

ST ANDREW'S

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S

Vicar's Blog

Last week we kicked off our 'Church of Tomorrow' series with the call for us as a church to stay alert to the signs of the times as Jesus asks us to. We shared a prophetic word that it's so important to avoid the trap of 'institutionalism' – by that we mean focusing on the scaffold rather than the building. The very traditions, habits, way of 'doing church' that at one time held a value in supporting our church structures, if we're not careful, and if they are not renewed, can instead become a trap for us. We can drift into 'legalism' or empty 'religion'. Like a flu vaccine, we can have a tiny amount of the 'real thing' (e.g. just attending a 'church service') to ever prevent us from wholeheartedly abandoning ourselves in surrender to God. We can rely on 'coming to church', or our liturgies, or our worship - whether hymns or contemporary worship, rather than pursuing the call to follow Jesus and keep in step with his Spirit.

We also explored a concept that every 500 years (I know it's a sweeping generalisation -but go with it!), it feels like the Holy Spirit holds a 'rummage sale' - out with 'old structures' and in with a new thing. Whether that was the fall of the Roman empire in AD 480, birthing a new monastic movement, to the medieval period following the separation of the Catholic and Orthodox churches in 1054, to the Reformation beginning in 1517, to this present move of the spirit with the Azusa street revival in 1906 birthing the Pentecostal church.

It seems to be the case that the darkest hour (this current cultural crisis) is often the point just before the dawn, where the church rises up with a God given momentum, and we start to see rebirth, renewal and revival. Lord, how we long for that in our day, that the best days for the Church in the UK are ahead of us! This week we'll be looking at Ephesians chapter 1, about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It's one thing to make Jesus as Saviour of our lives, but it's quite another thing, and a much longer, harder process of discipleship to make him Lord of our lives. One of the temptations for the charismatic church can be to focus on the benefits and blessings of Christ as Saviour – (his forgiveness, reconciliation, power, presence) but underemphasise the importance of Christ as Lord of every area of our lives. Jesus' primary love language is obedience to his Word (John 14:15). Lord help us to honour you as both Saviour and Lord today. Amen.

Sunday 21st January

Church of Tomorrow – Eph 1

9am Communion service at St A's

10.30am Informal Worship at St A's with Children's and Youth Groups

6pm Encounter – bimonthly evening of worship & prayer St A

Sunday 28th January

Church of Tomorrow – Eph 1

9am Communion service at St A's

10.30am Informal Worship with Children's and Youth Groups

3:30pm Holy Communion St B's

Monday 22nd Jan

7pm STA Youth

Wednesday 24th Jan

11:30am BLT (Babies, Lunch and Toddlers)

Thursday 25th Jan

10am Thursday Knitters

10am Holy Communion at St A's

7:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

7:15pm Alpha

Friday 26th Jan

9:30am Friday Minis

11am Funeral of John Positive

Saturday 27th Jan

8:30am Men's Breakfast

Please visit www.stastb.church/calendar for the most up to date information.

Pastoral Care

As part of our Christian community, we provide mutual support for one another. Much of this happens informally with friends within the church and through the connect groups. However, sometimes people will have need for more personal support and encouragement either as a 'one-off chat' or on a more ongoing basis. We have a pastoral care team who can provide this type of care. Please contact Nigel Roe (Team Leader) on 07780 994827 or Rosi White on 07426 357967.

Churches Together

This winter, we invite you to embrace the cosy ambience of our Winter Warmers Initiative. Join us at St. John's Church every Thursday from 12:30 pm to 2 pm until March 21, 2024. Delight in a variety of soups, freshly baked bread, delectable cakes, and steaming hot drinks! Take this opportunity to connect with others, fostering friendships over heart-warming meals. We look forward to sharing the warmth with you!

Notices

Last opportunity to join Alpha: It's not too late to embark on the Alpha journey with us! Alpha is open to everyone who is curious about exploring the basics of the Christian faith in a fun, free, and friendly environment. Our sessions are designed to encourage open conversations where no question is off-limits. Join us on Thursday evenings at St Andrew's Church at 7:15 pm for engaging discussions. An evening meal with refreshments will be provided to make your experience even more enjoyable. You can still register at www.stastb.church/alpha. Once registered, we'll promptly send you all the details you need to get started.

Discipleship Questionnaire: We've launched our 'Healthy Habits' discipleship series, and will be preaching through them in all our all-age services plus other services. As part of that, we have a discipleship questionnaire we would love you to fill out before the end of Jan - the link for the questionnaire is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FN2RR55>

Men's Breakfast: Join us for a Men's Breakfast on the 27th of January, where we will delve into the theme of prayer. This gathering promises not only a hearty meal but also an opportunity for us to come together, share our thoughts, and deepen our understanding of the power of prayer in our lives. Sign up here <https://stastb.churchsuite.com/events/w6o7va27>

Worship Recruitment

Join our Worship Team! Explore your passion for music and serving by turning up after the 10:30 am service on January 21st, 2024. Whether you sing, play an instrument, or have technical skills, discover how your unique gifts can contribute to our vision for worship.

Finance Officer We are delighted to announce that Alison Salcombe will be joining the team on Wednesday 17th January as our new Finance Officer. Alison lives in Churchdown and for over 20 years has the business manager for a school in Cheltenham. Alice and Di will be supporting Alison to settle in over the next couple of months. Please hold her in your prayers.

Thursday Women's Connect Group Helen Neave and Penny Murphy's Connect group will be moving from every other week to every week from now on. If you would like to join, feel free to come along every Thursday to St Andrew's Church, 10:30am-12noon as we look to develop intimacy with God, learning to hear from God for ourselves and activating the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Eco Tip

ENERGY: In the bleak mid winter, consider blocking off those draughts, by simply using rolled up blankets and if you have a chimney you could use a chimney balloon to stop that sneaky draught. Blocking draughts helps keep the heat in, saving energy and therefore money.

Events

Our website calendar is a good place to find out what's happening throughout the year. Visit <https://www.stastb.church/calendar>

27th Jan – Men's Breakfast

9th Feb – Youth Social – Ninja Warrior

14th Feb – Ash Wednesday Service

17th March – Newcomers' Tea

St Andrew's Church Centre, Station Road, Churchdown, Gloucester
GL3 2JT

www.stastb.church 01452 712154

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Closed Tuesday 9.30am - 11.30am

Contact information

Admin: admin@stastb.church

Children's and Families: Kate Smith, children@stastb.church

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07426357967

Treasurer: treasurer@stastb.church

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Youth: Jamie Flores, jamie@stastb.church

Forward any notices to Adam.



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