



**Image of the day - Hexham Abbey**

## Reports



### Archbishop John McDowell's Enthronement Service

**The Enthronement service of Archbishop John McDowell will take place in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, on Tuesday 14th September 2021 at 7.30pm.**

Archbishop John McDowell was elected by the House of Bishops to the office of Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland and Metropolitan on 11th March 2020.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic the service of Enthronement for the new Archbishop unfortunately did not take place in 2020 and with the necessary health care restrictions earlier this year any plans for the service were put on hold.

It has now been decided that the Enthronement will proceed with a scaled back service and a limited number of people in attendance rather than delay the service any further. Attendance in person is by invitation only.

The service will be live streamed and there will be a link posted on the Armagh Diocesan Facebook page and the Diocese of Armagh website:  
<http://armagh.anglican.org>

## **Saint Patrick's Cathedral announces completion of restoration works**

**St Patrick's Cathedral's major restoration project has officially came to an end on September 9 2021. More than 14,000 slates have been replaced on the cathedral's roof.**

Essential fire protection systems have been completely upgraded as part of the extensive renovation project, which, according to Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, The Very Revd Dr William Morton, has been the cathedral's most significant renovation in 160 years and will secure the 800-year-old medieval building for generations to come.

The completion of the building works, announced by Saint Patrick's Cathedral today, marks the end of a two-year conservation project which cost €9.4m and included the replacement of roof slates, gutters and walkways, as well as the repair of masonry, glazing and carpentry.

“This is a wonderful moment for Saint Patrick’s Cathedral,” said Dr Morton. “The conservation project has been extremely wide-ranging and there are many different factors which had to be considered for a heritage restoration project of such a scale.



“All slates, for instance, were hand cut

individually and come from the same quarry in Wales as those used for the last major roofing project, undertaken under the stewardship of Sir Benjamin Guinness in the 1860s. The oak beams in the roof of the cathedral date from 1320 and are the oldest in-situ roof timbers in Ireland. The custom-made scaffolding and specially designed temporary roof took eight months to erect, and the temporary roof structure was the biggest of its kind ever built in Ireland.

“We have been lucky to work with a highly-skilled and dedicated team of architects, engineers and craftspeople. The whole team has been extremely responsive to the challenges of the restoration of this unique heritage building

and the high level of knowledge, skill and craft has been critical in securing its future.”

## Impact of Covid–19 on the project financing

Saint Patrick’s Cathedral has so far raised €6m out of the €9.4m total building cost. This includes a grant of €1.25m from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as well as €1.25m raised through a public appeal for sponsorship. However, to make up the balance and meet the total building cost, the Cathedral also had to borrow €3.4m to ensure the completion of the project. The shortfall was caused by the impact of the Covid–19 pandemic, which has seen visitor figures plummet.

“The works on the Cathedral started in early 2020, just a few weeks before the Covid–19 pandemic brought many sectors in Ireland – and across the world – to a complete standstill,” said Dean Morton.



“As one of Ireland’s major tourist attractions, we would usually welcome around 600,000 visitors per year, however, due to Covid–19, our number of visitors in 2020 dropped by almost 90% and we’re expecting similar figures for 2021. This means

that, unfortunately, the tourist income which we had intended to use to fund a portion of the building cost did not materialise and the unforeseen borrowings will place a financial strain on our operations for many years to come.

“We have therefore decided to continue our ‘Sponsor a Slate’ fundraising campaign and invite anyone with an interest in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral to become a part of its living history. We are so grateful to all of those who have already become sponsors. Their generous financial support of nearly €40,000 to date, as well as the significant grant we received from the Department of Heritage, have been crucial in bringing the project to fruition.”

## **Pop-up exhibition opens door to heritage conservation project**

To mark the end of the building works, and to give its visitors a unique insight into the heritage conservation project, Saint Patrick’s Cathedral has opened a pop-up exhibition in its south transept which can be seen as part of a visit to the Cathedral.

The exhibition includes large-scale photographs and video footage captured during the building works as well as samples of roof tiles and interpretive panels which provide information about the conservation process.

Dean Morton said: “The idea behind the exhibition is to offer visitors a ‘behind the scenes’ glimpse of the conservation works. While the works have been very visible to the local community and visitors to the area through the cranes, scaffolding and temporary roof, we hope the photos, video

footage and panels will provide a different insight into the project.

