

# IN TOUCH

Autumn 2025



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



# SIMON'S SCRAWL

by Simon Gales

Welcome to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of In Touch! You'll find some photos and reflections of the special events we've held over the last 9 months to mark St John's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, as well as articles about the first two vicars who were, it seems, both great 'men of God'.

Our celebrations had the banner 'Hope 150 - celebrating 150 years of history and hope for the people of Wilmslow'. That message of hope is very distinctive for the church today. It sets us apart from anything else. It's not just that we remain religious in a secular age, or that we uphold morality and family values in the midst of permissiveness. What is most obvious about the Christian today is that we are people of hope! Many today are uncertain about the future, understandably fearful about the society their children are growing up into. Most modern day prophets are messengers of doom, not hope. Yet few of us can live without hope, without something to look forward to - it is the suicide note which says 'I have nothing to live for'. And so we settle for short-term hopes - the next holiday, the next birthday, the next weekend, yet painfully aware that such hopes don't last, with nothing to offer beyond this life.

What a contrast to the hope contained in the Christian message! First of all it is a certain hope. In modern English we use the word 'hope' when we are not sure ('I hope Liverpool win the league!'), but the Bible word refers to a future certainty. It's 'thumbs up' rather than 'fingers crossed'! The apostle Paul talks to the Colossian

Christians about 'the hope that is stored up for you in heaven' - no danger of it being snatched away!

And it is a glorious hope. The apostle Peter says in one of his letters 'In keeping with God's promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness' and the apostle John was given a vision of that future: 'I heard a loud voice from the throne saying "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away".'

If we are trusting Jesus now, then we can face the future with confidence. That's a distinctive message of joy in a world where many are despairing, many are fearful about what the future might bring. May St John's keep holding out that hope to the people of Wilmslow for the next 150 years - or until Jesus returns to bring his kingdom to its glorious completion!

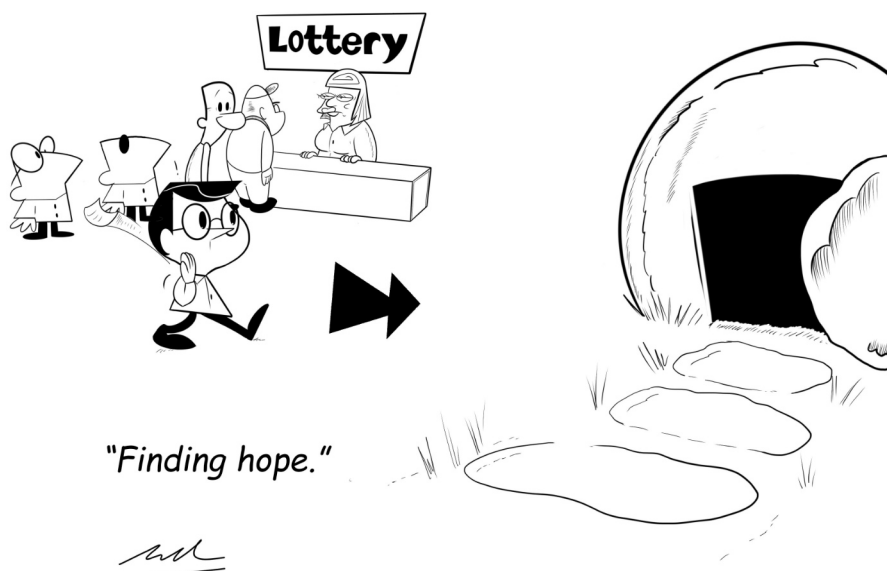
Please make sure you don't miss out,

Simon



## Sketchy theology

By Ben Hollinshead



# JESUS' AUDIO-VISUAL REVELATION TO ST. JOHN

David Watts

## PATMOS: A SMALL MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND. ABOUT AD 95.

The ageing Christian apostle John is a prisoner in solitary exile, having incurred the displeasure of the Roman Superpower. John's teaching conflicts with the divine claims of Caesar, the emperor. It centres upon the person and identity of one; Jesus of Nazareth, who, less than a generation ago, was executed in Jerusalem by the occupying Roman military. John was a close associate of Jesus. Little did John know that, 2,000 years later, there would be a group of Christians, based in the Lindow district of Wilmslow, NW Britannia, who - like many other such groups - would name their 'church' after St John.

## WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?



On Patmos Island, St John received an unexpected command: to write about a startling audio-visual communication he received from and about Jesus Christ.

The result we now know as the last book of the Bible; The Book of Revelation. The original - and alternate - name for this book is apokalypsis. It refers to the act of uncovering something hidden. From this, the English words "apocalypse" and "apocalyptic" are derived and now may refer to catastrophic global events.

'Apocalyptic' also refers to a literary style exemplified again, in the Bible, by parts of the book of Daniel.

Revelation chapter 1 has an Introduction (v. 1-3). There are greetings from the Holy Trinity to the "seven churches of Asia" plus a doxology of praise (v. 4-8): "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood...." Then comes the audio-visual revelation of Jesus (v. 9-20). Firstly, Jesus speaks audibly to John, his voice as loud as a trumpet! Secondly, He appeared visually. Initially, John sees 7 gold lampstands; then - amongst them - the glorified, dazzling 'human' figure

of Jesus holding 7 stars in his right hand. John falls to the ground before Him, but he is raised, as Jesus says: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore..."

## A VISION FOR TODAY

Jesus interpreted the lampstands as representing the "7 churches of Asia" - 'gentile' churches - to whom specific letters were dictated, as detailed in chapters 2 and 3. The 7 stars represent the 7 'angel' messengers sent to each church. John's account throughout Revelation uses highly symbolical and metaphorical language, but this is not a mysterious 'cryptic code' to be 'cracked'. Rather it is a consistent mode of communication that requires responsible interpretation in line with the wider context of the Biblical message.

Many of the specific 7 church 'destinations' no longer exist in 2025, as they did then. Ephesus was formerly a seaport, but now the seashore is 1 mile distant from the ruins of the ancient city. Colossae is an abandoned ruin. But the wider intended application of Jesus' Revelation is to Churches across the globe, throughout history and until his future 'Second Advent'. So, it is also addressed to "Saint John's Lindow".

"Without a vision the people perish". Let us together make this counter-cultural revelation to St John our collective vision for the next 150 years! Many of us have been raised under secular, materialistic influences that discounted any real sense of transcendent realities, despite numerous signposts including human love and longing, music and the glories of the natural world. We must recognise that above and beyond temporal things are eternal realities, seen in the glories of Jesus' life, crucifixion and resurrection. By faith in this mighty rescue, Jesus "has made us to be a kingdom, priests to serve his God and Father" (1v6).

**"I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA", SAYS THE LORD GOD, "WHO IS AND WHO WAS AND WHO IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY".**

# HEROES OF THE FAITH

## REV WILLIAM S BARNES SLACKE

William was born on 22 October 1845, the son of James and Esther Barnes, who already had three daughters. James was a surgeon and the family lived in Ardwick but sadly both his father and eldest sister died when William was 15.

He was educated at Owens College, Manchester and started at St John's College, Cambridge in 1865. He graduated with a first class degree in Mathematics, and was ordained a year later, as curate at St Phillip's Alderley Edge.

