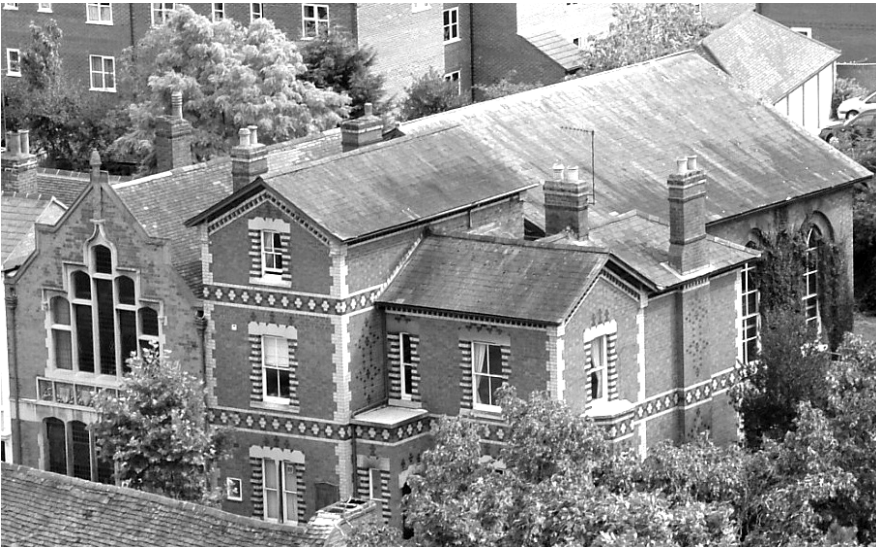


Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

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www.pershorebaptist.org

Church Secretary Ann P. Taylor
tel. 01386-561314 e-mail: parkerann_taylor@yahoo.com

Dear Friends

Is Jesus to Christianity what Muhammad is to Islam?

This is part 2 of a long article from the Parish Pump. Last month's part was about Jesus. If you would like a reprint of the whole article please ask.

And who was Muhammad?

Muhammad was an Arab prophet, and the founder of Islam. He was born in Mecca in 570 AD, to Abdallah, a poor merchant of the powerful tribe of Quaraysh, hereditary guardians of the shrine in Mecca.

Orphaned at six, Muhammad was brought up by his grandfather and uncle, Talib, who trained him to be a merchant. When Muhammad was 24, he entered the service of a rich widow, Khadijah. They married and had six children.

While continuing as a trader, Muhammad became increasingly drawn to religious contemplation. Soon after 600 (the traditional date is 610) he began to receive revelations of the word of Allah, the one and only God. This Quran (Koran), or 'reading', commanded that the numerous idols of the shrine should be destroyed and that the rich should give to the poor. This simple message attracted some support, but even more hostility.

When his wife and uncle died, Mohammad was reduced to

poverty. He began making a few converts among the pilgrims to Mecca from the town of Yathrib, an agricultural community which eventually gave him shelter from his wealthy enemies. Mohammad's migration to Yathrib, called the Hegira, marks the beginning of the Muslim era. The name of the town was changed to Medina, the city of the prophet.

By 630, Mohammad had won control over all Arabia, which acknowledged him as chief and prophet. In March 632 he took his last pilgrimage to Mecca, and there on Mount Arafat fixed for all time the ceremonies of the pilgrimage. He fell ill soon after his return, and died on 8 June in the home of the favourite of his nine wives. His tomb in the mosque at Medina is venerated throughout Islam.

There are five essential religious duties known as the 'pillars of Islam'.

1. The shahadah (profession of faith) is the sincere recitation of the two-fold creed: 'There is no god but God' and 'Muhammad is the Messenger of God'.

2. The salat (formal prayer) must be performed at fixed hours five times a day while facing towards the holy city of Mecca.

3. Alms-giving through the payment of zakat is seen primarily as an act of worship.

4. There is a duty to fast (saum) during the month of Ramadan.

5. The Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca is to be performed if at all possible at least once during one's lifetime. Shariah is the sacred law of Islam, and applies to all aspects of life, not just religious practices. It prescribes the way for a Muslim must fulfil the command of God and so reach heaven.

Islam has an annual cycle of festivals, including Hegira, which is the beginning of the Islamic year, and Ramadan, the month in which Muslim fast during the hours of daylight. There is not an organised priesthood, but great respect is accorded to the Hashim family, descendants of Muhammad, and other publicly acknowledged holy men, scholars, and teachers, such as mullahs and ayatollah.

