

St. John's, Lindow

# IN TOUCH

Summer/Autumn 2016

A person stands on the peak of a grassy cliff, looking out over the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The water is a deep blue-green color.

## Mission Matters

*Therefore 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

# SIMON'S SCRAWL

Simon Gales

Contrary to popular opinion Christianity is not a Western religion that destroys local cultures. Rather Christianity has been more adaptive and less destructive of diverse cultures than many other worldviews.

For example, the pattern of Christian growth differs from every other world religion. The centre of Islam is still in its place of origin – the Middle East. Likewise the original centres of Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism have remained so. By contrast, Christianity was first centred in Jerusalem. Later it was centred around the Mediterranean. Later still it came to be dominated by Western Europeans and then North Americans. Today most Christians in the world live in Africa, Latin America and Asia. It will soon be centred in the southern and eastern hemispheres. Christianity is more culturally diverse than other faiths.

African scholar Lamin Sanneh argues that secularism with its anti-supernaturalism and individualism is much more destructive of local cultures and 'African-ness' than Christianity. In the Bible, Africans read of Jesus' power over supernatural and spiritual evil and his triumph over it on the cross. When Africans become Christians their 'African-ness' is converted, completed and resolved, not replaced with 'European-ness' or something else. Through Christianity, Africans get distance to critique their

traditions yet still inhabit them.

Why has Christianity been able to infiltrate so many radically different cultures? There are core truths (the deity of Jesus, the trustworthiness of the Bible, faith in the sin-bearing death of Jesus as the only means of salvation) but there is a great deal of freedom in how these truths are expressed within a particular culture. Such cultural diversity was built into the Christian faith from the start. In Acts chapter 15 the new Gentile Christians were not required to adopt Jewish culture – they had to work out their own cultural expression of Christianity. There is no 'Christian culture' in the way that there is, say, an 'Islamic culture'.



The Bible finishes with a picture of a renewed, perfect, future world in which we retain our cultural differences (every tribe, tongue, people...). In every human culture there will be strengths to which Christianity can adapt and accommodate. The Christian gospel is indeed good news for all people everywhere and uniquely suited for world mission - the topic of this magazine.

Yours,  
Simon



Ben Hollinshead

# VIEW FROM THE PEW

Grace Lambert

*Gareth Crispin: Hi Grace. Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.*

Grace: My mum died when I was 7, and now I live with my Dad and step Mum, 2 step sisters and step-brother. I've have just finished my A levels.

*How did you first start coming to St John's?*

When my Dad was getting to know my step Mum – she lived near St. John's. My dad is a Christian, and so he started bringing me to church. Then we bought a house on the other side of Wilmslow and Dad moved to St. Bart's as it was closer, but I had made friends here, so I kept coming.

*How did this lead to you becoming a Christian?*

I suppose it took 2 or 3 years before it started to mean something to me personally. I went to Keswick with the Vaughan's and made the decision to commit my life to Christ. I kept coming along to groups at St. John's, growing in confidence and understanding what Christianity means in real world. For the last year and a half I have been teaching at Kids Club, with Gareth and Steve Battey helping me prepare the sessions. Taking the older teens out of Sunday morning services and discussing the sermon really helped me understand too.

People in the church family have been crucial: Nathan Phillingam, Paul Kerry and Gareth have really helped me to grow as a Christian. And the Vaughans have always been there to support me.

*How have you found being a Christian at school?*

Being a Christian at school has had its tough moments, especially when gay marriage was discussed. It was tough not to just sit quietly in the crowd. There was only one other Christian in my year at the time. Now there are a few. With my friend Oli, I set up the school Christian Union and we sometimes get double figures now! There's a great teacher who does most of the teaching, and Oli and I help out. This summer, Rachel and I are taking five of the new CU members to Keswick, which is really exciting.



*I gather you have an exciting gap year planned?*

Yes. The plan is to go to Thailand with Crosslinks for 4.5 months (January to May). We'll live near Bangkok and work in a food bank, teach English in the local school and run Bible studies. I hope I will be able to get in touch with Johnny and Ann McClean too.

