

St. John's, Lindow

IN TOUCH

Summer 2015

Creatives in the image of God

SIMON'S SCRAWL

Simon Gales

Welcome to our church magazine! The theme of this issue is the creative arts. All creativity is the precious gift of God. Music, painting, dance, sculpture, theatre and so many other art forms enrich our lives and allow expression of the human condition. They challenge and comfort us. They inspire and humble us. While personally not very creative (to put it mildly!) what a miserable and shallow existence life without the arts would be!

Having said that, there is a dark side to the arts because we live in a fallen world. Even God's good and wonderful gifts can be badly abused. We can all too easily worship our creativity instead of worshipping the God who is the source of our creativity. Take, for example, a professional musician. To reach that level they will have been devoted to music for most of their lives. On top of thousands of hours of dedication, many find their identity in their art form – 'I am a musician'. It goes deeper still – most artists have a deep passion and love for what they do. For many, their art 'saves' them - it gives their life meaning and purpose and significance. In short, their art is their idol.

Unfortunately, Christians have often reacted inappropriately to the thing that has become an idol (and let's remember that not just art - sport, money, success, popularity, self etc can all be the 'god' we worship). But it's not the thing that is wrong – it's the attitude to and treatment of the thing that is wrong. Just because money is the idol

of many does not make money an evil thing in itself. The Bible says that wealth is a gift from God. It's our attitude towards it that's the issue. So it is with the arts. Some people have made art into an idol. The idol is to be dethroned – but that's one's attitude to art, not art itself.



Art is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master. That's the case for all forms of idolatry – wonderful gifts of God but if abused they do great damage. That's what idols do – they destroy. They might appear attractive for worship, but they are not good gods. Only Jesus is worthy of worship and only he can fix broken lives. When he is worshipped, everything else is put in its right place – and that includes art. There's no need to pit art and Christ against one another – they are only in competition if art (or anything else) is occupying Jesus' position as number one. When He is recognised as Lord, art finds its place as a wonderful gift from God – for our enjoyment, nourishment, expression and well-being! Enjoy the magazine, and worship the God who is behind all within it.

Yours as ever,
Simon

"What? You said that I should express my God given creativity!?"



Ben Hollinshead

VIEW FROM THE PEW

Duncan Howsley

Marc Hollinshead: How did you become a Christian?

Duncan: I grew up at St. Johns from a young age, so I can't point to a conversion moment when I became a Christian. I've been here since I was a Climber (as Fireworks was called then) so it was somewhere along that journey. I can't remember a time when I wouldn't have identified as a Christian.

M: Were you born into a Christian family?

D: My mum (Kate) wasn't a Christian when I was born and my dad still isn't. Mum started coming to St John's when I was around six and brought me and Philly along too.

M: What do you do for a living?

D: I'm a bit of a creative jack-of-all-trades! I work in the music industry as a self employed music video director, photographer and website designer.

In fact, I only planned to be self employed for six months after I finished my law conversion course. I had decided not to become a lawyer, so I needed a little time to allow me to work out what I really wanted to do. I had never trained to be a designer or photographer, so I felt a bit directionless when I started out, but getting involved with things like designing the church website and magazine really helped to give what I was doing a sense of purpose. Ultimately, that initial few months turned into a full-time career and I've now been doing this for five years!

M: Has being a Christian affected the way you work?

D: Being a Christian has certainly affected the way I approach my work! My faith is central to who I am, so it affects all aspects of my life. I try to make sure that the way I run my business and the way that the way I behave in my relationships with clients is distinctive and Christ-honouring - I would really hope that my faith is reflected in that!



M: Thinking more about St. Johns, you're in the music group?

D: Yes – I think I joined when I was around 13. I was fairly terrible at playing guitar when I first joined the music group. Anna was very patient with me! Both she and Margi Lawrence were a great encouragement to me growing up.

M: How else does the church family encourage you?

D: Being part of the church family is a huge encouragement; growing up at St John's has meant that I feel a really strong bond to our family here. When I manage to wake up for it, I go to the men's bible study on Friday mornings and that has been an incredible way to help me grow in faith and knowledge, as well as in my relationships with the other guys there.

