

St. John's, Lindow

# IN TOUCH

Spring 2016

## Resurrection

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

John 11:25-26

# SIMON'S SCRAWL

Simon Gales

These days it is not very often that Christianity is a natural, everyday topic of conversation. Maybe you feel that the natural opportunities to talk about your faith are few and far between.

But now just such an opportunity is about to land in our laps! A new film is coming out which will get everyone talking.

On March 18th 'Risen' will be released. It is a compelling, professionally produced film about Jesus' resurrection, which takes a fresh approach while remaining true to the biblical story. The story is told through the eyes of Clavius, a sceptical Roman soldier, who is tasked by Pontius Pilate to investigate Jesus' death and resurrection, in order to debunk the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. In the movie we see Clavius turn from someone who is hardened and remote to someone who shows mercy and believes. Towards the end there's a moving scene where Jesus affirms what Clavius seeks - certainty, a day without death and peace, all found in following Jesus. You can check out the review by Dan Rackham (from St Philemon's Toxteth) by searching for 'Dan Rackham Risen' on Youtube.

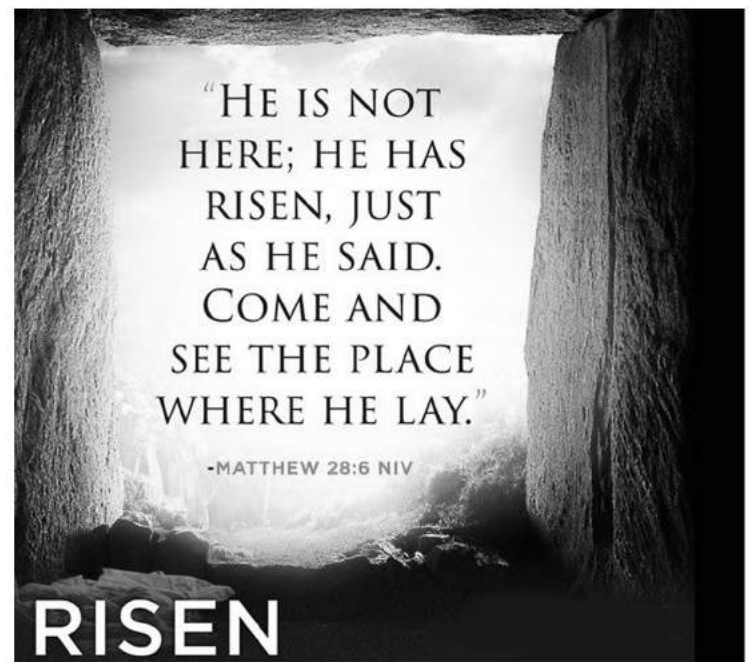
'Risen' is on at all major cinemas - including Didsbury. Lets use this easy opportunity to get our unbelieving friends talking - invite as many as possible to come and see it with you (even if it

means going several times yourself !!), and why not give them a copy of 'Easter Uncut' (see review on page 5) as a take home gift, to look at the eye witness record themselves.



Its not often a chance like this comes along! As the Apostle Paul says 'Make the most of every opportunity!' Be sure to let me know what you made of the film and how it went.

Yours, Simon



Ben Hollinshead

# VIEW FROM THE PEW

Anne & Richard DuFresne

*Gareth: Hi Anne and Richard, many of us know you, given you've been a part of St. John's nearly 20 years now! but for those of us that don't know you tell us a bit about your background.*

*Richard: I'm an Engineer by training and I started out working life in North Sea oil exploration and in the mid-1980s I was looking for a base near Heathrow so I could fly out to Norway easily and so I looked into renting a room in Oxford and ended up being flat mates with Anne!*

*Anne: I told my mum that our new flat mate was nice because he wasn't there very much! But when he left at the end of the year we started seeing each other and were married a few years later in 1990. We moved to Cheltenham the next year and Henry, our eldest was born the year after that. By the time we moved to Wilmslow in 1998, we had George, Ellie and Alice in tow too!*