In December 1874 he accepted the post as the first vicar of St John's but not everyone agreed - the editor of the local paper wrote *'there is a general impression that he is scarcely suited to the position and the appointment is opposed to the wishes of the main body of the congregation. Should Mr Barnes persist in forcing himself upon a hostile congregation . . it seems probable that the words of the Prayer Book 'where two or three are gathered together' will be literally realised. A sad future to foreshadow. Empty benches and a failing stipend may convince him when too late of the misfortune of being made a tool of others.'*

That was refuted by one of the trustees, the following week:

*'We feel thankful to have secured a man of Christian zeal, earnest work, amiable character, as well as able powers in preaching'.*

On Monday 18th January 1875, after the opening weekend, Rev Barnes Slacke made his first visit to Lindow school which he continued every week. But all was not easy for him - in March a letter appeared in the local paper

*'The trustees must admit that the appointment has been made through spite, with the view of showing how wealth can give them power to triumph over men who have worked hard for the benefit of Lindow people and their church. Mr Editor, how true your words have come to pass . . the morning congregation has been limited to two dozen. At the evening services the number has pulled up to about forty or fifty. It matters little who I speak to about Lindow Church, they all express their surprise at the action taken by the trustees, an action that has caused it to fail altogether as a place of worship. All say that Mr Barnes is a good little man, but that he is not the right man for the place'.*

However by Christmas that year, a congregational tea party was well attended. Mr Massey, the churchwarden, spoke of the difficulties that had beset the church but *'when he took stock of the first year's work there was ground for much satisfaction over what had been accomplished'*. By 1881, Thursday evening services and a Men's bible class had started and the Sunday School had 150 names on the register. The annual vestry meeting in April 1888 reported on *'church affairs being satisfactory and harmonious with an increasing congregation'*.



William, his mother and two sisters had moved to Fulshaw House, Knutsford Road (where Fairbourne Drive now is) and it thus became the first vicarage. In 1878 he inherited an estate from Thomas Slacke, a doctor and good friend of William's father, as well as a distant relative, which had led to William being given the middle name 'Slack' at birth. It was a requirement of Thomas' will that any beneficiary should take the surname 'Slacke', which

William did from that date on.

He remained a bachelor, and died while still in post at the age of 59, leaving an estate of £80,000 (about £6.8M today!). His funeral was conducted by his friend Rev William Hayden, vicar of St John's Knutsford and the final hymn was one of his favourites, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus'. By the time of his death he could be described as the *'much esteemed'* vicar of St John's. *'The mournful event cast quite a gloom over the whole parish and many of the surrounding places where the vicar was so well known'*

The local paper reported *'Mr Barnes Slack was an earnest preacher, and his services were distinctly 'low church'. He was always looked upon as an 'evangelical clergyman'. . . his sermons were always given with wonderful power and effect. . In him the poor and the sick always found a true and generous friend. The rev gentleman will therefore be much missed in many ways and many places. A gap has been created by his death which will not easily be filled up'*.

It continued: *'the parishioners have lost not only a good vicar, but a good friend, indeed his death means a terrible loss to the church and the parish. No incumbent was perhaps more beloved and respected by the members of his congregation than Mr Barnes Slacke was.'*

The congregation subscribed towards a stained glass window which depicts the parable of the talents, with the inscription *'Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'*. The plaque below reads: *'This window was erected by the congregation and friends to the glory of God and in loving memory of: The Rev W S Barnes-Slacke, first Vicar of this church 1875 to 1904'*.





His sisters, Mary (left) and Esther (right), continued to live at Fulshaw House until they died (1916 and 1926 respectively) and were buried in their brother's grave. They used some of the wealth they had inherited to buy land for a vicarage, the church rooms and the playing fields across the road for the 'recreation of the members of St John's Lindow'. When Esther died, she gave the rest of the money to a selection of Christian charities, including the Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society and a charity for disabled sailors and soldiers 'in the recent war'.



## REV REGINALD H CONSTERDINE

Reginald Henry was born on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1862, the sixth child of Rev James Consterdine (first vicar of St Philips, Alderley Edge) and his wife Mary. He was first schooled at home with his brothers and sisters, by a governess, and then attended school in Old Trafford. He went to Trinity College, Cambridge, and Ridley Hall theological college, and was ordained deacon in 1886 when he started as curate at Holy Trinity Cheltenham. He then went with the Church Missionary Society to Japan, returning after 7 years due to ill health, and served short curacies in Tonbridge and St Mark's Cheltenham, before being appointed vicar of St John's in 1905, just a year after his father had retired as vicar of the neighbouring parish!

