

Ministers-at-Work

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Contents

<i>Editorial</i>	2
<i>Climate crunch time</i>	3
<i>Wisdom and MSE</i>	5
<i>What has the Committee been doing?</i>	16
<i>What we each can do as CHRISM members</i>	18
<i>Notice - Dr Nick Yates</i>	19
<i>Book Review</i>	19
<i>Lydia: a story by Paula Gooder (2022)</i>	19
<i>Membership Update</i>	21
<i>Dates for your diary</i>	24
<i>CHRISM Theology Discussion Group - Future Meetings</i>	28
<i>The promises I have made</i>	29

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Please email contributions to: rebeccaccraven@gmail.com

Editorial

As I write, the news recently has been full of revelations of abuse of power at Harrod's store. Other news included whistleblowers silenced; a "gang culture" in one department and a "culture of fear" throughout the organisation. All this was at an NHS hospital and Trust.

Clearly this is world-wide phenomenon. One example is India where the average working week is almost 47 hours. The vast majority of workers are in the informal sector, where exploitation is rife, and regulation is very limited. But in the formal employment within the corporate sector too, toxic, bullying work environments are reported. High levels of unemployment among graduates make for intense competition for these jobs and management seem to treat staff as dispensable.

So, it was heartening to receive an invitation to a conference entitled "Troublemakers at work"! This is a meeting for trade unionists and others, not just speeches about workers' rights but practical skills-based workshops about communicating effectively in the workplace, tackling oppression, supporting migrant and precarious workers. Surely there is a role for MSEs in challenging bad practises at work, striving to make work environments more humane and supportive, even where necessary, being the Troublemakers!

Wisdom is much needed in discerning the "whether" and "when" and "how" of our troublemaking. Rob's article will be a good starting point. Do book now for the lovely reflective weekend planned for February, too.

Rebecca Craven

Climate crunch time

“It’s climate crunch time” – so said UN Secretary-General António Guterres earlier this year. Yet, as the International Climate Change meeting known as COP 29 convenes in November 2024, some governments, including the UK, and some companies, including BP, seem to be easing up on their plans to address climate change. Against a background of global levels of carbon dioxide and methane, and global annual temperatures, all continuing to rise, we might wonder why there is such a relaxed approach.

Part of the answer may lie in hopes that carbon capture and storage can avert disaster. However, the technology is still in its infancy, is very expensive and small scale. The Paris Agreement, the near total agreement reached internationally in 2015, sought to keep climate change to within 1.5°C but it now looks inevitable that there will be “overshoot”. The hope is that the temperature can be brought back down later by reduced emissions and the new technologies.

A recent article¹ in the highly respected Nature journal casts doubt on this. In the complex systems that regulate global climate it seems that some processes may reach a tipping point that cannot easily be reversed. For many of earth’s population, crop yields will decline, water shortages become more common, health and social cohesion will be under increasing strain. It is happening already.

Surely, we who are called to love our neighbour should be actively resisting climate change. In response, probably we do what we can. Perhaps we have swapped to an electric car, use public transport more, fly less, gone vegetarian. But change on the scale and at the pace needed demands more than this. It needs action by governments and industries worldwide, especially and urgently to move away from using fossil fuels for energy.

The editorial in the same edition of *Nature* summed it up.

“Governments and industry must have a laser-like focus on the risks ahead and how to mitigate them. This means nothing less than **aggressively cutting emissions and helping communities to become resilient to the impending shocks**. To wait and scrub the atmosphere later is to court disaster — for people and the planet.”²

Let’s do all we can to avert the disaster.

Rebecca Craven

1. Schleussner, CF., Ganti, G., Lejeune, Q. et al. Overconfidence in climate overshoot. *Nature* **634**, 366–373 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-08020-9>
2. Editorial. Don’t overshoot: why carbon dioxide removal will achieve too little, too late. *Nature* **634**, 265 (2024).



Wisdom and MSE

The intersection of Biblical Wisdom writings and ministry in and through work.

CHRISM has visited the theme of MSE as Prophet several times over the years, and we've learned a great deal in the process. As MSEs we are often called to be prophets in and through our work. As I'll advocate here, this is not the only role we can take on, just as important is being an agent of and for Wisdom.

The following is distilled from a presentation I gave to the CHRISM Theology Group (we meet via Zoom on the last Wednesday of each month) on 25 September, looking at:

- The context of Wisdom writing in the Bible
- The scope of Wisdom writing in the Bible
- The characteristics of Wisdom writing
- The relevance of Wisdom writing to MSE

The last is implicit throughout the content, this, as should become apparent, being a characteristic of Wisdom.