*Gareth: And you both became Christians in Cheltenham?*

*Anne: Yes, we both come from Christian families but had drifted away in our teen years and then in Cheltenham we got to know a couple who had been medical missionaries and who had a baby the same age as Henry. They invited us to church and although they then moved to Leeds, we continued going to the church. The turning point came in 1993 when we both did the Alpha course.*

*Gareth: And you moved to Wilmslow because of work?*

*Richard: Yes I moved out of oil and into an insurance company. It was a difficult time as we'd just moved to Wilmslow and had four children 0-6 and the job we'd moved here with wasn't working out. But I then got a job in banking in 2000 and still work in that sector.*

*Gareth: So they weren't easy years.*

*Anne: No but it was fine really, personally I have found the last few years far more challenging. Henry has had serious eye problems and there was a time a couple of years ago when I was sitting in the hospital waiting whilst Henry underwent eye surgery and over in St. Anne's my mum was*



*seriously ill and passed away shortly after. It was very hard, but my sister was sending me regular texts of Bible verses and I was listening to a lot of Christian worship music, which helped a great deal.*

*Gareth: Our theme for In touch this term is the resurrection, what does the resurrection mean to you?*

*Richard: For me the most important thing, the bedrock of my faith is that Jesus died for me; God so loved me that he was prepared to send his son to do that. I guess I'm less clear on why the resurrection is so important; Jesus' sacrifice is the powerful core of the faith I think.*

*Anne: Well for me the resurrection is vital because it means that I worship a living Lord. I have a personal living relationship with a living person and that means I know who I am trusting and I don't have to worry about the rest, he's alive and got it covered.*

*[We then had a half hour discussion on the resurrection which is hard to summarise on one page of A4!]*

*Gareth: Well maybe this could be the beginning of a conversation about the importance of the resurrection! Well, thanks Richard and Anne, it's been a joy to talk with you.*

# THE MESSAGE TRUST

Ann Vaughan

The Message Trust is a Christian youth charity with over 20 years' experience of working with some of the hardest to reach young people tackling issues ranging from offending, antisocial behaviour, unemployment, to self-image issues. They work in schools, prisons, and tough neighbourhoods, using music, drama and mobile youth clubs on converted double decker buses (why not speak to Harry about his time on the bus), whilst proclaiming the gospel. The Message started in Manchester and has moved to regions across the UK and most recently to South Africa.

The HIGHER Tour will be the biggest mission to young people in the UK for a generation.



It started in Greater Manchester, and will visit other regions over the next 5 years, where creative teams will lead intensive missions in up to 50 high schools over a four-week period, presenting the Christian faith and inviting young people to attend large-scale outreach events to learn more. There, through live music, performances and preaching, they will be given a clear opportunity to respond to the good news of Jesus Christ. In Manchester the O2 Apollo was the venue for 5 such nights. Those young people who responded will be connected with one of the local church partners and a range of helpful discipleship resources.

The vision is that, in partnership with local churches and other youth agencies, 200,000 young people – 10% of the UK high school population – might become disciples of Christ over the next five years and if they are equipped and empowered to share the good news of the gospel with their friends, our nation could see the transformation of this generation.



*Emma Owen with Respect ME - part of The Message that works in schools with teenage girls discussing issues like self-image and peer pressure.*

## *Why 200,000?*

It is thought that if 10% of a population holds an unshakable belief, their belief will be adopted by the majority of society.

Those young people who respond during the HIGHER Tour will be supported in their tentative steps in the Christian journey. This had meant:

- equipping local churches and the regions youth workers for the expectant influx of new believers.
- training and encouraging Christian young people ready to support peers.
- writing the 'AAA' discipleship resource to enable new believers to get started on their discipleship journey.
- printing a pocket sized Higher Bible for every new believer to enable them to grow in their faith.

The HIGHER Tour vision has been covered in prayer from its outset. In the run up to the HIGHER Tour Manchester a period of 40 days of prayer and fasting took place.

The HIGHER Tour Manchester has now taken place, but you can still get involved by praying for all those young people and for the next HIGHER event. Follow at [twitter.com/thehighertour](https://twitter.com/thehighertour) or [message.org.uk](http://message.org.uk).

