Autumn Courses 2014

with course organiser
Canon Dr. Rod Garner
Diocesan Theologian
Autumn is here again and for those wishing to explore their faith or deepen their knowledge there are a number of good things on offer between now and November. At Southport our theme will be the Light of Faith – what faith amounts to in a sceptical age and the difference it makes to our lives and the wider community. In October an evening has been set aside at St. James’ House to reflect on the widest possible theological canvas – the cosmos and the current search for extraterrestrial intelligence. I will be using a new book by Professor David Wilkinson as our principal text. In the summer he was a visiting speaker at one of our Readers’ Study evenings and gave a fascinating address that drew many appreciative comments from those present. The book offers us the opportunity to carry on the conversation. In November there is an evening course arranged for the Walton Deanery that is open to everyone. Over three weeks the emphasis will be on Christian mission and how best we can serve those beyond our congregations in changing times. I have also organised a Quiet Day in November to point us towards Advent and the place of forgiveness in the life of discipleship. Places will be limited on this occasion so early booking is recommended.

Last Autumn I gave a lecture on the life and witness of Etty Hillesum, a remarkable young Jewish woman who met her death in Auschwitz in 1943 when she was just 29 years old. There will be another opportunity to consider her affirmation of life in the darkest possible times, at the Arts Centre, Edge Hill University on Friday, 26th September at 7.30 p.m. A new play by Donna Worthington entitled Through the Leaves of the Green Tree will trace Etty’s journey and her search for wholeness through her diaries. Donna read theology at Cambridge and has taught Ethics, Philosophy and Religion. I have met her recently and hope to share in the post-performance discussion. Tickets for this event are £10 (£8 concessions) and can be obtained from the Box Office, Edge Hill University 01695 584480 or www.edgehill.ac.uk/artscentre.

I look forward to welcoming learners, old and new. Please phone me on 07754 812915 if you need further information or email me at: holytrinitysouthport@gmail.com
The light of faith in an age of fragments

An Evening Course at Southport College

‘Fragmented’ seems the best way of describing modern times. Increasingly, people declare themselves to be spiritual but not religious; others hate everything religion stands for with a vengeance. Some live without God and others simply don’t care. In their view, the world isn’t going anywhere so just enjoy the ride. This raises the question of meaning – whether anything or something underpins the fleeting moments of life and points beyond it. In his First Evangelical Letter, Pope Francis has written that ‘once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim’ and we find ourselves in a dark wood. By contrast, more than a century earlier, the philosopher, Nietzsche encouraged his sister Elizabeth to put faith aside in order to ‘tread new paths....with all the uncertainty of one who must find her own way’. His legacy abides and represents part of our present fragmentation.

This evening Course will explore the light of faith and some of the arguments of those who hold it to be illusory. I will be using the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis and Peter Watson’s new book The Age of Nothing as course material. Over three meetings the aim will be to show faith as a light to be recovered rather than a leap in the dark – a star that can brighten the horizon of our journey and show us a better way. The evenings will be of interest to anyone interested in the current and sometimes furious debate about religious belief or seeking a deeper understanding of the nature of faith in fragmented times.

Course Information

The light of faith in an age of fragments:
Course Led by Canon Dr. Rod Garner

Dates and Topics

Tuesday 16th September 2014 -
Pioneers of Faith: Abraham, Israel, Christ

Tuesday 23rd September 2014 -
An Illusory Light? Faith under Fire in an Age of Nothing

Tuesday 30th September 2014 -
Faith, the Church and the Common Good

Time

All meetings start at 7.30pm with refreshments served from 7.00pm

Fee

£15 (£12 concessions) for all three sessions including refreshments.

Location

Southport College Conference Room (1st Floor)
Mornington Road, Southport, PR9 0TT.
Not alone?
Science, religion and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence

An evening meeting at St. James’ House, Liverpool.

In August 2012 the robotic rover Curiosity landed on the surface of Mars. Its primary goal was to investigate whether conditions have ever been favourable for microbial life, thereby addressing the much bigger question of whether we are alone in the Universe. The Astronomer Royal, Lord Martin Rees calls this ‘our greatest quest’ and its success would be one of the greatest moments in human history. Even thinking about such an achievement raises profound religious questions. In relation to God it requires us to think again about his role as creator beyond our own fragile planet, in a universe containing 100 billion stars, in each of 100 billion galaxies. Concerning Christ, it challenges us to ponder his redemptive work and how that might be manifested in the farthest reaches of the universe. To paraphrase the theologian and scientist John Polkinghorne, if there are little green men on Mars in need of saving, will not God take little green flesh to do what is necessary? Both questions invite our curiosity and our capacity for awe and wonder. The aim of this meeting is to enlarge our understanding of God and the whole creation. I shall be drawing on a new book Science, Religion and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence by Rev’d Professor David Wilkinson of St. John’s College, Durham. The evening is open to lay and ordained who wish to explore what our boundless universe and the possibility of other intelligent beings in it means for our belief in God and our relationship with Him.
Christian Mission in changing times

