

# Chester Cursillo



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## Spring Newsletter 2023

A Celebration of all that God has created bringing wonder, joy and glory.  
Many thanks to those who contributed.

Towards the end of last year I attended webinar hosted by the Church of England titled Creation Speaks of God's Glory..How Do We Hear It?

Creation is called upon to praise God; it is a testimony of God's work. We talked about how animal and plant life give glory to the Lord by being what God created them to be; we need to look at Creation and join in. I heard a powerful message of Creation singing of God's glory in all its colour, sounds and being...I had felt it over the years but not 'heard' it

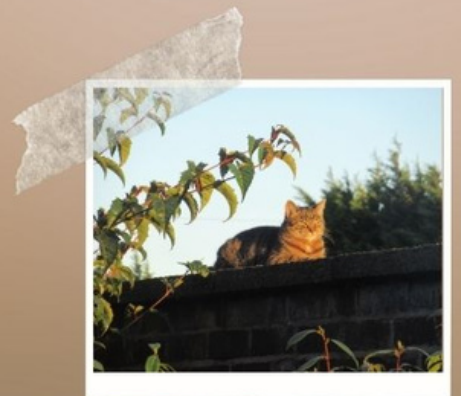
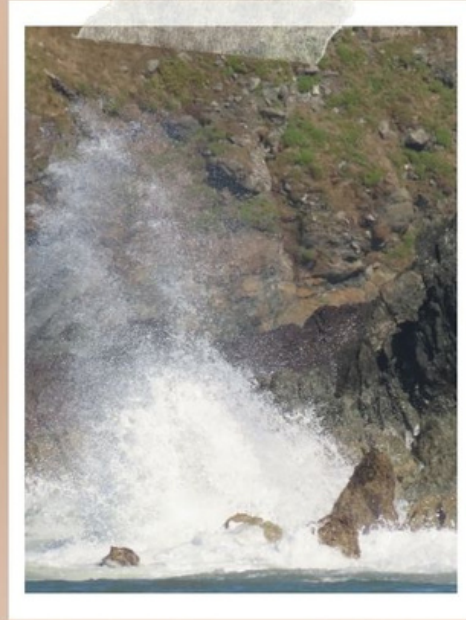
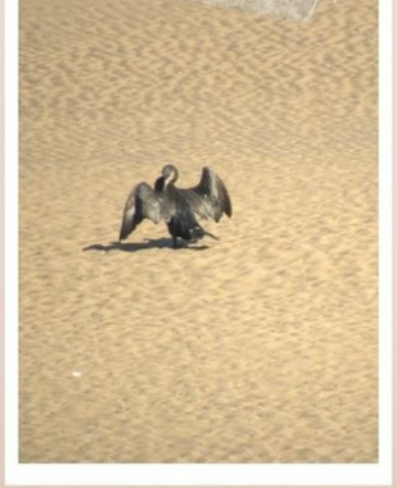
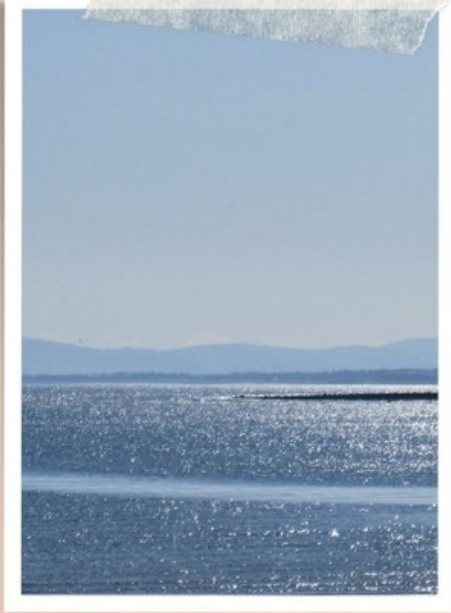
I now hear the singing of Creation where ever I go; the redness of the berries, the leaves falling, the birds in flight, people going about their lives... all give glory to God by being what God created them to be. All this has deeply enhanced my relationship with God and the natural world.

**I enjoy photography and my photo's show the glory of God's creation and the praise it sings out.**

Psalm 96:11-12

"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy."

**Sue Lewis**



From Nick Hutt

# Glory

During Advent, I read a book by Derek Turnbull. I used his reflections on the word *Glory* as inspiration for of this piece, which I originally wrote for our Julian Group as an introduction to contemplative prayer. It is a Christmassy piece but the birth of Christ was arguably when God's glory was clearly laid bare.