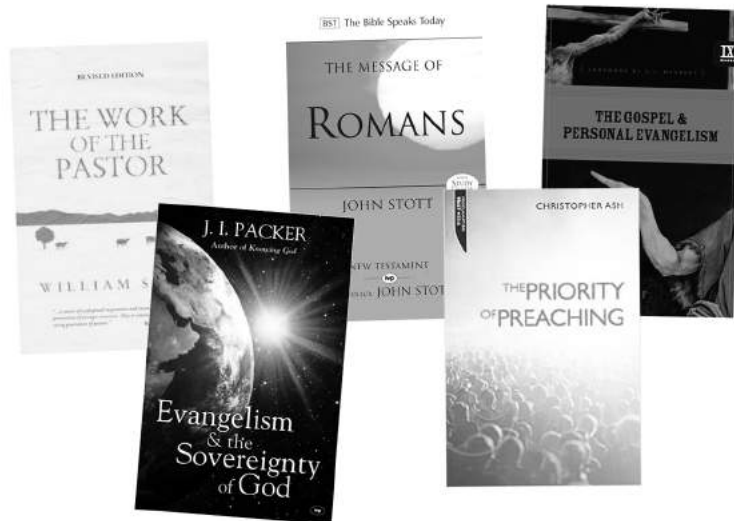
Cassie (my wife) and I are also members of the Perrins' home group, which is a brilliant source of encouragement and has helped us a great deal. As a newly married Christian couple, we can learn so much from Christians who have been married longer than us, and that's a huge blessing.

Duncan is part of our morning congregation – if you've don't know him, why not go and introduce yourself. I'm sure he'd love to get to know you too.

MISSION UPDATE: MESCOS IN PERU



About the time you are reading this, Alejandro Mesco, our mission partner of the last 18 years, will be consecrated as suffragan Bishop of Arequipa, in Lima Cathedral. One of our church, Norma Pearce, will meet up with him in Lima but is unfortunately flying home on the day of the consecration, 25th July. To mark the occasion we have sent him a gift of some Christian books that he has chosen (some as shown - all in Spanish!) I'm delighted to say that Doris and their four children will all be able to attend the service.



It will mark a big change in Alejandro's ministry. In the years that we have been partnered with him he has been a faithful pastor of three different churches - San Lucas, Cabanaconde and most recently Mission Santiago Apostol, a shanty town on the outskirts of Arequipa. Some of these have been lonely isolated situations.

Now he will be based in Arequipa (living in the house that members of St John's helped to fund) but will have pastoral oversight of 24 clergy in the south of Peru. They are quite a 'mixed' bag - some place great emphasis on religious ritual, some were previously priests in the Roman Catholic church, and a few are evangelicals. He plans to lead a retreat for all of them in mid-August and has asked Simon to suggest resources he might use. Google Translate is a very useful tool!



Lima Cathedral

Alejandro will be one of 3 suffragan bishops, under the leadership of the diocesan bishop. Here too there is a variety of churchmanship, with Alejandro under the authority of the diocesan bishop in some areas. Alejandro particularly asks that he might be able to train a new generation of potential church leaders.

There are preliminary plans for Alejandro's partners in the UK to contribute towards a car for him to travel through his region - funds in the diocese are very limited. Please look out for details as they emerge if you would like to support Alejandro's new ministry in this practical way. Let's continue to pray for our brother Alejandro and his family as he embarks upon this new and demanding service for our Lord Jesus and his church.

Simon

FILM REVIEW

The Theory of Everything

Steve Battey

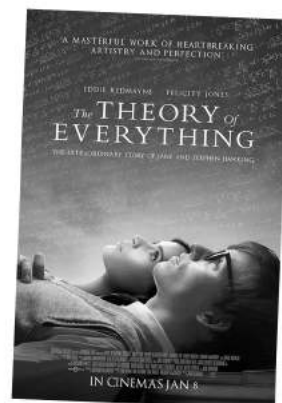
Watching films is one of the most popular ways to enjoy the creative arts. Like other creative arts, films engage us on a deeper level than pure information. Their messages get under our skin, and influence our outlook on life, often without us even realising it. Therefore it's important, as Christians, to think critically about what we're watching, rather than just soak up their influences unwittingly.

There are many benefits to engaging with what we watch. We can enjoy seeing reflections of God's glory. John Piper writes of the visual arts and music that *"they have the potential to awaken the mind and heart to aspects of God's glory that were not perceived before."* We can be also aware of how films can undermine the Biblical truths, and guard against them doing so. Also, discussing the message of a film from a Christian point of view can be a great way to engage with non-Christians.

The Theory of Everything tells the story of Stephen

Hawking and his wife, as they struggle with Hawking's motor neuron disease. It's a great film, and simply the brilliant acting and camera work was reason enough to thank God.