Some 15 months later he married, at the age of 44, in the home where he lived (Darnel Bank, Gravel Lane), by special license, Ada Griffiths from Cheltenham. The reason for this unusual arrangement was that Ada was unwell and she sadly died just 19 days later. He moved into the present vicarage in 1908 as a widower and never remarried.

Mr Consterdine continued the evangelical tradition of his predecessor - for example, at the harvest festival service in 1909 he retold the story of Mary Jones, a poor Welsh girl. Having saved up for six years, she set out to walk 26 miles barefoot to Bala to buy a Bible from Thomas Charles because she did not have one. Mr Consterdine explained that this was the means of stirring Thomas Charles to form the British and Foreign Bible Society. The collections that day were for that society and amounted to £16 2s 2d - about £1400 today!

He was vicar through the devastation of the First World War. His younger brother Capt Arthur Edward Consterdine was killed on Boxing Day 1916, having been sent to the front just a month before. At special services to mark the end of the war, he preached from John's Gospel, *'alluding to the strain of the past few years. He hoped the congregation would try and avoid that grumbling and dissatisfied spirit that was so disagreeable to others, but every time the thought arose, express thankfulness that we had been granted a victory for the cause of honour, justice and righteousness.'*

He retired in 1937 age 75, moving to 'Lisadel', Manchester Road, Wilmslow, with two of his sisters, Emily and Agnes. Emily died 6 months later and Reginald died suddenly from heart trouble on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1938 and was buried in a grave shared with his beloved Ada, who had died more than 30 years previously.



Such was the esteem with which he was regarded that when his death was announced in nearby Stanley Methodist Chapel the congregation stood in silence. Mr Goodwin, leading the service, remembered how, when he was a convalescent patient returning from Gallipoli, he had made the acquaintance of Mr Consterdine. In the years since, Mr Goodwin, working at Moss Rose Mission in Macclesfield, would bring groups of boys cycling to Lindow to be welcomed by Mr Consterdine.

On the north wall of the church, under the window nearest the pulpit, is a simple oak plaque in his memory: *'In thy presence is the fullness of joy'*, a quote from Psalm 16.

As well as faithfully teaching God's Word throughout his years, Reginald was a keen amateur astronomer, with a telescope mounted in the vicarage attic, which he often shared with visitors. He also gave lectures and was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in January 1938, a few months before his death. He took delight in the natural world, with ornithology being another particular interest.





# Looking back 150 years

In 1875 Queen Victoria was on the throne. A year later she was declared Empress of India, and the British Empire was at the height of its power, covering a quarter of the surface of the planet. Canada was the first country within that empire to become self-governing, in 1867.

One hundred and fifty years ago there were:

## No telephones

They were invented by Alexander Graham Bell a year later.

## No washing machines

They were patented by Bendix in 1937.

## No electric light bulbs

They were invented by Thomas Edison in 1879.

## No cars

The first car built in the UK was in 1892 by a 20-year-old plumber named Fredrick William Bremer. By 1900 there were only 750 cars in the whole of the UK.

## No Manchester United or Manchester City

They were founded in 1878 and 1880 respectively.



Not everyone had the vote. It was extended to most men in 1884, to women over 30 in 1918, and to everyone over the age of 21 in 1928.

A local paper had just started - the first edition of the Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser ran on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1874.

Here are some landmarks in the life of Britain in the years since:

### 1914–1918

World War I; over 700,000 British soldiers were killed.

### 1926

General Strike; major labour unrest.

### 1936

The abdication of Edward VIII over his relationship with Mrs Wallis Simpson.

### 1939–1945

World War II

### 1948

Creation of the National Health Service

### 1952

Queen Elizabeth II begins to reign.

### 1956

Suez Crisis marks the end of Britain as a global imperial power.

