



Dear Church Family,

The further we journey into this season of Dwelling in God's presence, the more aware I become of His transforming power at work deep within us - the rich beauty and variety of his work in our hearts when we detach from the rush and give Him time and space.

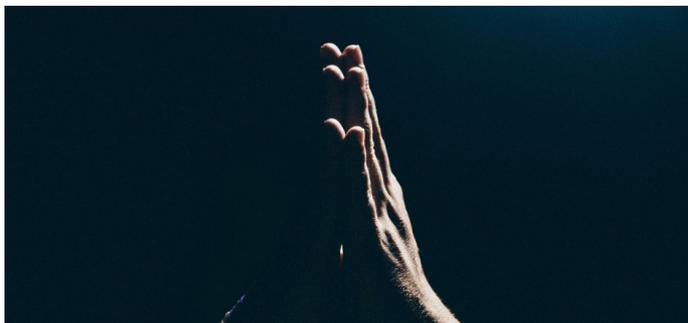
I do hope you are meeting with God as you read *Thirsty*, and the blogs to accompany it. I am very aware that whilst Strahan writes in a very readable way, the rich and deep areas he explores will delight and awaken things within us and God may use the book for deep heart surgery. I won't promise that will be easy, but I can promise that God is loving and works for our good.

Another way we want to create more opportunities to Dwell in God's Presence is through extended time to worship. We are excited to introduce that we will be beginning worship nights, once/month on Friday evenings. These evenings will create space to come together to worship, fix our eyes on Jesus and have extended time with him. Giving extended time with songs, silence, listening to God and follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads is exciting, and from the times we have done these before giving aside space with God like this is profound and precious. We've chosen Friday nights, because we feel it's a great time to detach from the week and will feel different from a Sunday. Also because we believe there is something profound in the sacrifice of giving up a Friday night of going out or crashing in front of the TV. God calls us to worship which is costly as we make him our first priority. The first will be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March in church. Do also come along daily to pray 6-7pm in church Monday to Friday through Lent.

For April, our worship night will be 'Still Hope' on Easter Saturday, after the extraordinary way the Holy Spirit moved amongst us last year at Still Hope, we are thirsting for more of him on that evening.

For me personally, this season of Dwelling in God's Presence will take a fresh turn from 23<sup>rd</sup> April, as the Bishops have granted me a three month Sabbatical this spring from late April until late July. I have been looking for this for some time and with Katie and Dave in post, now is a good time for me to step back from day-to-day ministry to spend more time with God. My sabbatical will include some time of retreat, time with Nells, some study, supporting our boys through exams and then a big family holiday. We will share more practical details after Easter. I would value your prayers, it is a decade since I last took time out like this to be refreshed, re-envisioned and revitalised. I am so thirsty to meet with God and hear his voice. Please pray for Katie and Dave and all our leaders too through this season. I have every confidence in their gifts to lead St Chads for a season, but our confidence is always in the Lord and we all always need his help!

With love,  
Richard



## Prayer Events

One of the greatest joys at St Chads over the past year has been seeing our monthly prayer events steadily growing and very much established as a key part of the life of our church. Thank you to all who have come alone and joined in with this most essential part of our life together. We pray because we want to see More People, More like Jesus and we absolutely believe that this is only possible in God's power not our own.

Our prayer events are interactive and engaging, I believe they are becoming spiritually richer and deeper and this year we will continue to grow in dwelling in God's Presence. This call is for our whole church family, I would love you to think of attending a monthly prayer event as a core part of what it means to be part of St Chads. Here are the dates for March and if you haven't yet come along to a prayer event, then give it a go. I always go home energised and encouraged and we get to partner with God in seeing his kingdom come.

### March Prayer Events:

**Tues 3rd Mar** - 7.30pm in the LifeCentre

**Weds 11th Mar** - 1.30pm in the church lounge.



## Lent book

Our Lent book this year is *Thirsting* by Strahan Coleman. As I've re-read it, I've been struck by how powerfully it calls us to deeper intimacy with God. Several people have already shared how much it's impacting them.

I encourage you to get a copy and read it with us. Let God stir your heart afresh — as our bodies need water, so our souls need the Holy Spirit.

We'll also be sharing two short blog reflections each week (Monday and Thursday on Facebook and WordPress), with printed copies available in church on Sundays.

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## Prayer During Lent

We sense God calling us to pray more intentionally in this season.

You're welcome to join us Monday–Friday, 9.00–9.20am in the Sanctuary at the LifeCentre. The church building will also be open for quiet prayer each weekday evening, 6.00–7.00pm (unheated — please wrap up warm).

When we seek God, we find Him. When we pray, God moves. Let's lean into that thirst together.



This Lent, take part in  
**Climate Stewards'  
Carbon Fast**

## Carbon fast

Lent is here — why not take part in the **Carbon Fast** run by Climate Stewards? It invites us to reflect on our carbon footprint and consider whether any excess in our lives is distracting us from God.

You can find out more on their website ([www.climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast-for-lent/](http://www.climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast-for-lent/))