The film focuses on the relationship between Steven and Jane – both thrilling and heart-breaking – reminding us of our wonderful God-given capacity for relationships. On the other hand, it presents a false division between science and religion. This is a common view in society – it's worth being aware that the film is reinforcing it! Thinking through how films point to God's glory and how they can undermine the way the Bible explains the world has helped me spiritually. Far from lessening my enjoyment of films, I've found it's made them more fun to watch! Why not try it next time you go to the cinema?



BOOK REVIEW

Art and The Bible - Francis A. Schaeffer

Jean Thomas

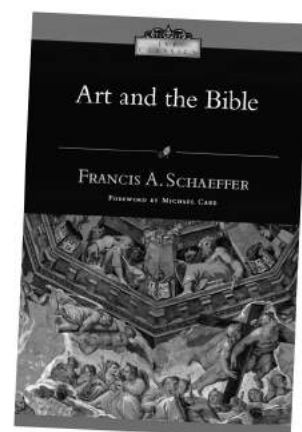
This concise book, genuinely pocket-sized, starts with a big question: *'What is the place of art in a Christian Life?'* Writing in the early 1970's (when the evangelical 'Jesus Movement' was calling for a return to the Christianity of the early church and a recovery of the gifts of the Spirit), Schaeffer sets out his answer in two essays; the first outlines what the Bible says about art, and how the Creator God himself gave us patterns for its use, both religious and secular. Visual art, poetry, music, drama and dance are all considered.

"We have misunderstood the concept of the Lordship of Christ over the whole man" Schaeffer argues, and this wholeness includes man's intellect and creativity. Made in the image of God, we should use our creativity in his praise. He deplores the 'pressures' that have made art 'seem something less than spiritual' and explains how using art to praise God brings with it truth, beauty and a

freedom before God. Striving for excellence becomes another way to praise God, he suggests.

In his second essay Schaeffer tackles what 'art' is, another huge question, and suggests the standards of judgement, as Christians, we should use to measure and discriminate. Forty years after publication, we might raise an eyebrow at some of his views (notably on abstract art) but his scholarship and skillful handling of the subject make this book informative, accessible and stimulating.

Arrived at the end of this slim volume, there is no fudging the big, personal question it leaves us with; is the creative part of our life committed to Christ?



ART THAT SPEAKS TO ME

We asked members of the St John's church family to share some of the art that speaks to them about God, faith or the Christian life.



The Light of the World

By the pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt. My family lived in London when I was a young child. When I was about 6 my father took me to St. Paul's cathedral, where the largest version of this painting hangs. I was transfixed by it, even though we were not a religious family. I didn't know what it meant at the time, but it felt very special and remained in my heart over all the following years. Eventually when I became a Christian (when I was approaching 50!), I understood the meaning of the painting. I see it as one of the markers on my journey to where I am now, a message early on perhaps about the path for my life. Jesus always waiting at the door, that only you can open to receive him.

Janine McDougall

Les Misérables - Victor Hugo

I am challenged by the priest's actions to Jean Valjean near the beginning that seems to be the turning point in Jean Valjean's life as a released convict - an act of kindness to a stranger without any strings attached. I also love the words in the epilogue where they sing "And remember the truth that once was spoken, to love another person is to see the face of God" - it just reminds me that God is love and how through our relationships with other people we can show his love - or not, as the case may be.

Michelle Hesslegrave



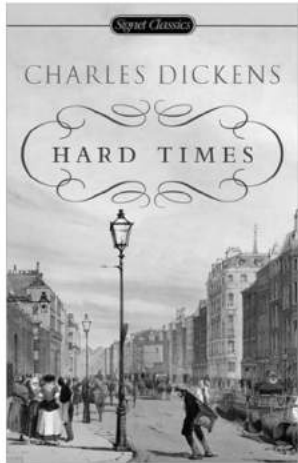
Harvest Festival

This year as we celebrate the end of the Second World War these photographs remind me of the occasions when my church in Bristol was decorated for Harvest Festival. The church had two transepts, one was allocated to the Sunday school and the other to the Youth group. I remember helping my mother decorate the window sills and chancel. Where did the flowers and vegetables come from in wartime? Probably gardens and allotments. The blackout curtains for every window in the church would have been made by the Sewing Group.

Cynthia Adams

ART THAT SPEAKS TO ME

We asked members of the St John's church family to share some of the art that speaks to them about God, faith or the Christian life.