# BOOK REVIEW

*Lifted – Experiencing the Resurrection Life*  
by Sam Allberry

Nick Vaughan

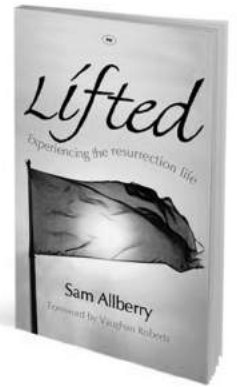
I'd be the first to admit that I am not very good at talking to non-Christians about Jesus, but when I do get into these conversations I tend to ask them what they believe happened at Easter. This book, by Sam Allberry, turned that question back onto me, not so much as to what do I think happened, I believe in the resurrection and am convinced of the historicity of it, but more about how do I display that belief and do so every day not just at Easter.

Right at the beginning Sam Allberry challenges us by saying that the resurrection changes everything – it guarantees our forgiveness, empowers us to change, gives us a hope for the future and an urgent mission for the present. Those themes of assurance, transformation hope and mission are then unpacked over the rest of the book.

It is not a difficult academic book to read, the style is quite light and humorous at times. One of the things I particularly enjoyed about the book is the way that Sam Allberry writes as if he is having a conversation with you, the reader. Writing about our certain hope that comes from the resurrection

of Jesus he reminds us of Paul's letter to the Corinthians "If Christ had not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:14). After a short discussion on this Sam goes on to write "But don't sit there feeling sorry for Paul. If Jesus Christ is still dead you have some serious problems of your own."

I found this book a great encouragement in both the explaining of the message of the resurrection and it's application for us today. Sam tells us of a man in the United States who had the Nike Swoosh tattooed on his chest. When asked why, he replied that he wanted to be able to look down at it in the shower and to remind him at the start of each day to "Just do it". If we are transformed by the resurrection that seems a good way to start each day – but I don't think I will be getting the tattoo just yet.



# BOOK REVIEW

*Easter Uncut - Carl Laferton*

David Land

When I was asked to write this book review, I started to worry. What if I didn't like it? Would I have to compromise my integrity as a literary critic? Thankfully, none of these concerns were relevant since it is a genuinely good book which I have no reservations in recommending to you.

The book aims to tell the story of Easter without jargon or assumed knowledge, making it both accessible to those who no Bible knowledge, whilst also being a fresh telling of the Easter story for those with extensive Bible knowledge. As someone whose Bible knowledge lies somewhere between those two extremes, I found that what was familiar was painted with new colour and what was new to me was...new. I learnt not just knowledge, but also understanding and appreciation of Jesus.

The book itself is a series of short chapters, each starting with a passage from John's Gospel followed by a concise and readable explanation of both the passage itself and the consequences for us. It is written with non-Christians in mind and works as a great introduction to Easter (and Jesus more generally), but I expect it will be valuable for everyone to read. If you are preparing to celebrate Easter for the nth time, this book will help you bypass your familiarity and rediscover something of the surprise and excitement of celebrating Easter for the first time.



# EVIDENCE

Everyday, we make decisions in our lives based on evidence. Whether the evidence might be things we have personally seen or heard, or things people have told us, we weigh up what we know about a situation and choose how to act based on the evidence.

Have we personally put Jesus' resurrection to the test in this way? Have we weighed up the evidence? Take a look at these detective's notes to dig deeper.

## WAS JESUS REALLY DEAD?

How do we know he really died? If Jesus didn't die, he didn't need to rise from the dead!

- On the cross, Jesus cries "It is finished"
- Jesus is stabbed with a spear
- Joseph of Arimathea requests Jesus' body from Pilate

- The Romans were experts at execution and crucifixion wasn't something people survived.

- Pilate asks the centurion to check Jesus is dead and the executioner confirms that he has died and releases the body.

It seems clear that Jesus really did die on the cross.

## THE MISSING BODY

After the crucifixion, the women went to the tomb and found it empty, without the Roman soldiers were not guarding it. The huge stone was rolled away. The angel that appeared to the women told them "not to seek the living amongst the dead," and then Mary said she spoke to the living Jesus

**THE ROMAN GUARDS?**  
A guard abandoning their post or failing in their duties could have feared execution!

# THE RESURRECTION

An evidence-based look at the claims

## THE APPEARANCES

**Eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus**

- Mary at the tomb

- The disciples on the road to Emmaus  
- They were dejected and disappointed  
24:21 - "but we had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem Israel."  
- Since they hadn't seen Jesus, they are convinced they are other disciples

The 11 disciples in the upper room

- They are fearful and doubtful  
- They don't believe that Jesus is risen  
- They are wondering if they might see him appear in their midst!

