

Getting ready for Christmas in August??

Normally, it seems all wrong when someone starts getting ready for Christmas way too early and the tinsel in the shops begins in September – but this year the Whitton churches will be starting the run-up to Christmas even earlier! Usually, we spend the four weeks of Advent, just before the big day, thinking of the faith journey that led to Christ’s mission on earth, but this year from August onwards we’ll be tracing the story in greater detail, Sunday by Sunday, in all our churches, whatever the type of service.

In August we’ll begin at the beginning, with the foundational idea that the very universe itself is part of God’s plan of creativity and love, and then trace how humankind started thinking it knew better, and how some (notably Noah) had the first inklings of the faithfulness of God’s love.

In September, we’ll see the beginnings of the Jewish faith, with Abraham’s obedience and God’s promise that through his offspring all the nations would be blessed – but then the lessons of forgiveness that had to be learned before the clan could become a people and seek its own destiny. Having seen in October how the new nation was tested in the wilderness years and given the Ten Commandments to live by, we’ll watch them adapting to living out those commands as a settled people in their own land, and how they came to think that having a human king would help reinforce their nationhood.

So November will bring us to the “golden years” of King David and his son Solomon, and God’s promise that a descendant of their line would save his people – a people who, however, constantly turned away from following God despite the urgent warnings of the prophets. In the end, Jerusalem was destroyed and the people had to find new ways of living out their faith in exile in Babylon. Finally, at the start of December, we’ll recall the return to Jerusalem, the reinvigoration of faith and the promise of the Messiah – the Christ – heralded by John the Baptist.

Throughout this time, each church will have a “timeline” of pictures illustrating the various stages, updated as the story unfolds. We’ll also be running some weekday discussion sessions in September and October to fill in the historical gaps and answer questions – times and places will be advertised. It promises to be a fascinating journey – come and walk it with us!

Whitton Team Ministry
The Faith Journey of the Old Testament
August – December 2017

August – In the beginning

- 6th August – God’s generous provision in creation
- 13th August – Humanity turns from God and hides in fear
- 20th August – God’s rescue plan begins
- 27th August – The promise of God’s faithfulness

September – Abraham and his family begin to follow the one true God

- 3rd September – Abraham and the First Covenant
- 10th September – Family divisions and rivalries
- 17th September – The gift of forgiveness
- 24th September – Moses and the call to serve God

October – The Clan becomes a nation

- 1st October – God saves his people from slavery and gives them the Law
- 8th October – The wilderness years
- 15th October – The Promised Land
- 22nd October – The time of the Judges
- 29th October – The desire for a human king

November – The days of the Kingdoms – success and failure

- 5th November – David & Solomon, and the second Covenant
- 12th November (Remembrance Sun.) – The prophets’ vision of God’s kingdom
- 19th November – The prophets’ call to repentance and faith
- 26th November – Holding on to faith during a time of exile

December – Return from exile and looking forward to the promised Messiah

- 3rd December – The Jews’ return from exile and the rebuilding of Jerusalem
- 10th December – The promise of the Messiah
- 17th December – John the Baptist

The first Sunday in each month is a Team Service (10am). On other Sundays, the topic will be the theme of the services (of whatever kind) in each of the churches.