Hard Times - Charles Dickens

Shortly after I became a Christian, I was reading *Hard Times* and noticed that I approved of and was sympathetic to Mr Gradgrind, while Dickens was not. I loathed the Crummles – could not stand their shapeless mess – but Dickens was trying to show how that their approach, though not normally admired, led to life, while Gradgrind's cool rationalism led to death. This came to me like a jolt from God. I realised that I had become hardened and needed to allow God to soften my heart.

Brenda Lewis

Trees by Joyce Kilmer (1914)

Joan Kelsall recalled the following poem to Jean Thomas recently. It was recited by her brother after returning home from the war. He had been interned, and his poetry, learnt by heart during school days, brought him comfort. (Alfred) Joyce Kilmer was the leading American Roman Catholic poet and lecturer of his generation. He was killed in action in 1918 aged 31.

Joan Kelsall

*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.*

*A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;*

*A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;*

*A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;*

*Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.*

*Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

Handel's Messiah

In May 1945, I was at school in Gloucestershire and to celebrate VE Day, choirs from schools around Gloucester congregated in the Cathedral. There were about 1,000 of us and we sang the "Hallelujah" chorus from Handel's *Messiah*. It was an occasion I shall remember for the rest of my life.

Diana Armstrong



Why is music part of church, and where does it belong in the Christian Life?

It's a near universal occurrence; when churches gather together in worship, they have a tendency to sing together, amongst other things. From the solemn folk hymns of Catholic liturgical music, to the upbeat, exuberant gospel music of many Pentecostal churches, almost all of God's Church lift their voices to him in praise.

Right back in Exodus 15, after God has delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they sing a song in recognition of the wonderful thing God has done for them. What a unifying moment that must have been, singing together to express their adoration for God!

In fact, part of the purpose of corporate worship is to illustrate the unity of the Church, and singing as one is an excellent way of achieving this. It's no mistake that, Psalms, one of the largest books in the Bible, is dedicated entirely to song lyrics, and scripture actually instructs us on many occasions to sing to the Lord. In addition, music allows us to show a broader range of emotions, can soothe our hearts (in the way David's playing calmed Saul), and is useful for remembering scriptural truths.



With that said, certain types of music may be inappropriate in a particular context. American pastor Ed Stetzer spoke to some Jamaican pastors who said that almost any kind of music would be acceptable to have in their services, with the exception of reggae, which for them is associated with drugs.

Church music groups also need to be considerate of the musical ability of the congregation, as we want the whole church to be able to participate as a cohesive unit. Equally, however, we ought to "sing to the Lord a new song" (Psalm 96), embracing and encouraging the creation of a variety of new music.

Indeed, music is an inherently good, God-given thing, but it is a tool that can be used incorrectly in certain circumstances. As I said before, use of certain styles may be culturally insensitive, but we should also be careful when considering the lyrical content of our music. It is evident that in corporate worship the lyrics should incisively reflect the truths of scripture, but with the music we listen to in our own time, the boundaries are much more ill-defined. In this case, each individual needs to evaluate themselves. How does the music affect me? Am I uncomfortable with the message, or with the language used? What memories or practices do I associate with the song? God's goodness is found in all music, but that doesn't mean that all music is necessarily good for us.

254 **While Shepherds Watched their Flocks.**
 NAHUM TATE. (CHRISTMAS, C. M.) GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL.

1. While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night, All seated on the ground; The an-gel
 2. 'To you in David's town this day, Is born of Da-vid's line, The Saviour,
 3. The heav'nly babe you there shall find To hu-man view dis-played, All mean-ly
 4. 'All glo-ry be to God on high, And to the earth be peace; Good-will hence-
 of the Lord came down, And glo-ry shone a-round, And glo-ry shone a-round.
 who is Christ, the Lord, And this shall be the sign, And this shall be the sign;
 wrapp'd in swathing bands And in a man-ger laid, And in a man-ger laid.
 forth from heav'n to men Be-gin, and nev-er cease! Be-gin, and nev-er cease!"

So it's important that we sing when we come together in worship, but what sort of music should we be singing? The Bible shows no preference for genre, emphasis is placed largely on the lyrical content, and musical style is rarely noted; the words we sing are of much greater significance than the style or genre that we put those words to.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Photos from recent events at St. John's



Church Weekend Away



Friday Night Live



End-of-term Tournament



INTRODUCING OUR NEW MINISTRY TRAINEES

Having just said farewell to Steve Battey and Tom Beaumont we are delighted to welcome two young men as our new ministry trainees (we were looking for a female trainee but sadly none applied!). Both will arrive in time for the holiday bible club in August.



