

St John's Lindow

# INTOUCH

Winter 2019



## The Heavenly Royal Family

*Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth"*

John 15:16

[www.saint-johns.org.uk](http://www.saint-johns.org.uk)

# SIMON'S SCRAWL

by Simon Gales

We have sent space probes to the outer reaches of our solar system but that's only a fraction of our galaxy, and our galaxy is one of millions. We really know very little about our universe. How then can we expect to know God who is infinitely greater? How can the finite know the infinite?

Many today doubt that we can confidently know the truth about God and, in part, I agree! By ourselves we're not able to arrive at the truth about God. We are finite creatures and he is the infinite Creator. Moreover the Bible says *'we suppress the truth by our wickedness'* – we're not the honest seekers-after-truth we like to think we are!

So, if we are to know God he must make himself known, he must communicate himself to us. But such revelation must be more than an information download! (knowing someone means more than knowing their height and hair colour) It must be personal if God is to be properly known. But personhood is about relationships, about interacting with others.

A solitary God would not be truly personal. What great news that the God of the Bible is Trinity (the theme of this magazine), a three-in-one divine family! God is only knowable because he is relational and his three-in-oneness says he is – three persons in loving relationship with each other for ever! Some Christians regard the Trinity as our 'Achilles heel', a rather embarrassing complication but it is gloriously beautiful.

That first Christmas this revelation from God was very personal.

In the words of a Christmas reading, Jesus ('the Word') *'became flesh and made his dwelling among us. No-one has ever seen God, but God the One & Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known'* (John 1:14,18).



We can truly know God because through Jesus coming to earth that first Christmas God has revealed his personhood, and through his death Jesus has opened up the way for us to be reconciled to God. A solitary God could never do that. Only a God who is 'three in one'. Not an embarrassing complication but a glorious essential, which makes Christmas the good news we need!

I've only scratched the surface. Read on. Get hold of 'Connected' (see page 10). Join us for our Christmas services (see the back page for all the details) to hear of a God who can be truly known.

Yours,  
Simon

## SKETCHY THEOLOGY

BY BEN HOLLINSHEAD

***"THE VICAR NEVER WAS VERY GOOD AT MATHS..."***



Marc: So Grace, where have you come from?

Grace: I've actually lived in the same house my whole life! I live down Chapel Lane near St Anne's church, and I used to be taken there growing up.

We've seen you around St John's now for quite a long time so what caused you to move churches as you got older?

I used to help at JAM (Jesus and Me) club at St Anne's and actually got involved in a lot there, but there weren't many kids and it felt as though Jesus wasn't at the centre of the teaching. I even made excuses to not to go to church!

So you were simply going for the sake of going in the end?

Basically, yeah. I've been to FNL/Kairos for years now but only started properly going to the services in St Johns since last Christmas. I really enjoy the services, even to the point where I hate missing them! It's well the worth the longer walk to get there every Sunday.

Your gran, Anne, is also a well-loved member of the church, too!

She is, and because I'm with her I feel like I've been part of the church family for years, when in fact I've only been an official member for just about a year now!

I can see that your faith means so much to you. Does it translate well into your school life?

Well I used to always say I was a Christian when I didn't really know it, but now I'm known as the "Christian girl" in school. It means that people always ask me questions and I've come to realise I have answers for them! Even when I don't, I know it's not a failure because I can come back to them with an answer later.

That sounds really positive! What about in the workplace?

I work as a waitress in Wood, Fire, Smoke in Wilmslow and I get on really well with everyone there. It was my friend's last night recently and we



got to talking about Christianity. When in a work environment it can be quite hard! It's definitely been character building and faith strengthening for me, though.

Being a Christian is hard!

But it's still important to make the most of the opportunities God gives us! I actually wonder where I'd be if I didn't have God, because I'm only where I am because of him.

I wonder that, too. So how do you feel God has helped you?

God knows all of our pain, he knows love and he knows what it's like to be us. That helps me to remember that it's through his strength that I do everything.

In that same vein, we're thinking about the trinity this term, so what would you say the trinity means to you personally?

God always does things for the good of those who love him, and we have a God who fully understands us. So why would anyone else create anything like all of this? He completely loves us and wants to help us!

That amazing truth is a great place to end our time. Thank you, Grace, for taking the time to share some of your story and thoughts with us.

