



# Link Up!

**'You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvellous - how well I know it.'**  
**Psalm 139 vs 13-15 (New Living Translation)**

## For the rest of November:

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November we will be looking at Esther. Ken is taking a few days leave so we will have Stephen Ashby leading our service.

Then on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November we will begin our Advent series with an E3 service in the hall, with the theme 'APR'. Come prepared to participate in this as we did at Pentecost.

This service will be followed by our Church Members meeting. Please bring your lunch, as usual, and we will provide drinks. The agenda for the meeting and finance papers will be sent out at the same time as this newsletter. Apologies for absence can be given to Janet or one of the other leaders.

## Other Notices:

During the last week we have sent money from our Emergency Relief Fund to two emergency appeals. £250 was sent to Samaritans Purse for their Hurricane Melissa Appeal and £250 to TearFund for their Super Typhoon Appeal for the Philippines.

## There's nothing artificial about this intelligence...

"I've recently spent a lot of time learning about the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It's everywhere now – in our phones, our workplaces, and even in our homes. The company I work for is embracing use of AI in its processes, and I find myself using it more than I thought I would. I can't deny it has its uses – a fraud investigation used to take many hours; now I can ask ChatGPT to compare documents and compile reports for me in mere minutes.

My inbox fills up with articles about how AI will 'transform the world' or 'redefine humanity'. Some of it is fascinating, and the speed at which AI has developed, and continues to develop, is incredible, although I don't think we are in 'Terminator' territory just yet. The Replicants are not among us...

But I understand why people worry. There's a genuine fear we're creating something which, one day, might surpass us – machines might learn to 'think' or 'feel', and we'll somehow become obsolete. So, my thoughts turn to those verses from Psalm 139, and I remind myself that, whilst AI is clever, and sometimes astonishingly so, it's still a tool – not a life. It can analyse data, predict outcomes, and even write a convincing poem or newsletter, but it cannot love. It cannot emphasise. It cannot rejoice with those who rejoice or grieve with those who grieve. It cannot look into your eyes and understand the person you really are. It has no conscience, no soul, no living breath within it. It is not alive.

#### Looking forward to December:

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December we will continue our Advent series with the theme 'Anticipate'. Rev Penny Draper from St George's Oakdale C of E will be leading our service and this will include our monthly communion time.

Then on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December we will be looking at our Advent theme of 'Prepare' with Ken leading the service

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December we will hold our Carol Service and will look at the final Advent theme of 'Reflect'. Visitors are welcome to join us for this service.

We will hold our Christmas Day Family Service on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December and this starts, as usual, at 10.30am. Another opportunity to invite visitors to join us.

The final Sunday of December will be a Combined Service with Parkstone Baptist Church using the theme we have used in the past of 'Looking Back, Moving Forward'. The service at Parkstone starts at 10.30am. If anyone needs a lift to this, please let Janet know.

There will be publicity leaflets available soon to use to invite your friends and family along to our Christmas services and you will find copies of these around the church.

#### Other Notices:

A big 'thank you' to everyone who helped with our recent Rock Choir Concert for the Foodbank – Setting up team, working on the door helpers, refreshment team and clearing up and putting everything back for Sunday. We collected a really wonderful amount of food which was taken to the Foodbank Store in the week after the concert. We also took £355 towards the Foodbank running costs on the night and this will be boosted by some online donations and Gift Aid. We estimate there were about 120 attendees and 70 in the choir.

Humanity will always be unique because we are created by God. David captures this so eloquently in Psalm 139 – the beautiful image of being '*knit together in our mother's womb*'. It's such an intimate picture. We are not mass-produced; we are individually crafted and each of us bears the imprint of the Creator, made in His image (Genesis 1:27). This means we share something of His nature – the ability to think, to reason, to feel compassion, to create, to forgive, and to love. We have a conscience. We have a soul. We have the breath of God within us. We are alive.

Technology, like any tool, can be used for good or ill. It can help heal diseases, connect people across the world, and make our lives easier. But it should never define what it means to be human. Only God does that. AI might mimic intelligence, but only God gives wisdom. AI might process words, but only God gives meaning. It might imitate conversation, but only God breathes life.

Rather than fearing what we've built, we should remember Who created us. We are His handiwork and His masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10). And in a world increasingly impressed (and controlled) by what humans can build, take a moment to pause and marvel at the Creator Himself – the One who not only made us, but knows us, loves us, and calls us by name so we can be in relationship with Him.

AI might be smart. But it will never be sacred. We are. We remain God's crowning glory, fearfully and wonderfully made, with His divine image upon us, and there is nothing artificial about this – a relationship with God is the most real thing anyone can experience.

Blessings,

*Stephen Chaloner*