

GRAPEVINE

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Towards SPARK

'Through the Son then God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's sacrificial death on the cross, and brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.' Colossians 1.19-20

Dear Friends,

Having finished the excellent Jesus Shaped People course last term we have launched out on a new JSP adventure - Cross Shaped Jesus. Today we have been looking at the Centrality and Cosmic nature of the Cross: Through the Cross God brought the whole of Creation back to Himself. In other words Creation, which was broken by the Fall in the Garden of Eden has been re-set. We are part of the New Creation, but we discovered that the

Devil and the broken world won't go quietly and we are oppressed and depressed by all the lies. We live in a time when God's Kingdom has come but the old kingdom is still evident – the Kingdom of God is both Now and Not Yet.



Absolute unshakable truth: God has given a way for us to escape the consequences of the broken world we live in and it began with the Cross. *"What can wash away our*

sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

So how do I get from there to Spark in the Park? Easy. The world needs to know that Jesus is the answer to all of life's questions, and Spark is one of the best ways we have of reaching our community with that truth. People actually take their holidays to coincide with Spark. So we need to be there to tell them and show them that there is hope, there is peace, there is a future – and it begins at the cross. Mon 29th July to Fri 2nd August 2019 in Danson Park – where will you be? How will you be helping? There is something you can do to help. Look out for a registration form soon. Save the dates.

And ask God to banish the stuff that keeps us constantly in doubt. *"Rejoice! The Lord is King."*

Adam Foot, Vicar

St John's News

So far, at least, the Beast from the East has not blighted 2019 and thankfully Spring seems increasingly to have control of our weather. Consequently life since Christmas at St John's, has been able to continue uninterrupted.

Following our Autumn Jesus Shaped People adventure, the review day in early February proved a valuable opportunity to both reflect on what we had learnt and consider future Adventures! The current Church focus, "Cross Shaped Jesus" is an immediate next step and is already proving both challenging and helpful as we journey through Lent towards Holy Week and Easter.

Equally key is the eight week School of Theology Course about 60 of us are enjoying: another excellent next step for many of us as we learn more about the wonderful word of God, the Bible! Thank you so much JSP Team and Sarah Coates

for your consistent hard work in making both of these happen.

These are the Night Shelter months and as in previous years it continues to be both a challenge and a privilege to be part of the NS Team. If it is a task you might consider next year, do chat with someone on this year's team...it's definitely a JSP activity!

After much prayer, thought and discussion it has been decided that SPARK in the PARK will go ahead this year. Why the initial uncertainty ?

- Key Team member changes,
- a significant shortage of young, energetic team members last year
- the danger of it becoming a St John's event

But as we prayed there have been clear indications God has not finished with Spark yet so neither will we. Please can you join the team? (And just to reassure, there are many, many Spark roles for which we do NOT need to be young and energetic!)

Welcome home from Uganda Sue, Steve and Linzi. We look forward to catching up

on news, especially the progress in constructing those toilets!

Other lovely events which stand out in my mind are back two Sundays in January, firstly when our Mission Partners Paul and Sarah Tester visited us and then World Leprosy Day when our Lamplighters took a major part in the service.

Family News

Thank you Abigail Storey for asking to be baptised and in doing so, challenged and encouraged all of us including Jesus Kidz. Congratulations to, and prayers for, Steve and Molly Norman as they begin married life. Our love and prayers to and for Chris Moyle and Danielle as they recover from surgery, and Edd and Twink Upson dealing with long term health issues. Oh, and have I managed to get this far without mentioning Alpha?! This is JSP work too and it needs us all to be involved. Please make sure you have put your response sheet in the large box at the back of the Church and are praying you may have the opportunity to invite someone. So, 'til June!