“The Cathedral re–opened to visitors several weeks ago and we invite anyone, be they locals, staycationers or international tourists, to visit us, see our exhibition and experience a fascinating microcosm of 800 years of history.”

## **Antrim Parish Scouts go with the flow during their Summer Jam**

**To celebrate 10 years since the formation of their Troop in All Saints’ Parish, Antrim, 5th Antrim Scouts held a Summer Jam at Breckenhill Activity Centre in Doagh.**

More than 30 young people attended, taking part in activities such as Splatmaster, archery, bush craft cooking, raft building and the Drumdarragh Challenge.

The Troop was set up in 2011 by the Rev Adrian Halligan, who was curate in All Saints’ at the time and a very experienced Scout, along with parishioner, Fiona Simpson. This was part of a diocesan initiative to encourage parishes to try something new.

On that first night in September 2011, nine boys and three leaders attended, and by the end of the session in June 2012, the troop had more than 25 Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and 10 leaders.

The vicar of Antrim, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, said: “Since then we have grown and grown, and on most Tuesday evenings there are upwards of 50 boys and girls



aged from 6-16 enjoying themselves in a variety of activities and gaining an armful of attractive badges for their hard work.

“Such is the popularity of our Troop that we regularly have a waiting list to join our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.”

Those who took part in the Summer Jam at Breckenhill enjoyed the late summer sunshine, and the camp activities concluded with a celebratory cake.

Archdeacon McBride said: “We are indebted to the Education Authority who provided us with a grant in excess of £5,000 towards the camp and also granted us over £2,000 towards new camping equipment.”

He added: “Although my previous experience of a youth organisation had been in the Boys’ Brigade where I went



Archdeacon Stephen McBride and the Rev Peter Blake enjoying the sunshine at the 5th Antrim Scouts Summer Jam.

through the ranks, I was aware of the importance belonging to an organisation such as the Scouts has in the formation of a young person's life, helping them to develop a whole range of life skills.

“As a parish we are grateful to all the initial support that was given to us by the local district and look forward to our next 10 years.”

## Celebrating the 140th anniversary of Larne church organ

**Dr Mark McKinty, organist at St Cedma's, Larne, will give a recital on September 17 to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the church organ.**

St Cedma's Parish Church in Larne is set to celebrate a very significant musical milestone – the 140th anniversary of its beautiful pipe organ!

September 11, 2021

The parish will host a musical recital by the church's present organist, Dr Mark McKinty, on Friday September 17 – almost 140 years to the day that the instrument was first used for public worship in St Cedma's



The church itself stands on a site where Christian worship has been observed for a millennium. This organ, built by the Conacher firm in Huddersfield, was obtained in the late 19th century and was the first pipe organ installed in Larne. It remains one of the oldest still in regular use in the wider area.

The beautifully decorated instrument was first used in public worship on September 18 1881, and remains largely as it was when first installed, except for a slight enlargement in 1913.

Mark explained that the organ is entirely mechanical when played, except for the provision of air through an electric blower – such provision having previously been provided both by hand pumping and water power from the nearby river.

The recital will take place on September 17 at 7.30pm in St Cedma's, Church Road, Larne, and there will be a retiring collection towards ongoing maintenance and refurbishment of the historic instrument.

## **Archbishop Welby cuts meat and diesel in crusade to 'choose life'**

**The Archbishop of Canterbury has cut meat and diesel from his life, but has admitted that his choices “are not entirely virtuous” ahead of Cop26.**

The Most Rev Justin Welby has made changes to his diet and lifestyle to help combat climate change as he urged global leaders to “choose life”.

On Tuesday the Archbishop, along with Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church, released a joint statement ahead of the climate summit, saying it is a “critical moment” for the future of the planet.

‘We believe in engagement. Christians believe in conversion. We want to see firms change behaviour’

On BBC Radio 4's Today on Thursday, he added that he had adjusted his habits to live more sustainably.

“I've cut back on travel,” he said. “We, like so many people, are very involved in and committed to recycling and all that. I used to have an official diesel car, I no longer have that. We've cut right back on meat.”



However, he added that his decisions were not entirely selfless: “I’d like to pretend that was entirely virtuous, but it’s also to do with health and money.”

The Church of England has committed to being net zero on carbon by 2030.