There are two basic groups in Islam: Sunni Muslims are the majority. The Shiites comprise the largest minority group. There are a

"Tell the kids I love them" - God

"We need to talk" - God

"Keep using my name in vain - I'll make rush hour longer" - God

"That love thy neighbour thing" - I meant it" - God

"Need directions?" - God

number of sub-sects. There are over 700 million Muslims throughout the world.

Islam is the Arabic word for 'submission' to the will of God (Allah). Followers of Islam, known as Muslims or Moslems, have in Islam a religion that embraces every aspect of life. They believe that individuals, societies, and governments should all be obedient to the will of God as it is set forth in the Koran, which they regard as the Word of God revealed to his Messenger, Muhammad. The Koran teaches that God is one and has no partners. He is the Creator of all things, and holds absolute power. Muslims believe that since the beginning of creation, God has sent prophets, including Moses and Jesus, to provide the guidance necessary for the attainment of eternal reward: a succession of prophets culminating in the revelation to Muhammad of the perfect Word of God.

When the subject of marriage counselling came up, my uncle said, "Your aunt and I never needed any. She did media studies at university and I did theatre studies."

"What's that got to do with a successful relationship?" I asked.

"She's good at communicating," he said, "and I'm good at pretending I'm listening."

Reader's Digest

News of the Family

It was good to see **David Dixon** in church again after his illness and to hear that he is making good progress.

Marina Townend is not able to have visits or phone calls but values our continuing prayers.

Churches together in Pershore

To start just a brief explanation to those who are fairly new to our Church. Back in 1984, the three churches in the town entered into a covenant with each other. In essence the three churches covenanted to work together in such areas where it was possible and desirable to do so. A copy of the covenant is on the notice board at the left hand side of the church should you wish to read it. Admittedly, in recent months, activity between our churches has been at a low key, but the coming period of Lent gives us the opportunity to work and share together – in the following ways

Each year, in rotation, one of the three churches chooses a charity to be supported financially. This year it is the choice of our friends in the Abbey and they have chosen a local charity, the **Maggs Centre in Worcester**, which works among the homeless in the Worcester area. Would you like to know more, and I hope you do, then come along to the Baptist Church on the evening of **Shrove Tuesday, 5th February**. We will have what has become a traditional Pancake Party to launch the Lent Project. A speaker will come to talk about the Maggs Centre

and will, no doubt, be happy to answer questions.

Throughout the Lent period, on each Friday, we will be having our **Frugal Lunches** – soup and a roll. We share in fellowship over lunch. The lunch is free but partakers are asked to make a donation to the charity. The three churches share the making of the soup on an alphabetical basis – Abbey, Baptist and Catholic – as easy as ABC! The Abbey will kick off on Friday 8th February. Our days for "Baptist Soup" will be 15th February and 7th March when volunteers to make the soup will be sought.

On each Tuesday in Lent, commencing 12th February, there will be a Joint Study course in which members of the three churches will take part. The study course will take place in our church. The final format is still to be decided but, if past years are a guide, it will be like this; a member of the clergy will introduce and talk about the theme to be followed by group discussion on questions raised.

It would be good if there was a good representation from we Baptists.

The details of the Good Friday walks will be in the March Messenger.

If you have any questions please ask me.

John Gosney

When you get tangled up

in our problems, be still. God wants you to be still so HE can untangle the knot.

Obituary of the late Mr. Common Sense.

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years.

No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

Knowing when to come in out of the rain;

Why the early bird gets the worm;

Life isn't always fair; and

Maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate;

Teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and

A teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer

Calpol, sun lotion, or a band-aid to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses, and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge multi-million dollar settlement

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust; his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility, and his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 3 stepbrothers; I Know My Rights, Someone Else Is To Blame, and I'm A Victim

Stormont Stepping Stone

Verger's advice to visiting preacher: 'You'll 'ave to shout very loud in this 'ere church vicar. The agnostics are somefink terrible!'

To get to heaven, turn right and keep going straight. *Anon*

Regret is an appalling waste of energy; you can't build on it; it's only good for wallowing in.

Katherine Mansfield.

Even if marriages are made in heaven, man has to be responsible for the maintenance. *Anon*

A former bishop of Exeter

was renowned for his bad memory. On one occasion he was travelling by train to a certain part of his diocese. Before he reached his destination the ticket collector appeared demanding to see all tickets. The bishop groped his way through this pocket and that, inside his purple cassock and out, but no ticket could be found. Finally the ticket collector lost patience and said; 'Tha's o'right bishop. We all know you's an harnest man. It don't matter.'

'Oh indeed it does!' replied the bishop. 'Without that ticket I shan't know where to get off this train!'

