



St John's Lindow

INTOUCH

Easter 2019

What is Worship?

"...Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

Romans 12:1b

www.saint-johns.org.uk

It is with very mixed emotions that we say farewell to the Crispin family! As many will be aware Gareth has willingly served as our Youth Children & Families Minister for the last 8½ years and in that time many (not just young people) have benefitted enormously from his ministry, wisdom and friendship.

Speaking personally he has been a fantastic colleague – tremendously hardworking, steadfastly loyal and constantly encouraging. It's been a joyful partnership in the gospel, arising out of our common identity in Christ and shared convictions about biblical truth, but greatly facilitated by Gareth's patience and cheerfulness! I know others have similarly enjoyed working alongside Gareth.

Gareth will be joining the faculty at Cliff College to head up the BA in Mission and Ministry, focussing on youth, children and families. His gifts, experience and PhD (to be completed in the coming year) make him well suited for that role. Please pray that God would use him to train and equip many gospel workers to serve the upcoming generation, for the glory of Jesus.

We will greatly miss the whole family –Sarah, alongside supporting Gareth's ministry, has diligently run our Toddler group for several years, and contributed in many other kind and creative ways; it has been a delight to have Ben, Tom and Luke as part of our church family, and to witness their growing maturity. They leave with our love and prayers for God's blessing on their futures.

Gareth will be preaching on

his final Sunday morning (April 14th) but the family will not be moving until the end of May so we shall say farewell to them on Sunday 19th May. They will be joining Trinity Church, Buxton, an evangelical Anglican church which is a 'proprietary chapel', operating outside the parish system.



The theme of this magazine is 'True Worship'. Everybody worships something, even if they don't realise it. What we worship is whatever we live for, whatever matters most to us, the 'thing' without which life would be unbearable. So true worship is **both** worshipping the true God (not a substitute – *Counterfeit Gods* reviewed on page 10 is very helpful) **and** worshipping Him in the right way – not just with our lips but the sacrifice of our lives (see the other review, 'True Worship').

It seems to me that Gareth & Sarah have modelled such worship in our midst these last 8½ years!

Yours, in gratitude to God,

Simon

SKETCHY THEOLOGY

BY BEN HOLLINSHEAD

*"WORSHIP - NOT JUST SINGING
IN CHURCH ON A SUNDAY!"*



Marc Hollinshead: Chris, you obviously haven't grown up here!

Chris Fisk : That's right – I'm a southerner! Five years ago I moved up to Macclesfield and God lead me to St Johns.

Marc: What have you been doing in your time up north?

Chris: Working! I'm a compliance engineer which basically is making sure that buildings, mostly residential, are up to scratch in regards to their energy efficiency and acoustics.

Marc: Would you say you're happy in your job?

Chris: It pays the bills. Part of it is in line with what I've wanted to do in acoustics. We are called to work as human beings after all so it's good to contribute to the world. I used to go swimming as well but unfortunately work took over.

Marc: It sure sounds like you're busy! You're going to be even more busy soon, because I hear you're getting married!

Chris: Yes! I'm getting married in July 2020. I met my fiancée, Natasha, online but it turns out that last year her dad actually spoke at a St John's men's breakfast!

Marc: Wow, small world! Does that mean you're planning to move on? What are your future plans with Natasha?

Chris: Yes, I will be moving away once Natasha and I get married, but it won't be sudden. My involvement in St Johns will reduce next year as I begin to attend Natasha's dad's church in Ormskirk. The rest is in God's hands, but you won't be seeing the back of me that quickly!

Marc: Good to hear! I've noticed that you've been involved with a lot of stuff in St John's in your five years here.

Chris: Well if you want to evangelise and do God's



work, you should get stuck in! We have so much that helps with the fellowship here, such as tea and coffee and homegroups, and I've loved being a part of it and seeing the church evolve. Hopefully God has used me to be a great benefit to St John's.