*Why Crosslinks? And why did you want to do it?*

I chose Crosslinks for practical reasons really. I could apply early, and provide the long list of reasons they wanted, plus the references, and interview, well before my A-levels.. Why do it? Well, I always wanted to make a difference. I think we are ignorant about how lucky we are here, and how safe in this country. I want to see a new part of world, and if possible make some impact. You can always send money, but it's good to go and do the groundwork. And I won't have the opportunity to take time out like this again.

*How about after that?*

So long as I get the grades I'll be going to Birmingham Uni, to read philosophy, religion and ethics. I'm planning to join the CU and find a good church. And I'll be looking for good Christian friends too. I'm not sure where I will end up eventually. I used to think teaching, but maybe my experience this year will mean I will be more interested in working for charity – perhaps Water Aid.

# DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHAT RELIGION?

Philip Lewis

Would you prefer to follow truth or be deceived?

Judaism is based on the revelation of God through the Jewish nation, reliably recorded in the Old Testament, including many prophecies which have since become historical reality. Some prophecies look forward to the coming of a "Messiah" who will be exalted yet despised. But where is that expectation of Judaism to be found?

Jesus Christ claimed to be that person. He said "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except by me." His many miracles, which he claimed were proof of his divinity, were recorded by reliable eye-witnesses. His teachings and his example have remained unsurpassed. His crucifixion and resurrection are historically attested.

How do the founders of other religions compare?

Interestingly, Islam recognises Jesus' virgin birth, his prophethood, sinlessness, second coming and miracles (but refuses to acknowledge him as God!). Muhammed, its founder, claimed neither to be God nor immortal but the final prophet of God. The Qur'an speaks of Muhammed's need of forgiveness, that he taught polygamy, gave women a lower status than men (even permitting them to be beaten to extract the truth). This is quite unlike Jesus who was able to challenge his enemies "Which of you convicts me of sin?"

Hinduism represents a broad group of beliefs with many gods but many believe in Brahman as an infinite God who is indefinable but who may be attained by meditation, work, knowledge, love and devotion. Ultimate achievement is unity with Brahman, otherwise one is consigned to the cycle of reincarnation.

Sikhism was an attempt to purify Hinduism founded by Nanak a youthful poet – yet his failure as a husband and father resulted in his leaving his family. It teaches reincarnation and karma – our

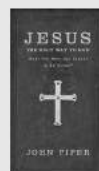
lives are forever the result of previous actions. Nanak made no claims to divinity and no miraculous evidence is reported.

Buddhism encompasses a range of beliefs from the searches of Gautama Buddha for enlightenment. Its teachings include suffering, impermanence and eliminating all desire by right speech, thought, action, livelihood, effort, awareness and meditation. It teaches that our ultimate goal should be Nirvana – nothingness.

Christianity is unique, standing in such contrast to all of the above! Jesus alone claims to be God-made-man and demonstrated this claim by his perfect life, miracles and ultimately by rising from the dead. He taught that we cannot get to heaven by our efforts but only through the rescue of his death in our place. Rather than recycling or annihilation, Jesus promises forgiveness now, his Spirit changing us from within and eternal life with God.

With such differences, they can't all be true. Which religion certainly does matter – eternally!

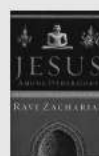
If you would like to read more about this topic, there have been a number of excellent books published on the topic, all available at [tenofthose.com](http://tenofthose.com):



Jesus: The Only Way to God  
by John Piper



But Don't All Religions Lead To God?  
by Michael Green



Jesus Among Other Gods  
by Ravi Zacharias

# BOOK REVIEW

Mission Matters - Tim Chester

Kate Howsley

If you like a good love story, this book is for you! Love leaps off every page of 'Mission Matters'. Tim Chester begins with the reason for mission: The Father loves his Son and delights in others loving his Son too. Tim describes this divine love as a cascade: 'The Father is the fountain of life and love, and his life and love fill the Son and overflow through the Son to the world. That love overflows to you, and then through you it keeps on flowing to a needy world... Those who are loved by God, love like God.'

We discover that the gospel is a big ask. When we share the gospel, we're asking our friends, family and neighbours to change their lives and quite rightly they will think (and we might think this too) what right do we have to share what we believe? The answer, of course, is Jesus, which in turn leads to the question: 'What's so special about Jesus ...' and then there is so much to say! Tim Chester reminds us that the Holy Spirit is the great missionary, equipping, empowering and emboldening us to share the gospel.