### 1973

UK joins the European Economic Community.

### 1979

Margaret Thatcher becomes our first female Prime Minister.

### 1989

The fall of Berlin Wall; the collapse of Communism brings a shift in global geopolitics.

### 2016

Brexit referendum; the UK votes to leave the European Union.

### 2022

Queen Elizabeth II dies after 70-year reign and King Charles succeeds.



# Looking ahead 150 years



Predicting the future is not easy for mere human beings, so we asked Chat GPT, and it struggled too!

*Predicting what Christianity will look like in 150 years involves a lot of uncertainty, but based on current trends, historical shifts, and plausible future developments, we can imagine several scenarios:*

## **1. Decentralized & Digitally-Driven Faith**

*Technology will deeply shape worship: immersive virtual/augmented reality "churches," AI-generated sermons, holographic clergy, and global online congregations.*

## **2. Continued Growth in the Global South**

*The centre of Christianity is shifting from Europe and North America to Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia.*

*By 2175 the majority of Christians may be African or Latin American.*

## **3. Post-Christian Europe?**

*Western Europe (including the UK) may become even more secular. Christianity could persist in more symbolic, cultural, or heritage-based forms. However, pockets of revival or counter-cultural Christian movements may still emerge, especially among younger generations seeking meaning.*

## **4. Crisis Faith Movements**

*Environmental catastrophes, AI ethics, and bioengineering may create new existential questions. Christianity might evolve into a faith of resilience and moral resistance, akin to early church movements during persecution.*

There are a lot of 'maybe's' and 'might's' in there!! It is perhaps no surprise to read that western society may become even more secular, but actually the God of the Bible could bring revival whenever he chooses!

Fortunately when we open our Bibles the future is a lot more certain. Here are some of the things we can be sure about:

- Jesus will return. It is something that Jesus and the rest of the New Testament speaks about repeatedly (e.g. John 14v3; Luke 24v44; Philippians 3v20; Hebrews 9v28). We don't know whether it will be in the next 150 years but we do know that he will return in great triumph and glory (Philippians 2v10,11).
- There will be scoffers (2 Peter 3v3) pouring scorn on the idea of a returning Jesus. There will be false teachers in the church (Mark 13v6; 2 Timothy 4v3,4) and those whom John refers to as 'anti-Christ's' (1 John 2v18,22; 4v3).
- There will be conflicts and natural disasters (Mark 13v7,8). 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines.'
- There will be continual spiritual warfare. Jesus has defeated the Devil through the victory of the Cross (Colossians 2v15) but that victory will not be fully realised until he returns (1 Corinthians 15v24; Revelation 20v10). In the meantime, every Christian

will be involved in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6v12,13). We experience the tension of having a foot in two worlds – we belong to God's kingdom yet we still live in 'this present evil age' (Galatians 1v3) and so there is a battle that rages within every Christian (Romans 7v21-25; Galatians 5v16,17). That's normal!

- There will be persecution for the followers of Jesus (Mark 13v12,13; John 15v20). Jesus even said to his disciples 'Woe to you when all men speak well of you!' (Luke 6v26).
- The mission of Jesus will continue – 'the gospel must first be preached to all nations' (Mark 13v10). His standing instruction to his church in every generation is: 'Go and make disciples of all nations . . . and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' (Matthew 28v19,20) Thus, in the future, there will be a great multitude 'from every nation, tribe, people and language' around the throne of Heaven (Revelation 7v9).
- Until he returns, the Christian lives by faith. 'We live by faith, not by sight' (2 Corinthians 5v7). 'Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known' (1 Corinthians 13v12). Knowing that God has prepared a glorious future for all who belong to Jesus helps us to live with the uncertainties and unanswered questions of this life, far better than Chat GPT!



# Anniversary service reflections from past members



I thoroughly enjoyed my time at St. John's in the early noughties. Attending the 150th Anniversary was a real treat and just highlights how the Lord is continuing to bless St. John's. Whatever 'life' may throw at us - God remains faithful - I believe faithfulness is a hallmark of this church.

