

Can we make it on our own?

Many believe they can, but the simple truth is that we can't. Jesus knows that we need his constant help, through the gift of His Holy Spirit.

He has also given us the perfect model of prayer as he invites us to pray '*Our Father...*' We pray this on Sundays - how about praying every day?

There are also other practical ways we are encouraging everyone at St Mary's, young and old, to join in, deepening our relationship with Jesus and enabling us to be more effective as we follow him as disciples:

- Wednesdays. Church is always open from 2-3pm and we invite you to join us as we pray together for around 20 minutes. We pray for ourselves; for the needs of others we know; for the mission & ministry across our parish and the 4Saints Team, including those needing God's healing touch; and for those around the world needing God's help.
- We try and encourage short, simple prayers so everyone can take part - but don't worry, there's no pressure and you're just as welcome to pray silently. We often say this is the most important meeting of the week - will you join us taking up the challenge?!
- Prayer triplets. Some cannot make Wednesdays and may prefer to pray with 2 others at a mutually convenient time - go on, find a couple of friends!!
- Or how about offering to take a turn in leading our intercessions on a Sunday - we'll help you!



Called to PRAY

More people knowing Jesus
...More justice in the world...



Diocese of Liverpool



St. Mary's Church

Do you love reading? If so, what are your favourite books? Have you read any more than once? Maybe you struggle with reading and prefer audio books, or on the Kindle - brilliant!

And so it is with the bible! For many, it's their favourite book, and it's not yet been knocked off the best-seller lists! Why? Because it remains the primary means by which God reveals himself and communicates with us. Last week we considered our calling to pray - this week we reflect on our calling to read the bible.

Be honest! Is this something you do every day, or do you just listen once a week in church?! Is it a drag or a joy? Are you excited when you come to read, expecting God to speak to you - or not?

Be honest! **Start where you are.** There's no right way to read the bible, just as there's no one style of writing (66 books!) - but start by praying, with expectation, that 'the Word' will speak to you as you read, whether on your own at home, or on the move, or in a group

Many in St Mary's use a form of **bible-reading notes**, such as New Daylight (please see Pauline Reddington), though there are many other resources too, including for children and youth, with many good online apps.

And this week '**Open Book**' relaunches, meeting every other Wednesday evening at 7.30pm in the vicarage. Do come and join us - maybe just listening in to begin with, but we guarantee that before long you'll be sharing the excitement of how God has been speaking to you - go on, come and join in the adventure!!



Called to READ

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St Mary's Church

Are you a learner? Someone with a constant thirst to learn and to broaden your horizons? Or couldn't you wait to leave school and give up learning?!

Maybe you feel your horizon or perspective keeps changing, or maybe you feel that you've 'made it' and you've reached a plateau of what you're likely to learn.

I guess one of the constants in life is that things never stay the same: we are always changing (whether we like it or not!) and in many ways we need to keep learning, or re-learning, to keep in step. The Diocese of Liverpool has a Department called *Lifelong Learning* where all ministers are encouraged and required to keep learning and growing. In fact, this Wednesday we meet at Liverpool Hope University for our annual Study Day on the three Letters of John, led by the Bishop of Penrith.

How about you? How do you feel reading this leaflet and the emphasis on our *Calling to Learn*? I hope you're positive, enthusiastic - even excited?! In fact, if you've been following the call to pray and to read, you will be well on the way to learning already. For if we are in prayer and have an open spirit when we come to read God's word, he promises to speak to us. And even familiar passages take on new depths and meaning.

So be encouraged to keep reading, to keep learning, to keep growing - on your own and with others. One of the best places is our own mid-week *Open Book* study group in the vicarage, with an emphasis on being still, listening to God's word, reflecting & listening to others as well as having fun and enjoying good company. See you there!



Called to LEARN

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St. Mary's Church

The banners have been marching down church in recent weeks—are you wondering where we go next?!