Marc: I think many will agree with me that you've been a great addition to our church. What would you say your highlight has been?

Chris: Simon's jokes! In all seriousness, it's seeing how St John's has evolved, how it's approached the strategy review and adjusted itself without deviating from the bible. It hosts events that both further the glory of God and encourage people who don't usually come to church to attend.

Marc: On that idea of being a biblical church, we're thinking about the theme of worship this term. What is your idea of worship and how do you see it in your own life?

Chris: Worship is living out our whole lives for Christ, but because I'm a naturally sinful person, I see myself failing in it. But thanks to the grace of God I still have the opportunity to live for Christ! This then enables me to share the good news of the cross.

Marc: That's a great thought to end on, Chris. Thank you for sharing your story with us.

MISSION UPDATE

Paul & Gabby Kerry

Dear friends at St. John's Lindow,

This is a bit of an update about where your once ministry trainee and his wife, Paul and Gabby Kerry, are now.

We left Lindow in summer of 2010 with Joseph (now 8) who was just three months old at the time. Since then we have been joined by Lydia (7 years), Benjamin (5 years) and Aaron (1 year) who are all wonderfully different in character and yet equally draining of energy!

After training at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford then doing a curacy at Houghton and Kingmoor in Carlisle, the same Church Simon Gales did his curacy at, we have found ourselves for just over 3 years in the parish of St. Bridget's Moresby just on the northern outskirts of Whitehaven and the Western edge of Cumbria.

We have inherited a church family with a warm gospel heart, a background in Bible teaching ministry and a desire to reach out to those in the parish who don't yet know Jesus. Specific encouragements have been new ministries we've set up in an empty but versatile Methodist chapel where we've established a toddler group, lunch club, youth ministry and Sunday afternoon church.

We have also established strong links with the local church School which the children attend. Those links have led to a new Christianity Explored group with some of the staff, an after school club for the children who want to find out more about Jesus and a new and actively Christian headteacher.

Besides praying for those ventures to flourish with the gospel we'd also deeply value your prayers as we face changes here. In early March Paul was licensed to a second parish at the far side of Whitehaven called St. Andrew's Mirehouse. That coincided with the licensing of a lay church leader



there, Peter Verburgh, who will live in the vicarage of St Andrews and run the church from day to day. Paul's role is one of oversight and he would value prayers that it doesn't mean he gets stretched too thinly and that his relationship with Peter would be strong and prayerful.

Gabby is doing an amazing job raising the four children, even in exhaustion, and is also leading the new toddler group and meeting with others to pray and read the Bible. She is a living example of "true worship" as she serves God in word and deed even in the seemingly mundane tasks of life.

We are all enjoying living in West Cumbria. We live with the sea of the Solway on one side and the fells of the lake district on the other – if you ever want to come and experience this God given beauty by visiting us do just shout! We remember our time at Lindow very warmly and trust all is well with you.

God bless,

Paul, Gabby and the clan!

If idolatry is when 'a good thing becomes a God thing' then how do I know when that is happening? Good things are given by God to enjoy, right? So enjoying the good gifts of God is not wrong. How would I know when I've slipped into worshipping the good gift rather than worshipping the good giver?

It's a good question and it's difficult to see for sure where and when idolatry might be happening in our own lives. So it's going to be a process of discernment, which may be helped through discussion with your brothers and sisters in the church.

In his book, *Counterfeit Gods* (reviewed later), Tim Keller has written an epilogue on finding and discerning your idols. It's best to go and read it, but for those who need a quick summary now, what follows is a condensed version.

Idols are always connected to local culture; specific to time and place. So if you are living in twenty first century Wilmslow then probably, any potential idols you have are ones that you can see in your community. So step 1 is to look around you and see what seems to consume the people around you. It's easier to see it in others and you'll have a list to think about.

Next there are some clues, some things that might serve as indicators of idolatry:

Think about your imagination; do you have something imaginary that your thoughts go to when you have some downtime? What do you daydream about? Do you frequently play out scenarios in your mind relating to a particular area of your life? Not merely considering your options but saviouring the world that you are creating for yourself?

