

## SHALOM

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests."

The Hebrew word that's translated peace is "shalom." A word with a rich depth of meaning. So what does shalom mean?

Shalom means:

- Harmony with yourself
- Harmony with your body
- Harmony with your neighbour
- Harmony with your environment
- Harmony with your world
- Harmony with your God

"Shalom" this Christmas.

*Simon Lloyd*

## CHRISTMAS? Paul Merton

I was astonished to read this week that a department store Santa on his way home for the night was beaten up by stressed-out Christmas shoppers in Germany. Stefan Stettler, 31, from Wiesbaden, was still in character and chatting to other passengers while waiting for his train home. Police say two men, allegedly stressed after a full day's Christmas shopping, lost their patience when asked to "tell Santa what they want for Christmas".

The men took Stettler's sack of presents and beat him over the head with it, breaking his fingers as he tried to protect himself. Stettler said: "Around this time of year shoppers seem to get this glint in their eyes and you can just see they are going to go off any minute. I should have known better but come on,

who beats up Santa Claus?" Police are still searching for the men but have no clue as to their identities.

Is it me, or is Christmas getting weirder by the year?! But this apart, this incident made me reflect on my stress levels and how I'm going to come across to my family, church, friends, and work colleagues this Christmas time. I don't think I will be driven to mug a Santa. But will I be stressed, snappy, and as miserable as Scrooge? Or will I be full of grace, peace, and good humour?

It's just that the Saviour who came into the world was full of grace and if I'm not also full of grace, the New Testament principle of "aroma" tells me that my manner will cancel out my seasonal message. So I wish you a happy Christmas - because your joy authenticates the good news that our Saviour has come to us. Have you got the right glint in your eye?

## DENTON BURN HOUSE GROUP .....

..... was re-born out of the growth of the then Group and its ongoing aim 'to divide and multiply'. 2003 saw us set apart half of the members to form a new Group, which became 'The Weebles'. (Since when, from time to time, we too have sought to come up with something more imaginative, a name that captures something of who, what and where we are. Alas, the inspiration is still lacking and the re-branding will have to wait. In the meantime, having produced a good number of proposals, as opposed to a number of good proposals, I have been advised not to give up the day job.)

After an encouraging re-start, we experienced the loss of a few members who felt it was time for them to move on, but, happily, others (re-)joined in their stead. Then we shared in the pains of members having to face redundancy and unemployment, or confronted with declining health and faculties. But God is good. Those issues served not to dishearten us, but brought the Group closer together, and this past year in particular we have been richly blessed and encouraged by clear answers to prayer.

We are a warm and friendly lot. We meet on alternate Thursday evenings, usually at Brignall Gardens, and usually there's between eight to ten of us. We would be delighted to squeeze a couple more in, preferably with a musical instrument or two (but we would struggle with a grand piano, double bass, sousaphone or the like). If you would like to give us a try, please have a word ....

Every blessing, *Ron Wilson*

## THE DIFFERENCE

I got up early one morning  
And rushed right into the day.  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I didn't have time to pray.  
Problems just tumbled about me  
And heavier came each task,  
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered,  
He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
But the day toiled on grey and bleak;  
I wondered why God didn't show me?  
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence;  
I used all my keys in the lock,  
God gently and lovingly chided,  
"My child but you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning  
And paused before entering the day;  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I had to take time to pray.

*Anon.*

## ALL AGE CAROLS

**Jonathan Harness**

The All Age Carol Service is an important service in the church calendar. In one sense it traditionally marks the first of the Christmas celebration services. However, it is also the one service in the year when the Young People actively bring us the Word of God (albeit in non-traditional ways).

There is a temptation during the Children's performances to sit back and consider it to be a just that: a concert with a Christian theme. However, from the beginning it is an act of worship that glorifies God and intends to engage everyone. The message may be a simple one (compared to a traditional sermon), but Christ himself tells us to have the faith and humility of a child (Matt 18:4).

Part of the job of Young Church Co-ordinator is to act as an advocate for the Young People, in terms of how decisions made by the church affect the children and to commend to the church all that the children and Young People have to offer. I trust (and expect!) that, as they usually do, their gifts and talents will actually commend themselves.

## SHEPHERD'S CORNER

**Simon Lloyd**

I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to have been one of the shepherds sitting beside a smelly stone-walled sheep pen outside Bethlehem on the night of

Jesus birth? What would it have been like to be so poor that it meant having to take on shepherding work or starve? I've never known such poverty.

