

St. John's, Lindow

IN TOUCH

Autumn 2013



The church with good news for today's people

SIMON'S SCRAWL

Welcome to the new style quarterly *In Touch* magazine! We hope this will be a great way of sharing stories of what God is doing amongst us, within our church family. Perhaps we are not always very good at doing that, but as a church we are supposed to be dependent upon one another, needing one another or encouraging one another.



One of the Apostle Paul's favourite pictures for the church is that of the human body – each part interconnected, each part dependent on the other parts. As you read these articles, I hope you'll be encouraged by God at work amongst us, and perhaps that will be a catalyst for a greater sharing of our lives, one with another. As we think about connecting with one another, praise God that he has communicated with us! *"The word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us."*

Yours, Simon

UNCOVER

Helping ordinary church members to introduce their friends to Jesus

This autumn, through our Sunday services and homegroups, we will be launching 'Uncover' – a series of simple studies in Luke's gospel, designed for use with non-Christians, giving them the chance to 'uncover' the evidence about the life and purpose of Jesus.

Courses such as *Christianity Explored* have been greatly used by God, but increasingly people do not have a church background or know much about Jesus. It's a big ask for friends to come to a course – it requires a degree of interest already! *Uncover* aims to bridge that gap: it is relational, helping you to talk about Jesus with your friends over a cup of coffee; it is easy to use, needing very little preparation time; and study questions have been expertly written in jargon-free language.

In conjunction with 'Uncover', we are hosting 'Three Witnesses', which is a fresh, dramatic retelling of Luke's gospel on Thursday 10th October at Wilmslow High School. This will be a great follow-on to The God Particle play that we hosted recently and a natural introduction to using 'Uncover' with your friends.

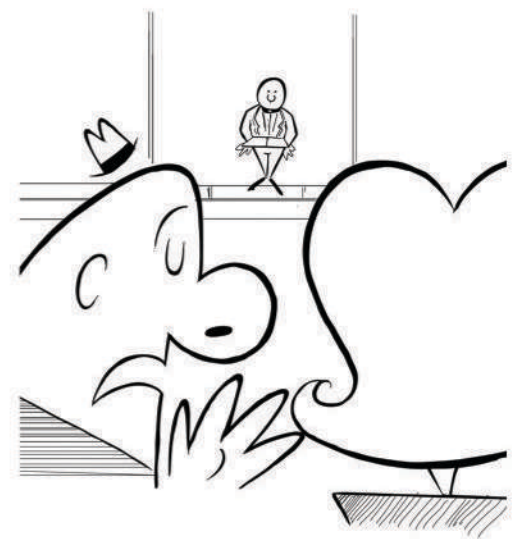
COMMUNICATIONS

Earlier this year a survey of the church family revealed that some of our communication wasn't working too well, and other things were missing altogether!

Since then, a small working group put an exciting series of recommendations to the church council which were warmly welcomed. Already the church website has been totally revamped – do have a browse at www.saint-johns.org.uk.

This new style of *In Touch* aims to improve our communication of things that are coming up in the next few months, so that together we'll be ready for the opportunities ahead. It will also be a way for us to look back, with more news from one another in the church family so we can be encouraged for the journey ahead.

The parish *Crosslink* leaflet has also become a rather tired and dated, so that's getting a facelift too – look out for more changes in the pipeline!



"WHAT'S HE SAYING?"

"NOT SURE - SOMETHING
ABOUT EX-COMMUNICATION"

VIEW FROM THE PEW

Gareth: Anne, I hear you like Desert Island Discs, so what about you? What music would you take, if you were marooned?

Anne: Well, I love Nabucco's Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves.

G: For cultural Philistines like me, what? why?

A: Well, it's a fantastic piece of music, but also it is based on Psalm 137, expressing the sadness of the Israelites when they are in exile in Babylon.

G: And is that a particular part of the Bible which is especially striking for you?

A: Well actually, the most striking part of scripture for me is the Exodus, especially the Passover. It's such a striking picture of what Jesus then does for us as our sacrifice, with God's judgement passing over us onto him.