- The disciples on the beach

- Then, Jesus appears to them  
- He appears to over 500 at once (1 Corinthians 15:6)

- In his gospel, Luke says that there were many eyewitnesses of the events

- So where were they?  
- If the women didn't find the body, why would they say that Jesus was risen?  
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# ION: A CASE FILE

aim that Jesus rose from the dead

Jesus seen alive  
after crucifixion??

## RANCES

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## WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE?

The disciples' behaviour is incredibly persuasive. They witnessed Jesus' death on the cross and gave up completely, thinking they were wrong about him being the Messiah.

They are then transformed by seeing him alive after the resurrection. They are tortured, persecuted and martyred for their faith in the living, risen Jesus.

Stephen, the first martyr, is killed under the watchful eye of Saul the persecutor - who in turn becomes convinced of the risen Jesus after his encounter with God on the road to Damascus.

We are in a better position than the disciples. We have all the evidence; we can see what happens and we have the testimony from all these sources. Saul - who would become Paul, the writer of much of the New Testament - is clear as to the importance of the resurrection: **"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."** (1 Corinthians 15).

Paul is clear on the implications - if Jesus is not risen, Christianity is nothing. And yet, Paul is so convinced that he repeatedly puts his life on the line to spread the gospel message.

## WHAT IS YOUR VERDICT? STILL DEAD? OR RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

Your verdict, based on this evidence, is of huge significance.

If Jesus never rose from the dead, none of this matters.

If Jesus was raised from the dead, this requires a response. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

# CHURCH WEEKEND AT HOME

Rebekah Watson

We had a great weekend at home thinking about mission with Peter Rowan from OMF. On Saturday morning we studied Acts 13 and 16 and considered the beginnings of the church and Paul's vision for taking the gospel to Europe. We discussed and prayed about what our mission fields are and how to reach out to them, whether in at work, at home; locally or further afield.



On Saturday afternoon we got stuck in with crafts from around the world! From kite making to Peruvian cooking; from bunting creating, to origami folding, video watching, card making and praying, everyone had a great time. The meal on Saturday evening was lovely and that along with the barn dance, gave us a time to engage in fun and fellowship.

## EVERGREENS

We now find ourselves part of the Evergreens Team. What a great blessing this is - to be part of such a well-oiled, enthusiastic, long lasting and above all, widespread team who have been doing so much good work for so long. It is a real pleasure and privilege. What the team tries to do is to provide comfort and fellowship around a meal about every 6/8 weeks for the more elderly within our local community with whom we have contact. They are a wonderful group with great life experience and it is a joy to be getting to know them and to hear their stories from such long lives.

The main motive is to share Jesus with them so that those who already know Him are encouraged and those who don't are introduced to Him so that they may turn and be saved- a great cause and mission. In Philippians Paul talks about "partnership in the

On Sunday morning, we were encouraged from 1 Corinthians to run the race with preparation, perseverance and perspective. Paul was prepared, he knew the scriptures, he knew God and he was sensitive to the needs and values of his mission field. He was prepared to fit into their culture for the sake of winning them for Christ as full disciples - he was gospel orientated. Paul persevered through many trials to continue in his ministry. We were encouraged to run in the perspective of our transformation at the end of the race, and not to forget who we are (in Christ) and where we are going.

All in all, a fantastic weekend was had by all, but this write up wouldn't be a complete view of things without catching up with the kids! The kids' weekend was amazing, fun filled with biscuits, songs and pink koalas (if you want to know what on earth that means, you'll have to ask them!). What they concluded they would take away from the weekend was summed up perfectly by Ben Crispin: *"the mission Jesus gives us is possible with God"*. What a truth for us all to take away! We don't have the power to change hearts, He does. What a privilege that He has chosen us to be a part of His mission!