What was it like to experience the terrifying and yet thrilling visit of the angel? Then the amazing sight of the whole of the skies being filled with heavenly beings and the sound of their praises. Followed by seeing such a tiny baby lying there so vulnerable and yet bringing so much promise?

What would it have been like if lying at home was a tiny baby boy of his own, but he had to spend the night out on that cold hillside? What must he have felt a few weeks later that terrible night when Herod's soldiers killed his baby son?

Was the memory of that glorious night worth all the grief? Or did that cost make what that baby had come to be so worth while?

## **THE PEOPLE'S KITCHEN**

Our aim is to provide friendship, food and support to the needy, lonely and homeless in and around Newcastle upon Tyne. This is made possible through our enthusiastic team of Volunteers and generous support. We are a registered Charity, No.103649. Loneliness and homelessness are all too familiar and depressing aspects of life today, a fact which is easily ignored. Alison Kay, the founder, believed that it is important that all the people in all the

world should be aware of what is happening around them. The People's Kitchen motto is "We are NOT here to see through one another - We are here to see one another through."

In 1985 Alison, aged 75 was so moved by finding an unidentified man dead under a bush in the city that she decided to do something to help rough sleepers.

The People's Kitchen offers friendship, food and support to anyone who is in need, no questions asked. We run a drop-in centre in Bath Lane and take food to the streets of Newcastle upon Tyne. "A lot of people come here to have a gossip with other people, and a chat with us," says volunteer Joe Collins.

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **December 2007**

**Sunday 16th 3.30pm** Join us outside 'Iceland' to sing Carols then come back with us for food in the church hall & hear the Christmas Story.

**Sunday 23rd 6.30pm** **Nine Lessons and Carols, by Candlelight** with mince pies, tea or coffee afterwards.

**Monday 24th December 11.30pm**  
**Christmas Eve Service** in the church including Communion.

**CHRISTMAS DAY: 10am Christmas Family Celebration** for all ages.

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Please complete and return survey overleaf

## January 2008

**Wednesday 9th January** from 6.30-8.30pm  
Small Groups joint **Fun & Fellowship evening with faith supper** - for the whole Church family to start the New Year together.

**Sunday 13th January** - 10.30am '**Servers Sunday**' Celebrating opportunities of serving inside and outside of the Church building with lunch to follow.

**Wednesday 16th January - 7-8.30pm Church Members Finance Meeting** a very important time to discuss and agree our financial plan for 2008. [Tea can be provided, for those who want to come straight from work and transport can be arranged for anyone who needs it, if booked in advance].

**SATURDAY February 9th Church AGM** - 9.15 for breakfast and 10am start and finished by 1pm at the latest. Children can be catered for if arranged in advance.

## WESTGATE NEWS - WORTH HAVING? Simon Lloyd

Would you please help me by completing a simple survey? I would like to know two specific things. Do you think Westgate News is worth producing? If you do, would you be prepared to help in its production? I have edited Westgate News for three

years because I believe we need to keep each other informed about what is happening in our church and in our own lives. There are two reasons for this. First it helps us both participate and support each other. Second in sharing what God is doing in our church life we present an ongoing witness to the Lord's work.

This edition is the shortest yet. On the last day for items to be sent in I got 3 articles and one has arrived since. I need more articles than this to include. I write an editorial and at least one other item but I simply don't have the personal time or skills to act as an investigative journalist.

I am fully aware that a lot of different things are being done by a lot of busy people. That includes me as my own personal commitments have grown a lot since I took this job on 3 years ago. Perhaps it is time for someone else or even a small group to take it over. Or should this be the last issue? Please pray about this.

So would you complete the survey form below and put it in the box in the foyer by the end of **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> December?**

## CHURCH CONTACT

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## Westgate News Survey

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think Westgate News is worth producing? YES / NO If you think it is worth producing would you be prepared to: Contribute to it? YES/NO

- If you are prepared to contribute, which of the following could you offer?  
Personal testimony \_\_\_\_ Humorous articles \_\_\_\_ Article about an aspect of church life \_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Would you be prepared to help produce future editions? YES / NO

**PLEASE LEAVE THIS SURVEY FORM IN THE BOX IN THE CHURCH FOYER**