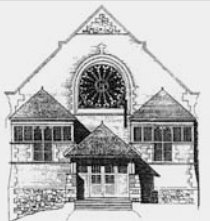




FAIRTRADE



Crediton Methodist Church



Newsletter
Dec 08/Jan 09

Crediton Methodist Church

Minister: Rev D Gregory Tel: 01363 774312

Email: minister@creditonmethodist.org.uk

Services this month:

Dec 7th: 8.45 Rev D Gregory (Sacrament)
10.30 Mrs C Colin
6.30 Rev D Gregory (Sacrament)
Dec 14th: 10.30 Rev P Webb
6.30 Mrs M Hardy
Dec 21st: 10.30 Rev A Brazier (Christmas Family Service)
6.30 No Service
Dec 24th: 4.00 Christmas Eve Service
Dec 25th: 10.00 Christmas Day Service – Rev D Gregory
Dec 28th: 10.30 Rev D Easton
6.30 No Service

Church Groups:

Toddlers – meets on Mondays 1.30 to 3.15 during term time
(contact Sarah on 01363 774370)

Ladies Supper group: 1st Tuesday of each month (contact Margaret Kenshole 775144)

Mid-week service: Wednesdays 12.30 Bring a sandwich lunch/drinks provided.

Knit & Natter: Wednesdays 2.00 to 3.30 (Wendy Homeshaw 01363 772786)

Bright Hour: Fridays at 2.30 p.m. (Contact Kath Wollacott 01363 775445)

Fellowship Groups meet regularly. (Contact Ken Saunders on 01363 773078)

Every Saturday: Coffee Morning from 10.30.

Church is open for prayer 9a.m. – 10 a.m.

The Ark: Saturdays monthly 4 – 6 p.m. (contact the minister)

Sunday Services at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m (most Sundays)

Every Sunday: 10.30 a.m. Sunday Club

**Material for the February newsletter to Ken Saunders
by January 18th.**

editors: Ken Saunders, June Redfern, Sarah Turner

ken.d.saunders@btinternet.com

Church website: www.creditonmethodist.org.uk

Cover Photo: Nativity – Papua New Guinean Art

Sing Christmas

Sing Christmas is an interactive community carol service organised by Churches Together with BBC Southwest and to be broadcast live on Monday 22 December 2008 at 8pm by BBC local radio in Devon, Cornwall and the Channel Islands.

If you're involved with a pub, club, community centre, care home or wherever there's a gathering of people – you are invited to be a host venue for the largest carol service ever across the South West. Churches are invited to help venues host the broadcast by providing a crowd to sing along with the carols and to help organise the interactive sections.

There'll be live music, lots of well known carols to sing along with, a unique interactive element to experience and special guests who will help us think about the real meaning of Christmas.

To take part in your venue all you have to do is:

- go to the BBC Radio Devon websites where you will find ideas and downloads, and you can list your venue;
- plan to receive the interactive service at 8pm on Monday 22 December 2008 via your local BBC Radio

station or on their website at bbc.co.uk/devon

- invite people to come along and SING CHRISTMAS!



Christmas Cards

Do you send Christmas cards to friends in the church? If so, you might like to consider sending just one card to everyone and placing it on a board which will be provided in the church. In this way we shall spend less money on purchasing cards and with the money we save we could make a donation to National Children's Home – a charity which we support at this time of year. A bag for donations will be provided by the board.

Merry Christmas

Dear Friends,

Christmas

It is celebrated by some with great enthusiasm, a happy time with family and friends; seeing children's eyes light up as they unwrap their presents, and also their joy in giving presents. For others, it is a sad and painful time. , an absent place at the table, only memories of happier times; families separated by necessity, perhaps a son, brother or father serving abroad in Afghanistan or Iraq. It comes at a time of loneliness; for others , due to a breakdown in relationships, it creates anger, bitterness or pain. A whole lot of mixed emotions and feelings.

There are those religious Christmas cards which depict a very cosy, tranquil first Christmas, but in reality it was anything but.

How did Mary and Joseph cope with the news that they would have to travel to Bethlehem (80 miles from Nazareth) to register? No question of a dispensation or postal registration; freedom and rights denied, when your country is governed by a foreign power. Did Mary and Joseph have anxious moments about this long journey? What if the baby was born enroute? Or, whilst in Bethlehem? What if there were complications? Could not God have planned it better?