JAMES PANEK

I'm originally from Sheffield so, yes, I talk like Steve Battey! I'm the middle one out of a family of five and was brought up in a Christian home, but it wasn't

until I was 13 that I came to follow Jesus for myself. I'm currently completing a one year internship at Hope Church, in Oswestry, where I am involved in the youth & children's ministry. I'm excited about the North West Partnership training course as I look to develop my ability to share the gospel.



DAVID LAND

I grew up on t'other side of the Pennines on a farm in North Yorkshire and I've just graduated with a degree in astrophysics at Cambridge. I was fortunate to grow up in

a Christian family, so I've always considered myself to be a Christian, but I'm constantly learning what it really means to live for Christ. In my spare time, I like to play basketball or roll around on the floor with my cats! It will be good to get to know many of you in the months ahead.

Both of them are less experienced than previous trainees so please don't expect 'too much too soon'! They will be helping in our youth & children's ministry midweek and on Sundays, as well as meeting with individuals and small groups. We expect it will be a while before either of them feels ready for a share in Sunday preaching, if indeed it turns out that way. We are extremely grateful to the Lindow Ministry Trust for the continued funding of these posts. I'm sure you will give them a warm welcome, and invite them round to your homes in the months ahead. They will be sharing the flat at 76a Knutsford Road (01625 402082). On a practical note James is 'gluten free' and David has a mild nut allergy.

CREATIVITY IN TEACHING CHILDREN

Ros Scott

It's a great privilege to be a member of the Sunday Seekers team, to be in the position of teaching youngsters about God and His amazing rescue plan. With this privilege comes a great responsibility, to teach faithfully but also engagingly and creatively; so how do I go about doing that?

I guess I have a two pronged approach. Firstly and most importantly, I work to understand the allocated Bible passage. Secondly. I think about the age, ability, and to some extent, the gender of the group I will be teaching. In other words how can a given passage be transformed into a lesson that is, meaningful, relevant and fun without compromising the message and teaching point of the passage. It goes without saying that some books of the Bible are easier to teach than others!

A recent lesson from Exodus lent itself particularly

well to drama. Rockets and Fireworks joined together to re-enact the crossing of the Red Sea. The "Egyptians" on horses (hockey sticks with horses heads fixed on), pursued the Israelites across the "sea" of blue fabric which then covered the "Egyptians" thus "drowning" them. We had a "pillar of cloud" made from some white material and a pillar of fire made from tubing and crepe paper. This was a fun activity for the children but there is a danger with creative activity, be it drama, art or craft etc. to become an end itself rather than a teaching tool!

Sometimes, as leaders, we work in tandem as creative thinking is sometimes best done as a team event! But either way, it's just a case of thinking: how can I help the children, really see this truth, what object, or sound, or picture, or illustration can I use and sometimes that just takes time.

THEOLOGY CORNER

WHY ARE WE CREATIVE?

Ann Vaughan

In Genesis 1:1 we are told "God created the heavens and the earth" God's creative powers are immense and stimulates each of our senses. A sunset brings pleasure to the eye, the rumbling of the thunder can hurt our ears and the scent of a summer rose brings pleasure. We are also told in Genesis 1:26 that we are created in God's image, so does it not follow that we too are creative, whilst we may not all have specific creative gifts, in music, speech, writing, dancing and art, or even see ourselves as creative we can always appreciate it in others?

The existence of ancient cave paintings demonstrate that even when man was a hunter and lived a subsistence life, he had the desire to create.

God created the Garden of Eden for the pleasure and enjoyment of mankind, sadly the Fall changed this. Today in many parts of the world there is toil associated with growing food to feed a family which is essential for their survival or their livelihood. However for many people gardening like many other creative gifts is not motivated by material gain just by a sense of personal wellbeing. The recent Wilmslow Wells Garden's Day demonstrates this so clearly, with many local gardens open for others enjoyment. Similarly, garden designers at Chelsea are willing to pour months of their lives into their garden designs for the chance of winning a silver gilt and admiration from all those who attend.

We all need food to survive, yet as chefs and contestants on Masterchef creatively present their plate of food, we see it has become an art form and judging by the TV ratings people enjoy watching them. Similarly making a meal for the family allows a person to show how much they care and can give pleasure to both those who eat it and those who create it.

On the Great British Bake Off contestants spend hours preparing and decorating that perfect cake, only for Mary Berry to destroy it by cutting into it to

try it, so the satisfaction for them must surely be in the creation of that unique cake.