A walk a day can keep your heart going

Walking just a mile and a half a day is enough exercise to help stave off heart disease and diabetes, a study has found. Such moderate exercise for 30 minutes, rather than intense activity, can help people to lose weight, reduce high blood pressure and cut down on blood sugar - all factors linked to the early warning signs.

The study, by the US Duke University Medical Centre, concluded: "It means that sedentary, middle-aged adults don't have to go out running four or five days a week; they can get significant health benefits by simply walking around the neighbourhood every night."

The Department of Health recommends that the average person should have at least 30 minutes of exercise five times a week.

The Year of the Potato

The United Nations, in its wisdom, has named 2008 as the International Year of the Potato. This does not mean you have to give up your seat on the bus for one, or that there will be pop concerts devoted to potatoes. Rather, the UN wants to focus attention on "the potential contribution of the potato to defeating hunger." Apparently by giving the potato a 'year', it is hoped to inspire exhibits, educational programs, films, publications and greater public awareness of multi-national efforts on behalf of our food resources.

The potato has been consumed in the Andes for about 8,000 years. Taken by the Spanish to Europe in the 16th century, it quickly spread across the globe: today potatoes are grown on an estimated 195,000 sq km, or 75,000 square miles, of farmland, from China's Yunnan plateau and the subtropical lowlands of India, to Java's equatorial highlands and the steppes of Ukraine. In terms of sheer quantity harvested, the humble potato tuber is the world's No. 4 food crop, with production in 2006 of almost 315 million tonnes. More than half of that total was harvested in developing countries.

When trouble arises and things look bad, there is always one individual who perceives a solution and is eager to take command. Very often, that individual is crazy.

10 miscellaneous observations on daily life

If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be 'meetings'.

There is a very fine line between 'hobby' and 'mental illness'.

You should not confuse your career with your life.

No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously.

When trouble arises and things look bad, there is always one individual who perceives a solution and is eager to take command. Very often, that individual is crazy.

Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.

The most powerful force in the universe is gossip.

The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above-average drivers.

The main accomplishment of almost all organized protests is to annoy people who are not in them. A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person. (This is very important. Pay attention. It never fails.)

What Psalm 23 is really all about

The Lord is my Shepherd
 THAT'S RELATIONSHIP!
 I shall not want THAT'S SUPPLY!
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures
 THAT'S REST!
 He leadeth me beside still waters
 THAT'S REFRESHMENT!
 He restoreth my soul
 THAT'S HEALING!
 He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
 THAT'S GUIDANCE!
 For his name sake
 THAT'S PURPOSE!
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
 THAT'S TESTING!
 I will fear no evil
 THAT'S PROTECTION!
 For thou art with me
 THAT'S FAITHFULNESS!
 Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me
 THAT'S DISCIPLINE!
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies
 THAT'S HOPE!
 Thou anointest my head with oil
 THAT'S CONSECRATION!
 My cup runneth over
 THAT'S ABUNDANCE!
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life
 THAT'S BLESSING!
 And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
 THAT'S SECURITY!
 Forever THAT'S ETERNITY!

Christian Basics Sin and Suffering

'What's wrong with the world? How can a God of love allow suffering? These are questions that many people ask in the light of their own experience. In answer to these questions, the Christian Faith offers an understanding of how sin affects both the human race and the whole created order.

Genesis gives us a picture of how sin first entered the world.

In Genesis 2:16-17, God gave Adam and Eve a far reaching permission ('You are free to eat from any tree in the garden'), a prohibition ('But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil') and them warned them of the penalty if they disobeyed ('For when you eat of it you will surely die').

In Genesis 3, we see how Adam and Eve broke God's law by eating of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As a result their eyes were opened to the nature of sin (they knew shame) and their relationship with God was broken (they hid from him). Also as a consequence they faced the reality of death in their lives. This story expresses the truth that God gives us free will (an essential aspect of our humanity) to live with God at the centre of our lives or not.

Love in a bag

I asked my nephew whether he bought his wife anything for Valentine's Day.

"Yes", he said, "I bought her a belt and a bag."

"That was very nice of you", I replied, "I hope she appreciated the thought."

He said, "So do I, and hopefully the vacuum cleaner will work better now."

There are different pictures in the Bible which describe the nature of sin: **Firstly**, a spirit of independence: choosing to live our own lives in our own way, independent of God. This means we do our own thing, regardless whether it pleases God or helps others.

Secondly, ignoring the maker's instructions: if you buy an expensive item of equipment and then ignore the user instructions, you have only yourself to blame if things go wrong! God created us to function with him at the centre of our lives.