However the Archbishop, who used to work as an executive in the oil industry, explained that the goal of the church is not pure divestment from fossil fuel companies.

He said: “In terms of our investment, we believe in engagement. Christians believe in conversion. We want to see companies change their behaviour.

“We’ve divested of coal because there’s no clean way forward.”

The Church of England's National Investing Bodies continue to propose that engagement with fossil fuel companies enables them to influence their decisions.

Furthermore, two of the three national investment arms of the Church of England (the Church Commissioners and the Pensions Board) cumulatively have approximately £55 million in fossil fuel shares.

Additionally, 21 of 42 Church of England dioceses have investments in fossil fuel.

The Archbishop made the comments following his return from sabbatical.

## **Church in Wales Governing Body: Bishop of Bangor praises clergy for Covid response**

**The Bishop of Bangor, the Rt Revd Andy John, has praised clergy in the Church in Wales for having “held their nerve” during the Covid pandemic and become “light on their feet, discovering new and innovative ways to care for others”.**

The Bishop, who is President of the Governing Body, also praised congregations, “who have shown the power of love in action at a community level. We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts and say how proud we are of what you have given in the service of Christ. Thank you.”

He described the pandemic as the most significant event to affect humanity since the Second World War. “The impact on our economy and national well-being has been profound,” he said. “It is perhaps too early to understand and describe completely how life is being reshaped, whether in the workplace, our communities, or even the effect on the global economy. The landscape of life is changing, and, to use the words of St John, admittedly entirely out of context, it is not yet clear what we will become.”

Bishop John spoke of the changed context of ministry, including the emergence of new ways of being church, such as online worship. “We are wondering what to take with us on the next stage of our journey, and what to lay down. We are conscious that the numbers of those who worship in person might be fewer than was the case pre-Covid, and that a diminished base of support will ask new questions about our mission, property, and finance.

“But external stimuli have always shaped Christian purpose and polity: the persecution of the Early Church led to the first missionary journeys, and the demand of new tasks led to the calling of the first deacons. What is significant has never been the size of the challenge, but the scale of the faithful response.”

He described the task as deeply missional. The debate that was about to follow on same-sex blessings was “fundamentally about whether we want to shape that life to be bigger and better so that fewer people feel unable to believe and more feel invited to truly belong”.

The Bishop acknowledged that the change in polity would be painful for some of his colleagues. “Such a novel development will be regarded as an aberration, a departure. And, thus regarded, it would be considered an act of disobedience. To depart from Christ’s word is to depart from Christ.” But he described every development as to some degree a departure.

“The ‘authority of the eternal yesterday’ must not be a millstone around our necks, but provide a basis for a courageous embrace of what God is doing in the world around us. Mission always lies at the heart of faith, and being alive to God, to what might happen next, is part of remaining curious and open to new opportunity.”

## **Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars**

### **The Big Quiz Night**

Question: how can your church have an evening of community-building, poverty-beating, joy-spreading fun?

Answer: by getting involved in the Big Quiz Night.

Run by Christian charity Tearfund, the Big Quiz Night brings together churches from around the UK for a quizzical extravaganza. Since 2018, tens of thousands of people have taken part, raising over £675,000 to help end poverty. One host described last year’s event as ‘the best night of the year in our church’!



**This year's Big Quiz Night will take place on Saturday 20 November. And you can get involved!**

Tearfund provides all the resources for the quiz to make joining in a breeze. Just click the link below to get all the info you need.

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/big-quiz-night> ]

## Discovering the Early Church

**Do you want to find out about how the Church grew from what we read in the Bible to a movement that spread across the world?**

This course at Belfast Bible College will delve into the details of the early church's story to discover what it offers us for being the people of God today. Scripture will be our starting point as we creatively explore its portrayal of the first Christian communities.

Additional sources throughout the patristic period (100-500 AD) will add to our study as we ask and seek to answer such questions as:

What helped the early church to grow? What were threats to its existence and how did the first Christians they respond?

