Di & Richard on behalf of all the Walking Group.

*Anthony Davies*

The October walk, led by Vaughan and Garry, should have been in the Chester area. However as so many of the regular participants were unable to take part the anticipated turn-out was much reduced and so it was decided to change the walk to the lanes and fields about Norley.

On the day there were six of us and we set out from Chapel, down Breech Moss, through Nursery wood to Gallowsclough Lane, crossing Cheese Hill to reach Delamere Park. From here we made our way via Wood Lane and Bag Lane back to Norley. It was a beautiful autumn day and the Cheshire countryside was at its best making us realise once again how lucky we are to live in Norley. We adjourned to the Oaks in Kelsall for lunch meeting up with Tony and Betty Knight.

*Garry Wynne*

Eleven members of the group met for the November walk around Alvanley, which was led by Peter and Sheila. We were lucky with the weather, which stayed dry all day. We had planned to use the car park of the White Lion in Alvanley, where we intended to lunch afterwards, but unfortunately we found out at the last minute that the pub was closed for refurbishment, so other arrangements had to be made. We therefore parked on the roadside outside the pub, opposite the parish church.

The walk started by going northwards across the fields on part of the North Cheshire Way. We then turned down the Ridgeway before picking up the Sandstone Trail southwards below Alvanley Cliff, with a break for coffee at the high point. After crossing the Alvanley-Mouldsworth road we skirted Manley Old Hall and the fish ponds beyond, before turning north across the fields back to Alvanley. It was then just a short car journey down to the Hornsmill pub in Helsby for a well-earned lunch.

*Words Peter Hills*

Future walks are planned for

**Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup> (around Cuddington with lunch at the White Barn and then tea and mince pies at John and Sylvia's)**

**Wednesday January 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup>**

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

*Bruce*

*Written examples of Children's insights into the bible*

- *Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day ... but a ball of fire by night.*
- *Christians can have only one wife. This is called monotony.*
- *Salome was a woman who danced naked in front of Harrods*
- *Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.*

# Family worker report.

## Light the way this Winter time.

I started off this half term in school reminding the children about being lights in the world. Matthew 5 v 14-16 says:-

*<sup>14</sup> "You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; instead it is put on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.*

When the darkness closes in, either from shorter days or it's just one of those days when nothing is going right, remember God's presence provides a light in that darkness. Connect to him and shine brightly through this season. May you rest in God's love and peace.

### **3 ways to share Gods love this Christmas.**

Share with others.

Surprise someone by being helpful.

Be positive

## Be the Light

### Holiday Club At Norley Methodist Church

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Time 2-4pm

Lots of fun games and activities for Primary School Children.

Cost £5 each

**To book a place contact Andrea on 07749877823**

At the end of the afternoon at 4pm there will be a **short Christingle service at 4pm** followed by refreshments. **to which everyone is invited.**

Donations to the Children's Society gratefully received.

Come and join us over this festive season.

*Andrea Ellams*

## Looking Back ...

### Shoe Box Sunday

Saturday 5 November was Shoe Box Saturday – a new experiment when folk gathered to bring shoe box contents and to fill shoe boxes, ahead of Shoe Box Sunday the following day. This was a very successful morning and a lot of boxes were filled. More arrived the next day at the service, and a total 42 boxes plus extras were sent on their way early in the following week to their final destined Zambia. Well done everybody.

*Bruce*

### The Church Council

The October church council approved the accounts for the year presented by John Bell subject to audit. Thanks were recorded to the Craft Club for their generous donation of £263 during the year

Bruce Lane presented the Online Property Returns and the Church Property Checklist for Annual Inspections by the Property Stewards which were approved by the Church Council.

The Church Weekend Away in 2017 is booked for October 6th – 8th at Beth-Eden in Llandudno and Bruce was asked to book a weekend in October 2018 at Abbot Hall.

Currently the church has 51 members.

### Church Family Weekend Away

The Church Weekend away was held at Abbot Hall, Grange-over-Sands from October 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>. In the end, 18 of us attended and enjoyed a wonderful weekend's fellowship and excellent food.

Many of us took the opportunity to visit places in the Lake District. On the Saturday afternoon some of us took the train across the Kent estuary and walked up Arnside Knott for the spectacular views in the glorious sunshine.