'Mission Matters' goes on to trace the story of mission, the scope of mission and the challenges of mission. Tim deals helpfully with the cultural and personal challenges we encounter in sharing the gospel and enables us to think them through. 'Mission Matters' is a

book to read and enjoy and also to take some time over and reflect on the implications for ourselves. Tim concludes that mission is a big ambition for all of us, but we have a big God who makes things happen.



*"We go to all the world  
with kingdom hope unfurled  
No other name has power to save  
but Jesus Christ the Lord."*

*Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Ed Cash and Fionan de Barra*

# BOOK REVIEW

Engaging with Muslims - John Klaassen

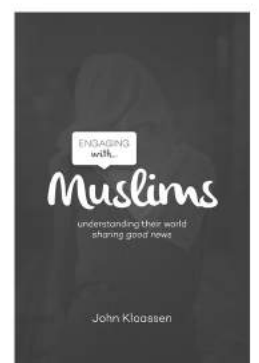
Martin Haywood

This book is most valuable as a confidence boost for Christians with no knowledge of Muslim faith and culture. It also contains helpful advice on outreach for others. Each Muslim is different, but they are firstly individuals seeking to build their lives and families. Newcomers without employment may present more opportunity. Basic beliefs common to all Muslims are explained. The bulk of the book concentrates on how to engage with individual Muslims. It is very practical on forming friendships.

The author, who speaks Arabic, has lived and worked in Muslim cultures for 18 years including North Africa and visits to Central Asia. With gender specific advice he advocates four principles beginning with prayer and suggests helpful bridges through testimony and sharing Bible stories, with or without access to the Bible. These can be planned for and practiced and a dozen or so most helpful

passages are suggested with key concepts to convey. Eg. Peace and justice achieved through a substitute sacrifice. After an understanding of sacrifice is appreciated then is the time to look at the cross, which they would otherwise be resistant to consider.

Reading this book will make clear common ground we share and the gulf they do not yet appreciate in their understanding of God. With Muslims from lands closed to the gospel settling in Britain this book could serve an important role for the church.



*This book is one in a series of 'Engaging with...' titles, focusing on spreading the gospel amongst different groups of people.*

# OUR MISSION PARTNER



## **Alejandro & Doris Mesco**

work in the Anglican Church of Peru. Alejandro is the Bishop of Arequipa in the south of Peru, although there is some uncertainty about his future role. They have served in evangelism and church planting in rural communities in Peru's highlands and in the suburbs of Arequipa. They and their four children live in a house funded by members of St Johns.



## **Keith** retire part of

OMF, using both English and mainland Chinese students outstanding leadership po great interest in exploring t

## **PRAYER POINTS**

### **THE MESCOS**

1. For the future of the Anglican Church of Peru now that is guided by a Peruvian bishop, with many ex-Roman Catholic priests.
2. That God will raise up new leaders, as many clergy are in their late 50's and there are few younger leaders.
3. For the Lord to guide Alejandro as he seeks what God wants for him and his family.

### **THE ROBINSONS**

1. For Paul, as he teaches in the university, to be faithful to Jesus in all he does.
2. For the establishment of a student Christian group supported by Cambodian staff workers
3. For the nation of Cambodia, where many are trapped by animism and fear of the spirits

### **THE RANGERS**

1. For Keith as he speaks to C country, that many might tu
2. For Chinese Christians ret they might be connected wi
3. For continued fruitful use prepared in recent years

### **THE MCLEANS**

1. For outreach to 100,000 i campuses across Bangkok. M name Jesus or seen a bible.
2. For more workers to join th
3. For Ann teaching in an children and teachers know

# LS AROUND THE WORLD



**Johnny and Ann McLean,** with their children **Matthew, Bethan and Joshua,** work with the Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM) among international students in Thailand, especially universities in Bangkok. They seek to lead students to faith in Christ and train student leaders to work with them.

**h and Catherine Ranger,** ed OMF missionaries, are f the 'diaspora' ministry of l Mandarin to reach out to here in the UK, people of potential who often show he Christian faith.