How you spend your money is another clue. As with

imagination, money will flow towards an idol, it will be difficult to direct money away from it.

What frustrates you or angers you most? If you think X should happen and someone makes sure it doesn't, how do you react? If you shrug your shoulders and get on with life X cannot be an idol, but if you explode with unexpected and unwarranted anger then.....

What makes you (think will make you) happy? What does success look and feel like? What one thing would make life OK, or make you feel satisfied? As Keller puts it: "when you "pull up your emotions by the roots"... you will often find your idols clinging to them."

This isn't a checklist, they are questions that will help you to reflect on your heart. They are tools and clues of discernment. If you know someone well enough and trust them then it might be something worth doing with their help.

There is more to do of course. When you discover your idols they need replacing with the one true God. In the same way that nature abhors a vacuum, our hearts will never worship nothing, so after discerning our rival gods we turn to see the dazzling brilliance of Jesus and replace our idols with him. We are then free to enjoy God's good gifts in the way he created them to be enjoyed, as gifts, not gods.

**You can read the review of
Tim Keller's *Counterfeit Gods*
on page 10 of this magazine**

A Life of Worship

We asked members of St John's to tell us what day-to-day worship means to them

My outlook on work and recreation is transformed by God's grace as he prompts me by his Word and Spirit to develop a worshipping Christian mind. "*The earth is the LORD's and everything in it*": so all that I am and explore and encounter - from mountains to molecules - belongs to him. It is the magnificent theatre of his glory and in the scientific enterprise we are "*Thinking God's thoughts after him*" (Johannes Kepler) as we discover creation's secrets, including the reason why mathematics is so "*unreasonably effective*" in science (Eugene Wigner) and why "*the most incomprehensible thing about the universe is its comprehensibility*" (Albert Einstein).

David Watts

Our chief aim should be to bring glory to God in whatever we do. Sport is a God given gift, and my sport became rowing – ideal for someone with an addictive personality.

I love the training and the "crack". I hate competing but I love winning. I enjoy the challenge of doing something so ridiculously simple and yet so amazingly subtle and complex.

But there are real risks. Do I find my identity in rowing, or worse in winning? Do I place rowing before my family, natural and church, or before God? And the answer sadly is sometimes yes. I know that physical training is of value, but it is of no value when compared with being right with God through faith in Jesus.

But there are huge blessings. I meet people in the sporting world who need Jesus every bit as much as I do –but won't admit it. Most laugh when I try to tell them of Jesus.

But it is a huge opportunity to show Christ in the way I lead and serve my club, in the way I coach and motivate, in the way I face problems and opportunities, the way I face defeat and victory, and the way I pray and care for them. It is a huge God-given gift to be able to go rowing and enjoy the environment and the body which

I currently inhabit. It's brilliant!

George Perrin

I spend the majority of my waking week at or thinking about work. So how does that align with living for Christ?

Well, I see work as a blessing (a flawed blessing), but not a curse – there was work to be done in the garden (Gen 2), and there will be work to be done in the new creation. And so my work is not something to be endured, but something to be enjoyed; as a blessing and a gift from my creator, my provider, my sustainer. As such I give it my very best. I don't wish the week away, longing for the weekend, but rather I give it my all.

Part of God's purpose is to have me there – a Christian in the workplace. Does that mean constant evangelism? No. Being ready when the opportunity arises.

Lest I make it sound like Eden restored, it's not. At its most extreme, at its earthiest (and it can be very earthy), it can be a very dark and very worldly place, a place where total immersion can be quite suffocating. And when the weekend comes, I reengage with the real world which is so important for my sanity.