Thanks are due to Alison for the programme of entertainment over the weekend (and the jigsaws); to Philip, Ruth and Alison for the prologues and epilogues; to Jean for the music; and to Sue and Peter for the Sunday morning service. All in all it was a most memorable weekend.

*pictures by Lewis, words Bruce*

## We made the headlines with our Flower Festival

The Methodist Recorder, Norley News and the Circuit Newsletter



## Church Life and Witness - the Theme of Norley's Flower Festival

From the moment you entered and saw all the faces in the vegetables in the Harvest display you knew that you had to examine everything closely as there was so much to see in all the different aspects of church life that were portrayed – from highlights in the church's worship and the major festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, to weddings and baptisms and then all the broader pastoral and outreach activities of the church.

All the creators of the displays were associated with Norley church and knew intimately what most inspired them about the aspect of church life they'd chosen. Hence there was much to see and ponder on – especially as each display was linked to a hymn or Bible reading.

Then, when you thought you'd seen everything, you looked up and found more displays high above the porch, and all you could do was pause and listen to the musicians while you gazed in wonder at the creativity and artistry all around you.

**You can see photos of every display on the website - a link is available for you on the homepage or you can click here**

<http://norleymethodistchurch.org.uk/flowerfestival.php>

# 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 2016

|  |                  |                    |   |
|--|------------------|--------------------|---|
| Saturday   | 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 10.00a<br>m        | Decorate the Church for Christmas   |
| Sunday (Advent<br>2)                             | 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 10.45a<br>m        | Dr Ruth Lane of Norley  |
|  |                  | 6.30p<br>m         | Rev'd Andrew Emison of Frodsham   |
| Monday   | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 4.00p<br>m         | Kelsall Messy Church  |
| Tuesday  | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 7.00p<br>m         | Spiritual Committee meeting at Old Orchard to plan<br>Carol Service   |
|  |                  | 7.30p<br>m         | Wreath making class at Frodsham Cost £15 book<br>07749877823  |
| Wednesday  | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 9.45a<br>m         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday Walk  |
| Thursday   | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 12<br>noon         | Open Door Christmas Lunch   |
|  |                  | 7.30p<br>m         | Carols for Christmas, Salvation Army Tarvin CH3 8EE   |
| Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> - Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> |                  |                    | Kelsall Christmas Tree festival. Opens 6pm Friday,<br>Closes 3pm Sunday. Saturday Christmas market, Vale<br>Royal Singers 2-8pm |
| Sunday (Advent<br>3)                             | 11 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45a<br>m        | Rev'd Sue Levitt – Sacrament  |
|  |                  | 6.30p<br>m         | No Service at Norley  |
| Saturday   | 17 <sup>th</sup> | 10.00a<br>m        | The Hurst 'Too busy to stop' Day until 6pm  |
| Sunday (Advent<br>4)                             | 18 <sup>th</sup> | 9.00a<br>m         | Norley@9  |
|  |                  | 10.45a<br>m        | No Service at Norley  |
|  |                  | <b>4.00p<br/>m</b> | <b>Candlelit Carol Service</b>  |
| Wednesday  | 21 <sup>st</sup> | 5.00p<br>m         | Tarvin Messy Church   |



|               |                  |                          |  |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|--|
|               |                  | 6.00p<br>m               | Carol Singing until 9pm                              |
| Thursday      | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 7.30p<br>m               | Equinox Carol Service Frodsham. Tickets 01928 735922 |
| Saturday      | 24 <sup>th</sup> | 6.00p<br>m               | Carol Singing  |
| Christmas Day | 25 <sup>th</sup> | <b>9.30a</b><br><b>m</b> | Rev'd Sue Levitt                                     |
|               |                  | 6.30p<br>m               | No Service at Norley                                 |