As consumers we are willing to pay to be entertained by reading a good book or watching a film or listening to music. At New Year we went to the Tate in London and joined lots of others queuing to attend the Turner exhibition. While I do not paint myself, I could still enjoy and admire the obvious creative gifts of Turner.

Our homes are places where we can express our individual creativity in our choice of colours and furnishings, even without spending lots of money we can make things like cushion covers, curtains or paint a wall that express something of ourselves.

In Exodus 31 in preparation for the tabernacle being built God blessed chosen men with particular artistic gifts to enable its building and decoration.

Music plays a big part in the Old Testament, King David was a skilled musician. He was also a poet and many of the Psalms are credited to David's pen. Today in our regular meetings we sing hymns and songs that have been inspired by the Word of God and written and set to music. Singing is creative and we can all join in this praise to God, and it is hard not to be encouraged by this.

What we create can be inspired by God and if the finished piece is artistic, well executed and made to the highest standard, it can glorify him. There is often little financial gain in being creative and yet people will invest a lot of time making that special meal for family and friends and how making parents have a treasure box of birthday cards or gifts lovingly made for them by their children?

Why?

The simple answer is because God is creative and he made things for our enjoyment and as we are made in his image, it stands to reason we also will take pleasure in being creative.

AUTUMN/WINTER PROGRAMME

Sundays	10am Lord's Supper on third Sunday	6.30pm Lord's Supper on first Sunday	Homegroups
Sept 6	Holiday Club Sunday	Psalm 23	<p>Meeting in various homes, on Thursday & Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's Word and encourage one another.</p> <hr/> <p>COLOSSIANS: THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE</p> <p>Sept 10 <i>A Bird's Eye View</i></p> <p>Sept 24 <i>True Christians & the True Gospel: 1:1-14</i></p> <p>Oct 8 <i>Christ Supreme: 1:15-23</i></p> <p>Oct 22 <i>True Ministry: 1:14 - 2:5</i></p> <p>Nov 5 <i>Kidnapped! 2:8-23</i></p> <p>Nov 19 <i>True Spirituality: 3:1-17</i></p> <p>Dec 3 <i>True Spirituality...in the household: 3:18 - 4:1</i></p> <p>Dec 17 <i>True Spirituality...in the world: 4:2-18</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>
Sept 13	The Way of the King Like a little child Mark 10:13-16	A Relationship with God A Relationship with God Matthew 6:1-18	
Sept 20	Before all else Mark 10:17-31	Praying to Our Father Matthew 6:9	
Sept 27	Servanthood Mark 10:32-45	Praying for God's Concerns Matthew 6:10	
Oct 4	Needing Mercy Mark 10:46-52	Praying for Our Needs Matthew 6:11-13	
Oct 11	Harvest Praise All Age Gathering	The Peril of Money Matthew 6:19-24	
Oct 18	The King Arrives Mark 11:1-11	The Value of Contentment Matthew 6: 25-34	
Oct 25	The ruined Kingdom? Mark 11:12-25	The Evil of Hypocrisy Matthew 7:1-6	
Nov 1	Who is the real king? Mark 11:20-33	Light Party	
Nov 8	The rejected King Mark 12:1-12	The Power of Prayer Matthew 7:7-12	
Nov 15	Challenging the King Mark 12:13-27	Is it wrong to be sure about heaven?	
Nov 22	The King of Love Mark 12:28-34	Losing Touch with the Living God Cheating God Malachi 1	
Nov 29	The Lord is Coming Come down, O Lord! Isaiah 63, 64	Disobeying God Malachi 2:1-16	
Dec 6	Two ways to live Isaiah 65	Meeting God Malachi 2:17 - 2:18	
Dec 13	The arrival of the end Isaiah 66	Revering God Malachi 4	
Dec 20	Nativity from Scratch	Nine Lessons & Carols	

Special Events	Sept 13	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms	Oct 25	Visit of International Students
	Sept 19	Who Let The Dads Out? Church Rooms, 9.30-11.15am	Nov 7	SOUND (14-18s)
	Sept 26	Men's Breakfast Alderley Edge Golf Club, 8.15am	Nov 28	Who Let The Dads Out? Church Rooms, 9.30-11.15am
	Oct 3-4	14-18s Weekend Away	Dec 6	Evergreens Tea Church Rooms, 2pm
	Oct 4	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms	Dec 19	Nativity from Scratch Rehearsal
	Oct 10	Northern Womens' Convention Bradford	Monthly prayer breakfasts: Sept 12, Oct 10, Nov 14 & Dec 12 Saturday mornings, 8.30-9.45am, Church Rooms	