Background to Wisdom writing

Scholars identify several types of OT literature, e.g.:

- Historical – 'how we got here'
- Priestly – regulation for right living
- Prophetic – the consequences of not living rightly
- Wisdom – how we can actually live rightly.

Few works are one type only – most contain elements of more than one type. Wisdom writing can be found, for example, in historical writing such as I Kings, and in Prophetic, such as Isaiah and Malachi.

Wisdom literature as a genre is not confined to Judaism, but is found extensively in the then contemporary Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Indian and Chinese literature, with some borrowing between them. In the Judaic tradition, Wisdom literature emerges in the middle of the first millennium BC, and is associated with the Greek word for wisdom, Sophia. Wisdom is rendered in Hebrew as *hokmâ*; as it is used in the OT, it has a variety of nuances, but it generally refers to a gift that is given by God and a skill that is learned or developed. These two ideas are not necessarily opposed to each other. The skill needed to build and furnish the tabernacle is called wisdom. Solomon specifically asked God for wisdom to be able to govern the nation of Israel and to administer justice ([1Kgs 3:7-14; 4:29](#)). Thus, Wisdom is not a pre-packed, fully fledged gift from God; it begins with God's gift, through the Spirit, and then grows and is applied through experience and the exercise of wisdom.

OT Wisdom literature itself is often seen as of two types:

- Conservative Positive Wisdom – pragmatic, real-world advice about proper behaviour and actions, attaining success in life, living a good and fulfilling life. Proverbs is the best example.
- Critical Negative Wisdom ("Vanity Literature" or "Wisdom in Protest") – a more pessimistic outlook, frequently expressing scepticism about human achievements, highlighting the inevitability of mortality, advocating the rejection of all material gains, and expressing the view that, since nothing has intrinsic value (*vanity theme*) and all will come to an end (*memento mori theme*), therefore one should just enjoy life to the fullest while we can (*carpe diem*). Ecclesiastes is the exemplar.

Context of OT Wisdom writing

Israelite Wisdom is rooted in reverence and commitment to God. The basic world view of Israelite wisdom is that God is Creator, both of his people and the physical world; everything else in wisdom arises from this conviction.¹

Wisdom was God's first creation.² As Creator, God has embedded truth in all of creation. Another way to say this is that all of creation reflects the wisdom, nature, and character of its creator, and therefore all of creation is a way to learn about God and his purposes for the world; creation is truly a "cosmos."³ Wisdom takes seriously the confession in Genesis that the created world is good; there is no hint of an evil physical world that would emerge later in Greek thinking.⁴ There is a clear link here with contemporary Ecotheology.

Human responsibility to God involves finding the truth of God in the world as reflected in how the world operates according to the harmony of its creator, and then living within that harmony of God's order.⁵ Being wise is to search for and maintain the order of God in the world in order to live well as God has created

¹ Cf. Proverbs 3:19: The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; Psalm 19:1 The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

² Proverbs 8:22: "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago."

³ Romans 1:10: Ever since the creation of the world God's eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been seen and understood through the things God has made.

⁴ Genesis 1:31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

⁵ Echoed at 1 Cor 3:9 – we are co-workers with God

humanity to live. A "fool" is one who does not recognise God as creator and therefore does not seek to live according to the harmony of God's creation.⁶

The "way of wisdom" is an ethical system in which humanity is responsible for searching, finding, and doing the things necessary to secure their well-being in God's world.⁷ It constantly asks, "What is God doing here, and what therefore should I be doing?"



⁶ Matthew 6:33: But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

⁷ Ecclesiastes 8:12: Though sinners do evil a hundred times and prolong their lives, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they stand in fear before him.

The scope of Wisdom writing

Old Testament and Apocrypha works that Scholars identify as Wisdom writings are usually:

- Job
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- *Ecclesiasticus*
- *Wisdom of Solomon*
- some Psalms

As noted above, many other OT books contain elements of Wisdom writing.

Wisdom writing can also be found in the NT, for example:

- Much of Jesus' teaching (wisdom parables and proverbs)
- Much of the letters of Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude, and of the letter to the Hebrews – cf. wisdom with Jesus as the subject

The characteristics of Wisdom writing

Wisdom is concerned with the issues facing humanity in general, the typical and recurring aspects of life that face human beings on a daily basis. Much of the other genres of writing is concerned with those unique events in history in which God reveals himself. In wisdom literature there is little interest in history, politics, God who acts, miracles, sin, forgiveness, guilt. These things are not discounted, only that the concern is focused on daily living, on what might be called the mundane aspects of life, such as raising children, providing economic security, finding the appropriate spouse, and so on.