# MISSION UPDATE

*An update on Alejandro Mesco*

Alejandro is now working as a voluntary chaplain for a charity, Medical Ministry International ([www.medicalmissionsperu.org](http://www.medicalmissionsperu.org)) in Arequipa. He continues to lead a small fellowship on a Sunday, 'House of Peace', and a midweek men's bible study.

He writes:

*Dear brothers & sisters in Christ,*

*I thank you very much for your prayers for us and for all who live in Latin America, especially for the poorer people living in the mountains and the shanty towns of the cities. Last months MMI had a very large ophthalmology campaign in Arequipa and many people were given eye tests, glasses and cataract operations.*

*In September with the favour of our good God, we were able to help some disabled people with the distribution of wheelchairs. I spend part of my time repairing them - I feel very happy when I finish repairing a wheelchair, because I know it will be useful for a child with a disability.*

*On October 4, we celebrated 20 years of MMI service in Arequipa and the southern region of Peru.*

*Last month we held a special day for children with disabilities and it was very exciting for the children to participate together with their parents. I was able to speak and share my testimony to everyone who was present and it was a blessing to everyone.*

*MMI are in the process of building a new clinic on land they have bought in Arequipa. This clinic will be a special blessing for the people of Arequipa and southern Peru, in that, being a Christian institution, we will also give spiritual counselling to patients.*



*Medical Ministry International 20th anniversary*

---

*There will be a multi-purpose area to have Sunday services.*

We also support Alejandro & Doris' son, Alejandro Jnr, who is training for Anglican ministry at a theological college in Santiago, Chile (<http://cep-iach.cl/>).

In June his wife, Marilú, gave birth to their first child, Joshua who was born 10 weeks prematurely. He has recently had surgery on his 'club foot' and might need a heart operation at some point in the future. Marilú has just received the good news that the retained placenta has been completely absorbed and she will not need an operation.

Alejandro writes, 'thank God and thank you for your prayers'. Due to these health issues they moved to Valparaizo to live with Marilú's brother, and near her parents.

Every Sunday afternoon Alejandro travels 2 hours by bus to Santiago and returns to the family on Thursdays.

# A LOOK BACK ON 2019

What a busy year we've had, with much to be thankful to God for in the blessings he has bestowed on us and the provisions he has made.

We started the year being able to carry out much needed structural improvements to the Church and Church rooms, thanks to the legacy that was left to us by Jan Norris. Thanks to Ian for diligently arranging quotes and co-ordinating all the work. In April we had our annual general meeting, as well as our Church Weekend at Home, where we received inspirational teaching from David Banting, with Ann Vaughan making sure everything ran smoothly. Much fun and fellowship was had during the social sessions too, especially the barn dancing!

In May we said goodbye to Gareth, Sarah, Ben, Tom and Luke Crispin after nine years and are thankful that they are still close by in Buxton.

In August we had our holiday club and it was lovely to welcome back Mark Tomlinson who did such an amazing job of teaching the children. On the Sunday morning we were all given a taste of how much fun the children had during the week! Thanks to all the leaders and helpers who worked so hard during the week.