Johnny Walsh

School is a large part of every day life. Now that I'm in 6th form and have been in education for the last 12 years of my life, it has all become part of the daily routine. In school the ultimate focus is on the grades you are achieving, leading to the job you want, where you will hopefully have enough money to have a comfortable life with a nice car and yearly holidays. This doesn't seem like too bad of a thing to aim for, especially when it's encouraged by the self fulfilling nature of society.

Even as a Christian it's easy to think of that as a good motivation for hard work. However when we take a step back and think of it as a form of worship we realise how entangled we've become in the secular way of thinking. Are we working for ourselves or are we working to honour God and glorify him? Surrounded by non Christians it can be so easy to lose sight of why we are doing what we are doing and what the main focus of our life should be- Jesus! My faith helped me to see the bigger picture through exams, to not become stressed and trust in God's plan for me, knowing my identity comes not from my achievements or failures, but in being a child of God. And nothing could ever change that.

Grace Wilson

For the last 5 years I have been working with the elderly on a casual basis. I had the opportunity to learn and prepare myself for a call of duty that later, I gladly applied to the help and care of my in-laws and parents. It allowed me to give my gratitude to those who helped me be what I am now (putting aside me!). Bless the Lord!

I have learnt that caring for the elderly is part of being in a relationship with God, as He is always working around us. We know that this pleases God, as our heart becomes the heart of a servant. So, let's be ready to sacrifice and trust God, with the joy to meet every need of the elderly, whoever they happen to be. We need to humble ourselves, and do what is required, whatever that may be, and serve even unto death, which is a privilege.

For someone like me, who doesn't have many relatives nearby, it's very comforting to have not just my church family but lovely elderly friends who gladly greet me weekly. It is however, also very sad when I learn they are not among us anymore.

As Christians we know that we owe respect and honour to those who can't take care of themselves, and our elders. The Bible is consistent and clear in these matters.

Norma Pearce

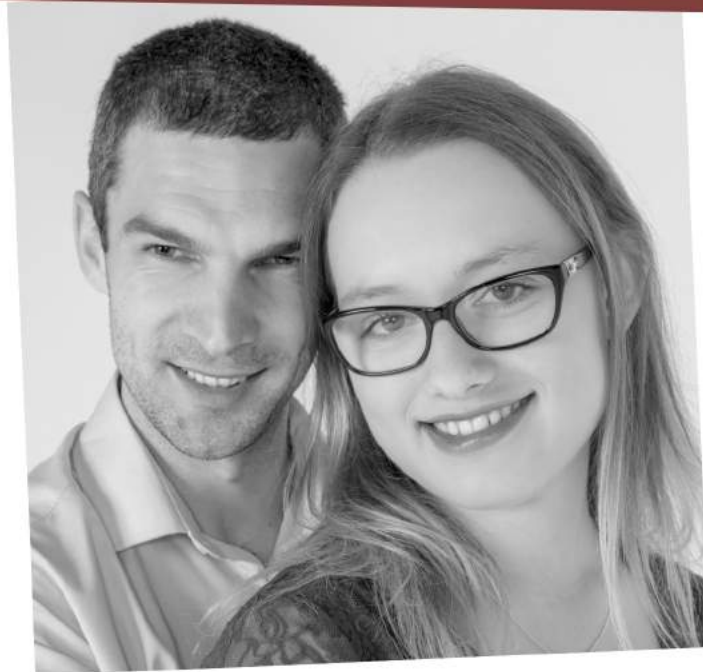
RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

News & updates from the
St John's church family!

A new ministry trainee, James Edwards and his wife Jessica, will be joining us over the summer



**Homegroup lunch
with friends**



Kairos ice skating trip



**Our new mission partners, Rob & Claire Laws,
with sons Barney & Toby. They are heading to
Naples in September with Crosslinks.**



Recent parade service



Crafting at Who Let The Dads Out?