The world view of wisdom is not mythical or cyclical, but it is concerned with stability and order, the *status quo*, especially in the social arena; the goal is to live in harmonious relationship with God, others, and the world. How we live rightly in the here and now.

The perspectives of wisdom are not unique to Israelites, although in Israelite wisdom commitment to God is simply assumed.⁸ The focus is on interpersonal relationships, as well as reflective questions about the meaning of life and how to live it.

Wisdom does not address the human condition from the divine perspective, but rather from the perspective of human needs and concerns, and in terms of what human beings can and should do to address those concerns. Wisdom is practical in that it starts with the human and works towards what the wise action is, in the light of our relationships to God and to each other.⁹ Wisdom attempts to give expression to the way things are, rather than what we'd like them to be; it is descriptive and not prescriptive, describing and defining the world and the existing social order as a means to live within both in productive ways.

Wisdom thinking grapples with understanding the world, especially the physical and social environment in which we live; as such, it is reflective, rational, and concerned with knowledge. It is concerned with learning enough to be able to choose the proper course of action for well-being in life, often expressed metaphorically as the "two ways" or the "two paths".¹⁰

⁸ cf. Prov. 1:7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

⁹ Again, echoed at 1 Cor 3:9 – we are co-workers with God.

¹⁰ Cf. Psalm 1:

¹ Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers,

² but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, they meditate day and night.

³ They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

I've already noted that Wisdom writing is prominent in the New Testament as well as the Old. Of particular note is that the 'two ways' theme is found in the writings of Paul (which should be no surprise, given his training) and John. Paul contrasts the ways of light and darkness,¹¹ spirit and flesh;¹² John again of light and darkness.¹³

Wisdom is also distinct from knowledge. Simply knowing does not itself lead to wise actions; on its own it "puffs up", as Paul puts it (1 Cor. 8:1). Knowledge is a neutral commodity; how we use it is the arena of wisdom.

Wisdom's claim to authority lies in tradition and observation; it is self-evident. There is no "thus says the Lord" grounding of authority in wisdom thinking; rather the truth of life is already there in God's creation awaiting discovery. Tradition finds expression through the wisdom of experience, both in individuals and in the collective experiences of the community. Preference is usually given to age and established and proven ways of doing things, and our places of work

¹¹ Ephesians 5:8-11: once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them.

¹² Galatians 3:3: Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

¹³ 1 John 5-7: ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷ but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

are communities! Wisdom is grounded in social structures, such as the family, the "schools" of the wise elders, or the king and royal court; what we now call civic society.

Wisdom perspectives do not demand radical change, for example in dealing with social problems. Evolution rather than revolution: how can we work with what is to make it better for all stakeholders?

Wisdom in the New Testament

As a genre, Wisdom has gained clear apocalyptic overtones, unsurprising when Wisdom herself was always located with God and served to reveal God to his people. The New Testament teaches us that wisdom is to be found in the crucified Christ, and that he is the ultimate arbiter of the wisdom of God. He reveals the ways of God to us in his humility and his submission to God, and he teaches his followers what it means to obey and worship God "in Spirit and in truth." How believers respond to the mystery of Christ crucified and his demands on their lives reveals their growth in wisdom. Paul's discussion of Wisdom in his first letter to the church at Corinth (which needed to learn wisdom!), and how he contrasts wisdom from God with human wisdom, expresses this clearly.¹⁴

The relevance of Wisdom to MSE

By this point I hope it is clear that Wisdom is highly relevant to MSE. If further evidence is needed

The principal area of mission and ministry for the MSE is their secular work context and I include here those activities that we undertake voluntarily: unpaid work is still work. Here we grapple with what 'is', the day-to-day, interpersonal relationships, understanding where we are and what is going on, and seeking to make the 'right' decisions –

¹⁴ I Cor. 1:17 – 2:7

expressed in word and action.¹⁵ What is the proper course for the well-being of our workplace as an organisation and a community? This we do in the context of understanding the world as God's handiwork, as Creator.