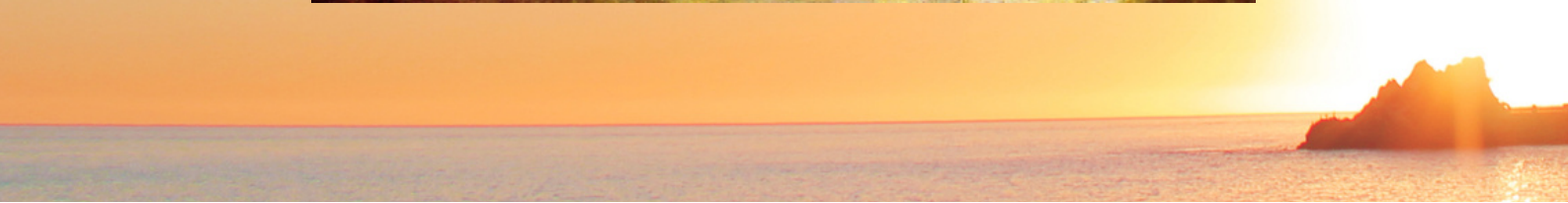
Nowadays *Glory* seems to belong to the world of majestic cathedrals, aromatic incense, candle wax and gold-edged Bibles, pointing to something that is exceptional and sacred. But if we look back to the Christmas story we see something much more awesome and exciting. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest Heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favours'

LUKE 2:14

When the angel first broke open the skies Luke tells us 'the glory of the Lord shone all around'

LUKE 2:9



Here are 3 thoughts about God's Glory:

Firstly, glory is a description of God himself. He is the 'king of glory' who is marked by splendour, beauty, magnificence. The manifestation of God's glory indicates his presence. God's glory is variously associated with fire, light, thunder and thick cloud, all of which suggest that he is a mystery that no human mind can fully understand. When people encounter God's glory they are filled with awe and react with fear at his majestic presence.

Therefore God is no petty deity or tribal idol, but the living sovereign Lord who presides magnificently over all creation. Second, this glory is, astonishingly, associated with the birth of a baby. Gone is the thunder, lightning, cloud and fire of former times. Incredibly, God's glory is now linked to the arrival of a crying infant who is totally dependent on others.

As Philip Yancey has written,

'The God who roared, who could order armies and empires about like pawns on a chessboard, this God emerged in Palestine as a baby who could not speak or eat solid food or control his bladder, who depended on a teenage couple for shelter, food and love!'

The angel armies who were used to singing songs of military victories are now found cooing over a baby's cot. From his birth, through his life, death, resurrection and exaltation, to his coming again, Jesus is the glory of God in human form.



Thirdly, what the angels at Bethlehem are doing is to attribute glory to God as an act of praise. Their praise does not maintain the glory of God, as if it would drain away unless topped up by his servants. It simply expresses what they know of God. His glory is an objective description of what they recognise about him, used as a word of adoration. Such praise is not the province of heavenly beings alone, since all people are invited to 'Make a joyful noise to God...sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise'

The best response we can make is to join the choir of angels. As the well known hymn puts it:

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
Bow down before Him, His glory proclaim;  
Gold of obedience and incense of lowliness  
Bring and adore Him; the Lord is His name!

J.S.B. Monsell 1811

Nick Hutt

# Beatitudes for the Weird

Blessed are the weird people

-poets, misfits, writers, mystics,

Heretics, painters and troubadours-

For they teach us to see the world through different eyes

Blessed are those who embrace the intensity of life's pain and pleasure,

For they shall be rewarded with uncommon ecstasy.

Blessed are ye who see beauty in ugliness,

For you shall transform our vision of how the world might be.

Blessed are the bold and whimsical,

For their imagination shatters ancient boundaries of fear for us all.



Blessed are ye who are mocked for unbridled expression of love in all its forms, Because your kind of crazy is exactly that freedom

For which the world is unconsciously begging.

Blessed are those who have endured breaking by life,

For they are the resplendent cracks through which the light shines.

From "Blessed are the weird: a manifesto for creatives" by Jacob Nordby

Shared by Vicki Schofield



## Encounter Days

~ connecting more deeply with God ~

How do you most readily experience a sense of God's presence?

Some people love silence and long for space to simply be.  
Others find silence difficult, almost physically painful.

In our Encounter Days there will always be lots of space for quiet for those who value the silence, but we also recognise that not everyone processes internally.