G: You get the Bible on your desert island for free, but what about other books?

A: Joyce Burmester has always been great at giving me good books to read - I've especially enjoyed the biographies, like the one on John Newton, a man who was such a monster and yet turned around by God's grace.

Gareth: There's another disc for you, 'Amazing grace.' Now tell us a bit about your life and faith.

Anne: I grew up in a nominally Christian family, going to Sunday School and being confirmed as a teenager, but it meant nothing to me at the time. Years later an old friend of my husband's moved into Wilmslow in the 1980s. He and his wife were Roman Catholics and although they were having a very difficult time in their life they always seemed to have such peace and joy in their lives. After a few years of seeing how they lived I simply decided to go to church. I went to St. John's and spoke to Rob Peters, the then vicar, and did a basic Christianity course with him - and that's where it all fell into place for me. I began to understand who Jesus was and what he had done and how I could know Jesus myself. Looking back though, in some ways I don't think I was ever really seeking God, it seems much more that he came looking for me. I wasn't interested in the church or the Bible, but this couple came along and through their lives posed unavoidable question about life.

This is an abridged version of a lovely hour long chat one July afternoon - If you've enjoyed reading this then why not take this as an opportunity to speak to Anne if you've never spoken to her before.



ANNE ELLIOT

BOOK REVIEW

If I Were God, I'd Make Myself Clearer - John Dickson

Over ten years since the book's initial release, John Dickson continues to make very relevant and insightful points about how people perceive God and Christianity in this day and age. For believer and non-believer alike, whether you're a Christ-filled Christian or an unrelenting atheist, this second instalment in Dickson's evangelistic series will help you to understand just why God and religion in general are such tender subjects in society.

Dickson splits the book into five easy-to-follow chapters, allowing me to go through the book at a reasonable pace, without being confused as to where I was, or what I was actually reading about. So if you aren't an avid reader, then you can very easily dip in and out of the 75-80 pages and start at whichever chapter sounds the most interesting to you.

Marc Hollinshead

MY TRIP TO AFRICA

Interview with Nicola Vaughan

I have recently returned from a 3 month mission trip to South Africa with Tearfund. The team (6 of us) were based in Mpophomeni Township in KwaZulu-Natal working with the charity Ethembeni – our time was mainly focused working with the children at the Family Centre.

I went out to South Africa not really knowing what to expect, and I really wasn't expecting what I found! The people I met were so physically poor; they relied on the kindness of friends, neighbours and charities like Ethembeni. But spiritually they were the richest people I have ever met. I quickly realised that because they were unable to rely on themselves – as we so easily are in the UK – they relied completely on God. They had continual praise, love and adoration for Him, whether they were in good health or bad; whether they were HIV+ or not; whether they had lost children, mothers, brothers, or everyone – they continued to love our God.



One day at the family centre Sma (one of the girls of the teenagers in the programme) asked me about witnessing for God. We looked through the Bible and found 2 Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." Sma and I talked about this verse and we decided that shining for God and letting his goodness and love shine out of us is the best way to witness for God. To many people – especially people in the township – Christians would be the only "bible" they would hear. In the township, actions speak louder than words – witnessing the way Christians acted showed people the gospel.



We also spent some time working with the youth in the local town – Howick. Our role was there as Christians to encourage and support both the junior youth, and the teenagers our own age. But we were also witnessing to them. Although Apartheid is over, the effects are still very obvious in some areas. Some of the youth at Howick we still very influenced by their families views, this meant that our role in Mpophomeni helped break down some of their beliefs. They were first shocked that we were living and working in the township, but they quickly learnt that, if the right precautions were taken, Mpophomeni was safe, and the people there were normal people, just living

under very different circumstances to them. We were there to help break down old beliefs, grudges and views of the British South Africans about Zulu people.