Thirdly, missing the mark: we will fail an exam if we have missed the pass mark, however near we get to it. As Paul reminds us, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23).

Fourthly, leaving God out of our lives: we don't want God to interfere with our lives, preferring our own ideas, plans and standards of behaviour.

There was a famous correspondence in The Times under the title 'What's wrong with the world?' One letter written by GK Chesterton simply said: 'Dear Sir, I am.'

As Lent begins this month, it is a good time to stop and consider what place God currently holds in our lives.

How early do you feel stressed each day?

One in five of us feel stressed before we've even had breakfast in the morning, according to recent research.* Nearly two in every five of us feel stressed by the time we've dropped the children off for school, or have reached our workplace. Half of us struggle to sleep at night, and half of us suffer from headaches. Almost a quarter of us suffer from digestive problems and nearly a fifth of us report having panic attacks.

The biggest cause of our stress? Money – or rather, our lack of it to meet our lifestyles. Next comes pressures at work and strained relationships. As if that weren't enough, 45% of women and 24% of men worry as well about their personal appearance.

The Bible has some comforting things to say about stress. We can ask God for help.

"I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Psalm 34:3

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6

The poll was carried out by the Relaxation for Living Institute

Don't bottle it up

London tap water has been voted superior to expensive mineral waters in a recent blind tasting by some of the UK's most sophisticated drinkers. London tap water, at less than 1p a litre, beat 20 bottled waters, including New Zealand's Rotomo Hills, which sells for £50 a litre at Claridge's Hotel.

The survey, held by Decanter, the wine drinkers' magazine, used a panel of tasters made up of the Masters of Wine, top sommeliers and some of the most experienced palates in the country. They voted Thames Water (from a kitchen tap in South Kensington) as third equal in a tasting of 24 products.

Badminton

Two courts are booked at Pershore High School from 8-9pm, generally on 1st and 3rd Fridays each month. Andrew &/or Anne Sadler will usually be there (tel: 01386-860491) You will need kit, racket (there may be one to borrow) and £2 per person (£1 for young people) for the hourly session. Shuttlecocks will be provided.

February – 1st and 15th

March – 7th

April – 4th and 18th

Open to church members and their friends.

If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be 'meetings'.

Weekly Church Events

Sundays	
10.30am	Family service with Sunday School Communion 3rd Sundays
5.00pm (6.00pm in summer)	Evening Worship Communion 1st Sundays
Mondays	
1.30pm	Little Fishes playgroup
7.30pm	House Group Middle Lane, Cropthorne
7.45pm	Prayer meeting at Church
Wednesdays	
2.30pm	Women's Own – Lower Room
7.45pm	Prayer and Bible Study 21 Ganderton Court
8.00pm	Bible Study 48 Mayfield Road
Thursdays	
10.15am	House Group 20 Abbeycroft
10.30am	Baby talk
7.45pm	Deacon's Meeting 1st and 3rd Thursdays

There is a **Monthly Communion service** on a Wednesday at 2.30pm

Impact- A generation Youth Event on 4th Sunday at 7.00pm

The **Thursday Club** meets in the Lower Room at 7.30pm on the 4th Thursday of each month.

Church Badminton is between 8-9pm on 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in Pershore High School. Details from Anne Sadler.

The **Multiple Sclerosis Group** meet on Monday mornings in the Worship area.

The **St John's Ambulance** use the Upper and Lower Rooms on Tuesday evening.

U3A Choir uses the Upper Room on alternate Wednesdays at 2.15pm.

Thursday Club

On February 28th Rosemary Prosser will give a talk entitled "To Cornwall and back". The meeting will be held in the lower schoolroom and begins at 7.30pm. All are welcome

Woman's Own

Feb 6th Margaret Cotton from Ashton-under-Hill
 Feb 20th Communion Service led by Rev Ed Pillar,
 Evesham Baptist Church

Love

He held her close in his arms' embrace,
 Their eyes and their lips did meet,
 He looked down into her lovely face,
 And her heart did faster beat...

They went to the kirk an it came the day,
 And the book the priest did take;
 He in his kilt was so bright and gay
 As his promise he did make.

She stood at his side so white and fair,
 Her white fingers fair to give,
 The priest handfasted them then and there,
 And he blessed them long to live.

O God give the joy and God the love
 To those who are lovers true,
 Shed down benediction from above
 As in one are joined the two.

From Prayers of the Western Highlanders

There is a very early deadline for the April Messenger – it is Sunday 9th March.