The Old and New Testaments are full of examples of applying Wisdom in daily contexts, including:

- Honest dealing – Proverbs 16:11: “Honest balances and scales are the Lord’s; all the weights in the bag are his work.”
- Get priorities right! Proverbs 24:27: “Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for you in the field; and after that build your house.”
- Understand the blockers to acting rightly, and avoid them, Proverbs 31:1-9: the dangers of distractions, such as wine, women, and song
- Prudence in business – Proverbs 31:10-end. Here the prudent and successful businessperson is a woman.
- Expect ups and downs – Ecclesiastes 3:9-13. Sometimes all our efforts seem in vain, a chasing after wind, but perseverance is its own reward.
- Don’t begrudge others in their success – Ecclesiastes 4:4: “Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from one person’s envy of another. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind.”

¹⁵ ‘Expressed in word and action’ includes knowing when it is more helpful that we should not speak or act.

And in the New Testament:

- The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16)
- The Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32: the one who says “no” to his father, but later does as he is asked, and the other who says “yes” but doesn’t).
- We are co-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:7-9).
- Don’t be a burden to others (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8).¹⁶
- Reward workers fairly and justly (1 Tim. 5:18; James 5:4).¹⁷
- Wisdom is proved right by her actions (Matt. 11:19).¹⁸

Wisdom is something we and others will see – but not always from the start. Persevering in what is right will have its way and its say. There are times when words or verbal responses are not necessary because we’re able to speak more clearly and effectively by living out wisdom.

We can summarise all the above thus:

1. In both Old and New Testaments, Wisdom begins with recognising God as source and creator.
2. Wisdom sees creation in this context and seeks to work with it.

¹⁶ You remember our labour and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

.... we did not eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labour we worked night and day so that we might not burden any of you.

¹⁷ ... for the scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain” and “The labourer deserves to be paid.”

¹⁸ “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her actions.”

3. Wisdom seeks first to understand, then to act based on understanding.
4. It starts with what is and seeks to do what is right in context.
5. Wisdom is practical in what it seeks to achieve.

Acting in the role of Priest or Prophet is a privilege we as MSEs take on from time to time, as the need arises. Wisdom is always needful, throughout the normal operations of our daily lives. Its scope is constant and all-embracing. Perhaps MSEs can embrace the role of agents of Wisdom?

Rob Fox

Further reading / resources:

BibleGateway: [Tour of the Bible, part 3: the Wisdom Books - Bible Gateway Blog](#)

Oxford Academic, Wisdom in the New Testament, at <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190661267.013.11>

Yale Bible Study Guide for Wisdom literature, at <https://yalebiblestudy.org/courses/wisdom-literature/lessons/what-is-wisdom-literature-study-guide/>

What has the Committee been doing?

Highlights from the Committee Meeting held on Saturday 21 September 2024.

Seven of us met via videoconferencing. Our committee meetings start and end with prayer and at the start each member briefly shares how they are and what's happening in their life currently.

We tend to spend a lot of effort focused on upcoming events, having reflected on how the latest one went. The 2024 Annual Conference and AGM was held at Luther King House, Manchester, 12-14 July 2024 entitled "MSE as Prophet". Feedback was generally positive, and the contribution of Bishop Julie Conalty had been particularly appreciated. The hybrid AGM format had been welcomed and will be continued with enhanced technology.

The 2025 Reflective Weekend, 14-16 February, Shallowford was discussed and planned and various roles allocated. The 2025 Annual Conference and AGM is set for 18-20 July 2025, at Sarum College and with a working title of "Where do we see reconciliation and redemption in the workplace?" There was also a broader discussion about CHRISM weekends, timing and venues. The pattern has been:

- Reflective weekend in February
- Conference and AGM in July

Some alternatives were discussed:

- retain two face-to-face events per year as now;
- retain two face-to-face events per year but change to May and November;
- have a separate AGM online at any time of year.

We agreed to survey the membership before deciding.

Rob, our treasurer, gave a financial report. Membership secretary, Sue reported current membership at 76. Annual subscriptions are due and it is hoped that the process of paying subscriptions will be made easier and simpler. Please see the enclosed/attached invoice and Sue's article later in the journal.

Two of our CHRISM publications, the Worship Book and Theological Resources Book, are not available in electronic form and would benefit from updating. We discussed various options, including scanning and sharing the documents before a decision be taken. It would certainly need a working group – any volunteers?

International links are a standing item and we rejoiced that five CHRISM members are hoping to go to the meeting of the European Worker Priests in Herzogenrath from 25-27 October.