I learnt a lot from my time in South Africa. I learnt how much God really does have a plan for every one of us and he loves us. Although we face challenges, he knows what he is doing. He is building us up into the person he wants us to be. There is a really good quote that sums this up "God will not let you go through more than you can handle. If you have a big challenge today, that just means you have a big destiny." One week in the church at the Family Centre on Sunday mornings, the speaker talked about how we are like clay, every day, continuously being moulded by God. I love that picture, it reminds me that every day God is looking after me and wanting me to trust him."



MISSION

In Touch sent our roving reporter Norma to Peru (well, via email!) to have a chat with Alejandro.

Hola Alejandro! We know you've moved to a new work on the outskirts of Arequipa in the past year – how's it going? Yes, I'm working in a new mission called St. James. Every Sunday we have a service. We are not many yet, just 7 or 8 adults and 7 children, but we hope to grow with the help of the Lord. Our mission is at the top of a hill, and access is not easy, we are a bit isolated.

What are the typical beliefs of the local people? There are many churches around us, of many denominations. About 95% of the people are Roman Catholic. Arequipa is known as "Little Rome", because in every village you will find a Roman Catholic church.

What plans have you got to reach them with the good news of Jesus? I am trying to get to know the locals and give the building a new look - it is very neglected. I would like to organize a course introducing the Christian faith, which would then be followed up by small bible study groups in people's homes. It might be small numbers to start with.

How is the house building going? We heard you've qualified as an electrician! Well, soon I hope to be! I am continuing with fitting out the house – unfortunately prices have gone through the roof in the last year for building materials.

Please tell us some news of your family. Thank God my family is fine - Rolando is working in a insurance company, Alejandro is working as a chef and is also studying English, Carlos is a teacher in the College San Lucas and Helen is still studying. She wanted to finish a degree in languages but this week we heard that the university has closed the course due to lack of students. We'll have to see what other related courses there are. Doris my wife is getting better slowly.

How can we pray for you? Thank you! That the process of acquiring the land documents will happen quickly for the Mission St. James, for the Lord to give me wisdom on how to develop the right courses for sharing the gospel, and that we may have funds to finish our home.

NEW MINISTRY TRAINEES - Q&A

Name, age, and where do you come from? Tom Beaumont, 22, from Buckhurst Hill, Essex // Steve Battey, 20, born and raised in Chapeltown, Sheffield

What have you just been doing? Tom: Studying Engineering at Cambridge University. // Steve: I've been working at The Oakes Holiday Centre, a great place where we get to share the gospel with young people aged 8-18 on a weekly basis, all year round!

Why are you coming to St. John's? Tom: I'm looking to get a better idea of what church ministry is like so that I can make a more informed decision about whether that would be right for me long-term. In the meantime I want to serve Jesus wholeheartedly during my time at St John's. // Steve: Firstly, because I love Jesus and secondly because I'd like to learn about how to further my own ministry, as well as other peoples, with a view to becoming involved in ministry full-time in a couple of years.

What's the best thing about Jesus? Tom: His selflessness and love in humbling himself to death on the cross so that I might have a relationship with God. // Steve: The best thing about Jesus is his unending love for us, the love that took him to the cross, and the love that brings me back into a full and right relationship with God despite all the rubbish things I've done.

What are your hobbies/pastimes? Tom: I love to play sport - particularly badminton, squash and football. I also really enjoy playing the piano. // Steve: I love music! I play guitar, bass, ukelele and a little bit of drums. When I'm not absorbed in music, I love to play sports - any and all sports!

FOREMARKE 3 2013

Interview with Grace Lambert

For people who don't know, what is Foremarke 3?
A Christian activity camp for 14-18s.

Why is Foremarke 3 a helpful holiday to go on?
It's really encouraging to meet other teenage Christians who are going through similar struggles.

What is your favourite thing about Foremarke 3?
There are so many amazing things, with all the activities and the friendships you develop, but the seminars and the singing are the best.

Describe Foremarke 3 in three words.
Friends. Songs. God.

What have been the big things you've learnt at Foremarke this year?
None of us are good enough to deserve our rescue, but if you're with God then it doesn't matter who you are or what you've done, He will save you.

