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URC in CHELTENHAM MORNING PRAYERS
11.30am – 12noon EVERY Tuesday at Warden Hill

Date	Readings	Prayer Issues
3 March	Psalms 116 Mark 8 31-38	Prestbury Road Area, Churches and Day Centre Special Needs Care World Council of Churches
10 March	Psalms 117 John 2 13-22	Lynworth Area, Crematorium and Cemetery and local businesses Ministry to the bereaved Prayers for the world
17 March	Psalms 118 John 3 14-21	Whaddon Area, Battledown Children’s Centre, GCHQ URCiC Thursday and Saturday coffee mornings Prayers for the world
24 March	Psalms 119 1-8 John 12 20-33	Pittville Area, Schools and University Education and URCiC Office Prayers for the World
31 March	Psalms 119 9-16 Mark 11 1-11	Pittville Area, St Vincent’s Centre Support for the mentally ill. Youth work in the Church at Warden Hill Prayers for the World

Minister’s Jottings

What an age we live in! How can we keep up with all the advances made in laboratories all over the world, not just scientifically, but in all aspects of our lives? The number of conversations I hear where the high-class grocer Lipton’s is still mentioned as part of the ‘good old days’. Yes, things are changing, and never before in the history of civilisation have so much been discovered in such a short space of time.

We remembered what we wanted; the busses always ran on time, there weren’t all these strikes, people could live off the old age pension and even the cost of a funeral was a good deal cheaper at the co-op than now; oh, and the churches were full.

I question whether some of the things were in fact better then, or if some of the breakthroughs today are bad. Just in my mere forty-five years, I remember strikes, power cuts, huge destruction to areas due to oil spillage, and farming methods causing massive environmental damage. I remember reading about prison demonstrations due to the squalid Victorian conditions.

I just wonder sometimes whether we look back with such warmth at the past because we survived it, we managed to come through those times relatively unscathed. The changing times are new battles to come to terms with, new challenges, and a widening gulf between those who are taught the technology and the rest of us being left behind. My grandmother wouldn’t switch on the television for years; it was a dangerous new fangled thing. She would watch it, but my grandfather used to have to turn it on and off. My mother had a washing machine in the fifties, well that was modern, to some it was a lazy way of washing, and certainly wouldn’t get the washing clean.

It is the same with our own journeys, our faith journeys; something in us develops and allows us to progress. Likewise, what we like changes; what we tolerate changes; and of course what we can do changes. But surely, that is right, we are meant to change, otherwise why would we be born an infant, and struggle to adulthood? It is up to us individually to choose to take on board these 'new fangled' gadgets and gismos. Do think about your change, a change that should bring you closer to God. While all around is changing, God stays constant. Christ constantly loves us back to His path, lovingly holding out hands to heal, caress and point the way. God's church is a sanctuary for us all to share our changes, our revelations and experience the love that Christ gives to all of us.

Christ through the cross desires us to give thanks for the past, for all our life and our memories, to ask for strength for the present, and to look forward to the future. 'God changeth not', but Christ's gospel is for all time, and applies to every change and situation these changing times put us through.

It might be time for you throw away that old hand whisk, and plug in an electric one, to use the best eco labour saving devices, something which will give you more time to take on new things. Do thank God for your journeys of faith through changing times, changing places and changing people, and look forward to new joys and achievements.

Finally, it might be a good time in Lent not to give something up, but to take something new on!! Now there's a thought.

Blessings Jon.

Thank you to all who have sent me messages of concern and wishing me a speedy recovery after my knee operation. I can inform you that it was not a success and now am waiting for a date to have a total knee replacement. This I am sure will give me a new bounce in my step. Please hold Jo and I in your prayers as we patiently wait for the date as the knee is rather painful after the first operation and poor Jo has to hear the word ouch a lot. Blessings JON

Music at St Andrew's in March

**Saturday 7 March
Gilbert Biberian
Guitar Concert
At 7.30pm**

**Sunday 22 March
Chamber Recorder Orchestra
Of the West
at 3.00pm**

Tickets: £7 on the door

A New Venture

On **Wednesday 4th of March**, between 11.45 & 13.45 Jon is opening a 'SOUP and CHAT' lunch. It will consist of a bowl of soup, fresh baguette, and a cup of tea or coffee. The aim of the outreach is to offer a place and a conversation for those passing by, a sit down for the weary and for the church again to be open and offering hospitality. All are welcome and it is hoped that members and friends will come and enjoy a chat with friends and meet and greet strangers.

Remember, strangers are not just people we don't know, but also people who don't know us! The cost for the lunch will be £1.50 (to cover costs), the chat is free.

Look forward to seeing you there. JON

Correspondence – placed in the Link Gallery

- Synod Saturday **March 14th** 2009 at Carrs Lane - Call for Displays on the Environment

Parent and Toddlers' Group

The Parent and Toddler group continues to grow, and the pastoral input now is beginning to deepen between the face of the church seen through Jon as minister being there as well as the fellowship between the parents and toddlers.

We are planning more short worship times in the church, (Mother's day, Holy week and post Easter, as well as going out on trips to parks, the Zoo and in house having themed sessions. Ann and I would like to thank those of you who help in the kitchen and invite anyone else to come and help, to really join in with a happy group of parents and toddlers.

‘JUMP FOR JOY’

**Sunday 15 March
9.30am – 10am**

Informal Short Service for all the family

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN CHELTENHAM

From the church registers:

In Memoriam

It is with sadness we report that Catherine Johnson passed away in 27 January 2009. Wesley and Catherine attended St Andrew's prior to Catherine suffering a stroke 9 years ago leaving her severely incapacitated and Wesley (Catherine's husband) has devoted his life to caring for her since that time. Please remember Wesley and the family in your prayers.

It is with sadness we record the death of Angus Wilson. Angus was born in Kilry in the County of Angus and never lost his love for Scotland and all things Scottish. His career took him in banking and commerce to India, Somaliland and Nigeria. He settled in Cheltenham in 1986 and regularly attended St Andrew's. He left Cheltenham in 2006 to be near his family in Glasgow. We extend our sympathy to his family and friends and remember them in our prayers.

Our prayers: we hold in our prayers those who are ill as well as those who are or have been in hospital: George Apps, Ann Ashworth, Jeane Combes, Carol and Lorna Dewhurst, Dennis Goldring, Hylda Greening, Mary Howes, Paulette Hyde, Dorothy Lamb, Joy Marsh, Mair McIndoe, Peter Meason, Edith Nicol, Betty Price, Nick Smith, Sadie Smyth, Jean Smith, Carole Wallace and Tony White.

Membership

Welcome and congratulations to Mike Aldridge who became a member of the URCiC on 8 February at Prestbury. Welcoming new members into the Church is a time for celebration and renewal and we hope where Mike has led others will follow.

Maz's Sabbatical

I will be on sabbatical from 1st Sept. to 30th Nov. 2009. I was due to take this two years ago, but deferred it because of moving here to Cheltenham. The time is now right, as in September, I begin my final year of my Doctorate and will use most of the sabbatical for research. (I also intend to take a holiday!) I return to work on 1st December and Christmas arrangements will not be affected. Thank you for your support.

Maz

BIRTHDAY TEAS AT HATHERLEY MANSE

Jan – March birthdays - Sat. 7th March

April – June - Sat. 6th June

July – Sept. – Sat. 29th August

Oct. – Dec - Sat. 12th December

3-5pm

All welcome don't forget to put the date in your diary

Pensioners' Forum – Wednesday 4 March

Many older people suffer from Macular Degeneration of the Eyes and this month we will be having a talk from the Macular Disease Support Group who will be providing information on how to recognise the disease, what effect it has on the eyes and what support is available. Coffee Bar will open at 10am and the talk will begin at 10.30am to last about an hour. All are welcome, there is no charge.

Qi Gong

Next session will be in the Garden Room at St Andrew's on **Wednesday 4 March** at 12.15pm. All are welcome; cost is £4 per session.

Walking Group

If you would like to take part in a five mile walk in the Crickley Hill area on **Monday 16 March**, then please sign up on the sheet on the

notice board in your churches, where further details can be found. Start time 10am.

Scaffolding – the repairs to the Rose Window have now been completed but the scaffolding inside the Church will remain until the new stone Celtic Cross has been placed on the outside of the building. The church is very grateful for the funding provided for the Rose Window by Sandra Heaven, in memory of her late father, **Dr Albert Perrigo**, and to Dr Tony Jeans for funding the Celtic Cross, in memory of his late parents, **Reg and Iris Jeans**.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Many thanks for all the stamps donated during 2008, and since Christmas. Please continue to support this excellent charity. I would be very grateful if you could cut the stamps from envelopes and try to leave ½cm border.

Joan Thomson

Thursday Coffee – a failing service?

The lack of volunteers to run the coffee bar for the outreach of the church on Thursdays is making it increasingly difficult to continue the service. Unless there are more people willing to devote a couple of hours of their time, there is now the **very real prospect that it will fail**. This would be a major setback to the work that has been put in by many people over the years in building up a regular attendance, and supporting the Bumps and Babes group by providing refreshments. If you have never given it a go, please consider doing so – it is good fun; you may be surprised. You do not have to make or supply cakes but simply put your name on the rota on the notice board by the kitchen. Twelve new volunteers would make it possible to run the rota so that no-one would be called on more than once every six weeks. At present, the handful of volunteers put in considerably more than that.

Roger Little

In Touch Contributions

Contributions of articles, or points of view, for inclusion in the magazine are always welcome. Please contact Roger Little (01452) 730848.

St Andrew's News

March Communion Offering

Everyman Club

Founded by Jan Stafford, the Everyman Club meets every Tuesday from 7:00 to 9:00pm in Parklands Community Centre, Whaddon. It is a social club for people with learning disabilities who live in the community. It has a friendly atmosphere with help and advice with any problems the members may have. There is a disco with all types of music, and numerous activities are available - draughts, snooker, television and video, and table tennis. Outings and social events are arranged, including a Christmas dinner and party, barbecues, bowling, and many other activities. Membership is usually by recommendation of a community nurse, key worker or social worker. All members must be able to look after themselves or be accompanied by a carer. If you would like to know more about the club, for someone you care for to attend, or as a helper, or just to pay them a visit, then please contact Jan or Noel on 01242 254676.

From the Elders' Meeting:

Pastoral Visiting - a consultation process is to be carried out amongst the congregation, to identify what is expected of elders and visiting teams engaged in pastoral visiting.

Soup Lunches – a weekly lunchtime drop-in facility, run by Jon as an outreach project, is to start on **Wednesday 4 March** and will run from 11.45am until 1.30pm, serving bread and soup – cost £1.

Elder Secondment - Martin Clarke will be seconded as an Elder to Prestbury until further notice, to help with the mission and ministry of the church there.

Broadband – The feasibility of transferring the Broadband facility from Prestbury to St Andrew's is being explored.

Sabbatical – Jon's sabbatical is scheduled to take place in 2011.

Tuesday Forum

On **10 March** Mrs Beagley, who is an expert on hidden corners of Japan, will be sharing more of her travels and adventures.

Bess Cummins, who spoke to us about the City of Benares, will be with us on **24 March** giving us another of her lively talks, subject to be announced.

Both meetings will be at 2.30pm in the Garden Room at St Andrew's followed by tea and biscuits. All are welcome to join us.

LENT GROUPS IN MARCH

York Course - 'Faith, Hope and Love'

at the following venues throughout March:
starting on

Wednesday 4 March 10.30am-12noon, Prestbury URC

Thursday 5 March 7.30-9pm, Warden Hill URC

Friday 6 March 10.30am-12noon – 51 Bournside Avenue.

Please contact Maz if you are interested

Wednesday 25 February 7.30-9pm, St Andrew's vestry

The first in the series is 'Heaven touches earth'.

All are welcome and the debate is lively so come to participate. Jon

If the above dates are not convenient, you are welcome to join

St Mark's Methodist Church on

Tuesday 24 February 7.30pm

Monday 9 March 7.30pm

Wednesday 25 March 7.30pm

Thursday 9 April 7.30pm

STAND yg will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sunday's of the month, but will have to meet at the Pittville Manse as we do not have a female helper. Please do search your hearts as well as your diaries to see if we can have some help so we can get back to alternating between SA and Warden Hill where the resources are much better. Another reason for the importance of finding a female helper is that some of the Air Cadets have shown an interest in coming along, so yet again there is some fruitful outreach coming to fruition. For more information please contact JON

In Touch Donations

Have you remembered to send in your donation for 'In Touch' If you are unable to put the envelope in the collecting plate on a Sunday, please post it to your Church Treasurer, their addresses are on the inside cover on the magazine.

Humanist Advertisement – Response from ASA – 21.1.09

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has concluded that the "There's probably no God" bus ad campaign by the British Humanist Association is not in breach of the advertising code. The ASA will therefore not launch an investigation and the case is now closed.

The ASA carefully assessed the 326 complaints it received. Some complained that the ad was offensive and denigratory to people of faith. Others challenged whether the ad was misleading because the advertiser would not be able to substantiate its claim that God "probably" does not exist.

The ASA Council concluded that the ad was an expression of the advertiser's opinion and that the claims in it were not capable of objective substantiation. Although the ASA acknowledges that the content of the ad would be at odds with the beliefs of many, it concluded that it was unlikely to mislead or to cause serious or widespread offence.

Peter Meason

C4 CHILDREN'S CHOIR

begin rehearsals for

DANIEL

A hard act to swallow

FRIDAY 6TH MARCH

6pm – 7pm

and every Friday in term-time.

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,
DEEP STREET, PRESTBURY**

For all children who enjoy singing

**Contact Revd. Maz Allen for details:
01242 238273**

Prestbury Passion Play

The Passion Play will be held on Good Friday 10th April at 11.00 and 3.00 pm in the Scout Field (opposite the The Royal Oak Pub), The Burgage, Prestbury. We would welcome anybody, adult or child who feels they would like to be part of the crowd and in particular we are looking for one Roman Soldier and Two Temple Guards - costumes will be supplied.

The next rehearsal is on Wednesday 4th March at 7.30 pm at St Nicolas Church, Swindon Lane. Rehearsals will take place each Wednesday at the same time and place until the technical rehearsal on Sunday 29th March at 3.00 pm in the Scout Field.

If you are not able to participate as part of the crowd, do come along and see one of the performances. It is a very moving experience. For further details please contact Cyril or Sheila Beer on Cheltenham 245320.

Lent Returns

It's that time of year:

pancakes all tossed, on with the forty days and nights.

Our annual repentance is now under way, of heat and dust.

Whilst you survived the heat and dust of the desert

helped by angels and wildlife, we, for whom pancakes

come easier than repentance, do not look forward to

returning to this place on our annual visit.

The desert may have its moments of beauty: still star-filled

nights, awesome vistas, weather etched outcrops but

as we enter the desert together again, we wonder if we'll

Every find the road to Jerusalem on the other side.

Lenten Christ

When we are tempted to practise skills only for self-survival, remind us of the company we keep, of the revolutionaries and holy fools with whom we travel, of the footsteps in which we tread, and of the timely nature of our journey. *Janet Lees*

A History of Mount Pleasant Chapel, Falfield

URCiC friends, especially those from the Congregational tradition, may be interested to know that, as a diversion from my Family History interests, I have recently researched the history of the former Mount Pleasant Chapel at Falfield, near Thornbury, Glos and have now written a short document with photos.

I have for a long time been interested in this Chapel, where my great grandparents and great-aunts were members and office-holders for many years, and where they are buried in the adjoining Churchyard. The Chapel was founded 1813, rebuilt 1843 and closed c.1971. It has recently been restored and converted into a private house.

This has proved to be a fascinating experience, giving me greater insight into C19 and early C20 nonconformity, and at the same time has introduced me to some delightful people – local historians, former members and an almost-cousin, now an RC priest! (His great great uncle married my great aunt, both of whom I remember from my childhood.) If anyone would like to know more, please ask!

Susan Nuttall

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

FRIDAY 6TH MARCH

Prepared by Christian Women of Papua New Guinea

In Christ there are many members yet one body

the following services are available throughout the town

Holy Apostles	10.30am
St Marks CofE, Church Road	10.30am
St Michael's Whaddon <i>Coffee available at 10.45am</i>	11.45am
Highbury	1.45pm
St Christopher's	7.30pm
St Luke's	8.00pm

Prestbury News

Coffee Morning Saturday 7th March 2009

The next coffee morning will be held on Saturday 7th March 2009 from 10.30 until 12.00. There will be cakes and homemade goodies for sale, so please come along and enjoy the chat, the coffee and the cake !

