

Happy New Year

It's funny how, as December fades away after the tremendous celebrations of Christmas and New Year, we look forward in time to the coming year; almost writing off the past year. We make New Year resolutions that seldom make it past the first week!

I guess in a way New Year's a lot like our faith; we devote so much time and energy looking forward in time to a future event - the coming of the Kingdom of God that we forget about the here and now. We have this over-riding sense that we will only experience the Kingdom in Heaven. We don't realise that Christ brought Heaven down to us 2000 years ago and that we have been living in the Kingdom since then.

Like the 'old year' we always focus on the bad things that have happened to us and those we love during the past year: the loss of a loved one, a job or the splitting up of a relationship

perhaps, but to name a few. Like our faith we dwell on the hardships of life. But I'm sure that if we re-focus we can



David Brown

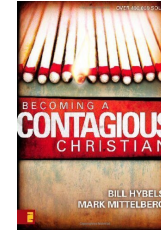
remember the almost un-noticed gifts and blessings that God has bestowed upon us: the chance comment in passing that has raised our spirits, the compliment that has made us walk tall, the unexpected cuddle from a child: the list is endless and personal and different for each of us.

I have made a point of actively looking for these God moments every day; and sure enough they are there in the here and now. Looking forward and having dreams to follow is amazing - but so are the little things that God does for us each day that usually go un-noticed.

So I urge you to enjoy the Kingdom of God each day in the here and now and smile at the little things God does for us each day. **God Bless**

Are you catching?

Hmmm... strange question, you might think, but think again. We are called to share our faith, to let people know about this amazing God of ours, to share with others the incredible love of our Lord Jesus. But do we? Honestly? If you had just one minute to explain your faith to a stranger, what would you say?



If you are like me, and would either get completely tongue-tied or end up giving such a complicated explanation that you feel you do more harm than good, then do not despair! I can recommend a great book called *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Bill Hybels & Mark Mittelberg) which is a fun read and helps us to see that sharing our faith does not have to be complicated or scary. It helps you find ways of sharing biblical truths in everyday language, and to see that sharing our faith should be the most natural thing in the world.

And yes, you can borrow my copy. **Pam Robinson**

Bubblegum or Fluff?

This was the question we asked the children from Year 6, St Matthew's School, when they came to our *Bubblegum Christmas* event in December.

With a willing team of helpers from both St Matthew's and Stockport Baptist Churches, the children found out about Jesus and the real meaning of Christmas (the "bubblegum") and the things we have stuck onto Christmas, such as trees, cards, carols and turkey (the "fluff").

The children made mince pies, answered quiz questions, joined in with a Christmas rap and generally had a great time!

The children really enjoyed themselves and were a credit to the school.



Do you ever feel a bit lonely?

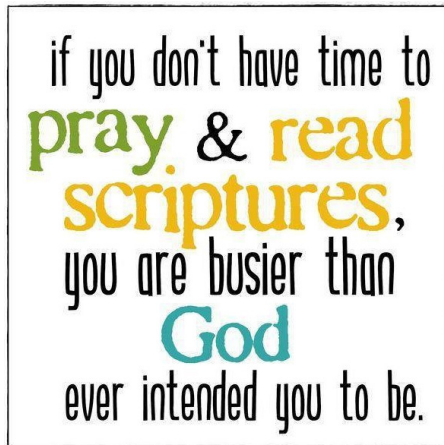
...or do you know anyone who does? It can be so easy for many of us to get caught up in the business of the new year; going back to work, sorting the kids out for school, trying to find time to go to the gym (!) but if you are one of the many people in our community who are facing a lonely start to the year, then you are warmly invited to come along to *Socially Yours*.

This group meets every Tuesday afternoon in church (1.30pm – 3.30pm). You will find a lovely welcome, with lots of things to do, even the odd meal out at the pub! Several of our congregation already come along, so you are sure to find a friendly face. See Pam Robinson for more details (group costs £3 per session).



Words of wisdom

This picture has been circulated on Facebook and has some very wise words for us all.



Unfortunately, a photo credit was not listed.

Thanks to Everyone

who has worked so hard over this year on our many events and services.

It sometimes feels like we are running to stand still, but we should all be very proud of the distance we've come over these last few years.