George and Alison Perrin



gospel" and it is a lovely way to share in the great commission (Mathew 28 vs 19). We do this by our action - sharing food and fellowship and ensuring that there is a short "thought for the day" that points to the fact that our Lord and Saviour is Jesus and that salvation is found in no one else. We are thinking and praying about how we may extend this mission so if you would like to join in the fun please let us know.

# RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

*Photos from recent events at St. John's*



Confirmation Service...



...and lunch afterwards!



Church Weekend at Home fun!



# NEW FACES AT ST. JOHN'S

*We say hello to some of the newer members of the St. John's Church family*



*Ben Johnson & Beth Wilson*

We started coming along to St. John's around October 2015. Ben is currently working for John Lewis Head Office in Didsbury. Beth is working as a County Court Advocate while she waits to finish training to be a barrister.

We are looking forward to getting married at St Johns in November this year. We hope to move back to the Wilmslow area in due course, having lived in the centre of town from 2012-2014.

*Lisa Li*

I am Lisa, I come from China. I was a nurse in China. Now I am doing a degree in nursing at Salford University - I hope to qualify this March and have been offered a job in Macclesfield Hospital. I have lived in Macclesfield for eleven years, my husband Alan is English and I have one son, also here in the UK.



*Harvey, Sarah & Austin Woods*

Hello we're the Woods family – Harvey, Sarah & Austin. We started coming to St John's since Austin joined the Beavers Lodge a few months ago. Thank you for the very warm welcome. It's lovely to feel part of the church family and community.

*Sarah Moore*

My name is Sarah Moore and I have 3 children (Hayley, Josh and Chloe) and one grandson, Max. I started coming to St John's after the death of Karen Prestidge's son, Daniel, and seeing the difference that faith in Jesus made in his life. I have recently completed the Christianity Explored course, which helped my understanding of the Christian message, and I decided to get confirmed in response to what Jesus has done for us.



*Frank, Debbie, Alexandra and Roman Witzel*

We are a German-American family who moved to Wilmslow in summer 2014. We have lived in Atlanta, Georgia; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Frankfurt, Germany, and before that...we could go on! We've been happily attending St. John's since January. Alexandra is in her second year at Sheffield Uni; Roman is in Y12 at Wilmslow High. We discovered St. John's when Debbie listened to one of Simon's sermons online. We appreciate the bible-based teaching and getting to know the kind and friendly folks here!

# THEOLOGY CORNER

## WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION PROVE?



Article by Keith  
Sinclair, Bishop of  
Birkenhead

Soon after Saul is converted dramatically on the Damascus Road, Acts 9:22 says he *"became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah"*.

Proving is a powerful word. In a court of law you have to prove a person's guilt "beyond all reasonable doubt". You accumulate evidence and on the basis of evidence you hope the jury will come to the correct verdict. If you have been part of a jury you may wonder sometimes if the evidence plays as strongly as it should (but that is a discussion for another time); here I want to set out not the evidence for the resurrection but what it is that the resurrection itself proves as Saul does in Damascus and as Christians have been doing ever since (if you want evidence for the resurrection itself go to Peter Walker's "The weekend that changed the world", or the article in the middle of this magazine).

The resurrection proves according to Saul that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ; this is why we call him "our Lord Jesus Christ". The Messiah was the one promised to Israel by God, the Anointed one prophesied by Isaiah (see Isaiah 61:1 "the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the oppressed"). Jesus quotes this same scripture to describe himself (Luke 4:16); he goes on to say that contrary to popular belief this Messiah would suffer and be killed and on the third day be raised (see Matthew 16:21 and many other places). The resurrection proves he was speaking the truth.

He is God's anointed to bring good news to the whole world, and the resurrection proves he is who he said he was, and he did what he said he would do.

There are many places in which this truth is explained by Saul (who was renamed Paul), and the 4 gospels spell it out. If you want one summary of what his resurrection proves from Jesus himself, go to the words he uses on the night before he dies; at the Passover meal he takes the bread and says "Take eat, this is my body" and he takes the cup and says "Drink this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27, 28).