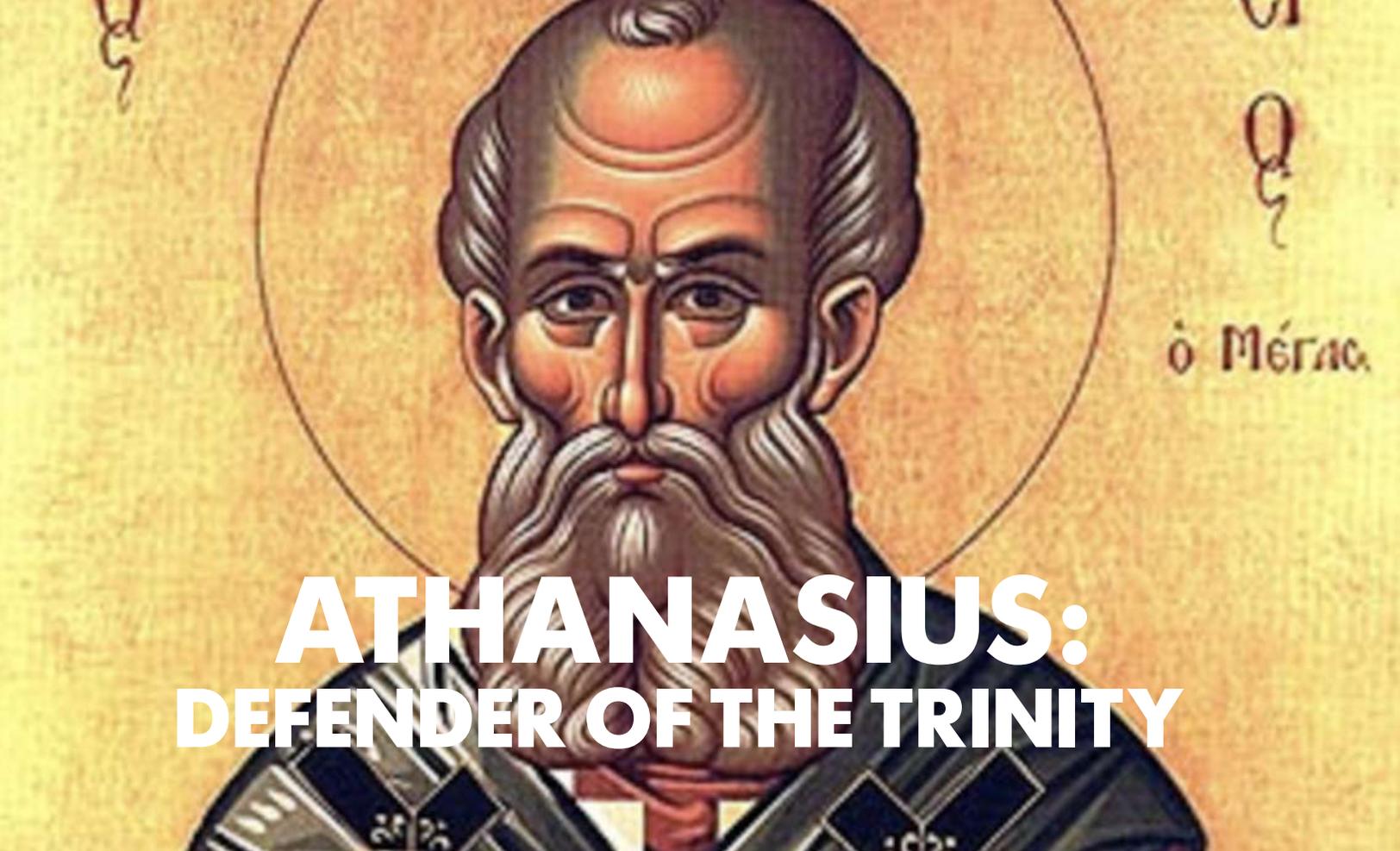
As well as our harvest festival, we were joined in October by a group of international students. Thanks to Alison for organising this and the families who hosted the students for lunch. They all went back to Manchester well fed and happy.



We were all delighted to welcome Leonie and Andrew in October and you can read more about Leonie in her page in this magazine.

Thanks to all those who have served us so well over the year, in children's ministry and for those who clean and care for the church, run the office, take care of the finances and pay the bills, serve the coffee, support our mission partners, enhance our music worship, welcome the congregation, run the sound desk, deliver food parcels, contribute to the church magazine and website and deliver our leaflets around the parish.





# ATHANASIUS: DEFENDER OF THE TRINITY

C S Lewis wrote:

*“His epitaph is: ‘Athanasius against the world’. He stood for the Trinitarian doctrine ‘whole and undefiled’, when it looked as if all the civilised world was slipping back from Christianity into the religion of Arius – into one of those ‘sensible’, synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended today and which, then as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen. It is his glory that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains, when those times have moved away.”*



In 318AD the theologian Arius (pictured left) argued that the Son could not be both subordinate to, and co-eternal with, the Father since co-eternity implies equality. He began teaching that the Son was actually a created being, made by

the Father (modern day Jehovah’s Witnesses make the same mistake!). The Bishop of Alexandria disagreed, claiming ‘always the Father, always the Son’ – that both always existed. The controversy became a matter of fierce debate across the Roman Empire.

So, when the Emperor Constantine (right) gained control of the Eastern empire, he convened a council at Nicea (in 325AD) of 300 bishops, including the Bishop of Alexandria (with his young secretary Athanasius) to resolve



the issue – he wanted a unified religion for a unified empire. Those bishops must have pinched themselves – some of them had been mutilated and scarred by the persecutions of a previous emperor and now they were discussing theology in front of his successor!