What would you say to anyone thinking of going next year?
It is easily the best part of my summer. You make great friends and the amazing leaders will answer any of your questions.



GRACE (LEFT) AND HER DORM
HANG OUT WITH TIGGER
(NICOLA VAUGHAN) DURING
AN ACTIVITY

EVERGREENS

Evergreens celebrated their third *Holiday at Home* event, open to anyone over the age of 60, during the first week of August. Over 30 people, including helpers, attended the three afternoon events held in the church rooms.

The event's theme, this year, was *Times Past* and the afternoon began with light refreshments followed by a short 5 minute talk on *Times Past* and its relevance for us today. This was followed by a quiz to keep the brain cells working and then the activities began!

We started with a round of "chairbics" – a gentle and amusing way of exercising - which once again proved to be very popular and caused much laughter.

After chairbics, some of the group broke off into arts and craft, where some beautiful book marks and greetings cards were designed and made by those participating. Others in the group enjoyed playing various table games such as dominoes.

For those for whom chairbics proved to be a stimulus for further exercise, there was croquet or boules on the vicarage lawn. The croquet masterclass leader was often bewildered and bemused by the amazing stroke play of his pupils.

The afternoon was concluded by afternoon tea which put back all the calories lost during the various exercises. A huge "Thank You" to all who helped make these afternoons a real success.

This term's lunches will be on 15th September and 3rd November, with our Christmas tea taking place at 2.30pm on Sunday 8th December.

Gordon Smith

THEOLOGY CORNER - APOLOGETICS

In a world where a majority remain indifferent to Christian faith or frankly disdain it as incompatible with reason, some opinion leaders, scientists and media personalities harangue Christians as being dogmatic, deluded, daft or frankly dangerous. Yet for centuries Christians have maintained that that their faith is both true and reasonable. Indeed the Greek word for faith (pistis) is related to the word for trust, honesty and provable knowledge.

Young and old feel ill-equipped to express their faith in credible terms. That's where apologetics comes in. It comes from a Greek word, 'apologia' which means to mount a strong defence which will stand up in a court of law. St Peter wrote "... Always be ready to make a defence (apologia) to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

Just like barristers, Christians need to train in effective defence for their hope. There are some amazing resources available including books, courses and internet resources (some are mentioned at the end of this article). A group of us who trained with the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics set up Apologetics in Manchester to provide a local training resource more than 3 years ago. We meet for two hours on a Saturday morning two or three times a term in a friendly setting with lots of coffee and doughnuts. We invite you to learn how strong, defensible, true and rational the bible and faith is, and how it is backed up by many exterior and interior witnesses.

Come join us on 12th October and 23rd November at Apologetics in Manchester. We are also running 5 week course as part of the Manchester Bible School - from September 23rd to October 21st - where the subject will be *The Practical Application of Apologetics in Society*.

Philip Lewis



BRIAN HAD NEVER REALLY BEEN SURE WHAT APOLOGETICS WAS.

NORTHERN WOMENS CONVENTION

In October 2012 a big group of women from St John's, some younger, some older, some single, some married, joined together with hundreds of other women from across the north of England (and beyond) to enjoy a day of Bible teaching, discussion and singing at the Northern Women's Convention in Manchester. It's easy to see why so many women attend – it's welcoming, inspirational and a great opportunity to get to know other women in the church family a bit better.

The 2012 theme was *The Ways of the Word*. The main speaker was Kathleen Nielson, an English Professor by trade, and currently the Director of Women's Initiatives for the Gospel Coalition. Married with three sons, and living in the USA, Kathleen says that helping people to understand the richness of God's word is the joy of her life. Kathleen gave two talks and led a seminar on Literary Beauty in God's Word. Other seminar choices included: *Getting to Grips with God's Word*, *How God Guides by his Word*, *God's Word Out and About*, *God's Word with Children* and *God's Word in Song*. We had a truly wonderful day together. We shared our sandwiches, our cars and a lot of laughter!