## January 2017

|           |                  |             |  |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|--|
| Sunday    | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 10.45a<br>m | Mr John Bell of Cuddington   |
|           |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | No Service at Norley   |
| Wednesday | 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 9.45a<br>m  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday Walk   |
|           |                  | 2.00p<br>m  | Holiday Club   |
| Friday    | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 2.00p<br>m  | Church Leadership Team meeting at Howell Croft                                 |
| Sunday    | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 10.45a<br>m | Rev'd Sue Levitt – Covenant Service - Sacrament                                |
|           |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | No Service at Norley<br>Blakelees Christmas Songs of Praise – John & Joan Bell |
| Monday    | 9 <sup>th</sup>  | 4.00p<br>m  | Kelsall Messy Church   |
| Wednesday | 11 <sup>th</sup> | 12<br>noon  | Open Door Lunch  |
|           |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | Norley PC hire of Open Door Room   |
| Thursday  | 12 <sup>th</sup> | 4.30p<br>m  | Kingsley The Hurst Messy Church  |
| Sunday    | 15 <sup>th</sup> | 9.00a<br>m  | Norley@9   |
|           |                  | 10.45a<br>m | Mrs Janet Batey of The Hurst   |
|           |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | Rev'd David Goodwin of Hoole   |
| Wednesday | 18 <sup>th</sup> | 5.00p<br>m  | Tarvin Messy Church  |
|           |                  | 7.30p<br>m  | Local Preachers' Meeting at Frodsham (change of venue)                         |
|           |                  | 8.00p<br>m  | Kingsley The Hurst Café Church   |

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>      Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>      Visit of the President and Vice President of Conference to the Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District

## January 2017 (continued)

|          |                  |             |  |
|----------|------------------|-------------|--|
| Sunday   | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 10.45a<br>m | Rev'd Graham Evans of Chester  |
|          |                  | 3.00p<br>m  | United Service at St Laurence Frodsham led by the President/Vice President of Conference |
| Thursday | 26 <sup>th</sup> | 12<br>noon  | Open Door Lunch  |
|          |                  | 1.15p<br>m  | Thursday Lunch Club  |
| Saturday | 28 <sup>th</sup> | 2.00p<br>m  | Tarporley re-opening service followed by tea   |
| Sunday   | 29 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45a<br>m | Mr Mike Halliday of Chester  |
|          |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | Rev'd Sue Levitt – Sacramento  |

## February

|           |                  |             |  |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|--|
| Wednesday | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 9.45a<br>m  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday walk                   |
|           |                  | 7.30p<br>m  | Café Church                                      |
| Thursday  | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 4.30p<br>m  | Kingsley The Hurst Messy Church                  |
| Sunday    | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 10.45a<br>m | Mr Robert Swettenham of Chester                  |
|           |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | Mr Philip Garner of Norley                       |
| Monday    | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 4.00p<br>m  | Kelsall Messy Church                             |
| Wednesday | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 12<br>noon  | Open Door Lunch                                  |
| Sunday    | 12 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45a<br>m | Rev'd Sue Levitt - Sacramento                    |
|           |                  | 6.30p<br>m  | No service at Norley                             |
| Wednesday | 15 <sup>th</sup> | 2.30p<br>m  | Oakmere Church Anniversary – Rev'd Andrew Emison |
|           |                  | 5.00p<br>m  | Tarvin Messy Church                              |
|           |                  | 7.30p<br>m  | Norley PC meeting in Open Door room              |

|          |                  |        |                                     |
|----------|------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|
|          |                  | 8.00p  | Kingsley The Hurst Café Church      |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
| Sunday   | 19 <sup>th</sup> | 9.00a  | Norley@9                            |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
|          |                  | 10.45a | Miss Wendy Ross Barker of Liverpool |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
|          |                  | 6.30p  | Rev'd Sue Levitt                    |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
| Thursday | 23 <sup>d</sup>  | 12     | Open Door Lunch                     |
|          |                  | noon   |                                     |
|          |                  | 1.15p  | Thursday Lunch Club                 |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
|          |                  | 7.30p  | Circuit Meeting at Tarporley        |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
| Sunday   | 26 <sup>th</sup> | 10.45a | Mr Ken Jackson of Caldby Valley     |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |
|          |                  | 6.30p  | Rev'd Sue Levitt - Sacrament        |
|          |                  | m      |                                     |