Book today at:

<https://belfast-bible-college.learnworlds.com/course/early-church>

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

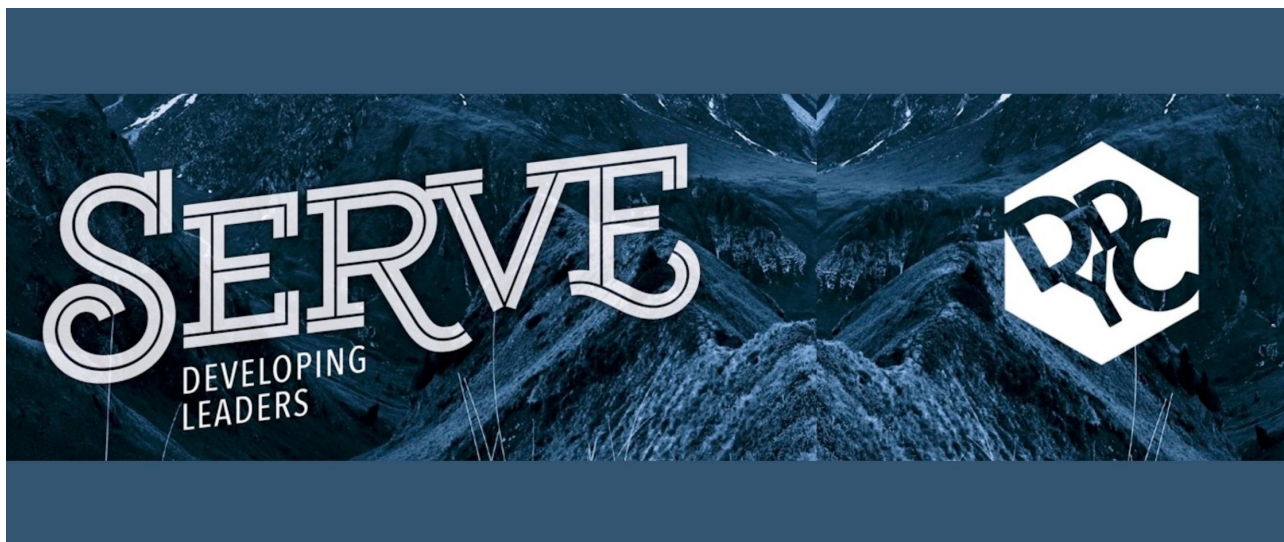
The  
*Transformation*  
Project

## What can we learn from the early church?

*with Dr Cynthia Bennett Brown*



BEGINS 21ST SEPT 2021 | 8PM | ONLINE



## Down & Dromore Serve Course returns

**The diocese will be running its SERVE Developing Leaders programme from 22 September in Church House, Belfast for 10 weeks.**

Aimed at young people aged from 15 to 18, SERVE is designed to help them grow in faith, explore and develop their gifts and abilities and engage more fully with the community around them.

It features a number of different elements at each gathering such as a meal together, book review, spiritual disciplines and teaching and discussion on leadership.

SERVE is a great resource to encourage young people to become faith-filled leaders who serve their churches and communities in Christlike ways.

Please encourage the young people in your parish to grasp this exciting opportunity!

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Parents, find out more [HERE](#).

[[] <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2021/09/serve-course-returns> ]

To apply for SERVE young people can visit:

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/serve-tickets-170280877689](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/serve-tickets-170280877689)

## **Freedom in Christ Online Course for Leaders**

The time is now! "September is here and that means our Freedom in Christ Course for Leaders is starting soon, its not too late to sign-up". The course starts 3pm Friday 17th September and runs for 10 weeks. The course is free and online so is accessible for all leaders who need to be refreshed, renewed, equipped and enabled in their walk with God. Visit <http://www.ficm.org.uk/fic-online> to find out more or to sign-up.

### **FIC Online For Leaders**

Join with other Christian leaders from all walks of life for a special online "Freedom In Christ Course For Leaders" that will help experience Jesus's freedom for yourself and your leadership in these really challenging times.

Amidst the ongoing anxiety and uncertainty of the pandemic, this online course will offer you the opportunity to:

Be refreshed and renewed by the Truth of your identity in Jesus



Be equipped to win the spiritual battle by Turning to Jesus in repentance and faith

Be enabled to walk on in Transformation into all God has for you.

All whilst sharing with other leaders in a safe and confidential space, enjoying a welcome oasis where you can press into what God is saying to you in this season, and experiencing a Digital Discipleship solution that you might be able to take back to your own church.

### **The Online Course will take the format of:**

Weekly Zoom Conference starting Friday 17th September, 3-5pm, for 10 weeks.