Why not join us at the 2013 convention? It's on 12th October and the main speaker, Jodi Hinds, will be speaking on Hebrews 12 with the theme of fixing our eyes on Jesus. You may want to have a look at the website (www.christianconventions.org.uk/nwc), where there are many helpful seminar choices. Be prepared to be challenged and to have some fun! It's bound to be another great day out together.

Kate Howsley

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Sundays

10am

LUKE MEGABITES

6.30pm

LUKE MINIBITES

Homegroups

Sept 8	Jesus arrives Luke 1:1 - 3:20	Seeing salvation Luke 2:22 - 2:35
Sept 15	The mission begins Luke 3:21 - 4:30	It's all coming true! Luke 4:14 - 4:21
Sept 22	Words of power Luke 4:31 - 6:49	Who can forgive sin? Luke 5:17 - 5:26
Sept 29	Who is this Jesus? Luke 7:1 - 9:50	Dying for life Luke 9:18 - 9:27
Oct 6	Following Jesus Luke 9:51 - 10:42	Real discipleship Luke 9:51 - 9:62
Oct 13	Harvest: All Age Parade The generous Father Luke 11:1 - 11:13	Not religion! Luke 11:1 - 12:12
Oct 20	Treasure in heaven Luke 12:13 - 13:21	The life that matters Luke 12:13 - 12:34
Oct 27	Who will inherit the Kingdom? Luke 13:22 - 14:35	God's banquet Luke 14:15 - 14:24
Nov 3	The long search Luke 15:1 - 16:15	Light Party
Nov 10	Remembrance: All Age Parade Jesus first! Luke 18:18 - 18:30	What must I do to receive eternal life? Luke 16:16 - 19:27
Nov 17	The King arrives Luke 19:28 - 22:38	The ultimate insult Luke 20:9 - 20:18
Nov 24	The cross of Jesus Luke 22:39 - 23:49	The death that saves Luke 23:26 - 23:43
Dec 1	Raised to life! Luke 23:50 - 24:53	Meeting the risen Lord Luke 24:13 - 24:55
Dec 8	The return of Jesus Luke 17:20 - 17:37	The King comes! Isaiah 11:1 - 11:11
Dec 15	Ready for his return? Luke 19:11 - 19:27	Good news of a glorious future Isaiah 61:1 - 61:11
Dec 22	Nativity from scratch	Nine lessons and carols

Lord's Supper on third Sunday

Lord's Supper on first Sunday

Meeting in various homes around the parish on Thursdays and Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's Word and to encourage and support one another. A specially produced DVD-based series *A Passion to Witness* will be equipping us to share the good news of our Lord Jesus.

Sept 5

What is the gospel?

Sept 19

Why should we share the gospel?

Oct 3

Using the Bible to share the gospel

Oct 17

Why don't we share the gospel?

Oct 31

How to pray when sharing the gospel

Nov 14

How to tell my story

Nov 28

How should we answer questions?

Dec 12

How to lead someone to Christ

Dates given are for Thursdays. In addition, a women's Bible study meets at 9.45am on Wednesdays and a men's Bible study meets at 6.30am on Fridays.

Special Events

Sept 1	Holiday Club <i>Sausage Sizzle</i> Vicarage Lawn, 11.30am - 2pm	Oct 12	Northern Women's Convention Armitage Centre
Sept 7	Prayer Breakfast Church Rooms, 8.30am - 10am	Oct 16	Three Witnesses Wilmslow High School
Sept 21	Men's Breakfast Speaker: Peter Horlock, 8.15am	Nov 2-3	Youth Weekend Away (14-18s)
Oct 5	Who Let The Dads Out? Church Rooms, 9.30am	Nov 9	SOUND Youth Conference
Oct 5	Family Forum 7pm	Nov 30	Who Let The Dads Out? Church Rooms, 9.30am
Oct 6	'Simply Lunch' Sharing a meal together	Dec 21	Nativity from Scratch - Rehearsal Church Rooms