## March

|           |                  |       |                                |
|-----------|------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Wednesday | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 9.45a | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday Walk |
|           |                  | m     |                                |
|           |                  | 7.30p | Café Church                    |
|           |                  | m     |                                |
| Thursday  | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 7.00p | Church Council                 |
|           |                  | m     |                                |
| Wednesday | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 12    | Open Door Lunch                |
|           |                  | noon  |                                |
| Sunday    | 19 <sup>th</sup> | 9.00a | Norley@9                       |
|           |                  | m     |                                |
| Thursday  | 23 <sup>d</sup>  | 12noo | Open Door Lunch                |
|           |                  | n     |                                |
|           |                  | 1.15p | Thursday Lunch Club            |
|           |                  | m     |                                |

## Carol Singing Dates and Routes 2016

**Wednesday  
Dec 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Car route starting at Chapel singing at selected houses – and welcoming the new occupants of Kingsleigh Close**

**Meet 6.00pm at the Church for a prompt start. Finish at 9pm.**

**Christmas  
Eve  
Saturday  
Dec 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Car Route starting at the James' on Gallowsclough, and ending at the Town Farm Lane barn conversions.**

**6.00pm at the James' on Gallowsclough. Finish around 9pm.**

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Cafe Church

Come and enjoy fellowship, worship and refreshments in a cafe atmosphere in the church at 7.30pm on the following

Wednesdays:

30th November .. led by Sue Levitt

1st February .. TBA

1st March .. TBA

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OPEN DOOR CHRISTMAS LUNCH

THURSDAY DECEMBER 8TH AT NOON

RESERVE YOUR PLACE WITH RUTH (788071)

=====

Come and decorate the church for

CHRISTMAS

Saturday December 3rd

at 10:00am

Refreshments

=====

# Norley @ 9

*Join us for an informal time of worship and praise on*

*December 18th*

*January 15th*

*February 19th*

*a time of praise lasting about 45 minutes  
followed by refreshments*

=====

DECEMBER 18TH  
CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE  
4:00PM  
EVERYONE WELCOME

\*\*\*\*\*

CHRISTMAS DAY  
9:30AM FAMILY WORSHIP  
COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US

=====

Children's Holiday Club

January 4th 2-4pm

ending with a Christingle service

Register to attend with Andrea on

07749 877823

=====

COVENANT SERVICE  
JANUARY 8TH AT 10:45AM



An invitation to you to come to the

THURSDAY CLUB

1:15pm - 2:30pm in the

Open Door Room on

January 26th

February 23rd

March 23rd



**OPEN DOOR LUNCHES**

I do hope you have all signed up for our Christmas Lunch on December 8th. As always it promises to be an exciting day and preparations are well advanced. Our dates for the quarter are as follows:

Thursday December 8th - Christmas Lunch

Wednesday January 11th

Thursday January 26th

Wednesday February 8th

Thursday February 23rd

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND BEST WISHES FOR 2017

*Joan Bell*

# The Church Weekend Away in 2017

We are returning to Beth Eden in Llandudno next year. The weekend is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October. Put it in your diary now – the booking forms will be out in January.

## Spiritual Committee

Last quarter, we celebrated a wonderful weekend combining the **Harvest and Flower Festivals** (see the centre spread): not least, it was spiritually uplifting as we welcomed a few hundred visitors to the church and enjoyed acts of worship and thanksgiving morning and evening on the Sunday. It was good to read about it in the Methodist Recorder newspaper a few weeks later.

In November, we brought and dedicated shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, stood in solemn Remembrance for those fallen in wars and, at the end, entered Advent. How time flies – it'll soon be Christmas again.

An **Advent liturgy** will be used each Sunday and on Christmas Day, kindly prepared this year by our minister, the Revd Sue Levitt. Advent is a time of anticipation and preparation which leads into Christmas and the birth of Jesus, but in some ways it is more important than Christmas: as an eminent biblical scholar has reflected 'take Christmas out of the bible and you lose four chapters at most: remove Advent and you lose most of the New Testament and half the Old'. Now there's something to ponder.