Having been called by our Lord, called by name, called to follow him in our discipleship—called to pray, read and learn, we are now asked to face a new direction as **the Lord sends us out**. This was Jesus' pattern with his first disciples, and so it is with us. You may recall the 2 hands on my white stole: the Lord's one hand calling us, and his other hand sending us. Well these are two related and complimentary sides of our life as Christians—one doesn't make sense without the other.

So this week, we are 'sent to tell', as Paul writes in 2 Tim 1:8—*"So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord"*

I wonder what story God has given you to tell? For each of us it will be different. Maybe how he's turned your life around; maybe how he's been your rock through testing times; maybe the comfort he's brought you, the peace he's given you, the hope he's holding out for you; maybe the challenge he's taking you through—maybe for our new confirmees that real sense of confirming and grounding your faith.

Whatever it is, my prayer is that the Lord will enable you to tell and share his good news as your good news, both within St Mary's and to all your family and friends.

Still scared? Well, we're all called to pray to the God *'who is able to do more than we can ever ask or imagine'* (Eph 3:20) If your desire is that more people should come to know the Jesus you worship, then his Holy Spirit will give you the words to say. Go on—'tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord'.

Yours in Christ, Hugh



Sent to TELL

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...More justice in the world...**



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St. Mary's Church

I wonder what your reaction is to the word 'service?!'
What a bind—what a chore—what a bore?!

Well, if you've been called by the Lord, if you've heard his voice, if you know him and have been drawn to love him—then it's no chore; rather, you just want to serve him and others more.

It's actually twinned with being 'Sent to Tell', for we tell our story of what Jesus is doing in our lives not just by words, but also by our actions. It's part of our church vision statement: 'To be an **Open Door Church**, sharing God's love for the world' (and growing in our love for Jesus).

They're actually part of a virtuous cycle—the more we get to know Jesus, the more we want to share him with others, and to serve them in practical ways. For instance it's the reason we're making a push this week to give as much as we can to the Knowsley Foodbank.

It's also the reason our volunteers turn up to run '*Messy Harvest*', to dish up the Harvest Hotpot, to organise the village bonfire, to commit to serving weekly at the *Wednesday Well* and at *Little Fishes*. And more!

It also matches vision we share with Liverpool Diocese: '**more people knowing Jesus...more justice in the world**'. There are also countless other ways in which God's people are serving through striving for justice across our borough—for example bighelpproject.com

And why do we do it? Not out of duty, but purely out of love for Jesus and for others, that they should be drawn into the fulness of life we are promised by our Saviour.

Yours in Him, Hugh



Sent to SERVE

**More people knowing Jesus
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St. Mary's Church



Two people emailed me this week to say 'Thank You' and 'Well done!' It meant a lot—an incredible amount. When was the last time someone said that to you? When was someone likewise encouraged from you?

32 children and about 30 adults attended Messy Harvest last week and together created the banner above/outside. Some say 'What's there to give thanks for?' Well, there's always something. I wonder: how are you giving thanks? For what? And to whom?

Hopefully your answer finds its full expression in worship: giving thanks to the One who gave everything, absolutely everything, for us. I ask every baptism family how far they would go if their children were in trouble—every parent so far has said they'd give everything, even their own life. And that's precisely what the Lord has done for us—given up his life to save you and me.

So may we be encouraged towards a similar overflowing generosity which characterises every part of our lives—from our worship and welcome to our service & sacrifice.

For some, this will touch their time and God-given talents; for others this might reach into their pockets and purses, affecting savings & investments as well as regular giving. We truly give thanks for 2 recent legacies, allowing the PCC to consider the potential reordering of St Mary's, but this doesn't remove the need to raise £1200/week (yes, it costs £62k/year to keep St Mary's open!)

May you know God's rich blessing as you respond to him, and as he sends you out: to tell—to serve—and to give!

Yours in Him, Hugh



Sent to GIVE

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