The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled on by him; but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved.

Matthew Henry

Ruth Tisdall has sent an e-mail which was too long and too late for inclusion in the Messenger. A copy is on the notice board at the back of the church. If you would like a copy please ask.

Social Events

A list of events came too late for all to be included. Here are the March entries in the calendar. The rest will be in the March Messenger. More details from Tracy Wheeler or by e-mail to tracy.wheeler@talk21.com

Mothering Sunday Lunch

March 2nd – a 3-course lunch following our morning worship

Games evening

Saturday March 8th



LENT

Lent, before Easter, is like Advent before Christmas, a time of preparation. Lent is when we remember that Jesus prepared himself for starting his ministry by going away by himself for 40 days of fasting and prayer. You can read about it in your Bible: Matthew, chapter 4, verses 1-11; Mark, chapter 1, verses 12-13 and Luke, chapter 4, verses 1-13.

Jesus went into the wilderness, a quiet lonely place away from people where he could think things out. He knew that his work would be hard, that many people would not listen to him, or if they listened, they would not believe him. During these 40 days Jesus made his choice: to work in God's way however hard that might be.

This year Lent starts on 6th February and goes three quarters of March: have you thought about how YOU are going to prepare yourself to follow Jesus this Lent?



SPRING COLOURS

The missing words in this puzzle are all colours which are mentioned with these things in the Bible.

1. Pastures, herbs and olives are all _____.
2. A sea, tents and wine are _____.
3. Hangings in the Temple, pomegranates and doors of tents were all _____.
4. A horse, robes and teeth were all _____.
5. Kings' raiment (clothing), Jesus' robe and the dye that Lydia sold were all _____.
6. One of the gifts to the baby Jesus, candlesticks and spoons were _____.
7. A raven, clouds and chariot horses were _____.
8. Lips, a thread tied to a window and robes are _____.

Answers at the bottom of this page.



What do you do with a green monster?

Wait till he's ripe.



Answers: 1.green 2.red 3.blue 4.white 5.purple 6.gold 7.black 8.scarlet

Rules of writing that Valentine love card

If you want to impress your loved one, remember the following:

Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.

Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.

And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.

Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat.)

Employ the vernacular.

Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.

Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.

It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.

Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.

Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.

Do not use more words than necessary. It's highly superfluous.

Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.

Be more or less specific.

Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth-shaking ideas.

One-word sentences? Eliminate.

Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.

The passive voice is to be avoided.

Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.

Who needs rhetorical questions?

Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary.

Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.

Puns are for children, not groan readers.

Proofread carefully to see if you left any words out of your

A women's burden in life

These days women are more weighed down by daily life than men are - by about 5lb.

That is now the weight of the average woman's handbag - and it is predicted to grow to 7lbs in the next decade.

Five years ago most women

carried handbags 38% lighter than they do now: but they didn't have so many gadgets to carry about then. A recent Asda survey of 50 women discovered mobile phones, bulky documents, smart office shoes, and even laptops had joined the more traditional purses, mirrors, tissues, make-up and addresses books.

Church notice that didn't quite get it right:

The regular Monday night choir practice of this church will be held on Tuesday night instead of Friday night.

Prayer Calendar for February 2008

- 1 Margaret Locker
- 2 Jean Lockhart
- 3 **You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart** **Jeremiah 29:13**
- 4 Marjorie Ludlow
- 5 Tony & Janet Liddington & family
- 6 Roz Mackay
- 7 David & Diane McBride
- 8 Margaret McCully
- 9 Marie McKenzie
- 10 **Come near to God and He will come near to you** **James 4:8**
- 11 Colin & Gloria McLellan
- 12 Viv McWhirter
- 13 Alan & Claudine Mee
- 14 Peter & Eileen Merry
- 15 David & Jean Middleton
- 16 John & Florrie Newell
- 17 **... Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us** **Ephesians 5:2**
- 18 Adrian & Chris Nicholls & family
- 19 Beatie O'Boyle
- 20 Joan Orr
- 21 Wayne & Carol Palfrey
- 22 Roz Palfrey
- 23 Kath Parker
- 24 **If I...have not love, I am only a resounding gong** **1 Corinthians 13:1**
- 25 Jayne Pickering
- 26 Ken & Jill Porter
- 27 Mike & Wendy Porteus
- 28 Ken & Barbara Price
- 29 Nick & Yvonne Price & family

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the March edition to be in by **noon on Sunday 17 February**. Please observe this deadline.
2. If there are any serious errors/oversights, please tell me!
3. If you would prefer a larger print version of the Messenger, have a word with me.

Thanks

Mike Taylor