The pattern of worship over the **Christmas and New Year** season will be as follows:

- December 18<sup>th</sup> Norley@9, focussing on the work of Christian Aid
- December 18<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm: Carol Service – a traditional service of (well-known) carols, lessons and readings arranged by the Spiritual Committee (see below)
- December 25<sup>th</sup> at 9.30 am: Christmas Day service led by the Rev'd Sue Levitt
- January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 at 10.45 am: Morning Service on New Year's Day led by Mr John Bell
- January 8<sup>th</sup> at 10.45 am: Annual Covenant Service led by the Rev'd Sue Levitt

There will be no services at 10.45 am on December 18<sup>th</sup> or in the evenings of December 25<sup>th</sup>, January 1<sup>st</sup> or January 8<sup>th</sup>.

The **Spiritual Committee** will meet on Tuesday December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7.00 pm at 2, The Old Orchard, Cuddington, to plan the carol service and also to make arrangements for the March to May quarter. Anyone is welcome to join us. We have noted that the first Sunday in Lent is March 5<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the next Preaching Plan.

**Cafe Church** will meet on November 30<sup>th</sup> (to avoid 'fixture congestion' the following week, when it would normally happen), then again on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The Spiritual Committee felt that to meet on January 4<sup>th</sup> (after an event in the afternoon – see elsewhere in Outreach, coupled with the holiday period) would be a step too far.

**Norley@9** will meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday each month, as per the usual pattern, i.e. December 18<sup>th</sup>, January 15<sup>th</sup> and February 19<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, at 3pm on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, there will be a service at St Laurence's Frodsham to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at which we understand either the President or Vice-President of the Methodist Conference will be present, and therefore we shall support that event and cancel the evening service at Norley.

Further details of all services and other events will be advertised, as ever, in the weekly notice-sheet.

*John Bell – Chair of Spiritual Committee*

## **Financial Report**

The financial report for the December edition of Outreach gives an overview of the accounts for the year ending on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 and an outlook for the year 2016-17.

The October Church Council approved the accounts for 2015-16 as presented, subject to the customary audit. As we fully appreciate, Richard Ramsbottom, our auditor, has had much more important concerns in recent weeks and there is still plenty of time before the signed off accounts have to be submitted to the Circuit.

However, on the assumption that the Treasurer's figures are correct, it can be reported that the balances in the church accounts at the end of August totaled £13,781. This was an increase on the previous year which enabled us to achieve our stated reserves policy as is required by the Methodist Church, with a little room to spare – but we have commitments to meet too!

Income in the main church account (i.e. excluding collections passed through and church weekend transactions) was £25,126 and expenditure £22,565, giving a surplus of £2561, as against a balanced budget. This arose from some small overall income gains, noting that weekly offerings slightly exceeded budget, and larger expenditure savings mainly comprising £800 allocated towards future external church painting, a much reduced utility bill (by £600) and deferred property projects. The property projects will be carried out in 2016-17 and we also are obliged to repay the first half, i.e. £1250, of the District loan which helped pay for the solar panels in March 2017.

As ever in these reports, we recognise our gratitude for the various events which generate income during the year: in 2015-16, Open Door lunches £920, Carol Singing for two nights £655, the Safari Supper netted £1019, the New Year Party £185, the Harvest Supper £170 and the pre-Christmas Coffee Morning £443.

The maximum income limit on small donations (cash, up to £20) was increased by HMRC in April 2016 from £5000 to £8000, thus giving us more headroom for claims. In 2015-16 we hit the limit of £5000 which enabled us to claim £1250.

Overall, the church accounts were in a sound position as we entered 2016-17, and a balanced budget had been prepared and agreed of just a few pounds under £25,000 income and expenditure. It is too early to make further forecasts, but nothing alarming has happened to date (mid-November). Indeed, the very successful Flower Festival generated a surplus of £1065 plus £422 in gift-aid (additional to the budget), giving a total of £1487 compared with the Treasurer's conservative figure of £800.

The church finances are in good shape, at least at the moment.

*John Bell -Treasurer*



# In Memoriam Judith Ann West

Judith was born in Norley, the younger of twin girls. Her sister Gillian being 10 minutes older! They were the first set of twins to be baptised here in this chapel and were regular attenders of the Sunday School taking active parts in the Sunday School anniversaries, and enjoying the Sunday School trips to Rhyl and other places. Her faith has always meant a lot to her even though she didn't always attend church, her prayer time each day was important to her.