Facilitated Breakout Rooms for prayer and discussion

Steps To Freedom Day on Saturday 30th October

Access to FreedomStream for the duration of the course to catch-up on or revisit any sessions.

You can find out more about what the Freedom In Christ Course involves by clicking [here](#).

### **Cost & Registration**

Places are limited, so the organisers recommend you register early.

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Registration is free, but the organisers encourage you to make a donation to Freedom In Christ if you can during the registration process.

You will need a copy of the Participant's Guide, Steps To Freedom In Christ and we strongly recommend the 21 Day Devotional, Walking In Freedom.

All three books are available at a specially discounted price of £19 here, along with a set of Biblical Truth postcards.

Also recommended are the "Discipleship Series" books which accompany the course.

Timings:

Fri 17 September 2021 15:00 through Fri 19 November 2021 17:00

[[] <https://www.ficm.org.uk/civicrm/event/info%3Fid%3D424%26amp%3Breset%3D1> ]

## Perspective

### Look to a new horizon by the Archbishop of Dublin

**As we embark on the autumn season of 2021, I wish each and every one of you everything that is best as you find your way forward, however tentatively, in the days and the weeks of September, writes Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson.**

The word: tentatively may surprise you but there are many people who have spoken to me who are tentative about the

future. Confidence is at a premium just now. If you have it, then please share it.

Already, for example, we see outbreaks of the coronavirus in schools and our heart goes out to pupils, teachers and family members as they seek together to manage these outbreaks and the suffering, the exhaustion and the anxiety that go with them. The Roadmap [click here](#) for link to Reframing the challenge, continuing our recovery and reconnecting for the opening up of society, and our part in it, frames our approach to September, not least following an Taoiseach's address to the nation. This he did passionately and compassionately on the last day of August. In that address, he was laying before us The Roadmap. He thanked the people of Ireland for everything we have done to date and, interestingly, for trusting in the science. He also encouraged us to use our personal responsibility in how we do our business and in how that business affects the lives of others as we move forward. Personal responsibility is the ethic of the present for the future. In this way, and to our surprise, the on-going presence of the coronavirus provides a positive opportunity for us to build a more caring and compassionate structure for our society if we fully embrace the opportunity alongside it to offer companionship and confidence to those who are feeling left out or left behind. For some of us, moving out of Lockdown will be both problematic and a considerable shock to the system. Compliance with Regulations has become such a way of life that the setting to one side of restrictions will bring its own difficulties and challenges. Others of us simply have no option but to get on with it, as our jobs depend on it.



Let us continue to remember the early strapline and the early idea from the very first Lockdown, namely that We are in this together. I should like to add some more straplines to this as of now. One is: Celebrate your new steps. Each move outward, each move forward is deserving of celebration with yourself and with others whom you cherish. A second is: Share your experiences. It is very important to talk about these things, not least as we always pick up something new from others and something obvious that we had not seen for ourselves. Such sharing is good for us and for others as well. A third is: Remember the bereaved and listen to them. The bereaved are a special care and concern of all of us and they may well have lost their voice through grief and sadness. They carry many things on their heart and they may well fear that nobody could possibly want to listen to someone as inconsequential as they feel they are.

A fourth is: Do not forget the young people. The voice of young people is precious to us as we emerge from The Lockdown. Before The Lockdown, it was they who were systematically, Friday after Friday, marching peacefully for a comprehensive national response to climate change. This voice still needs to be heard. They have missed out on two years of formative social life and formative educational life. This is a very large part of their lives and we who are older need to honour them and to hear what they have to say and to connect with them around things that matter to them and to us very quickly. And a fifth is: Look to a new horizon. In the Hebrew Scriptures and in The Old Testament of The Christian Scriptures, Lot's wife looks back – as, let us imagine, the lava from the volcano catches up with her and engulfs her. A curiosity for her old city and a fascination with her old life, both of them now gone, just as she fled their rubble and as she had the chance of a fresh life, was just too alluring, too enticing, too seductive. We all need to try our best to look forward, to think differently and to relax into the future. And we need one another to be able to do this with any delight and in order to conquer our fear and our foreboding.