Whilst we are preparing for the work to be carried out in the school room we are having a clear out. Can we graciously request that no bric-a-brac is brought along to the Coffee mornings for the next few months as we need to empty all the cupboards for the works to be carried out. Thanks for your help and support in this.

Help wanted to buy new wooden panels for The School Room

At the last Church Meeting it was agreed that the much needed repair work should be carried out in the school room, kitchen & vestry. There is a lot of work to be done. Some of the work in the school room involves removing the old wooden panels which run half way up three of the walls. After treating the damp problem behind the panels, the old panels will be replaced with nice, new ones.

The cost of each new panel is £1.50 & about 130 are needed. If you feel you could help with the purchase of one or more of the panels, please fill your name in on the chart which is in the school room & give your donation to either myself or one of the Prestbury Elders.

This is just a small part of the renovation & repair work needed to be done, but every small part adds up to one big job. Thank you in anticipation.
Wendy Gledhill

Family Worship

Family worship now takes place on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Please do support these services ; it is always great to see the younger people at church.

The Future

After the Church Meeting in early December it looked as if Christmas 2008 might have been our last Christmas in Deep Street for with only two serving Elders from March 2009 the Church would not have been viable.

However, at the Church Meeting on 31st January everything was turned around and now Prestbury is looking forward to having new Elders and the schoolroom repaired in the next few months.

Alister Bathgate has agreed to stay on for another year. He will be shadowed by Mike Aldridge who will be able to succeed him in a year's time after being welcomed as our newest Member on the 8th February. We are so pleased that Annette Tucker has agreed to be an Elder and that Martin Clarke has transferred his eldership to Prestbury.

We are delighted that Mike Aldridge (Mike A Fix It!) will be in charge of the restoration and it is hoped that the work on the schoolroom, kitchen and vestry will be but phase one of a series of refurbishments to the Church.

Bric-à-Brac Sale – Everything must go – Thank You !

The coffee morning and sale on 7th February raised £119 for Church funds. Thank you to the organisers and helpers and to all those who braved the snow and ice to come along.

Say it with Flowers !

Do you have a birthday ? Or a Wedding Anniversary or someone special you want to remember at a certain time of year ? Why not celebrate by offering to pay for the flowers in church on the nearest Sunday ? There are lots of blank spaces on the Flower rota – could you help by signing up for one Sunday ? It only costs £10 and it not only brightens up the church but the face of the people who receive them after church.

Soup and Chat

Come along every Wednesday from
4th March, to St. Andrew's United
Reformed Church, Montpellier St,
Cheltenham
11.45 – 1.30

HOME MADE SOUP, BREAD,
TEA OR COFFEE **ALL FOR**
£1.50

Come and have a chat with friends and perhaps make new friends; the minister even makes and serves the soup.

Just drop in. We look forward to seeing you.
For more information contact Rev Jon Morgan
on 692974

Warden Hill News

There are several dates for your diary this month, so please make a note of them and be prepared to come along.

Sunday 8th March: Rev Alison Evans, County Ecumenical Officer, will be with us.

Friday 13th / Saturday 14th March: Panto time! We need help at all three shows for “front of house” duties and Refreshments. If you can help “front of house”, please see brain Miles and if you can help with refreshments, please see Carole Pennington or Sue Hiley as soon as possible Oh yes you can!!

Saturday 21st March: Community Film afternoon, 2.15 for 2.30. Film to be announced, please keep an eye on the weekly sheets.

Wednesday 25th March: OUR AGM. 7.30 in the Church. Please make every effort to attend this very important meeting, where we will be updating you on the progress of the LEP, appointing officers and of course enjoying a time of fellowship over refreshments.

Please also put **Saturday 9th May** in your diaries. This is the date for our HOME PRODUCE SALE. We will be asking for donations of cakes, jams, marmalades, chutneys and anything else that you produce and we can sell. Refreshments and lunches will be served.