She and her sister attended the Primary School here in Norley and then went on to Helsby High School. One day when she was standing at a bus stop a young man waved from his car... she waved back and he stopped and they chatted and he even helped her with her homework, and then they went their separate ways. The young man berated himself for not having the courage to ask her out.... 2 years passed and Judith and Gillian were working at labs at ICI Runcorn - on different floors but near enough to have lunchbreaks together. Judith became lab manager and was always meticulous in all she did. Gillian was going out with a boy named Paul who asked his best friend Graham to go on a double date with Gillian's twin sister. Graham reluctantly agreed. When Judith and Graham met they realised it wasn't the first time they'd spoken to one another remembering the time at the bus stop. This time they didn't let it go as just a one off and have been together ever since, both twins marrying their respective beaus a few months apart, 46 years ago, again in this church.

Family meant everything to Judith. Sshe and her sister and their respective partners did everything together... even starting a family at the same time. She was so proud of her children, Rachel and Steven and encouraged them in all they wanted to do. She affectionately called Steven "little Runt" even when he grew to be 6 foot 3 and a father of her 2 grandchildren whom she adored. Rachel told me she was a wonderful mum if not a very good cook!

Judith and Gillian remained very close enjoying shopping together whenever the opportunity arose. Holidays were also a very special time when both families went away together and shared in fun and games, and Judith was particularly enthusiastic at tennis. Gillian has a special memory of Judith running along the beach laughing in Bournemouth. Judith was liked by everyone, nothing ever ruffled her, she would talk to anyone about anything, enjoying a joke with friends and family even at her own expense. She was meticulous in everything, including her gardening which she enjoyed greatly, moving plants to optimum positions for variety of colour etc. to the point where a neighbour once commented that the plants must be dizzy from all their moving around!

Sadly in the past few years Judith was diagnosed with PSP and life was a struggle particularly in the past two years, but Judith always remained positive and interested in what everyone was doing.

So today we give thanks for Judith, for all that she has meant in so many different ways and we thank God for all those special memories of her, for all the love she shared, for all she has taught in the way she has lived her life which means she will live on in your lives and in your hearts as you share that love and care with others.

But now for Judith the trials and tribulations of this world are over and death is past and I know that she has gone to be in God's house where there is no more pain, and no more suffering, and I know she will have been received into the loving arms of her Heavenly Father with the words 'Well done my good and faithful servant'. Amen.

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The civil war in Syria has triggered the world's largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War. Not a day goes by without references in the media to the atrocities inflicted by all sides on the people of Syria. But the Refugee Crisis it is not just about displaced Syrians; according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, there are almost 65 million (equivalent to the population of the United Kingdom) forcibly displaced people world-wide. This means that in the world as a whole, one out of every 122 people is an asylum-seeker, refugee or displaced person. These displaced people are in and from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, DR Congo, Eritrea, Sudan, Congo, and of course Syria.

The EU and its Member States have provided over €5 billion for assistance to Syrians in their own country (over 13 million in need of humanitarian support) and to Syrian refugees and their host communities in Lebanon (over 1 million), Jordan (over 600,000), Iraq (over 200,000), Turkey (over 2.5 million) and Egypt (over 100,000).

Jesus said if we want to do something for him, we should feed the hungry and welcome the stranger –“if you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me” (Matt 25:40). Working with partner organisations on the Serbia/Macedonia border, Christian Aid is providing food, shelter and help to Syrian families as close to their homelands as they safely can and with the hope of future resettlement. This Christmas Christian Aid is looking to its volunteers and supporters to 'Light the Way' – a campaign of prayer, donations, and representation, and we at Norley Methodist Church are no strangers to supporting Christian Aid's invaluable work. Your prayers, donations and active interest in Christian Aid's work are vital to, and will help, the current situation. There will be an envelope collection during December (see Church Notices for details) and the December Norley@9 Service (18<sup>th</sup> December) will focus on this topic.

May we all pray and hope for a world where all of God's children shall live in safety, where love has no borders and no bounds, and justice and peace are available to all. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Michael Gough, Christian Aid*

The Cheshire West Food Bank would like to thank Norley Methodist Church for its continuing support. Since January 2016 Norley has donated c. 100 Kgs. of grocery and home care products which is greatly appreciated. Currently, the food bank is short of the following items: