



The Beacon

Newsletter of St John's Church, Worksop

January 2026

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Our Vicar, Gareth, writes.....

I recently visited Redlands School Nursery and showed the children a picture of the church. Most of them recognised the building straight away. But, understandably, they had very little idea what the church is, what happens inside it, or why it's there at all.

That moment stayed with me. I often meet adults too who recognise the church building, but who carry the same sort of questions. If you were asked to finish the sentence "Our church is..." what would you say? There's lots of possible answers.

Interestingly, the Bible doesn't give us just one straightforward answer. It uses a number of different pictures to help us understand what the church is and what it's for. It speaks of the church as a family, where people belong; a body, where every person matters; a flock, guided and cared for; and a bride, deeply loved and full of hope for the future.

From Sunday 11th January, we're exploring these images together in a four-week series called "The Church Is...". Each Sunday looks at one picture, and there'll be opportunities to reflect further in our midweek groups. The dates and themes are included in the poster found overleaf.

Whether you're deeply involved in church, or just wondering what goes on behind the doors, you are very welcome to come and see.

Gareth



Our Church is...



a family

Romans 8:15-17



a body

1 Corinthians 12:12-27



a flock

John 10:1-14



a bride

Revelation 19:5-8

In the Bible, God gives us rich and beautiful pictures to help us understand what our church should be like. Over four weeks we'll look at four pictures during our Sunday 10.30 services and during our midweek groups.

Part ONE

There is great debate about the place of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in today's already confusing world. Some 'prophets of doom' are warning us to stay away from AI, even opposing any advancements where we can. Other Christian advisors are suggesting we embrace good AI, for example in medicine, communications, surgery and technology. One particular prophet said that if we do not use AI for good then others will use it for evil purposes. For example, consider how advances in media and music have largely been underused in Christian circles, and have been exploited by unsavoury content such as pornography and satanic heavy metal infatuations, leading to damaged lives.

So who are the people pushing the AI agenda? Who are the AI Missioners? We read that the Tech Giants are investing billions of dollars in AI with USA, China, and Russia competing to be top dog in this developing arena. What is their driving motivation? What is their mission, and is it for the good of all? Sci-Fi films of yesteryear had mega-computer run systems infiltrating and controlling all aspects of life under the pretext of a) improving our quality of life b) taking the strain out of daily living and c) having ready answers to all our concerns and misgivings. Mission for a godless Utopia?

So how worried should we be? How much do we know and understand?

I've found the following YouTube video by Dr John Lennox (Oxford University, Professor of Mathematics) a good way in from a Christian perspective

'The End of the World? John Lennox on AI and the Book of Revelation'

..... runs for about 47mins

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/mAfRswipXiE>

Part TWO of this article will hopefully bring some reassurance that all is well for those who love, fear and serve the Lord.

Chris L

"New Year's Day is a good time to fix one's eyes on the only One who knows what the year is to hold."

Elisabeth Elliot

God is the only one who knows what's going to happen for you in this Christian new year. So, don't forget to ask for His guidance and thank Him for it, too. Our faith in Jesus Christ is all about new beginnings and so fortunately we can cling to that with hope for the upcoming year.

Becoming a Christian

Many people have found saying this prayer to be a helpful first step to a relationship with God....

'Lord Jesus Christ,

I am truly sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life. Please forgive me. I now turn from everything that I know is wrong.

Thank You that You died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free.

Thank You that You offer me forgiveness and the gift of Your Holy Spirit.

Please come into my life today.

Thank You, Lord Jesus.'

I moved to Worksop in June 2020. There was a bit of a virus scare around, I wanted a new start and to see if I could create a fresh start and just be myself.

I looked on Zoopla for the house I'd prefer. I looked at a few and decided Worksop was where I'd start my new chapter. Worksop was going to be a two year test for me to see if I could make a home, a life for me that I desired and had dreamed of.

I was on my own, I knew no one or where anything or anywhere was. The house was adequate and provided what I wanted. So I moved in.

After a year of still not meeting anyone and just working six days a week, I was introduced to St. John's by a trusted friend. I'd explored a couple of other churches but they didn't feel right; they'd seen a couple of things in my house that begged the question "Do you have faith" obviously I said "Yes and always have".

I came to St. John's approximately four years ago and I haven't looked back since.

I have created the peaceful life I dreamt of all those years ago. I feel I have roots here now within St. John's at Worksop and I've met so many wonderful people and made good trusted friends.

The two years has passed I'm hoping I'm as settled as I can be.

With my parents' and God's guidance I was brought here to meet you – my wonderful church family.

God bless you all 🙏

Jan

New Year Trivia Quiz—National Traditions (Googling permitted!)

- 1 What food is eaten at midnight in Spain?
- 2 What colour underwear is considered lucky to wear on New Year's Eve in Brazil and Italy?
- 3 Which country's tradition involves throwing old furniture out of the window?!
- 4 What do people in Denmark do to welcome in the New Year?
- 5 What is the Danish tradition of jumping off a chair at midnight?

Answers



- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Grapes |
| 2 | Red |
| 3 | S Africa |
| 4 | Break dishes on friends' doorsteps |
| 5 | Leaping into the New Year! |





Throughout the month of December we had literally hundreds of visitors through our doors.

Confirmation Service ~ Vicar's Institution
~ 2 Carol Services ~ 3 Christingles.

Preparation for these takes a LOT of work and so a BIG THANK YOU to all the
Service Leaders, Musicians, Lesson Readers, Tea Makers, Chair Shifters, Clearer-uppers and Cleaners.

Team St John's at its best!



About St J's

New to St John's? Here's some general information about our church

Sunday Services

10.30 am Morning Worship
+ Kids, Church
6.00 pm Sunday @ 6.00
Informal service in the
Church Hall Lounge

Contact Point

Church Office:

Overend Road, Worksop S81 1QG
[usually open Friday a.m. from 9.30—12 noon]
Tel: 01909 472595

Email: office.worksopstjohn@gmail.com

Vicar: Revd Gareth Banton 07897 005843
garethrbanton@gmail.com

Church Website:

www.stjohnschurchworksop.co.uk

Heritage Website: <https://worksopspire.org>

Regular Weekly Diary

Tuesday 10.00—12 noon
Coffee Morning

Wednesday 1.00 pm Mothers' Union
(1st Wed'day of the month)
7.00 pm
Lifeline Praise and Prayer

OR Home Groups

Friday 7.00—8.30 (alternate weeks)
Games Night for all ages

Saturday 10.00—12 noon
Church open to all

*For more details of the above ask one
of our leaders*



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