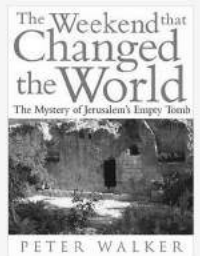
He is telling his followers (and us) what his death means; he is telling us that his death will be a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, the bread representing his body broken on the cross, his body, not the body of an animal, taking away the sin of the people, and his blood in the cup taking away God's judgement over all sin.

The resurrection proves that this has been done. It can never be repeated and it never needs to be repeated, it has been done, it is finished. It is good news for anyone who knows that they have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, like Saul, like us, like the world. Hallelujah.

### FURTHER READING

Peter Walker's *The Weekend that Changed the World* delves deeper into the evidence for the resurrection along with a look at why the resurrection is relevant and significant to

us today. Walker lectures in New Testament Studies and Biblical Theology at Oxford University.



# SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMME

Sundays	10am	6.30pm	Homegroups
	Lord's Supper on third Sunday	Lord's Supper on first Sunday	
Apr 3	Made in Eden: Human Identity	The promise of God Genesis 12:1-9	<p>Meeting in various homes, on Thursday &amp; Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's Word and encourage one another.</p> <hr/> <p>SOULS SONGS</p> <p>April 14th <i>Psalms 3 &amp; 4 - A song for sleepless nights</i></p> <p>April 28th <i>Psalm 16 - A song for when sin seems good</i></p> <p>May 12th <i>Psalm 18 - A song for when we want to run away</i></p> <p>May 26th <i>Psalm 27 - A song for when we are afraid</i></p> <p>June 9th <i>Psalm 30 - A song of gratitude</i></p> <p>June 23rd <i>Psalm 32 - A song for secret guilt</i></p> <p>July 7th <i>Psalm 34 - A song of deliverance</i></p> <p>July 21st <i>Psalm 40 - A song for when we feel besieged</i></p> <hr/> <p>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.</p>
Apr 10	Made in Eden: Marriage	Abram and Lot Genesis 13, 14	
Apr 17	Made in Eden: Stewardship	God's Covenant Genesis 15	
Apr 24	APCM	The Covenant: Signed & Sealed Genesis 17	
May 1	Made in Eden: Work	Day of Destiny Genesis 19	
May 8	Parade Service	Genuine Faith Genesis 22	
May 15	Gospel Twisters Galatians 1:1-10	The Work of the Spirit Revealing	
May 22	An inspired message Galatians 1:11-24	The Work of the Spirit Life Giving	
May 29	Only one way Galatians 2:1-10	The Work of the Spirit Fruit Bearing	
Jun 5	Faith alone Galatians 2:11-21	The Work of the Spirit Encouraging	
Jun 12	From curse to blessing Galatians 3:1-14	Rivalry Genesis 25:19-34	
Jun 19	A promise is a promise Galatians 3:15-25	Deception! Genesis 27:1-40	
Jun 26	From slaves to sons Galatians 3:26 - 4:7	Struggling with God Genesis 28:10-22	
Jul 3	Set free by Christ Galatians 4:8-31	Under God's Blessing Genesis 29-31	
Jul 10	False and True Galatians 5:1-12	Face to Face Genesis 32, 33	
Jul 17	Unnatural acts Galatians 5:13-26	Jacob's Return Genesis 35	
Jul 24	Two ways to live Galatians 6:1-18		

Special Events	Apr 17	Environmental Concern - a Christian Perspective: Bring & share lunch	Jun 16	Euro 2016 Sports Quiz Alderley Edge Golf Club
	Apr 23	Men's Breakfast "Now that's a good question" - 8.15am	Jun 30	An Evening with the McLeans Church Rooms, 8pm
	May 7	Equipped - Women in Ministry Day All Saints, Preston - Carrie Sandom	Jul 31	Bring & Share Lunch with Johnny & Ann McLean
		Who Let The Dads Out Church Rooms, 10-11.30am		
	May 8	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms		
	May 14	Men's Convention - Be Confident! St John's Knutsford		
			<p><b>Monthly prayer breakfasts:</b> April 16th, May 21st, June 11th and July 16th. Saturday mornings, 8.30-9.45am, Church Rooms. Drop by for prayer, coffee and croissants.</p>	