Estelle Woodcock

World Leprosy Sunday 27th January 2019

All the Lamplighter children and adults felt very welcomed and supported by the congregation at St John's on the annual service for World Leprosy Sunday. It was also good to welcome many friends and family of the children for this service. The Lamplighters had spent all the Fridays in January preparing to lead and participate in this event, from taking the offering, leading the prayers, performing a worship dance and leading the worship songs at the front. I know from comments that many were moved by the dance and also greatly enjoyed the children processing round the church carrying their lighthouses while everyone sang 'My Lighthouse'.



individual collecting boxes. The church also supports with money from Church offerings being sent four times a year from the Missionary Council.

giving totalling £3,000 was sent for Purulia Hospital in India. We have been supporting this hospital since Alison Read visited a couple of years ago. Our money has helped to pay for their new Outpatients Dept and it was good to see at the service pictures of the walls starting to be built.

We also sent £1,000 to Anandaban Hospital in Nepal which has desperate needs and is still recovering from a devastating earthquake in 2015. This is a hospital on a high hill shining out hope to leprosy sufferers which are some of the poorest and most stigmatised people in the world. The government has agreed to match fund for three months up to the end of April all donations given, so our £1,000 will become a gift of £2,000 which is much needed at this hospital.

We hope you all enjoyed the service and found it informative as well. The children who came out for activities had lots of fun finding out about the work of The Leprosy Mission. If you would like to help us at Lamplighters or you have a child that would like to join us please have a word with me, you would be warmly welcomed. Finally I need to say a massive thank you to all the Lamplighter group leaders who selflessly give their time every Friday: Keith, Miriam, Julie, Sylvia, Pat, Alison, Lisa, Megan, Lucy, Lucie, Jon, Tom, Nathan and to Sylvia for counting up all the thousands of pounds raised.

Jackie Mackley

So why were we doing all of this? World Leprosy Sunday gives Lamplighters an opportunity to spread knowledge of the amazing work of The Leprosy Mission to cure and support leprosy sufferers around the world. At Lamplighters we do this through our prayers, our fund raising events like the Christmas Fayre, and our

It also gives us an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who supports Lamplighters and The Leprosy Mission in one of these ways.

A very big thank you to all of you.

So where was all the money being sent this year? As usual a large amount of our

School of Theology – 'SOT'

As I sit and write this article we have completed 3 weeks of SOT and I must say the whole experience has surprised me; the amount of interest, the lovely people so happy to help and God's grace as I learn new things about technology and the church sound system!

I have been asked to do this first article about where the idea came from with the hope that there will be a follow up article at the end of the course. So I have to take you back a year to an open day at St Mellitus. I went along to it with Alex Barlow not sure what I was looking for but interested to see what was going on. We found out about the SOT they run on a Thursday evening and were quick to sign up for the life track. So Alex, Helen and I embarked on the 8 week course travelling up to London.

We had a wonderful time travelling together and the life track course was excellent; it challenged me to rethink some

of my ideas, provoked thoughts about scripture and expanded my view of God.

We knew that SOT ran a further 3 courses: two Bible tracks and a faith track, but we agreed that the time travelling and cost made it difficult to see how we could continue with the other tracks. We heard about the streaming of the course and talked about the possibility of holding something closer to home. Would we find enough people to make the course affordable? Could we find a venue? Initial messages to all the people I had stored in my phone seemed promising so after getting permission I set about trying to organise the live stream of Bible track 1 at St Johns and after some planning it started in church on the 31st Jan/1st Feb. So far I have learnt a lot, I am sure there are so many ways we could make improvements if we do it again in the future. Still God's faithfulness blows me away every time I attempt something out of my comfort zone. This kind of

organising would normally be my idea of a nightmare but it's all just worked out, I have a new found respect for my phone which can double as Wi-Fi, it gives me the ability to check bank accounts, reply to messages and emails wherever I am, these are all things I have relied on and thanked God for.

Leading up to the start of SOT I was encouraged when I came across when reading, "The pursuit of God is an endless delight of discovery of His divine nature- and there is no end to this most pleasurable journey".