Gail McNeill

We have such fond memories of fellowship with you all at St Johns. Wonderful Bible teaching and a joyful welcome! It was great to join you for the celebration and hear how you continue to faithfully point the people of Wilmslow to the Lord Jesus!

Love from Katie & Jon Howson



Keith and I enjoyed our time at St. Johns so much. We were there in retirement for about 10 years, having worked with OMF in South East Asia for nearly 30 years. The people were extremely friendly, the preaching and teaching excellent. I had the privilege of being pastoral care coordinator. We so much appreciated Simon and Dede's oversight of us all.

Keith and Catherine Ranger

Although it was almost 29 years since we left Lindow, coming back on 19 January and seeing so many familiar faces triggered many happy memories. A day celebrating the grace and mercy of an incomparable God reminded us that he is always faithful. Thank you, LORD. Thank you, LINDOW.

Rob and Esther Peters



As a family we have had so many treasured occasions at St Johns. Scouting, Baptisms, Confirmations & more recently Jonny & Vicky's Wedding. Even though I now live in Congleton when I do return to St Johns - it feels like home. Such a lovely, caring church community. Thank you for making Jonny & Vicky's wedding day a day to remember. Thank you Simon & Dede, Didge, Roz & team, Ed (deceased) & Elaine Walker - I feel blessed.

Gwen Stanley

It was such a joy to join you remotely for the anniversary service. It has been 25 years since we left Wilmslow for London with our children aged 11, 14 and 16. We retain fond memories of warm fellowship, especially in home groups, and Bible teaching. The refurbishment of the church hall was a fabulous time of shared endeavour to God's glory and we thank him for that experience and the service in January brought it all back. Wonderful to see old friends again. Thank you for inviting us.

Love Jane and Gary Carpenter



I will always be incredibly grateful for the love and support we received from St Johns ( 2007-2023). St Johns shared God's love and the Christian path with us and how closely Jesus walks with us in every aspect of our lives. Thank you very much.

Heather Rossetti

I started going to St John's when I was 12 years old in 2001 after I was invited by my friend and neighbour, Sarah Dixon. I was welcomed with open arms and gave my life to Jesus at the holiday club that summer. Kate Howsley gave me a beautiful youth Bible and I read it cover to cover in under a year. I will never forget the kindness, love and acceptance I was shown at St John's. It was such a joy to bring my husband and children along to the 150th anniversary service and re-connect with many of the wonderful people who invested in me as a teenager and taught me about Jesus.

Hannah Clifford (nee Davidson)



It was a special privilege to return to St. John's to celebrate the 150th anniversary. We spent 20 years enjoying loving fellowship, Biblical teaching and opportunities to serve God. Highlights include Women's Bible Study, Sunday School, Mission Activities and Choir. We thank God for His many blessings and pray for His continued favour on St John's.

From David and Maureen Barrett

August 1981 we moved from Guildford to Wilmslow for 32 long and happy years. From the start we attended St John's and played what part we could as the years went by. We were very sad to leave our church family to move on to Cheltenham in August 2013.

Dick & Bridget Taylor



We joined St. John's in 1978. It was also Mark Wigram's final service – I'm sure this was pure co-incidence! We were quickly recruited into Youth leadership. Our daughters, Rowena and Miriam were baptised at St. John's and both represented the church as Rose Queens. Paul served two separate stints as churchwarden and also helped with the church extension. Faculties and Quinquennial inspections were always a joy (not!). Paula did a 10 year stint as PCC secretary – in the days of manual typewriters and hand delivering agendas. We stayed at St. John's for over 30 years and it's been good to make some return visits and see the changes – pews out, chairs in, – but more important the new people!

Paul & Paula Wells

It was wonderful to catch up with people I had known since they were in Sunday Clubs and Pathfinders, now grown up, some with children of their own, and who had made the journey to share in the anniversary celebration of their childhood church.