The Council of Nicea

Arius and his followers fared badly. The result of the Council was the Nicene Creed (which we say in our communion service), with its anti-Arian statement

that the Son was ‘eternally begotten of the Father...true God from true God; begotten not made; of one being with the Father’. They would be words which the young Athanasius would devote his life to defending.

For the controversy did not end – the fickle emperor turned against Athanasius and sent him into exile in France. When Constantine died Athanasius was allowed to return to Alexandria but the new emperor, Constantius (Constantine’s son), was an Arian and was determined to root out all that had been accomplished at the Council of Nicea.

This meant Athanasius had to be silenced! In 356AD, five thousand Roman soldiers launched a surprise attack on the church where Athanasius was leading a service, but in the confusion Athanasius’ followers grabbed him and smuggled him out! A price was put on his head and even the desert was scoured but Athanasius managed to stay hidden.

The next emperor (Julian) allowed him to return to being bishop. Immediately he faced further

controversy: that ‘of the same being (homoousios) of the Father’ should be replaced by ‘of a similar being (homoiousios) to the Father’. Athanasius resolutely opposed this idea, sometimes standing almost alone against it.

Athanasius acknowledged that the Son was subordinate to the Father in the incarnation – he does his Father’s will – but he insisted that the Son was not subordinate to God in his being. In his freedom, the Son decides to be obedient to the Father, and in his freedom, the Spirit decides to glorify the Son but this does not mean they are less divine in their nature.

As the controversy raged back and forth, Athanasius was sent into exile 5 times for a total of 17 years for his implacable opposition to the addition of one Greek letter – the ‘i’ in ‘homoiousios’!! Yet he was not just a trigger-happy theological streetfighter, but a sensitive and realistic pastor. He opposed the word ‘homoiousios’ because it allowed the Son to be seen as something less than truly God, a being merely ‘similar’ to God. For Athanasius the divinity of Christ mattered because only God could restore fallen humanity. At stake was salvation itself. Athanasius knew that salvation was not just about being given the status of ‘saved’ but being brought into the intimate communion of God, knowing the Father just as the Son does. This was precisely what Arius had tragically removed – by making the Son a mere creature he had denied the Son’s communion with the Father and therefore unable to bring others into that same relationship.

The Athanasian Creed was not written by Athanasius but bears his name because it expresses his theology. You can find it on page 27 of the Book of Common Prayer (as an alternative to the Apostle’s Creed). It boldly says that the truths it declares are ‘necessary to salvation’ and those who believe otherwise will not be saved. It contains one of the best expressions of the Trinity: *‘we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.’*

*St. John's Lindow*  
ORDER FOR COMMUNION

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Collect*  
Readings: At the end of each may be said:  
This is the word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

*The Creed*  
We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,  
seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit  
and the Virgin Mary and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic  
and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

# RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

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



David and Abbie have recently announced their engagement. They are getting married at St John's on August 1st, 2020



Youth weekend away at The Gaines – combat archery and rafting



We were recently visited at St John's by the Straker family.

# INTRODUCING THE POOLES!

*“Gies a peh and twa bridies – a plein ane and an ingin ane an a”* is a phrase you might hear being uttered by a hungry Dundonian if you took a walk round my home city of Dundee!

It was there that I was born, brought up and taken faithfully every week to the local brethren assembly by my mum. Along with my sister, we were taught about Jesus, the saviour, who came to rescue us from the trouble we were in with God. At the age of nine, I asked Jesus to forgive me and be my king – and he did.

As a teenager, I was challenged and encouraged in my faith greatly by volunteering at Teen Ranch Scotland. Yes, a real-life cowboy ranch just outside Dundee, where we raised a barn in a weekend, rode horses bareback, ate 6 foot-long banana splits and shared the good news about Jesus with teenagers from all over Scotland.

Next stop, the biochemistry department at the University of Dundee where I learned, among other things, that evangelism is scary but God is faithful and some students are interested in reading the Bible. UCCF – the University and Colleges Christian fellowship began running an apprenticeship programme the year I graduated, and I became one of the first ever Relay Workers – search for the photo in their archives and find me, sporting big glasses when they were trendy the first-time round! Little did I know that this was the beginning of the path God would lead me down to youth, children and families ministry.