We want to encourage additional ways of seeking a sense of God's presence which might include discussion, prayer, or walking in a group or with another, making or listening to music, making or creating something, reflection using writing or reading.

We hope that this year you will take the opportunity to join us at Foxhill and our prayer for all of you is that in 2023 you'll know for yourself God's promise spoken to his people through Jeremiah, *'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you.'* Jeremiah 29:13-14

**£25per person - Includes lunch and refreshments.**

# Whats ON!

Foxhill Retreat and  
Conference Centre

[www.foxhillchester.co.uk](http://www.foxhillchester.co.uk)

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|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>'I am the resurrection and the life'</i><br>with Gill Morgan (largely silent)      | Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> April |
| <i>'I am the way'</i><br>with Joe Kennedy   | Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> May  |
| <i>'I am the truth'</i><br>with Ashleigh Askwith                                      | Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> June    |
| <i>'I am the bread of life'</i><br>with Andy Stinson ( <i>includes bread making</i> ) | Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> July |

## Meeting God in Music

Saturday  
3<sup>rd</sup>  
June

£25pp

Jill Elston and Catherine Cleghorne

How do you feel when you sing?

Using choral music to help us think about how we experience time with God through music, this session will be practical, participative, theological, and worshipful. No singing experience needed. Everyone is very welcome.

## Drawing Near

Tuesday  
5<sup>th</sup>  
September

£25pp

Hannah and Timothy Hupfield

*'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances'* 1 Thess. 5.16-18a

A day to explore methods of prayer, and perhaps encounter new comfort zones. An opportunity to deepen our lives of prayer, drawing nearer to that call in 1 Thessalonians.

## Day Retreats

There are also events taking place at: Retreat House Chester  
[www.retreathousechester.co.uk](http://www.retreathousechester.co.uk)

'Everything we do is non-residential, in the midst of everyday life. Find out more about what's happening with online and in-person events.'



## Christians CAN

# ***LGBT+ Christians South Cheshire***

*You are more than welcome at our next*

## **Open Table Community**

meeting **Sunday March 26**

**Methodist Church, Hospital Street, Nantwich CW5 5RP**

*6.00pm light refreshments*

**6.30pm ecumenical Eucharist**  
*followed by a simple meal*



*The **Open Table Network** is a growing partnership of Christian worship communities that welcome and affirm people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer / Questioning, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) and their families, friends and anyone who wants to belong in an accepting, loving community where they can come as they are.*

Everyone has a place at the table!

Please tell us about any special dietary requirements:

email [nantwich@opentable.lgbt](mailto:nantwich@opentable.lgbt)

*Nearest parking: Bowling Green, Church Lane, Love Lane (all free on Sundays); limited spaces on Hospital Street*

RegisteredCharity no: 1170226

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For future newsletters we would like to add a

## **What's On at Your Church!**

A place where you can offer invitations to events taking place in your own churches...a different way of us keeping connected. We plan to have Spring(Easter), Summer and Winter(Christmas) newsletters.. and any events inbetween.



# A word from Gideon...A Tearfund Lent Devotional

## You are nature

'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.' (Genesis 1:31, NIV)

It was joy that made this world: God declares over everything he makes, 'It is good... It is good... It is good.'

This declaration was reaffirmed with the incarnation – the eternal Christ becoming flesh in the body of the man Jesus. God became part of this physical world. Jesus belonged here, and so do you.

We must open ourselves to wider creation.

Breathe the larger air beyond our walls. Put our hands into the soil.

Get dirt beneath our nails. Spend time among the trees. Walk barefoot on grass and sand and rock. Listen to songbirds. Learn their names. Stare at the stars. Know the cycle of the moon. Move our animal bodies. Learn what the worm does, and why it keeps us alive.

Seek out wildflowers. See meals as sacred.

God created a dazzling world, one that reflects the divine glory (Psalm 97:6). Go – rediscover the place where you belong.

God of nature, we long to belong somewhere. Yet you have made this extraordinary world for us to live in. Help us to see this. Help us to know it. Help us to reconnect with the earth, and with all other living things. Amen.

Gideon Heugh

But then, but then, early in the first stirrings of the morning on Sunday the sun begins to rise, the shadows are put on notice. The world that trembled in the face of death now watches death begin to tremble in the face of new life. Something never before seen in all of human history.

And just as Paul says that "Christ died for our sins," now he says, "that Jesus was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

And suddenly life emerges out of that grave.

**We wait the glory of Easter morning.**

**Trevin Wax, Lifeway:part of sermon 2020**

