

PROVINCE OF WEST LANCASHIRE
PRESTON MASONIC GROUP
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

On Sunday 11 December 2005 the Preston Group held its annual Christmas Carol Service at the new venue of Christ Church, Victoria Road, Fulwood, Preston. The church was full to capacity with freemasons, families and friends.

The guest of honour being V W Bro T Blackburn, P.G.Swd.B. Deputy Provincial Grand Master, together with W Bro W R Seddon, P.S.G.D, Assistant Provincial Grand Master, E Comp S Oldfield, P.G.Std.B, Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals, along with Officers of the Preston Group.

The Vicar of Christ Church, the Rev'd Brian McConkey, welcomed the congregation to Christ Church, enlightening all of his family connections with freemasonry in Ireland. Continuing with a humorous reference to being a life long supporter of Manchester United, hoping that the service would finish before his team kicked off in their game against Everton, scheduled to be televised later that afternoon. He proceeded to conduct a most delightful service.

The choir, assembled by W Bro Ian Cuerden, led the singing of favourite carols accompanied by the organist, Cedric McIlwaine. The whole being complemented by the musical accompaniment of the Old Hall Brass Ensemble. Three readings were delivered, by Bro David Coulston, Worshipful Master, Lodge of Endeavour No 7036, W Bro Michael Threlfall, Master, Stanley of Preston Lodge No 2600, concluding with the final reading given by the Vicar.

The Rev'd Brian McConkey's delivery of the Christmas address was thoughtful and readily received by the congregation.

The Service concluded by the Group Chairman, W Bro I W Greenwood, thanking the Vicar and Church authorities for their cooperation in allowing the service to take place and V W Bro T Blackburn for his support, not only on this occasion, but for many years previous. He continued in thanking the organist Cedric McIlwaine, The Old Hall Brass Ensemble, and W Bro Ian Cuerden along with the choir for their contributions in making the event such a great success. He also extended thanks to the Preston Masters 2000/01 and their ladies, in organising the refreshments, which followed in the Church hall and informed the congregation that there would also be a "Fair Trade" stall organised by Margaret Harrison.

At the suggestion of the Vicar, the collection was donated to the Tom Wade Appeal. Tom is a four-year-old parishioner of Christ Church and has severe Quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy and is profoundly deaf. In contrast to his very poor physical ability, he is very mentally alert, sociable and desperate to be able to interact more with the world around him. He has been accepted for a newly developed Neuro-Respiratory Therapy, based in Sussex, which is enabling children like him to gain control of their bodies, improve feeding ability, speech, eye-sight and to reduce the incidence of seizures. The aim is to raise £10,000 over three years to enable him to access this treatment and the congregation contributed generously to this very worthy cause.



The new venue, Christ Church, Fulwood, bathed in glorious winter sunshine



The “Fair Trade” stall in the church hall organised by Margaret Harrison with a very distinguished customer contemplating a purchase.



The Chairman of the Preston Masters 2000/01, Rod Thompson, being served a cup of tea by Murray Cameron, the year’s Treasurer, together with Dave Winder and the 2000/01 Master’s ladies who organised the refreshments after the service.