There will be more struggles ahead, but together we can make a real positive difference in the lives of the people of our Parish. Take care and God bless you in this new year. David

Team Talk

Here's what's happening in the ministries this month:

Social & Community: The Christmas fair was a huge success, with thanks to everyone who donated items, time or skills to make it all happen. It was wonderful to welcome our community. Not only did we raise over £1,000 but it was encouraging to see so many people leaving prayers in the manger (and we had another mention in the Stockport Express!)

As we start our planning for next year, we encourage anyone who enjoys a night out to get involved with the team – every little helps!

Children & Young People: Christmas is coming and the children in our Sunday club are busy learning lines and signs for their part in the carol service on 22nd December. An e-mail to all our attendees brought many to church last Sunday with a number of 14 children - the most for a good few months. Praise be!

- Drop n shop (Youth on the Edge) event - was offered out and advertised within the community, but with only 3 children signed up, we took the decision to cancel this year.
- Bubblegum Christmas with Y6 pupils from St Matthew's. The children joined in the activities with gusto. A lovely touch was that we knew about 5 of the children from other events and Frantic Friday youth club. Their knowledge was evident and they were happy to share it with their friends. An affirmation that we are sowing the seeds, and we need to continue to do so.

Communications: Thank you to Arthur, who is taking the reins of our website and social media sites whilst Linda is on her internal sabbatical. If you have any news, please let him know. If you have any articles for the magazine, please see Pam Robinson.

Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.

St Francis of Assisi

What's on this month

Wednesday 1st January
10^{am} Holy Communion

Friday, 4th January
No Toddle Time
No Choir

Saturday 4th January
8:30^{am} Prayer Breakfast
10^{am} Saturday Café

Sunday 5th January
10:30^{am} Whole Parish Worship
with Prayer for Healing
Lea: Sue ~ Preach: David

Tuesday 7th January
8:30^{am} Home Group
1:30^{pm} Socially Yours

Wednesday 8th January
10^{am} Holy Communion
7:30^{pm} Home Groups

Thursday 9th January
7:30^{pm} Mother's Union AGM
in Church

Friday 10th January
9:30^{am} Toddle Time @ St Matt's
7^{pm} Choir

Saturday 11th January
10^{am} Saturday Café

Sunday 12th January
9:30^{am} Holy Communion
Lead: David ~ Preach: Julie
11:15^{am} Holy Communion
Lead: Julie ~ Preach: Julie
Magazine Articles Due

Tuesday 14th January
8:30^{am} Home Group
1:30^{pm} Socially Yours

Wednesday 15th January
10^{am} Holy Communion
7:30^{pm} Home Groups

Friday 17th January
9:30^{am} Toddle Time @ St Matt's
7^{pm} Choir

Saturday 18th January
10^{am} Saturday Café

Sunday 19th January
9:30^{am} Holy Communion
Lead: Sue ~ Preach: David
11:15^{am} Holy Communion
Lead: Lucy/David ~ Preach: David
200 Club – Subs Due

Tuesday 21st January
8:30^{am} Home Group
1:30^{pm} Socially Yours
7:45^{pm} PCC at St Matt's Vicarage

Wednesday 22nd January
10^{am} Holy Communion
7:30^{pm} Home Groups

Friday 24th January
9:30^{am} Toddle Time @ St Matt's
7^{pm} Choir
7:30^{pm} Induction of the Revd
Andy Williams at St Luke's

Saturday 25th January
10^{am} Saturday Café

Sunday 26th January
9:30^{am} Teen Breakfast
at St. Matthew's Vicarage
9:30^{am} Holy Communion
Lead: David ~ Preach: Sue

11:15^{am} Holy Communion
Lead: David ~ Preach: Heather

Tuesday 28th January
8:30^{am} Home Group
1:30^{pm} Socially Yours

Wednesday 29th January
10^{am} Holy Communion
7:30^{pm} Home Groups

Friday 31st January
9:30^{am} Toddle Time @ St Matt's
7^{pm} Choir

Looking ahead

Saturday 1st February
8:30^{am} Prayer Breakfast
10^{am} Saturday Café

Sunday 2nd February
10:30^{am} Whole Parish Worship
with Prayer for Healing

Saturday 15th February
1^{pm} Health & Safety Training
in Church

December Funeral

Morton Dodge, John Chetwynd,
Jane Barber, George Farrall,
Hilary Gaskell

December Baptisms

Callum Barlow, Jack Jacobs,
Liam Linskey, Brooke Ridgway,
Jack & Sophie Racz, Noah Lawton