In that moment I was reminded that when we study the nature of God it is an endless delight, excitement about the course began to rise again in me and I really felt that God deserved all the glory for it was exactly this feeling rising at that very minute that had started the whole idea in the first place.

Sarah Coates



May God keep you until we meet again

Owen David Wellman – born 20st December 1964 – went to be with our Lord on 8th December 2018. Too soon in our opinion but who can argue when the Lord calls for us?

Owen was a loving husband to Ruth, a devoted father to Jade, Jolie and Jenna, a loyal friend to a lot of us in this church and a dependable work colleague to many – he moved around a lot in recent years!!

Owen was fairly quiet and unassuming in certain arenas, particularly where he didn't feel very confident, but if it was anything to do with sport, he came alive.

Rugby, particularly England (he was a mean rugby player himself once during his youth and when he had hair!), Football – Exeter and England, Cricket (he liked 20-20)

and virtually any sport where he could have a beer in his hand, he would even have celebrated the World Tiddly Winks Championship if there was a Doombur or a Bishop's Finger in sight! However, he was never happier than when he was with his family who were his pride and joy. His sense of humour was very dry and he could lighten the darkest moments with his wit, sometimes with a touch of light sarcasm but never hurtful.

Owen was a deep character who didn't find it easy to share his innermost feelings with a wide audience but he cared about



others and was always happy to listen, whoever they were and whatever they wanted to say. In our culture, when someone dies we have a tendency to talk about them as though they were

perfect. Well Owen wasn't perfect and he didn't want people to think he was. He had struggles and hurts like everyone but mostly he overcame them with a wry smile and a calm acceptance of things he couldn't change but could pray that God would. In fact, he was so laid back sometimes, he was practically horizontal. He was also a joker and a wind up – just ask Ruth and the girls. God has transformed him into a saint and has given him the whole company of heaven to wind up – God help them all!!

So we say goodbye to our dear friend Owen but we will see him again, standing at the gates with a pint of Doombur in one hand and a Morgan Spice Rum in the other, the remains of a Vindaloo curry down his shirt. We will love and look after Ruth, the girls and their other halves and welcome the gift of a new grandchild to be born to Jade and Paul later this year. The mark of the impression someone makes in their lifetime is borne by how much they are missed. We miss you Owen. Thank you for being our Christian brother and our friend and for the good times we had together. May God keep you until we meet again.

Sue Read

Uganda 2019

This year, 5 of us went to visit the school. Linzi, Steve and myself from St John's and Cate Woodcock from Bishop Ridley. My friend Elizabeth (a former work colleague) also came to the school for a week. Cate is a specialist midwife with 25 years' experience



and her natural place to assist was at Nyakebale Hospital in Rukungiri, teaching the 3rd year midwives. Her input was invaluable as confirmed by the chief nursing officer. I went with her one day to observe her teaching infant resuscitation. The conditions and the equipment they have to use are a disgrace. They do their best, but no-one should have to experience what they do on a daily basis. They are supposed to be funded by the Catholic Church but there is little money available. Thank God for the NHS, however over-worked it is. Nothing here could ever compare to that.

Life at the school is fairly tough at the moment. There are 100 children in the school who are not sponsored or whose parents cannot pay school fees. Parents who can pay fees are paying them sporadically which makes things difficult to manage on an ongoing basis. Resources are scarce, but the headmaster and his team are doing a great job to try to make ends meet. The kids themselves were as welcoming as usual and pleased to see us. We managed to make 3000 bread rolls again, went to the deaf school, wrote the sponsor letters for 250 children, took 37 kids shopping (always an experience!) and took the school photos as usual. My time



there was a bit disappointing for me, as I spent most of it doing admin – no teaching, no music but someone reminded me that maybe that is what God wanted me to do this time given the number of children who are awaiting sponsors.

Steve was rampant with his water pistol as usual which the children love and Linzi was her artistic self, responding to requests for her art in the Bursar's, the Deputy Head's and the Nursery Headteacher's office.