Simply Lunch



Parenting Course

BOOK REVIEW

True Worship - Vaughan Roberts

Lottie Behardien

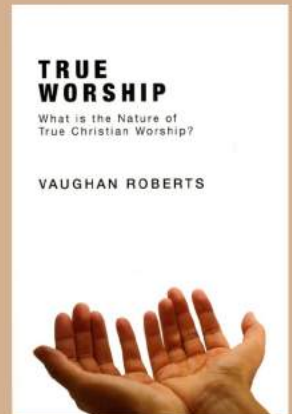
True Worship by Vaughan Roberts, is a brilliantly challenging read that completely debunks all the myths that surround worship. Here are just a few of the key points.

We worship because of what God has done - We have a sin problem that we cannot fix (e.g. James 1: 14-15). To stop us from taking that punishment, God sent Jesus to die on the cross and take our place. This holy, blameless and pure sacrifice paid that price that we never could.

It is not confined to church on Sunday - The core of worship is offering God all that we have and are, in response to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Our whole lives should be an expression of our love for God (Romans 12) and isn't attached to a building (Heb 10:11-25).

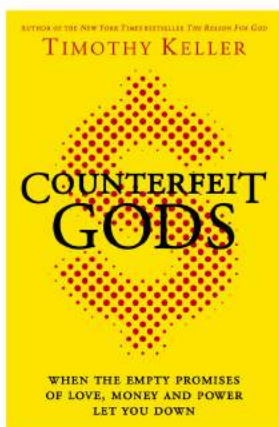
So why meet together? God uses our gatherings, to talk to us through his word, sacraments and spiritual gifts. We are one body, who use Sundays to build each other up in knowledge and understanding. This grows our love for God and encourages love for others. Spiritual gifts help us to support the body and are not individually focussed (Ephesians 4:11-16). We then respond back to God in prayer and praise.

Let's get to work - the next time someone loses your files at work, or you are drawn towards getting drunk, or holding back from helping, use it as a chance to worship!



BOOK REVIEW

Counterfeit Gods - Tim Keller



If, like me, idolatry is something that you associate with times gone by, then please read this book to learn just how pervasive and harmful worshipping false gods is in our lives today. So called counterfeit gods or god substitutes are many and varied and the author devotes chapters to each of love, money, success and power, the four most obvious things that many of us believe hold the key to happiness and contentment. The book uses contemporary examples such as the financial crisis in 2008, to illustrate how the opposite is true; these false gods lead ultimately to disappointment.

In the final chapter

Keller looks to the end of counterfeit gods and offers us real hope. He makes the point that idols are not necessarily bad things, it's just that we have let them take over our lives, pushing God to one side in so doing. The solution is not to discard these good things (love, money family etc) but to make sure that we don't make them become first in our lives. A right relationship with God comes first.

This is a book that is easy to read but not lacking in substance, because of it. It is challenging and certainly made me think differently. It is good to read alone but also works well in a group setting. A group of us read this together as part of a regular evening get-together; it certainly provoked wide ranging and thought provoking discussions.

Nigel Brooks

What is True Worship?

True worship is informed by the Scriptures, pleasing to the Father and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, caught up in the glory of the Son our Lord, Jesus Christ. Worship is also about real life.

Yes, worship is something that connects us to the glorious, majestic heavenly places, but it is also absolutely about the tangible, dirty, broken 'now'. John 4 points us to this starkly. Jesus sets himself to bringing a Samaritan adulteress to worship the Father: the least likely, in real life. Social, racial and 'sin stigma' barriers are crossed, showing just how grounded in real life our idea of worship should be. Jesus is very far from intercessions, rotas and liturgy here!

Entering Samaria, Jesus is stepping into the most hostile place for a Jew to find themselves. The Jewish/Samaritan conflict was centuries old. This explains the woman's surprise in v.9! Jesus then proceeds to offer her the gift of 'living water', a source of nourishment that will never go dry (v.10, 13). He's offering in himself the Word of truth (Proverbs 13:14, John 6:63), and the power of the Spirit (John 7:37-39).