Rob and colleagues are working on a learning module on MSE and will be looking to pilot it soon. There are plans are for an updated CHRISM website. Behind the scenes we are archiving material from the early days of CHRISM's formation and working on ensuring compliance with GDPR, our retention of documents policy and ensuring members' privacy.

At the CHRISM AGM there was a suggestion that we consider how we promote ourselves and this will be high on the agenda for our next meeting on 23 November.

What we each can do as CHRISM members

Ask not what CHRISM can do for you, but or also ask, how can you be more involved and a part of a thriving organisation.

- Join us on the Ministers at Work Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436> which has lots of information and links to current events and resources.
- Browse the CHRISM website resources <https://www.chrism.org.uk/page25.html>
- Do you feel drawn to work with others on CHRISM MSE worship materials or on a resource for theological reflection? Contact rebeccacraven@gmail.com
- Spread the word about CHRISM. Perhaps encourage a friend to join. If you're attending an MSE/SSM event why not take along some back copies of journals (contact Lyn Page for these) and print off some flyers from - https://www.chrism.org.uk/paper_00.pdf

Notice - Dr Nick Yates

All who knew him were very sorry to hear of Nick's death and send our love and condolences to Margaret, his wife. Nick died peacefully on Wednesday 24th July 2024 after a short illness. He worked as a General Medical Practitioner and both he and Margaret, have been much loved and active members of CHRISM for many years. We hope to publish a tribute to Nick in the next edition of Ministers-at-Work.

Book Review

Lydia: a story by Paula Gooder (2022)

Lydia appears only once in the New Testament (Acts 16:13-15) where she is found by Paul in Philippi, at a place of prayer. She is described as "a dealer in purple". Both her trade and her location in the company of worshippers mark her out as a very early MSE (as, of course, was Paul himself).

Paula Gooder has imagined a whole biography for Lydia, populating the story with several other characters recognisable from Acts and the Epistles, such as Euodia and Syntyche, Timothy and Epaphroditus. She develops other individuals, such as the girl from whom Paul cast out a prophesying spirit (Acts 16:16) and one of the soldiers involved in the crucifixion. Additional dramatis personae are purely fictional.

A convincing picture of Philippi at the time of the early church is created, describing in particular the trade in purple with its different dyes. Life under the Romans is portrayed, as well as how separate small groups of Christians began meeting together. The characters are aware of Paul in prison in Rome, and there is some disagreement as to whether he should have travelled there at all. Central to the story is the arrival of Paul's letter to the Christians at Philippi and how Lydia and her friends respond to it.

The book falls into two parts. Two-thirds consist of a very readable and plausible story which brings to life the context of first century Philippi. The rest of the book contains very accessible notes describing the latest research on Philippians and Acts. At the time of my writing this review, Philippians has appeared in the Morning Prayer Lectionary, and I shall be reading the passages in a new light and may feel more confident in preaching on this epistle.

Paula Gooder has presented a convincing picture of a group of people discerning what it means to be Christian in their daily life and work. I was not aware of her earlier book, *Phoebe: a story*, but I shall certainly be reading it since I enjoyed meeting Lydia.

Margaret Trivasse

Membership Update

Dear Members

This is your annual reminder that 2025 subscriptions are due on 1st January 2025. With this journal, you will find an invoice for 2025.

Please complete this and return it to me so that we have both your up-to-date contact details and your consent to keep your records. There are several ways to pay:

Standing Order

These are the easiest, as you can set them up and control them, though we do continue to receive payments year after year from people we can no longer get hold of – a good reason to keep sending in your forms.

In the last year or so, we have moved our bank account from HSBC to the Co-operative Bank. Standing Orders for 2024 were forwarded by HSBC under the bank switching process, but you may prefer to cancel and set up again with Co-op. Bank details are available from Sue Cossey or Rob Fox (we are not publishing them in the Journal). Please pay in January if possible.

Direct Bank Transfer

Again, this is easy for you if you have internet banking, though you will need to remember to pay each year. As above, our bank details are available from Sue or Rob.

Go Cardless

This is a form of Direct Debit, and is administered by Rob Fox. After some issues with payment dates and repeat payments, all direct debits

will in future be collected on January 15th each year. Contact Rob if you would like to pay this way (contact details at the back of the journal).

Cheque

This method of payment is still accepted, but it is time consuming for us, and you have to remember to send a cheque each year. We would prefer you pay by one of the other methods if possible.

Thanks to all our members who continue to support CHRISM each year, and special thanks to those who send in their forms and payment without me chasing them.