London and the Cornhill training course were where I began to learn how much I didn't know, how to teach the Bible and how much I missed the beaches of Scotland. From there, I worked for churches in rural Essex, Burton on Trent, Aberdeen and Sileby near Loughborough.



*Leonie - our new Youth,  
Children & Families Minister*

---

Sileby was where I met Andrew – as he says, misquoting Humphrey Bogart “Of all the house-groups in all the churches in all the world, she walks into mine.” Andrew is a Leicester boy – and although he managed to escape to university in Swansea to study history and politics and then Liverpool Poly to become a librarian, he has since worked in Leicestershire in various roles in libraries, further education and more recently as a rights o

way inspector for the county council. Contrary to popular belief this doesn't just involve getting paid to amble along footpaths: irate farmers, inquisitive bullocks and eager ramblers can prove troublesome on a daily basis. Andrew runs the Christian fellowship at County Hall and is continuing to lead our house-group in Sileby.

Saving the best till last – Dickens is a 14 year old toy poodle who enjoys playing with his friend Ducky and is partial to bananas, ham and peanut butter. He seems to be enjoying his new role guarding the caravan valiantly and vociferously.

Leonie & Andrew

# BOOK REVIEW

Mandy Matthews

## Connected – Living in the Light of the Trinity

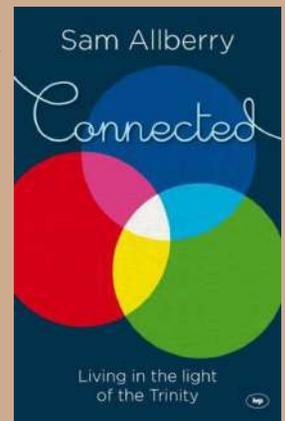
Sam Allberry

This is a book about the Trinity. It doesn't however try and explain the Trinity but relates the Trinity to various areas of our lives with applications.

I found it an enjoyable and interesting read – reading the first four chapters in one go and not wanting to put the book down! It isn't too heavy a read and the author writes personal anecdotes which I enjoyed and found helpful and that I could even relate to. You certainly don't need a degree in theology to access this book and it is even accessible to someone who is more used to reading numbers and Maths notation! It is not all simplistic though and has made me think quite hard at times.

I don't find the Trinity an easy concept to understand and to be honest until now I have just accepted that trying to understand it was a bit

too much for my little brain and a mystery that I told myself perhaps we are not meant to understand. After reading this book, I still don't fully understand the Trinity but I certainly have a much better understanding, so it has been worth the time and effort of reading the book!



In the early chapters the author looks at how God is one but also how God is three. In the chapters that follow the author looks at the Trinity and us and does this by relating the Trinity to such things as humanity, gender, marriage, the church, our gifts, prayer and worship. Even as I read these latter chapters I felt that I gained a better understanding of the Trinity, with real, helpful applications to everyday life. I would definitely recommend this book as I have found it helpful, interesting and enjoyable.

## NEW FACES

Say hello to some of the newer members of St John's!



### Ewan, Jane, Cameron & Julia Spence

Ewan is originally from Zimbabwe and Jane from the Highlands of Scotland. Since getting married in 2010, we have lived in Newcastle, Johannesburg and last year we moved to Hazel Grove.

Ewan works in Stockport as a Mechanical Engineer in the power sector. We have two little ones - Camy 3 and Julia 18 months who you have probably seen charging about! Child rearing keeps us very busy so don't have many hobbies these days but we enjoy visiting the zoo as a family.

# THEOLOGY CORNER

## ENCOUNTERING THE TRINITY

Christopher Hobbs

Imagine the apostle Peter.

Peter was a Jew. He knew that God was the Creator, the spiritual being to whom he owed his existence. Then, in his life, Jesus met him. Over a period of time he saw Jesus do things, heard Jesus talk, and came to see, what seemed impossible to him, that Jesus was God in the flesh. In the same way his friend Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and My God". Then, after Jesus' death and resurrection, came the day of Pentecost. Peter now came to know God in a third way. He felt God inside him.

It was this experience Jesus was referring to when he told his disciples to '*go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*' - Matthew 28:19.

God has revealed to us that God is a complex unity, a 'trinity' of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Question:** If God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity), are they the same person or three separate beings which form one person?