Next, Jesus confronts the woman on her sin (vv.16-18). She deviates to the safe academic issue of *where* they should worship, and Jesus declares the argument moot because she doesn't even know the God she should be worshiping (v.22). Jesus focuses the issue on the *how* and *whom* of worship: "true worshipers will worship the Father in *spirit* and in *truth*." (v.24)

John Piper says:

"Truth without emotion produces dead orthodoxy and a church full ... of artificial admirers... On the other hand, emotion without truth produces empty frenzy and cultivates shallow people who refuse the discipline of rigorous thought. But true worship comes from people who are *deeply emotional* and *who love deep and sound doctrine*. Strong affections for God rooted in truth are the bone and marrow of biblical worship."

It's helpful to reflect on Matthew 15:8-9 "This people honours me with their lips; but their heart is far from me, in vain do they worship me." Jesus equates worshipping God with honouring God; with gladly reflecting back to God the brilliant



awesomeness of his worth, in the way a loving husband presents his wife with flowers, not out of duty but moved by a spontaneous affection.

There is much more to be said on the practice of true worship, but as a barometer, the question we must ask ourselves at every point is surely:

'Does honour God with our deepest affection (in Spirit) and revelling in the majesty of his nature and his holy Word (in Truth)?

James is the ministry trainee here at St John's.

Further Reading

For more information on the true nature of worship, James recommends John Piper's *Desiring God* - specifically chapter 3, which deals directly with the issue of worship.

SUMMER PROGRAMME

Sundays	10am Lord's Supper on third Sunday	6.30pm Lord's Supper on first Sunday	Homegroups
Apr 28	Church Weekend at Home		Meeting in various homes, on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's work and encourage one another.
May 5	1 & 2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come: The patience of faith 1 Samuel 24	1 & 2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come: The patience of faith 1 Samuel 24	
May 12	The place of the King 1 Samuel 26	The place of the King 1 Samuel 26	1 & 2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come During the summer our homegroups are linked to our Sunday series.
May 19	Without hope & without God 1 Samuel 28	Without hope & without God 1 Samuel 28	
May 26	The King is Dead! 2 Samuel 1	The King is Dead! 2 Samuel 1	The groups will begin on 9th May and finish on 18th July (omitting 30th May for half term). Dates given are for Thursdays (full details published on weekly newssheet).
June 2	A tale of two kingdoms 2 Samuel 2:1-11	A tale of two kingdoms 2 Samuel 2:1-11	
June 9	Who is your king? 2 Samuel 2:12-4:12	Who is your king? 2 Samuel 2:12-4:12	Additionally, a women's bible study meets at 9.45am on Wednesdays, and a men's bible study meets at 6.30am on Fridays.
June 16	The true King 2 Samuel 5	The true King 2 Samuel 5	
June 23	Rejoice with the trembling 2 Samuel 6	Rejoice with the trembling 2 Samuel 6	Monthly Prayer Breakfasts May 18, June 1 and July 6 on Saturday mornings 8.30-9.45am, Church rooms. Please join us for the most important meetings we have as a family – this is the powerhouse of the church.
June 30	The most important words in the world 2 Samuel 7	The most important words in the world 2 Samuel 7	
July 7	The coming of the Kingdom 2 Samuel 8	The coming of the Kingdom 2 Samuel 8	
July 14	The kindness of the King 2 Samuel 9	The kindness of the King 2 Samuel 9	
July 21	The kindness rejected 2 Samuel 10	The kindness rejected 2 Samuel 10	

Special Events

May 4	Men's Breakfast Alderley Edge Golf Club, 8.15am	May 30	'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer week
May 11	Who Let the Dads Out? Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am	June 8	Who Let The Dads Out? Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am
May 12	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms, 12.15pm	June 23	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms, 12.15pm
May 18	Northern Men's Convention Platt Church, 10am - 4.45pm	June 28	Summer Sound, 14-18's All Saints Preston, 7 - 9.30pm
May 19	Farewell to the Crispins	July 14	Who Let The Dads Out? Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am