Kate Howsley



I was very sorry not to be with the St. John's family on the very special 150th anniversary of the church but I was delighted to be with you remotely and to have this opportunity to say how much the church meant to me over my forty years of attendance. I, together with my daughters, Annabel and Jane, came to a personal faith when Rob Peters was the Vicar and I was disciplined by Simon over a further 20+ years. Both ministered to us as a family, and to my mother and grandmother, and they were hugely supportive in times of crisis. The church family was also very kind when I ran the charity "Wilmslow Wells for Africa", with their support of events.

None of us will be at St. John's in another 150 years but I pray that God will continue to bless the church, those who oversee its running and the church family.

Joanna Southgate



I hope that...the sun shines tomorrow, we get an extra day off school, it's chips for tea, my team wins, there's no homework, I get to stay up late!



Think: what is something you are hoping for? How sure are you that it will happen? Why are you sure?

All those things would be great but hoping for them doesn't mean they will certainly happen.



Let's find out what God has to say

We have the Spirit as the first part of God's promise. So we are waiting for God to finish making us his own children. We are waiting for our bodies to be made free. We were saved, and we have this hope. If we see what we are waiting for, then that is not really hope. People do not hope for something they already have. But we are hoping for something that we do not have yet. We are waiting for it patiently. Romans ch 8v 23-25

Hope is to do with things we can't yet



S \_\_\_\_

Things we don't already H \_\_\_\_

Hope is to do with the F \_\_\_\_  
(clue = opposite of the past)

Which of God's promises is this Christian looking forward to?

Which of God's promises are you looking forward to?



Draw some things you might find swimming or floating in the sea!



Hope is like an anchor for our soul, sure and strong. It is with Jesus in heaven and keeps us looking forward to being with Jesus forever.

Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that we could have hope. Romans 15v4

The way to have hope is to keep listening to God's word – read it, sing it, pray it, share it!



## Theology Corner

Revd Keith Ranger

### A Hope That Sustains

A surprising number of people, many of them young, are today asking - "Does the Christian Bible have anything helpful to say in these very troubled 21<sup>st</sup> century times?" Here is what a Christian leader and thinker called Paul said about a not dissimilar situation two thousand years ago:- *"Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope"* (Romans 15 verse 4). Endurance, encouragement and hope: would you not agree that these are the very commodities in short supply in our world of today? An environment which sadly is:

1. a **FALLEN** world. In the beginning, humankind knew God, walked with God and loved God. But the day came when people sinned against God and lost contact with God. The result is the planet of selfishness and suffering which we know all too well today.

2. a **FRACTURED** world. In continent after continent and country after country we cannot but lament the wars and conflicts that cause so much pain and distress but seem so difficult to bring to a just end.

3. a **FRIGHTENED** world. What is to become of the human race? Outside of the Bible, what answer can anyone offer, to bring us Romans 15 verse 4 endurance, encouragement and hope? Challenge and comfort come in the Bible's invitation to us, individually and corporately, to place our trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord He can forgive our sins, change our lives and give us eternal life and hope. We are given

this invitation in the Bible, in John 3: 16 - *"God so loved the world, that He gave His Son Jesus that whoever believes in Him should not be lost, but have eternal life"*

So - read the Bible! It affirms that whatever the future may hold - international conflict, explosive population growth, accelerated climate change, increased persecution, global pandemics, you name it (!), all history is moving toward one great and climactic moment, the day when our Lord Jesus returns in power and great glory, to put an end to all evil, usher in a new world without tears, sickness and pain (Revelation 21:4), and evermore to reign! What a hope is that!

So - people of St John's - and Catherine and I include ourselves among you! - here's an encouraging concluding poem:

***"In this our day, when hope seems dead, and all looks dark and drear.***

***Let's lift our heads, let's raise our eyes, and in our Lord find cheer.***

***The One who came so long ago will surely come again -***

***To banish sin, to raise the dead, and evermore to reign!"***

***Amen!***



Keith and Catherine Ranger were members of St. John's for 10 years, in retirement, so an appropriate contributor for this anniversary edition!



# AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Mornings 10amSUNDAYSEvenings 6.30pm			HOMEGROUPS
31 Aug	<b>Holiday Club Special 'Shipwrecked'</b>	—	Meeting in various homes around the parish during the week (evenings and afternoons) to study God's Word and to encourage and support one another.
7 Sept	<b>Jesus: Destiny Decided</b> 1. Too costly? John 11:55-12:11	<b>2 Corinthians: Style or Substance?</b> 1. The comfort of real ministry 1:1-11	
14 Sept	2. Too weak? John 12:12-19	2. The shape of real ministry 1:12- 2:11	
21 Sept	3. The hour has come! John 12:20-36	3. The pattern of real ministry 2:12-2:17	
28 Sept	4. Two choices John 12:37-50	4. The content of real ministry 3:1-18	
5 Oct	5. Too shocking? John 13:1-17	5. The motivations of real ministry 4:1-6	<b>John: Destiny Decided</b>  During the autumn, our home groups are linked to our Sunday morning series. Meeting weekly, the groups begin on 11 <sup>th</sup> Sept and finish on 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov. Dates given are Thursdays but some groups meet at other times (full details on weekly notice sheet). Each month there is Prayer Event (see below). In addition, a men's fellowship meets at 6.30am Fridays.
12 Oct	<b>Harvest All Age Parade</b>	6. The experience of real ministry 4:7-16	
19 Oct	6. To betrayal John 13:13-30	7. The perspective of real ministry 4:16-5:10	
26 Oct	<b>All Age Service</b> 7. To prepare a place John 13:31-14:4	—	
2 Nov	8. No alternative John 14:5-14	—	
9 Nov	<b>Remembrance All Age Parade</b> 9. Not alone John 14:15-31	<b>Malachi: Losing Touch with the Living God</b> 1. Cheating God 1:1-14	<b>PRAYER EVENINGS</b> (in church)  <b>Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 8 - 9.15pm</b> <b>Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 8 - 9.15pm</b>  <b>PRAYER BREAKFAST</b> (in church rooms)  <b>Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 8.30 - 9.45 am</b> <b>Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Nov 8.30 - 9.45 am</b>
16 Nov	10. Spiritual intimacy John 15:1-17	2. Disobeying God 2:1-9	
23 Nov	11. Counting the cost John 15:18-16:4	3. Betraying God 2:10-16	
30 Nov	<b>The Lord's Return</b> 1. Delayed? 2 Peter 3:1-10	4. Meeting God 2:17-3:18	
7 Dec	2. Anticipated 2 Peter 3:11-16	5. Revering God 4:1-6	
14 Dec	3. Prepared 2 Peter 3:17-18	<b>Traditional Carol Service</b>	
21 Dec	<b>Nativity Presentation</b>	<b>4pm Brass Band Carol Concert</b>	
24 Dec		<b>4pm Kids' Carols</b>	
25 Dec	<b>10am Family Carols</b>		
SPECIAL EVENTS	<b>Sept 20 10 - 11.30am</b> Who let the dads out?	<b>Oct 18 10 - 11.30am</b> Who let the dads out?	<b>Nov 15 10 - 11.30am</b> Who let the dads out?
	<b>Sept 27</b> Northern Women's Convention, Manchester	<b>Nov 1</b> Simon & Dede's leaving do	<b>Nov 28 1.30 &amp; 7 pm</b> Wreath Making
	<b>Sept 28 12.15 pm</b> Evergreens Lunch	<b>Nov 8</b> SOUND - youth event	<b>Dec 7 2.30 pm</b> Evergreens Christmas Tea
		<b>Nov 9 12.15 pm</b> Evergreens Lunch	<b>Dec 13 10 - 11.30am</b> Who let the dads out?