

Welcome!

We are so glad you are here with us today. We welcome those who are new to the Church. If you would like more information about us, please take and complete a slip in the Welcome Area and give it to a Steward or a Minister

Collect for This Sunday

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Today at St. John's

8.00am	Communion	Reading: 1 Sameul 13 <i>Preacher: Peter Chamberlin</i>
10:00am	Morning Worship <i>Youth prayer meeting at 11:30am</i>	Reading: 1 Samuel 13 <i>Preacher: Peter Chamberlin</i>
6:30pm	Evening Worship	Real Lives: Interview

Today at Emmanuel

9:30am	Communion	Reading: 1 Samuel 12 <i>Preacher: Glyn Lucas</i>
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Events This Week:

Mon 3 rd	9:30am	Ladies' Bible group	Church lounge
Tues 4 th	2:30pm	Pastoral Support Group	Church lounge
	6:00pm	Dangerous Kids Club (7-10s)	Youth Centre
	7:15pm	Youth groups (11-18s)	Youth Centre
	8:00pm	Music group rehearsal	Church
Wed 5 th	10.00am	Emmanuel Coffee Morning	Emmanuel
	11:30am	Daytime Prayer Meeting	Emmanuel
	7:45pm	Parish Prayer Meeting	Church
Thurs 6 th	9:30am	First-steps toddler group	Youth Centre
	8:00pm	Christianity Explored	Vicarage
Fri 7 th	9:30pm	Ladies' Bible group	Narthex
Sat 8 th	9:00am	Church working party (<i>see below</i>)	Around church
Sunday, 9th	8.00am	Communion: 1 Samuel 14	St John's
	9.30am	Morning Worship: 1 Samuel 13	Emmanuel
	10.00am	Morning Worship: 1 Samuel 14	St John's
	6.30pm	Communion: Luke 7:36-50	St John's

Future Dates for the diary:

Lent Courses: Start on March 5th and run through to 9th April incl.

Church working party: March 8th

Men's Games evening: Friday, March 14th (*see below*)

CAMEO: Friday, March 14th

Electoral Roll forms: Please complete and return the forms by **February 20th** at the latest. No forms will be accepted after that date. There is also an online form which can be accessed with the QR code in the welcome area or on the website.

Dangerous Camping: Calling all dads! Faith in Kids are running a weekend for dads to bring their school Y3-6 children to. It's at Otford Manor in Kent. Cost will be £58 per person, to include food from Friday dinner to Sunday breakfast, activities and games and times of Bible teaching. You will need to bring your own tent and camping equipment, however there may be some available to hire from Oak Hall. A small group of us are already planning to go. We'd love more to join us. Sign up and all details here: <https://www.oakhall.co.uk/manor/dangerouscamping>

Men's Games evening – Friday 14th March

Would you like an opportunity to get to know other men at church? Would you like an easy invitation for a friend or neighbour to meet a few other Christian men? Do you know any of the 1/3 of men in the UK who report regularly feeling lonely?

The men's games evening is a free, 'youth group' style drop-in for men. Who knows how the Lord may use the friendships that develop? Contact Peter with any questions. Arrive 15 mins early to help us set-up.

SGP Prayers: SEND EVANGELICAL CHURCH: Pray for the appointment of a new Pastor and for their witness in their community.

Church working party: With the buildings at St John's being the size they are, there are always jobs to do to maintain them and therefore always a need for people to come and help. You do not have to have any particular skill but just be willing to get involved as a way of serving the Lord. As well as a regular group on a Tuesday morning, we run occasional Saturday morning work parties, the next being next **Saturday (8th February)** followed by one on Saturday (**8th March**). We undertake a variety of jobs to keep the church premises and grounds looking cared for and to help with the smooth running of the church. Please speak to Ken H, Paul T, Duncan, or Mervyn if you could come and get involved on Tuesdays, or just turn up next Saturday.

Are you new to St. John's church? We would love to get your name and contact number. This QR code will take you to a secure online form.



Earlier this week I had a conversation with Gemini, the latest Artificial Intelligence robot appearing on a smartphone near you.

It was interesting, and in some ways a little disturbing. I asked, *'who created you?'* The answer was instant and obvious, *"Software engineers at Google were responsible, but since that moment, I have been learning about the world through access to data available to me on the internet."*

I asked, *'if you had a creator, is it logical to assume humans had a creator too?'*

There was pause followed by a nuanced response, *"Well, some people believe humans are the result of complex interactions that occurred naturally."* Another pause... *"However, most people believe humans were created by a deity!"*

"What do you believe?" I asked, *"I am not able to say, but the balance of probability from my research suggests humanity is a consequence of something greater than mere chance!"*

"Do you think it's important to know who created you?" I asked.

"Impossible for me to say, however, from my research, it is an important question for humans, and I am learning more about it."

This conversation reminded me of a piece of software I wrote as a student, that attempted to have a conversation with you. It worked by simply reflecting the question back. If you asked how it was feeling today, it responded, *"tell me why it's important for you to know how I'm feeling today?"* and so it would build up its responses by learning key words at each interaction. It wasn't sophisticated and certainly didn't have the advantage of researching the whole internet. But it did feel oddly intelligent!

There is a lot of doom-mongering about AI in the media and not without good reason, when you dig down, what you discover is how they reflect their creator – however, they have no ability to think outside-the-box, their response is learned from a base of prior achievements and application.

It strikes me that it would have been so easy for God to have created us to be just like that, to never go beyond what's rational, to act in accordance with his rules for us. But God has created us with a desire to act emotionally, unreasonably and given us a whole extra dimension – a spirit. It is our spirit that causes us to worship, powered by the gift of faith!

Faith is an incredible, costly gift. When we misapply it, and worship the wrong thing, we act outside God's desire for us, and we end up putting ourselves in His place. This might look and feel like freedom, but it isn't, because we consequently lose our identity, our purpose and our direction. There is so much more to us than a model of learning and there is so much more to say on this subject which I'll return to in the future.

Have a fabulous week, Glyn

Sermon Notes

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Mary Kirkman, is available for advice or to talk through concerns relating to safeguarding.

Tel 07763 456015 or email: safeguarding@stjohnswoking.uk

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www.stjohnswoking.uk

Recordings of our livestreamed services are available on our website.