Absolute chaos when they arrived in Bethlehem, too many people, too few accommodation places, perhaps not so if you were really wealthy. Did no-one notice or care that Mary was pregnant? How did Joseph feel? A sense of failure that he had not been able to provide for his wife and expected son? Nothing but a stable, and in all probability, dirty and draughty. And in those conditions God himself was born.

Some time later, exactly how long is not certain, the baby Jesus's very life is threatened by a dictatorial, jealous king who considered this infant a

threat to him. Can you imagine Joseph explaining to Mary the dream and the visit of the angel? They had to flee to Egypt! Mary's response could well have been 'Are you sure? You mean we cannot go home? But my parents and your parents will want to see their grandchild. But we have little or nothing to take with us. Where will we live? What will we do for money? For how long?'



I perceive however that sooner or later Mary would have placed herself, Jesus and Joseph, into God's hands. They left behind a very angry king who ordered a massacre of young baby boys.

An incredible story and it teaches us about God who is not detached from his people; he identifies with us. Many of the incidents surrounding the birth of Jesus are apparent in our world today – people suppressed by foreign powers; poverty and primitive conditions into which many children are born; cruel dictators and injustices; refugees fleeing for their very lives.

The first Christmas has little to do with a lovely lit, warm, cosy stable; nor a fairy tale birth, but life in the raw, all glamour stripped away ...for this was for real. Our celebrations will vary, but I trust that the true significance of Christmas of Joy and Peace and Love will fill our hearts. Hallelujah, what a Saviour.

God bless
David Gregory

M.H.A

Wendy, who has been our Church rep for Methodist Homes for the Aged for a number of years, has decided to resign from the position. We are very grateful for the work she has done during that time.

The job involves receiving mail and passing on information to relevant people; being responsible for the annual envelope appeal and keeping in touch with the Circuit rep – Barbara Pratt.

If you are able to take on this position please see Rev David Gregory. If you would like more information please see Wendy.

Church Newsletter

For several years the cost of producing the Church Newsletter has been generously met by Phillips & Co. With rising costs they are no longer able to meet the full cost so the church has agreed to make a contribution.

We print 220 copies each month! This might be a good time for each distributor to check that they receive the correct number of copies and to let Karen know **if less copies are needed.**

Book of Prayer

There is a Book of Prayer in the foyer in which anyone can write requests for prayer and these requests are handed to the preacher at the morning service.

The Church would like to widen its prayer ministry; especially for those in our community who are ill or experiencing difficulties. If you have any ideas on how this might be done please see David (Gregory)

Carols by Candlelight

On Christmas Eve at 4 p.m. we shall be having our service of Carols by Candlelight. If you would like to be involved in planning, or taking part in this service, please attend a meeting at 7.30 p.m. in the Wesley Room Monday 1st December.

Covenant Service

It is normal practice for Methodists to hold their Covenant Service on the first Sunday of January. However, this year we shall hold our service on January 11th at 10.30 a.m.

SHOEBOX SERVICE and other events – Saturday/Sunday 15th and 16th November

It was such a pleasure to have Bernard Cocker and his wife Elaine with us for this special weekend. Bernard spoke at the Cream Tea and The Ark with about 22 children attending, wonderful. Then on Sunday although we didn't have a 'sermon' in the accepted sense, every word Bernard spoke seemed to have significance and teaching for us all.

The number of shoeboxes presented for blessing at the service amounted to 142 not including the big boxes filled by the pupils of Haywards School. Thank you all, and I hope you enjoyed filling the boxes. I just wish you could see the faces of those who receive the boxes, although Bernard did mention the old lady who received a box containing a face flannel, soap etc. and she said *"now I can be a lady"*.



Things we pick up every day in the course of our daily lives cannot be taken for granted in some countries! Then we saw the knitted baby clothes (probably not from our Church!) being used for the abandoned babies, who did not cry because there was no Mother there to pick them up and cuddle them – enough said! We know this is the case everywhere in the world, but to see the little ones was almost too much to bear.

Bernard came to us because he wanted to and he hopes to come more often, although knowing his schedule of visiting the Ukraine, Romania, Sri Lanka, Kenya etc. every 6 weeks or so it might be more difficult than he thinks! As a result of the Cream Tea, donations in lieu of shoeboxes and other donations including a substantial gift from Knit and Natter, I am able to send at least £430.00 with more money coming in.

