

PENWORTHAM UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

MINI CONTACT DECEMBER/JANUARY 2023/24

FOREWORD

Dear friends,

As we enter the season of Advent we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. The message of the angel of "Peace on earth, Good News to all People" remains one of hope for all Christians. But oh, how much noise and clamour currently acts to drown out the angel's voice?

It is just over twelve months ago that I visited Palestine and Israel, and much has changed in the interim. Violence and hatred continues in those bitterly divided lands.

Does anything ever change for the better?

It is natural to focus on what appears to be dramatic and attention grabbing. It is easy to forget that much of life is affected by minor events which happen around us, often those which seem to be by chance. Even in the midst of the horrible scenes in Gaza and Ukraine, we have seen that small (and large) acts of kindness continue to be given and received. In these acts God is always present amidst our human chaos and confusion. Most people are not bent on destroying, and can remain caring and compassionate, despite everything.

We look forward to celebrating at Christmas because we have so many reasons to do so, and because we can.

We are, I'm sure, thankful that we live in relative safety and prosperity, and from our positions of strength, do all we can to help those less fortunate than ourselves. This is a time of giving, but just as importantly a time of sharing.

There is darkness in the world, but also light, and we must remain true to our faith, despite everything, and always remember the angel's message.

On behalf of the Elders, may I wish you all a joyful Christmas, and every blessing for a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year.

With warmest good wishes, Robert



FRIENDS AND FAMILY

This month we have said goodbye to two of our church family. Joan Eastwood died in Norfolk, having moved there to be closer to her family. On Thursday 23rd we held the funeral of Joyce Duckworth here. A service with lots of happy memories of Joyce was led by Robert and Linda (as requested by Joyce), followed by refreshments in the hall.

Unfortunately, Doreen Baker is still waiting for her operation which has been cancelled once more. Valerie Hill, however, is progressing well after her recent operation. Pat Duckworth is back at home after her recent operation. Our best wishes go to them and anyone else who has been unwell or in hospital recently.

As for me – I am hobbling around, having fallen and fractured my patella whilst visiting my brother.

Could I ask people to ring me on a new number – 07947 518394. The other number still works for the moment.

Finally, as we enter Advent and the busy time up to Christmas and the New Year I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Gill Turner

INTERNATIONAL AID

Thank you very much for all your kind donations of knitted items, new clothes, toiletries, toys and money. It was also lovely to receive contributions from the wider Penwortham community who had heard of our involvement with International Aid.

The donations included: 18 filled shoe boxes; children's and adult's clothes and shoes; games and stationery; many gloves and scarves; 60 warm hats; 25 knitted jumpers of various sizes, and 12 blankets from very large to baby blankets.

They were delivered to the warehouse on Tuesday 31st October, sorted, boxed and labelled, and ready for shipment.

We were asked to thank everyone very much for all their efforts. They are very much appreciated.

Rita and Joyce

GIFTS

The harvest gifts were delivered to the Food Bank, and were gratefully received. In November £300 was raised by the Community Events and sent to the Food Bank. We have received a nice letter of thanks.

In addition, in October £200 was sent to Derian House.

TOY SERVICE

We are having our Toy Service on Sunday 10 December. It will be led by Rev Anton Muller, Lancashire County's Ecumenical Officer. Please bring gifts if you can for children who have no other gifts.

Anton also asks if people will bring with them to the service a favourite present from a previous Christmas.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL EVENT IN NOVEMBER

Rita reports that this event was well attended, and that there were lots of happy seasonal songs.



ECO WORLD – RECYCLING CHRISTMAS CARDS BY GILLIAN ASHURST

After cutting off any glitter or other unrecyclable embellishments, Christmas cards can be put in household recycling. Before recycling, consider whether you can get any more use out of your cards. You could:

- get creative and upcycle them into decorations or gift tags for next Christmas

- cut them into pieces and use coloured shapes for crafting and plain leftovers for shopping lists and notes

Longton 'Explorer' Scouts Expedition.

Henry writes:

Our expedition took place in North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. On the way to and from the expedition we travelled by train and went through nine countries. On the way we visited Amsterdam, Munich and Budapest. On the way back we visited Vienna, Luxembourg and Brussels. Overall we spent 21 days away. On the expedition itself our group were given 12 minor challenges as well as one major challenge which we chose ourselves.. Our minor challenges included things such as appearing in a local newspaper, meeting a beekeeper and cooking for a local family. The major challenge we chose was to investigate statues and monuments. We completed all our challenges over the 10 days and had lots of fun. One of our highlights was being able to stay in a monastery with monks in Prizren.

We are all very grateful for the help the church gave us in our fundraising as this wouldn't have been possible without it. We've made a presentation and all of us passed our explorer belt. If ever you would like us to share our presentation with you, we'd be more than willing. Thanks for the support.



DATES

10 December at 4.00 pm – Churches Together in Penwortham. This year, the service will be held in St Mary Magdalene. Tea and coffee will be served.

17 December at 3.00 pm – Our Carol Service, followed by mince pies and coffee.

21 January at 4.00 pm, we will host the service for the Week of Prayer.

26 February at 7.30 pm – Churches Together in Penwortham will meet in our church.

26 February 2024 at 2.00 pm – the next Community Event will take place.

14 October 2024 at 7.30 pm – Churches Together in Penwortham will hold its AGM in our church.

MY SWANSONG

I took on editing “Contact” for this year, but am now handing back to Alan Edward.

Please note the new e-mail address, house address and phone number.

In February, you can have a proper magazine, again!

Over and out. Brenda

FLOWERS

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 03 December | Doris McCutcheon |
| 10 December | Debra Owen |
| 17 December | Robert Bulloch |
| 24 December | Robert Bulloch |
| 31 December | VACANT |
| 07 January | Bill and Sue Bradley-White |
| 14 January | Margaret and Alan Edward |
| 21 January | Graham and Viv Moore |
| 28 January | Nigel and Anne Lemon |

SERVICES

| | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 03 December | Junior Church Nativity | |
| 10 December | Parade | Rev Anton Muller |
| 17 December | NO MORNING SERVICE | |
| 17 December | 3.00 pm | Carol Service |
| 24 December | NO SERVICE | |
| 25 December | Family Worship for Christmas | |
| 31 December | Family Worship | Rev Frank Kendall |
| 07 January | Holy Communion | Margery Pitcher |
| 14 January | Parade | To be announced |
| 21 January | Family Worship | Gill Turner |
| 28 January | Family Worship | To be announced |

CONTACT MAGAZINE INFORMATION

The next “CONTACT” will be the February issue.

“CONTACT” is also published on our web site, minus any personal or pastoral information not for general publication.

See www.penwortham.org.uk

If you have anything you would like to contribute to “Contact”, it will be most welcome.

Send it by e-mail to purcmagweb@talktalk.net

ring Alan Edward on 01772 740129 or deliver to 27 Hazel Close

Thank you for any contribution.

Next submission date will be Sunday 21 January 2024.

Next issue date will be 28 January 2024.