There will always be a degree of mystery about God which we can't fathom since we are finite beings and he is infinite. But the New Testament (and John's Gospel in particular) does give us the answer to the question. You could do no better than to read that gospel, especially Chapters 14-17.

The question uses the words 'same' and 'separate', but I think neither of these options is correct. Father, Son and Spirit are distinct centres of consciousness (loving, willing, acting, knowing, etc.), but they coexist in a unity that is so complete that they dwell in one another, act in harmony with one another, and can even be described as "one". ['same' would imply there aren't three distinct centres of consciousness; 'separate' would imply the three aren't united in that complete way in which the Bible speaks of their unity.]



Three things that follow are worth noting:

- 1) When you read the pages of the New Testament and come to understand more and more of who Christ is, you can be sure that you are also coming to understand who God the Father is (e.g. John 1:18, John 14:9);
- 2) Jesus Christ is the only person who can bring us human beings into relationship with the Father, since he is the only person who is both fully human (as we are) and fully God (as the Father is);
- 3) If you do have that relationship with the Father through Jesus, then you have all of God living within you (John 14:23, Romans 5:5) and you live in God (John 17:21). Awesome!

## ABOUT CHRISTOPHER

Rev Christopher Hobbs is Vicar of St Andrew's Church in Cheadle Hulme.

# SPRING PROGRAMME

## Sundays

10am

Lord's Supper on third Sunday

6.30pm

Lord's Supper on first Sunday

## Homegroups

Jan 5	1 Timothy: All Life is Here 1. Love me true 1 Timothy 1:1-11	1 Timothy: All Life is Here 1. Love me true 1 Timothy 1:1-11
Jan 12	2. House Rules 1. Timothy :12-20	2. House Rules 1. Timothy :12-20
Jan 19	3. What pleases God 1 Timothy 2:1-15	3. What pleases God 1 Timothy 2:1-15
Jan 26	4. Managing God's household 1 Timothy 3:1-16	4. Managing God's household 1 Timothy 3:1-16
Feb 2	5. Teaching: False & True 1 Timothy 4:1-16	5. Teaching: False & True 1 Timothy 4:1-16
Feb 9	All Age Parade service	How to get emotional!
Feb 16	6. Proper recognition 1 Timothy 5:1 - 6:2	6. Proper recognition 1 Timothy 5:1 - 6:2
Feb 23	7. The route to all evil 1 Timothy 6:3-21	7. The route to all evil 1 Timothy 6:3-21
Mar 1	Faith in a Time of Crisis 1. True Gospel Romans 1:1-5	Jesus and His friends 1. A love to follow John 13:1-17
Mar 8	All Age Parade service	2. A triumphant faith John 14:1-14
Mar 15	2. True love 1 John 4:7-21	3. The gift of the Spirit John 14:15-31
Mar 22	3. True sex Genesis 2:18-25	4. The last warning John 15:1-17
Mar 29	4. True unity John 17:13-26	5. Living in the real world John 15:18 - 16:16
Apr 5	5. True faith Galatians 2:11-21	6. The last prayer John 17:1-26
Apr 12	Easter All Age service	Easter Praise

Meeting in various homes, on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's work and encourage one another.

### 1 Timothy: All Life is Here

During the first half of term our homegroups are linked to our Sunday series. Meeting weekly, the groups begin on 9th Jan and finish on 27th Feb. Dates given are Thursdays but some groups meet at other times.

After half term we will be hosting a choice of training courses, 8pm, Wednesday & Thursday evenings (5th March – 2nd April) to include:

- The whole story of the Bible
- Being a Christian at work
- Sharing our faith with children
- Helping you to read the Bible with another person.

Additionally, a women's bible study meets at 9.45am on Wednesdays, and a men's bible study meets at 6.30am on Fridays.

### Monthly Prayer Breakfasts

Jan 4, Feb 1, March 7 & April 4 on Saturday mornings, 8.30am to 9.45am in the Church rooms.

## Special Events

Jan 11	Who Let the Dads Out? Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am
Jan 24-25	NWP Annual Conference St Andrew's Leyland
Jan 25	Men's Breakfast Alderley Edge Golf Club, 8.15am
Jan 26	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms, 12.15pm
Feb 8	Who Let the Dads Out? Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am

Mar 1	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms, 12.15pm
Mar 14	Who Let the Dads Out? Church Rooms, 10am - 11.30am
Mar 14	Youth & Children's Leaders Training Day Knutsford