Every two months or so, I receive a newsletter from Steve and Amanda Holder in Romania. These keep us up to date with progress on Timothy House and their other activities. I put them on the notice board at the back of Church, so please take time to look at them. If you want your own copy, then please ask, as I can photocopy for you. I have recently received a copy of the Annual Report for 2008. If you would like to have a look at this, please ask, it does make interesting

The Church of England has sold its shares in Caterpillar (for “economic” reasons)

reading. Can you remember Steve and Amanda in your prayers as they go about God’s work in Romania. *Carole Pennington*



Warden Hill Amateur Dramatic Society
Presents

The Princess & the Sprout

a pantomime by Tina-Louise Holland

at the URC Hall, Salisbury Avenue, Warden Hill
7.30 pm Friday March 13th
and 2.00 pm and 7.30 pm Saturday March 14th
Director Val Hobbs

Tickets available from Frank Probert 01242 515010

Or Terry/Val Hobbs 01242 573375

Price £5 adults / £3 accompanied children

The announcement that Britain’s state church divested £2.2 million in late December came after its Synod governing council clarified its position over the weekend on its investments in companies profiting from the illegally occupied Palestinian territories. The confirmation came just in time to prevent the planned publication of a letter in the Guardian newspaper Tuesday signed by 23 theologians accusing the Church of England of not acting on its policy to promote morally and ethically responsible investments.

"We believe that given the events in Gaza as well as the continued illegal occupation of whole swathes of Palestinian land and the illegal land grabs by settlers, supported by the Israeli Government, that the Church of England must make good on its policy of disinvestment and withdraw its investments from those who profit from the misery of millions of Palestinians immediately," the unpublished letter stated.

The move was welcomed by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) which said it was "a significant blow" to those who claimed ethical and morally responsible investments cannot be used as a peaceful weapon against Israel, even though the church insisted the withdrawal was for economic reasons.

"This is a clear message from the Church of England that they will not have their money tied up in companies that are directly or indirectly engaged in the suppression of the rights of Palestinians," PSC general secretary Betty Hunter said. But Reverend Gath Hewitt chair of Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible Investment (IMRI) expressed concern over the Church of England's claim that it had divested for investment reasons and not at its Synod's instigation. "I think it is a little bit sad that they quietly removed their holdings presumably to avoid any fuss," Hewitt said. "It appears to have been done secretly and leaked, then later announced as divestment but not at [our] instigation," he said.

The US-based manufacturer has been criticized for several years by such human rights organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as well as the United Nations for supplying weaponised bulldozers to Israel's military which has used them to raze more than 7,000 Palestinian homes since 1967

The Situation in Israel/Palestine is worsening, not just in the Occupied Tetrtris but also within the State of Israel.

A letter from world wide multi faith students:

The widespread passivity and hypocrisy of the governments of the East and West make it clear that they will rule out any solution to the conflict that continuously takes place between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

We, as students, do not want to be impotent spectators, incapable of taking action against the humiliation that Palestinians face on a daily basis. Therefore, we have taken the initiative to support the establishment of a global platform which seeks to unite organizations around the world in resisting the violent extremist policy of the Israeli State, and we call upon you to do the same.

The Movement enables a wide array of people, institutes and societies, to work together and resolve the conflict in accordance with basic, agreed principles of international law. These seven broad principles include:

1. **The Israel-Palestine conflict is primarily a political one** (*even though it has a religious dimension that implies the obligation to respect religious freedom for all* *=(B)Jews, Christians and Muslims* *=(B)and freedom of conscience for all, irrespective of religious or non-religious persuasion.*)
2. **There is an oppressor** (*State of Israel*) **and oppressed population** (*the Palestinian people*).
3. **The Palestinian resistance is, de facto, legitimate.**
4. **The Palestinians have the right to their own state, and to full freedom within it.**
5. **The equal dignity of the Palestinians requires full equality of rights and treatment, no matter the proposed solution.**
6. **Palestinians expelled from their lands have a natural right of return.**
7. **Our commitment is based on an unconditional and equal rejection of racism of any kind, be it anti-Jewish, anti-Arab, anti-Christian or anti-Muslim.**