By the end of the year about 1000 shoeboxes will have been sent from our Church and the surrounding area, and I again thank those of you who fill shoeboxes every week of the year, Haywards School, the Parish Church, Yeo Valley Primary School, Barnstaple, The Cathedral and more to come in from private individuals who support the ministry.

Finally I personally am so grateful for your support, I would still do the little I do do, but oh how much harder it would be without you all at the back of me!

THANK YOU! June.

Pause for Thought

So, once again it's advent, Christmas is coming. There are two things I'm always sorry to hear people say at this time of year. One is 'I'll be glad when it's all over and we can get back to normal.' Probably they would agree with George Bernard Shaw who said, 'Like all intelligent people, I greatly dislike Christmas – it really is an atrocious institution.' Well, no, it's not! We know that what most people mean is that they are distressed by the commercialisation, the chaos and the cost, particularly in this year of the credit crunch. We can share that feeling, but also we know that in the midst of all the waste, excess and activity we can 'pause for thought' and ponder the true meaning of Christmas and the simplicity and beauty of its message. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, that is the good news of Christmas.

The other thing I'm always sad to hear people say is 'Well Christmas is only for the children'. Again, no, it's not, but of course, again, we know what they mean. There is a special magic in the air for children at Christmas. It's lovely to do all that we can to help that along – we don't want to waste a drop of their happiness. But the deeper message of Christmas and its significance is beyond the highest intellect to comprehend fully. 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory – the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth.'



That is the most important part of Christmas and it should give us a sense of joy and wonder as great as that felt by the children.

'The Word made flesh' – what does that mean? It means when the shepherds

knelt by the manger to see the baby, they came face to face with God. It means God skipped along the dusty roads of Palestine beside his mother. He learned to use a carpenter's tools and made yokes for local farmers. Then later those 'hands that flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered.' Yet He lives to show even us the nature and quality of God's love. It needs a poet to express something so amazing. Charles Wesley gave us the lovely couplet, 'Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man.'

Before the next newsletter appears we shall be wishing each other 'Happy New Year.'

Does it make sense to do that when worldwide there is so much doom and gloom? Then on a personal level some people may not be looking forward to the new year – perhaps because of illness or family problems, or bereavement or financial difficulties at this time. Indeed, we none of us know what the new year will bring, but I hope we can say with G.K.Chesterton,

'There is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,
Before we go to paradise by way of Kensal Green.'

We live our lives in the presence of God. He goes with us into 2009 and gives us the strength and courage we need and brings us peace.

'I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'
And he replied,

'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be better to you than light and safer than a known way.'

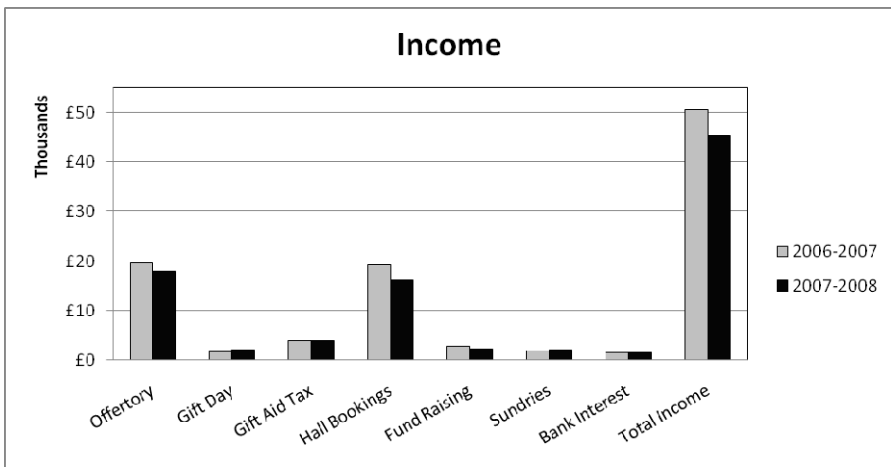
Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to everyone. Cynthia



Yearly Accounts

The end of the churches financial year is the 31st August. Now the year is ended, I thought I would bring you up to date with the church finances. As you can see from the graph below, our income this year is down by over 10% (£5,187) compared to last year. This is due for a couple of reasons, firstly hall bookings are down by almost 35% (£3,416) as last year we had a regular booking from Crediton Life Services which has now ended. Also our offertory is down by 9% (£1,771).