**Paul, Grace, Isobel & Sally Robinson** live & work in the city of Phnom Penh in Cambodia. They are members of OMF international whose vision is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the people groups of South East Asia. Originally from Manchester they have been working overseas in Cambodia since 2008. Their work includes teaching Urban Design at the Royal University of Fine Arts, being actively involved in a local Khmer church and leadership in the OMF team in Phnom Penh. Isobel (7) and Sally (4) attend Hope International school in Phnom Penh with students from over 10 countries.

Chinese scholars around the  
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international students on 9  
Many have never heard the

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international school - most  
nothing of the gospel.

# ST JOHN'S MISSION INTEREST TEAM

The team aims to raise awareness and encourage involvement in Christian cross cultural mission in such areas as prayer, giving, and response to the call to serve, both at home and overseas.

As a church our main mission partners who we pray for and financially support are Bishop Alejandro and Mrs Doris Mesco, serving with the Anglican Church in Peru, Johnny and Ann McClean in student work with UFM in Thailand and Paul and Grace Robinson who work in Cambodia with OMF (full details on centre pages). These couples each received £3000 last year.

We also pray for Peter and Sarah McKibbin, who work with OMF Diaspora Ministries, Melanie Bister who has been with OMF Taiwan and Keith and Catherine Ranger who are retired but still active among the Chinese Diaspora in the UK. These mission partners are always included in our monthly prayer breakfasts.

We also support financially, on a smaller scale, Christians in Schools Trust, UCCF, CPAS, Eden Project, The Christian Institute, Manchester City Mission, Barnabas Fund and Friends International.

During the year staff workers from Friends International have brought International students and academic visitors, mainly from China, on a Sunday to visit St. Johns. This opens windows of fresh understanding and potential friendships in two directions- for the students visiting an English Church and Christian home and for us in showing hospitality to those from countries far away.

Information about our Link Missionaries with photos and prayer requests can be found on the Missionary notice board at the back of church. Current Members: Simon Gales, Keith and Catherine Ranger, Norma Pearce, Margi Lawrence, Linda Baddeley, Helen Dupere, Alison Walsh and Michelle Hesselgrave.

## WORLD MISSION ON OUR DOORSTEP FRIENDS INTERNATIONAL

What comes into your mind when you hear the words "world mission"? Intrepid missionaries uprooting their families and leaving this green and pleasant land to go to distant places to learn new languages and cultures in order to preach the Gospel?

Yes, it can mean that but it can also mean ordinary church members opening their homes and their hearts to the one million international students and academic visitors who have come here to the UK from all parts of the world, including places inaccessible to missionaries, who are longing to make friends, understand the culture and learn English. This is a great opportunity for the church to 'welcome the stranger' and 'make disciples of all nations'. It was this realisation that led to the formation of Friends International over 30 years ago: an evangelical, interdenominational mission with 70 staff and 50 Affiliates aiming to envision, equip and encourage UK churches to reach out to international students. This involves forming teams from local churches to run international cafes, training Christians to lead international Bible



studies and events as well as arranging for international students to be hosted by British Christians. For several years St John's Church have been partners with Friends International by inviting a group of international students and academics from Manchester to a morning service followed by lunch in homes of members of the congregation. Both students and hosts always thoroughly enjoy these occasions!

Want to help at a café, become a regular host or support the ministry in finance and prayer? Contact Sabine at [Sabine.Stockton@friendsinternational.uk](mailto:Sabine.Stockton@friendsinternational.uk)

# RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Student Summer Camp



New Year Celebrations



The McCleans in Thailand



Bible Study



The Robinsons in Cambodia



*Photos from our mission partners around the world!*



Alejandro Mesco in Peru



# MY EXPERIENCE OF WORLD MISSION

We talked to some of the St. John's family who have been involved in world mission

*Michelle Hesselgrave*

I joined the OM (Operation Mobilisation) ship, Logos II, in Feb 1998 and travelled throughout the Caribbean, South America and West Africa for 2 years. Everyone on board had a job to do to keep the ship running – mine was washing up. During my time I learnt that the most important thing is my relationship with God – wherever I am. Also, God is faithful - there were personality conflicts, people who were sent home early and people who did things differently. Throughout it all God worked in everyone's lives, and in every port, God used us as His witnesses.



