

Wesley Services – January 2010

	3rd	10th	17th	24th	31st	7th Feb
10-30 am	Mr J Birch	Rev F Randall (Covenant)	Miss A Wheeler	Rev F Randall	Mrs N Williams	Miss A Wheeler
6-00 pm	Rev F Randall (Covenant)	n.b. Please note that there is only an evening service on the first Sunday in every month.				

Vestry

3rd Jan a.m. Lorette Hinson
p.m. Joan Edwards
10th Jan a.m. Margaret Birch
17th a.m. Hilary Gould
24th a.m. Angela Vooght
31st a.m. Lorette Hinson
7th Feb a.m. Margaret Birch
p.m. Joan Edwards
14th a.m. Hilary Gould

Door

3rd Jan a.m. Marjorie Hinson
p.m. Graham Edwards
10th Jan a.m. Peter Sharp
17th a.m. Sue and Roger
24th a.m. Hope Ackrill
31st a.m. Marjorie Hinson
7th Feb a.m. Peter Sharp
p.m. Graham Edwards
14th a.m. Marjorie Hinson

Quotes for the New Year

Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbours, and let each new year find you a better man. ~Benjamin Franklin

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
~Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1850

Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account. ~Oscar Wilde

May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions. ~Joey Adams

Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto man His Son hath given;
While angels sing with tender mirth,
A glad new year to all the earth.
~Martin Luther



January 2010

Just a thought....

Well let me begin with wishing everyone reading this a Happy New Year and I pray it will be a happy, healthy and prosperous one for you all.

It's this time of year when Methodist churches up and down the country traditionally have their Covenant services. This is something uniquely Methodist, and at the very heart of our discipleship, devotion and our call as Methodists to social justice; although it must be said that many other denominations now use this service too.

Although each individual person is invited to say the Covenant prayer it is *very much* an offering of the whole people of God and *very much* in response to the graceful love of God, extended to the whole of humanity. So although it might seem on first looking that this Covenant is akin to a contract between each of us as individuals and God, or in some way we say these words to form a relationship with God, that is not so. Instead the Covenant is our way of accepting and sustaining a relationship with God which is already freely and gracefully given. The Covenant is our way of saying "Thank you God for being so committed to us, now in response it's our turn to be committed to you!" The fact that it is an offering of the whole people of God helps us in this difficult commitment (just read the words of the Covenant prayer) as any Christian community will encourage and support one another in discipleship, just as God supports us in this commitment through the work of the Holy Spirit.

I'm going to finish with the Covenant prayer itself and I encourage you to prayerfully consider these words from time to time over the year (I actually

keep a copy in my purse as a constant reminder) as we support each other in our discipleship seeking always to live in an ever better and more committed loving relationship with God.

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.

Felicity

(Felicity's study day is Tuesday and her day off is Saturday)

December Coffee Mornings

Here are the figures for December.

December 2 nd	£92.91
December 9 th	95.94
December 16 th	103.00
December 23 rd	48.82
December 30 th	50.40
Total	£391.07

The average figure was £78.21 which is very good. It would have been even better if the cold weather had not arrived just before Christmas.

And a message from our Treasurer!

Instead of sending other members of the congregation Christmas cards, some members gave donations - mostly anonymously. So far I have received £44 which I will send to Christian Aid in the new year. The fund is still open if anybody would like to donate.

Carol Singing in Guildhall Square on Saturday December 19th.

This was organised by Cytun and representatives from most churches were there including several from Wesley. It was cold (it always is!) and hot mulled non-alcoholic punch was dispensed by the Salvation Army. There were fewer passers-by this year probably due to the closure of Woolworths. But it showed the locals that there were a few singing Christians in Carmarthen who were prepared to brave the elements and make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

The Christian Season of Epiphany

The Epiphany is an ancient Christian feast day and is significant in a number of ways. In the East, where it originated, the Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. It also celebrates Jesus' birth. The Western Church began celebrating the Epiphany in the 4th century where it was,



and still is, associated with the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the incarnation of Jesus.

For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from 6 January until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter.

Other traditions, including the Roman Catholic tradition, observe Epiphany as a single day, with the Sundays following Epiphany counted as Ordinary Time.

Action for Children

Methodist charity Action for Children has launched a major appeal to highlight the hidden problem of neglect.

Studies suggest that up to ten per cent of children in the UK experience neglect - that's almost 1.5 million young people. Neglect takes a variety of forms, says the charity, including a lack of care, food, security, clean clothes and love.

In recent years, neglect has become by far the greatest reason for a child becoming the subject of a child protection plan.

Research has shown that one in four adults have been worried that a child they know was being neglected - but over a third did not tell anyone about their concerns.

Those with access to the internet can find out more about this appeal on their website www.actionforchildren.org.uk/

The Church's Challenge for the next decade?



BELIEF in God in the UK continues to lag a long way behind the United States, a new study suggests. In the US, 61 per cent of those surveyed said that they had "no doubt" that God existed; in the UK, the percentage was just 17. In the US, just four per cent said that they were not religious at all: they don't believe in God, attend religious services, or even identify with a religion; in the UK the percentage was 31.

The figures come in a paper by David Voas and Rodney Ling, to be published in *British Social Attitudes: The 26th report*, to be released on 27 January. The authors suggest a significant decline in religious practice in the UK. "Over the last quarter of a

century, the number of people describing themselves as Christian has dropped from 66 per cent to 50 per cent."

The Church of England has suffered the biggest fall, they state, from 40 per cent in 1983 to 23 per cent in 2008. Of those who identified themselves as Anglicans in the interviews, fewer than one fifth attend a service once a month or more; half never attend. Some of these make up the category "fuzzy faithful", who do not act on their stated belief.

The full survey material is not yet available, and Prebendary Lynda Barley, head of research for the Archbishops' Council, expressed some doubt about the findings. "In surveys about belief, the wording of the question is all-important. If you ask: 'Do you belong to a Church, the Anglican Church, the Baptist Church, etc.?' you will get one figure. People in the 21st century are not membership-oriented. The voluntary sector, political parties, all are suffering because people no longer join things, and the Church is caught up in this.

(ed. If that all sounds a bit depressing, consider this - There are estimated now nearly 100 million Christians in China (compared with just 5,000 in the 1960s) and in South Korea, churches regularly have tens of thousands of members each. In one church, the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, there are over 800,000 members who meet each Sunday in several sittings in a vast hall. So, whilst it is difficult to give a definite answer to the actual number of Christians in the world (estimates range from 2 - 3 billion), Christianity remains the most dominant of the world, and is still growing at an astonishing rate.)