I would like to thank everyone who responded to our Gift Day appeal, we received £2,030, which is almost 19% up (£320) on last year. I also would like to thank everyone who has helped with fundraising this year. Although we are down by 21% (£570), I would especially like to thank Ken Saunders whose calendars were a great success, the team behind the Barn Dance, and the January Jollies. Also everyone who has helped raise money through lunches, coffee mornings and many other events. Not just for the general funds but also for the charities we have supported over the past year. Every penny raised helps in some way.

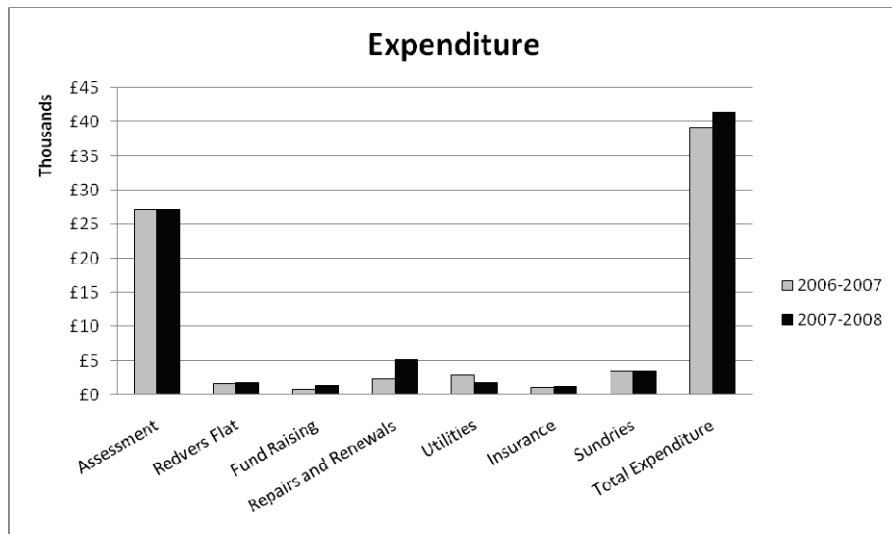


The graph on the next page shows that our expenditure is up by only 5% (£1,815). This has been achieved with the help and a lot of hard work from people working quietly in the background. We thank you all.

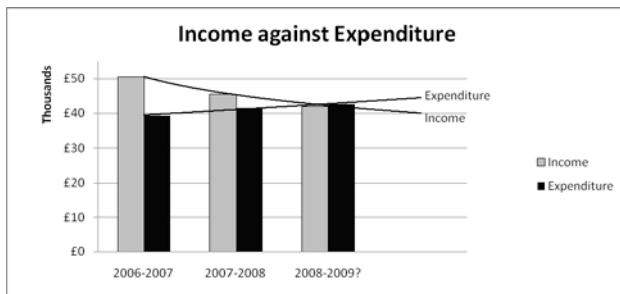
As you well know our greatest expenditure is our assessment to the Circuit. This is around 65% of our total expenditure and has remained the same as last year. The biggest increase in expenditure is for repairs and renewals which is up by 120% (£2,740) from last year. This is due to some of the cost of replacing the boiler in May/June. The other main increase in spending has been on the young people, up by 378% (£851), as we had a trip out to Pennywell Farm in September (we had an generous donation towards the cost), and the 'The Ark' which started in

November 2007 (although we will be receiving a grant of £1,000 a year for 3 years for the running cost of 'The Ark').

Where we have saved so far this year is in the cost of electricity and gas which is down by 63% (£1,101). With the installation of some energy saving devices, we have built up a considerable credit. This has been repaid back to us over the year.



The chart on the right clearly shows that our income is falling (so far this current year our offertory is down by 10%), while our expenditure is rising. Despite being careful, with our expenditure and fundraising etc – our expenditure WILL be greater than our income in a year or two's time. Please would you consider raising your weekly giving as our costs go up all the time and also if you are a tax payer, whenever you give money to the church please can you fill in an orange envelope, as we are able to recover 28p for every £1 you give from the inland revenue, for more information on Gift Aid please see myself or Christine Marshall.