*Andrea Edgington*

Whilst I originally planned to go to Zanzibar with TearFund, I ended up heading for Mwanza in northern Tanzania. I was involved in a number of building projects, including a toilet block and a couple of water tanks. I took part in health talks in local schools and assisted taking the sick to hospital, as well as visiting a leprosy colony. I learnt so much about God's patience and benevolence and was particularly captivated by the joy of the local people in times of uncertainty. I discovered I was able to adapt to a new culture and it certainly taught me how to pray and rely on God's provision.



*Simon Watson*

I grew up in Mali, West Africa - my parents were with the Navigators who work in mentoring and discipleship. It was a unique experience living and learning in French but it was also quite isolating from the modern western world. I had no TV and electricity was limited. My 3 brothers and I spent most of our time playing cricket. I saw the amazing difference that discipleship has on people's lives, the hardships and sacrifices that my parents made to follow their calling and the blessings that came as a result.

*Keith & Catherine Ranger*

Keith went out to work as an evangelist and Bible teacher in the villages of South Malaya in 1960. He then taught in Rawang, training village people for ministry in the villages. Catherine went out as a missionary nurse in 1965 to work in the villages of North Malaya. We met in the Cameron Highlands and married in 1970. In 1974 we moved to Hong Kong and engaged in theological teaching, church based evangelism, women's fellowship, rural outreach and church planting. The Lord has taught us in very varied situations that we can confidently rely on His enabling, sufficiency and guidance.



*Peter Bunyard*

I travelled to Malawi in 2008, where we were helping to build a school. We spent the mornings attempting to build a wall, and after lunch we would play with the kids: football and bible stories. My abiding memories are of the joy of the children, the kindness and welcome of the adults and that faith seemed more alive - and I learned you don't need much more than an out of tune guitar and the shade of a tree to hold a church service.

# THEOLOGY CORNER

## THE THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Simon Gales

The Bible closes with a magnificent picture of an enormous crowd, from every tribe, nation and tongue, worshipping their God and Saviour. This is where history is heading. This is the culmination of all God's purposes from the very beginning.

Knowing where the story is heading helps us to understand all the twists and turns along the way. Early on, God chose one man, Abraham as the focus of his blessing, but his ultimate intention was universal: 'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' (Genesis 12 verse 3)

As the story proceeds the descendants of this one man (the nation Israel) dominate the plot line yet the universal thread is never lost. At the Exodus, God reaches down to rescue his people from slavery. Yes, he responded to their cry, but more fundamentally the Lord acted 'that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth' (Exodus 9 verse 16) At the heart of God's rescue is his desire that his name be glorified amongst the nations. Israel was to have a pivotal role in this. She was to show the nations how good it was to have God as God, so that through her the nations might be drawn to the Lord, like moths to a light.

Sadly, national Israel failed in this task; the light rarely flickered. Increasingly the prophets looked forward to a time when Israel would fulfil her purpose: 'Nations shall come to your light.... and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord' (Isaiah 60 verses 3-6). Isaiah tells us that the Lord will raise up a new Israel – an individual, the Servant of the Lord – and he will be that bright light that will draw the nations: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob ... I will also make you a light to the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth' (Isaiah 49 verse 6)

So when Jesus arrives a significant shift begins. His mission still had a Jewish priority (Matthew 10v6,15v24) but he was sent into the world so that the world might be saved through him (John 3v17).

That great promise to Abraham is being fulfilled - through Jesus blessing comes to all the families of the earth, without distinction. What's more, with God sending his Son, there is a turnaround – no longer are the nations expected to be drawn to 'Israel' (God's people) – now 'Israel' is to go out and proclaim salvation to the nations. This movement from 'coming' to 'going' is rooted in the mission of God himself: 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' said Jesus. Sending his disciples to announce salvation. The magnet has become a launch pad.

At long last Israel is what God intended her to be. But not national Israel. The true Israel is Jesus. It is Jesus who fulfils the role of being a light to the nations. It is as we go out proclaiming Jesus amongst the nations that, in the power of the Spirit, people will be drawn to him. Recognising him to be both Lord and King, they will fall down and worship, offering him the praise of their lives.