The area for the toilets has been planned but they are having difficulty with the plans and planning permission. I have reached out to a US organisation who we met 'coincidentally' (God co-incidence I think) whilst travelling from Safari to the School. They specialise in latrines and have an architect who will draw up plans for free and potentially fit them although they will have to pay for that. Please pray this comes to fruition soon.

Despite some issues with our flight home, we are looking forward to next year and hopefully more people will feel called to come with us.

Sue Read

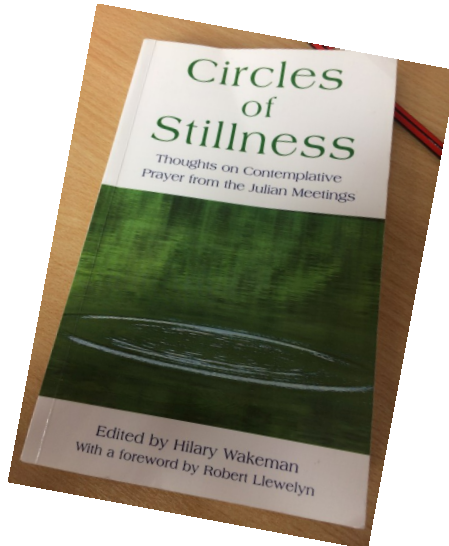
Book Review

Circles of Stillness

Thoughts on Contemplative Prayer from the Julian Meetings

Edited by Hilary Wakeman

'Silence is God's first language'
'Nothing is so much like God as silence'
Mother Teresa, an apostle of silence, wrote "We need silence to be able to touch souls. The more we receive in our silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life." The book *Circles of Stillness* is divided into nine sections made up of articles and poems from different writers who



are 'experienced in silence and the ways of the Spirit'.

The editor Hilary Wakeman is the founder of the Julian meetings which were set up to foster the teaching and practice of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition. Their motto is 'Meeting in silence with God'.

It is a good book to dip into if you are interested in contemplative intercession (praying silently), meditation, poetry, or generally 'being' rather than 'doing'. For me, more than anything, it reinforced my desire to try a silent retreat so I might look into that.

Wendy Mackenzie-Ingle

International Justice Mission – 'IJM'

Your prayer is powerful.

When IJM teams go into the darkest corners of the world, they will do it with your prayers behind them.

With exclusive insight into the horrors and the hope in the fight for justice, we're inviting you to a day of storytelling, worship, and intercession that will equip you to raise your voice against the strongholds of violence and be part of ending

slavery,

forever.



Pray for Justice 2019 - Great Power, Great Love
18th May 2019, St. Mark's Battersea Rise
9.30am - 3.45pm

New Wine Conference

New Wine regional leadership conference for the South East, St Paul's Hammer-smith, March 11th and 12th 2019.

Revival, and the hope and prayer for it, was a yearning voiced throughout this conference. We were inspired by powerful worship tunes before every one of the eight sessions. Twanging guitars and a throbbing drum got us all onto our feet and got the blood coursing around our brains and bodies, got us into the zone, animated for the Lord.

New Wine was a delight for us, centred as it is on the Holy Spirit, His presence being welcomed and expected, His refreshment and comfort being much

needed and sought. I began the conference feeling somewhat



distant and fatigued, but ended it inspired and renewed, and so for me it was a roar-

ing success. My personal highlight was meeting John Irvine once more and introducing him to Adam, as both of them blessed my evangelistic calling to shops. I was also again in tears when we were invited to kneel and confess during sessions on Tuesday.

There were two panel sessions of interviews, one with the early Charismatics who mentioned John Wimber as a huge influence when he came over to England in the sixties. Sandy Miller, David McInnis and John Irvine told the stories. The second panel comprised four of those young men and women who are in very differing ways carrying God's fire wherever he has placed them. Gemma Foster, Paul Unsworth, James Castlogia, all shine brightly for the Lord and the Spirit, bless them all.