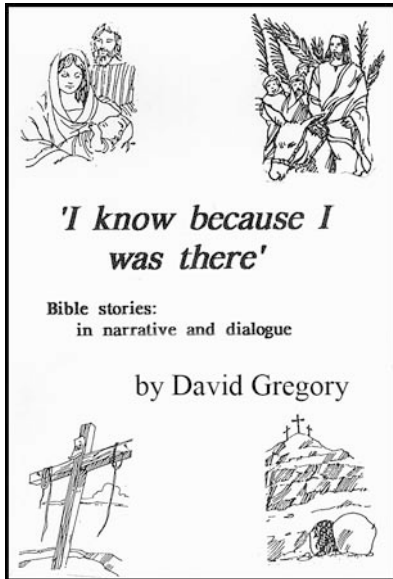


If you would like a copy of this years annual report, with the full set of accounts, or want any more information, about the churches finance please come and see me.

Thank you,
Glenn Turner.

'I know because I was there.

By David Gregory



We all have a good story! When David has come to Bright Hour on two occasions the ladies have been spellbound by the stories he told.

These were to be part of his new book which is still in the making. We were indeed privileged to hear them prior to publication.

His first book 'I know because I was there' contains some equally spellbinding stories. These bible stories have been embellished wonderfully. In some, one of the characters becomes a real person and has the narrative woven around him or her. His or her

personality is enlarged and his or her feelings, hopes, disappointments and joys are expressed.

Some of the stories are in the form of a dialogue, a conversation between two characters in connection with a very specific event in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. They become real people expressing their feelings, hopes, disappointments and joys.

At the beginning of each story we are given the Bible passage which is its basis. May I suggest you read the Bible passage and then the story. The Bible passage will come to life. You can put yourself in the place of one of the characters and you will be able to say 'I know because I was there'. Copies of the first book can be obtained from David – price £4, (of which £1 is donated to North Devon Hospice.)

Jenny Hext



Church Walk

Please meet in our Church car park at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday January 1st. for a walk along Exmouth sea front followed by an optional meal out.

Bright Hour

Dec 5th: Mr Sid Gardner

Dec 12th: Mrs Jenny Hext

We close on the 12th for our Christmas Break and resume on 16th January.

On behalf of the Bright Hour we wish you all Joy & Peace for Christmas and a Peaceful & Healthy 2009.

Church Anniversary

25th/26th April

Our Gift day will coincide with this weekend. There will be a sacred concert by a talented music group from Torrington on the Saturday evening and we look forward to welcoming Rev Robert Saunders to lead our Sunday Morning worship

January Jollies

24th January 5 – 8 p.m.

We are looking for people with hidden talents! If you are willing to take part, in any way, speak to John Ashley who is compiling the programme.

Long Service Local Preachers

At the Circuit service at Wonford on Nov 16th the preaching commitments of Philip Luscombe (50 years) and Tony and Joan Wragg (40 years) were recognized and we praise God for them.

*Carols for All
Mint Methodist Church
7.30 p.m.
on Mon 8th December
Tickets £5 /£2.50 students
Okehampton Choral
Society
In aid of MHA
Tickets from Marjorie
Ashley*

What's between you and the Almighty

Some of us will remember David Ash – Roland and Rita's son. David attended our Sunday School and Youth Group and was part of our church. David is now the vicar of four churches in North West Shropshire and recently Roland showed me a newsletter from David's churches. Here is an extract from David's letter and an article he wrote:

I consider myself very fortunate that I was brought up attending Sunday School and as part of the family of God, because this gave me a strong base of knowledge and experience upon which to make my own decision to be a follower of Jesus. For me it was at a young age that I took on the life quest of getting to know Him better through prayer, reading the Bible, meeting with other Christians and through being a worshipper. That delight of exploration, continued sense of developing a loving relationship with God and the desire to worship Him are stronger now than ever. I find it a very dynamic and purposeful way of living, but I know that for others it is just not part of their experience. It has to be a matter of informed choice and response to what you know of Jesus. When it comes down to it, what any of us decide to do about God is between us and Him, it's between you and the Almighty.