This is mission. Proclaiming Jesus. Announcing the salvation found in him. It was to this end that the Father sent the Son. It is for this activity that the Spirit empowers believers (Acts 1 verse 8). It is to fulfil this activity that God still sends men and women.

World mission, God's salvation to the nations, is central to the whole message of the Bible. Missionary work worldwide has rightly always been, and continues to be, an essential Christian task.



### FURTHER READING

For more about mission, you might consider reading Tim Chester's excellent book, *Mission Matters*, reviewed on p5 of this issue of In Touch magazine.

# AUTUMN/WINTER PROGRAMME

## Sundays

10am

Lord's Supper on third Sunday

6.30pm

Lord's Supper on first Sunday

## Homegroups

Sep 4	Holiday Club Service	
Sep 11	<b>LUKE - MEET THE KING</b> Getting ready Luke 3:1-20	<b>HAGGAI - TIME TO BUILD</b> Get building! Haggai 1:1-15
Sep 18	The King's battle Luke 4:1-13	A house of Glory Haggai 2:1-9
Sep 25	The King's rejection Luke 4:14-20	Blessings for bad people Haggai 2:10-23
Oct 2	The King's power Luke 4:31-37	Forgiveness - must we always?
Oct 9	All age parade Harvest	Conscience - a forgotten friend?
Oct 16	The King's mission Luke 4:38-44	<b>1 TIMOTHY - ALL LIFE IS HERE</b> Love me true 1 Timothy 1:11
Oct 23	The King's presence Luke 5:1-11	House Rules 1 Timothy 1:12-20
Oct 30	The King who gives life Luke 5:12-16	What pleases God 1 Timothy 2:1-15
Nov 6	The King who can forgive Luke 5:17-26	Managing God's Household 1 Timothy 3:1-16
Nov 13	The King who is for all! Luke 7:27-32	Exposing the false 1 Timothy 4:1-5
Nov 20	The King who brings in the new Luke 5:33-39	Encouraging the true 1 Timothy 6:6-16
Nov 27	<b>ISAIAH - THIS IS YOUR GOD!</b> How good is your God? Isaiah 40:1-11	Proper recognition 1 Timothy 5:1 - 6:2
Dec 4	How big is your God? Isaiah 40:12-26	The route to all evil 1 Timothy 6:3-10
Dec 11	How loving is your God? Isaiah 40:27-31	A pastor's charge 1 Timothy 6:11-21
Dec 18	Nativity Presentation	Traditional Carol Service
Dec 25	Family Carols	

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

### GOD'S TRUE KING

Sept 15th  
*An unexpected choice*  
1 Samuel 16

Sept 29th  
*An 'impossible' victory*  
1 Samuel 17

Oct 13th  
*An invisible protector*  
1 Samuel 18-20

Oct 27th  
*An amazing promise*  
2 Samuel 7

Nov 17th  
*An abject sinner*  
2 Samuel 11-12

Dec 1st  
*A sad triumph*  
2 Samuel 18-19:8

Dec 15th  
*An awesome God*  
2 Samuel 22

### MONTHLY PRAYER BREAKFASTS

Sept 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, Dec 10  
Saturday mornings 8.30-9.45am  
Church Rooms

## Special Events

Sep 17	Who Let The Dads Out Church Rooms, 10-11.30am	Nov 10	Christianity & Science - Friend or Foe?
Sep 22	The Big Creation Debate Church Rooms, 7.30pm	Nov 12	Northern Womens Convention
Sep 24	Men's Breakfast Alderley Edge Golf Club, 8.15am	Nov 13	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms
Oct 2	Evergreens Lunch Church Rooms	Dec 3	The Star of Bethlehem - Fact or Fable? Wilmslow Guild
Oct 15	Ladies Evening Church Rooms	Dec 8	Who Let The Dads Out Church Rooms, 10-11.30am
Oct 20	How to understand Genesis Church Rooms, 7.30pm	Dec 11	Evergreens Christmas Tea Church Rooms
Oct 28	Light Party Church Rooms	Dec 17	Nativity from Scratch Rehearsal Church Rooms