

Understanding the Bible in the early Church

The Ven Dr Edward Dowler, Archdeacon of Hastings

Wednesday 27 September at 7.30pm – 9pm

In one of his letters in the New Testament, St Paul writes that 'the letter kills but the Spirit gives life' (2 Corinthians 3.6). The early Christians believed that every part of Scripture – even some of the most unlikely ones – spoke of in some way about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This lecture will explore the way that the Bible was understood in early Christianity and will focus in particular on St Augustine of Hippo, the 'father of the western Church', and the way he preached to his congregation in the town of Hippo on the north coast of Africa – unlocking for them how the book of Psalms in the Old Testament both tell us about Christ – even though they predate his birth by several centuries – and about how we hear his voice speaking within them.



Why Revelation is the best book in the Bible

The Revd Dr Alan Le Grys, Lecturer, University of Kent

Wednesday, 8 November 7.30 – 9 pm

The Book of Revelation is an invitation to enter into the world of the biblical imagination, as the author weaves together a complex picture of ideas and images from the Old Testament to unpack a vision of God's triumph over evil and death. The corrosive violence of 'ordinary life' is seen as self-destructive as darkness and despair are turned into hope through the death and resurrection of Jesus. *Revelation* for too long has been treated with suspicion by the 'mainstream' churches, allowing it to be commandeered by fringe groups constantly predicting Armageddon and getting it wrong. It is time to allow *Revelation* to speak again to the contemporary Christian Church as a counter-cultural claim to see the 'real world' from God's point of view.

How religious are Christmas movies?

Dr Chris Deacy, Reader in Theology, University of Kent

Wed 6 December 7.30 – 9pm

Why should Christians take stock of 'secular' Christmas movies? Organized religion plays little part in their plot, but the supernatural seems to be in vogue, with a seemingly deliberate conflation between secular narratives of conversion and renewal and the Christian drama of redemption. Do Christmas movies witness the replacement of one set of redeemer figures with another, with flying (even talking) snowmen, reindeer, angels and Father Christmas taking on the role once accorded to the Nativity? Have the rituals and mythologies we associate with the Christian festival been usurped by Christmas movies? What does this all have to say about the way we understand religion to operate in the world today? Are cinematic festive offerings sites of religious encounter and transcendence which requires us to revisit the way we understand the nature and activity of the sacred?



All lectures take place at St Thomas the Apostle, Corseley Road, Groombridge TN3 9SF

As you enter Groombridge, turn into Corseley Road - beside the Post Office.

After about half a mile, you pass The Close on the left. The Church is just beyond on the left. Please park on the road. [Please note: It is not the church on Groombridge Hill, opposite the Crown Inn]

Cost: £3 per lecture on the door, includes a glass of wine or soft drink.

Further information available from Sharon Francis 01892 864265 revsharon.francis@outlook.com
or at www.stthomasgroombridge.org.uk