Sue Cossey

Membership Secretary

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Ordering Back Copies of the Journal

Do you enjoy reading this journal and would like to share the experience? There is an opportunity to get some back issues to give to any individual or organisation who may be interested in workplace ministry. Please contact me on my email address lyn.page@willow-bank.co.uk with your name and address. I will post a parcel of back issue Journals to you for distribution.

Lyn Page

Dates for your diary

2024 MODEM Conference, Monday 5th to Tuesday 6th November Power under Pressure - Ecologies of Power in the Church.

Exploring different ways in which power is used in churches and related organisations. The Conference is open to all and will cover some of the different theologies of power in the Church and how authority and power are used in church contexts. Confirmed speakers:

The Revd Professor Martyn Percy

The Revd Liz Griffiths

The Revd Richard Bolden

Cost: £145 (B&B £59 extra; £20 discount for members)

Venue: Sarum College, 19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EE

<https://www.modemuk.org/>

Saturday 9 November 10:00am.

Wisdom Lab: Better Conversations The Use and Abuse of Power

LICC, St Peter's Vere Street, London, W1G 0DQ

Tailored for 18–35s but open to all, this in-person gathering will give you a safe space to explore what you think, wrestle with tricky topics, and consider what it all means for the way you live today.

<https://licc.org.uk/events/wisdom-lab-better-conversations-the-use-and-abuse-of-power/>

And, most importantly.....

Book Your Place Now!



**Reflective Weekend, 14-16 February 2025
Shallowford, Staffordshire ST15 0NZ**

We are delighted that our CHRISM Reflective Weekend is to be led by Jan Lees. Jan Dean/Lees spent almost 40 years as a poet-in-schools and 20 years as a Reader. She learned to draw as a way of resting from the wordiness of her working life and to paint as another way of trying to understand her responses to the world around her.

14-16 February 2025, Reflective Weekend Shallowford, Staffordshire ST15 0NZ

<https://www.shallowfordhouse.org/about/>

A reflective weekend based around Jacob's journey and led by artist, Jan Lees, entitled '...and Jakov went out...' - disruption and exploration in story, faith and painting.

Enjoy a refreshing and relaxing weekend retreat at Shallowford House, set within 9 acres of secluded gardens, woodland and meadows in the Staffordshire countryside. There will be time for both reflective silence and companionship, and the opportunity to explore the area, or simply have some free time to walk, talk, snooze, reflect, read, pray.....

How to book:

- Complete and send the flyer to Ali Creasey
revalisoncreasey@gmail.com
- Book online via Eventbrite at [CHRISM Reflective Weekend 2025 Tickets, Fri 14 Feb 2025 at 17:00 | Eventbrite.](#)

Advance notice: Save the date!



2025 CHRISM conference, 18-20 July, 2025 will be held at Sarum College, 19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EE. More information soon.

CHRISM Theology Discussion Group - Future Meetings

This Discussion Group, which is open to all CHRISM members, provides an online forum where we can reflect on and discuss the theological aspects of our work. We meet monthly by Zoom for an hour and a half. Recent topics have included: The Importance of our Work to God and Us, The Idea of Rest, What is Work?, Justice at Work, The Kingdom at Work Project, Eternal Life, Christian Perspectives on Conflict in the Workplace, Organisational values - Help or hindrance to ministry in the workplace?, Is it OK to be ambitious?, Who is Jesus?, and Neighbourliness at Work.

If you are interested in joining the Theology Discussion Group, please email me at rev.julian.e.blakemore@gmail.com and I will add you to the invitation list so that you receive Zoom links for future meetings.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Rev'd Julian Blakemore



The promises I have made

“For the promises I have made
then broken,
forgive me, Lord.
Of my outward show
and inward poverty,
heal me, Lord.
In my desire to produce fruit
and in my struggle,
help me, Lord.”

Kate McIlhagga, from *The Green Heart of the Snowdrop* (Downloadable book) Wild Goose Publications

https://www.ionabooks.com/?s=from+the+green+heart&post_type=product&type_aws=true

CHRISM is on Facebook, 'Ministers at Work':

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/>

and LinkedIn, at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=3756477>

CHRISM is the National Association of Christians In Secular Ministry

for **all** Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry, and for those who support that vision. To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly Journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat. Conferences are held regularly, and worldwide links pursued.

CHRISM welcomes members, both lay and ordained, from all Christian denominations, encourages them to be active within their own faith communities and to champion ministry in and through secular employment.

If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of the Committee. **Further information may be obtained from the Secretary or the Journal Editor.**

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