What's between you and the Almighty

If you don't meet with other Christians
You've missed out on encouragement from God and his people,
And missed opportunities to be an encourager too
.....it's between you and the Almighty

If you don't read the Bible
It's no less useful to guide, nurture and challenge,
Only you don't receive your daily nourishment
....it's between you and the Almighty.

If you don't pray ...God is still there for you
But you may find it harder to start the conversation
....it's between you and the Almighty.

If you don't give for the work of God
It still happens, only there could be more
And you may not be aware of lives transformed
....it's between you and the Almighty.

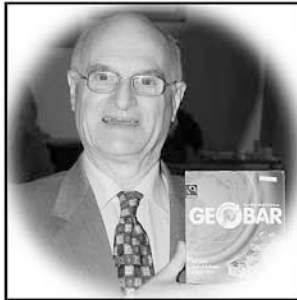
If you don't care for your neighbour
Then you may be the impoverished one
And perhaps more isolated
....it's between you and the Almighty.

If you do good turns for those around you and live a good life
Then that's good, but by ignoring God
You're likely to have missed the special tasks He intended for you
....it's between you and the Almighty.

If you keep hold of grudges and issues
Then you've much to discover about God's son, Jesus
....He's between you and the Almighty.

If you haven't considered that Jesus could be for you the living way
to God
Certainly no dead-end
Then now is the time to close the gap
....between you and the Almighty.

Revd David Ash





***Buy from the
Fairtrade Stall
this Christmas***



Look out for these photographs on the Fair-trade tree at the Christmas Tree Festival, Holy Cross Church, December 4th – 6th

Pastoral News



*God of love, you watch with all who weep, worry or
who are weary.
You offer hope to those in despair, and your calming
presence to the troubled.
Give us peace.*

Church Family news

We have sad news of two Hillbrow residents who have died during the past month: Harold Bayley who was a member at the Mint (his wife Sybil is still in Hillbrow), and Vera Scanes who was a member at Cheriton Cross. Please remember their family and friends in your prayers.

Please pray for all in our church family who are ill or facing difficult times, and those who are no longer able to join in worship and fellowship with us on Sundays.

Amongst those of our church family whom we pray for, we remember by name Rita Ash; Sybil Bayley (Hillbrow); Ray Burnett; Kim & Alan Clemens; Harold Hollingsworth; Allan Hooper, Frank Howarth, Rob Ings; Len Jenkinson; Iris Mackie; Phyllis Maunder; Lynda & Norman Medcraft; Clara Paige (Kenwyn); Rene Sankey; Shirley Sharpe; Anne Spry; Arthur Tancock; Eileen and George Tarr; Ken Turner, Mary Tyson, Joy Wilshire.

Residential Homes

Summerhayes :	Thursday	4 December	2:30 pm
Kenwyn:	Wednesday	17 December	2:00 pm
St Lawrence	Thursday	18 December	2:30 pm

Services for December are:

Thank you for the support we receive from those who come along and join us.
All are welcome.

Contacts: Karen Theedom: Pastoral Secretary: 775704

Pam Murphy: Pastoral Page news 773414

Please let me know of anyone who would like to be mentioned for prayers.

December/January Diary

1st Dec: Planning meeting for Carols by Candlelight

4th Jan: K. Hext (10.30am) Arscott (6.30pm)

11th Jan: Covenant Service – Gregory (10.30am) Lea (6.30pm)

16th Jan: Visit to pantomime at Northcott Theatre

18th Jan: All Age Worship – Gregory (10.30am) Sacrament - Brazier (6.30pm)

24th Jan: January Jollies

25th Jan: Sacrament – Easton (8.45am) Lea (10.30am) Easton (6.30pm)

Christmas at Crediton Methodist

21st: Dec Christmas All Age Worship

With Rev Andrew Brazier

10.30 a.m.

24th: Dec Carols by Candlelight 4 p.m.

Followed by Coffee & Mincepies

25th: Dec Christmas Day service 10 a.m.

With Rev David Gregory

January Jollies

24th January 5 p.m.

Entertainment

Quiz

Drama

Refreshments

And more

50 Years of Experience

1958

Phillips
(Print & Stationery) Ltd.

2008

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ECO FRIENDLY DIGITAL PRESS

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Christmas printing needs; we can provide
personal greetings cards, calendars,
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