And finally: Don't expect to do it all at once. This is not a competition. This is not a race to the line. This is more a circle where everyone holds hands and comes together to meet in the middle. If you are actually able to do less – then, do less. Nobody is counting. If you need a rest – then, take a rest. Nobody is watching. If you are able to keep going and going and going – then, share this capacity with everyone you meet. And – remember to smile at them, not least if you do not know them or have never met them before. You are now a bigger person by virtue of your

experiences, however difficult they were, however hard they are to understand, however hard they are to take on board.

Psalm 24.7, a Scripture shared by the Jewish and the Christian Faiths, gives us a glorious and a joyous image – whoever we are, wherever we are – of a way forward as a journey of adventure and of hope and of companionship, and of lifting up: Lift up your heads, you gates, Lift yourselves up, you everlasting doors ... Let us lift ourselves up in these new days of new opportunity.

Photo courtesy of Presentsquare on Upsplash.

## Poem for today

### Blackberry-Picking by Seamus Heaney

Late August, given heavy rain and sun  
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.  
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot  
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.  
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet  
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it  
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for  
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger  
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots  
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.  
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills  
We trekked and picked until the cans were full,  
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered  
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned

Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered  
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.  
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,  
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.  
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush  
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.  
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair  
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.  
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

Source: Death of a Naturalist (1966)

## Pointers for prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,  
Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity;  
and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise,  
make us to love that which thou dost command;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We give You thanks, O Lord, that You have invited Your  
people to pray, in the confidence that You will both hear and  
answer them according to Your merciful will.

We praise You, O Lord, for the gift of work and for the gifts  
and skills which shape our earthly vocations. Teach us to  
labour not for earthly reward but for Your glory, knowing that  
nothing we do in Your service is ever in vain. Give comfort  
and direction to the unemployed and the underemployed,

that they may find work appropriate to their needs and abilities. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray especially for those who labour on behalf of Your kingdom, for our bishops.....clergy, our pastor(s), and for all missionaries and church workers. Bless especially those who serve You on mission fields far from home and those who bring the light of Your Word to the blind. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our nation and those who labour on our behalf at every level of government, and for all who serve the public trust, that they may fulfil their duties with wisdom, honour, and justice. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the men and women of our armed forces, especially those who labour against the forces of war, terrorism, and oppression. We ask Your blessing also upon those who protect and defend us here. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We are mindful of the many whose lives are filled with pain and suffering, grief and sorrow. As You once showed Your mercy to those who called upon You long ago, so show Your mercy to those who cry to You today. According to Your will, grant them healing and peace, especially \_\_\_\_\_\*\*those whom we name now in our hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Almighty God,  
whose only Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence:  
Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills

September 11, 2021

to worship you in spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



## Speaking to the Soul

**Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. He also told them that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus.**

Acts 9.27 NLT

Friends are a precious gift and we all need them. Saul found himself in a delicate position when he visited Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion and he desperately needed a really good friend. His visit came a couple of years after his encounter with Christ on the Road to Damascus, and there is no doubt that many people in Jerusalem would have remembered what kind of man he used to be. They would have heard stories about his preaching ministry, but they were deeply suspicious. Maybe it was all an elaborate trap. Saul needed a good friend and he had one in

Barnabas, who took it upon himself to introduce Saul to the apostles. Barnabas believed in Saul and was able to speak warmly of his powerful preaching ministry. This was a crucial moment and Barnabas, whose name meant son of encouragement, was just the friend that Saul needed.

We all face difficult times in life and those are the moments that reveal who our true friends are. The fair-weather friends rush for cover at such times. They are nowhere to be seen. However, true friends stand with us whatever the circumstances. I'm sure you, like me, can immediately think of people who have shown that kind of friendship. I will never forget my first really difficult situation as a minister. It was an agonising time and I felt awful. A letter arrived from a good friend in which he assured me that I had his complete support and he would stand by me whatever happened. And he was as good as his word. I thank God for him and so many others who have given me that wonderful gift of friendship and stood by me in the tough times as well as the good times. The most wonderful example of friendship in the Bible was between David and Jonathan. They lived with constant danger and appalling pressures but, right to the end, they were completely faithful to one another. Thank God for the amazing gift of friendship!

## **QUESTION**

In what ways have friends been a blessing in your life?

## **PRAYER**

Loving God, help me to be like Barnabas by being faithful and encouraging to my friends. Amen