An Autumn course in Walton Deanery

The times are changing but no one is sure what they consist of. What’s ending, what’s around the corner, what should we be doing as local churches? Sometime it feels we are exiles in a strange land (Ps. 137.4) and on other days it seems there is still fertile soil in which to earth the gospel. Either way, the unique task of sharing the grace and truth of Jesus Christ with others (John 12.21) remains our duty and joy.

This short series of Autumn meetings, hosted by the Walton deanery and led by our Diocesan Theologian, Rod Garner but open to all, will explore these and related questions from a number of angles. It will encourage new ways of thinking about whatever lies before us in order that we may pray, serve and witness with renewed hope and understanding. And it will also challenge us to reflect on what it means to believe that the Church is the body of Christ. The meetings will be of particular interest to all those who have a responsibility for local mission and evangelism and a concern for the lives beyond our immediate membership.
Against the odds - an advent quiet day

We misunderstand Advent if we see it as nothing more than the prelude to Christmas and the season to be jolly. It is an annual opportunity to grow in grace as we reflect on our life and the many opportunities we have each day to grow in faith and love. Forgiveness is central to the life of discipleship and no healthy relationship can flourish without it. Yet sometimes hurts go so deep that it seems difficult to forgive ourselves or others.

This Quiet Day provides a space for us to think about our experience of forgiveness and the chances we are given each day to benefit from this gift. The Guest Speaker, Carmel Thomason, is author of Against the Odds – a collection of inspirational true stories that demonstrates the power of forgiveness through ordinary people’s experiences of crime, betrayal and broken relationships. Her accounts offer hope that forgiveness can be found in the darkest of circumstances, and encourage us to think about where we may be holding on to hurt, and how we can be more open to forgiveness in all our relationships.

Course Information

Against the Odds: True Stories of Forgiveness and Healing
Organiser: Canon Dr. Rod Garner
Speaker: Carmel Thomason

Dates and Topics
Saturday, 22 November 2014

Time
9.30am – 4.00pm

Fee
£12 including refreshments, lunch and afternoon tea

Location
Ince Blundell Hall
Augustinian Sister of the Mercy of Jesus, Liverpool, L38 6JL.

Directions
Ince Blundell Hall is located on Back of the Town Lane, off the A565 Liverpool/Southport Road. Turn off at traffic lights (the Blundell Arms Hotel and Lady Green Garden Centre). The Ince Blundell Hall turn off is on the right hand side of a bend further on past Lady Green Garden Centre.
Autumn 2014 Booking Form

The closing date for bookings is the 12th September 2014.

Complete this form and send it to Lifelong Learning. Please show if you will be paying the normal fees or the concessionary rate (for retired and unwaged attendees).

Feel free to make copies of this form if more people would like to attend.

The light of faith in an age of fragments [ ]
Tuesday 16th September - Pioneers of Faith: Abraham, Israel, Christ [ ]
Tuesday 23rd September - An Illusory Light? Faith under Fire in an Age of Nothing [ ]
Tuesday 30th September - Faith, the Church and the Common Good [ ]
Fees - £15 [ ] £12 [ ]

Not alone? Science, religion and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence [ ]
Tuesday 28th October 2014
Fees - £5 [ ] £4 [ ]

Christian Mission in changing times [ ]
Tuesday 4th November - What’s going on? [ ]
Tuesday 11th November - Where do we stand? Our foundations in God, Christ, Scripture [ ]
Tuesday 18th November - Believing in the Kingdom of God [ ]
No Fees - retiring collection

Against the odds - an advent quiet day [ ]
Saturday 22nd November, 2014
Fee - £12

Total fees enclosed _____________________
Please make cheques payable to Liverpool DBF

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Autumn 2014 Booking Form

Please detach and complete this form using BLOCK CAPITALS and return by **12th September 2014** to: Margaret Short
Lifelong Learning
St James’ House
20 St James Road
Liverpool, L1 7BY

Name: _______________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
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_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Post Code: __________________________
Daytime Tel No: ____________________________________________
Email: _______________________________________________________

Please indicate if you are
Clergy [ ] Reader [ ] Lay Person [ ]

Please give details of any special requirements:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
(continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Signed: ________________________ Date: ______________________

www.liverpool.anglican.org
0151 705 2120 | margaret.short@liverpool.anglican.org