

# The Watford Word

[www.watfordchurchofchrist.org](http://www.watfordchurchofchrist.org)

## What's on

**Sunday 26 May - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking**

**Sunday 02 June - 10:30AM. Visiting speaker Dr John Oakes (<https://evidenceforchristianity.org/>)**



I am delighted that my friend Dr John Oakes will be with us on 2nd June. John is a retired Chemistry professor who together with his wife currently leads a church planting in California. He has written 15 books - several are in our church library. His speciality is defending the Christian

faith. John has taught adults, campus, singles and teens for more than 200 churches, in more than 80 countries and at 60 universities. Subjects he teaches include: God, Science and the Bible; History, Archaeology and the Bible; Daniel, Prophet to the Nations; From Shadow to Reality; How We Got the Bible; Revelation, Ezekiel, Post-Exile Prophets, Luke, John, Evidence for Jesus; The Problem of Pain and Suffering; Church History; Old Testament Survey; Hebrews; Christian World View; World Religions; Baptism: Into Christ; and many more. As you can imagine, his visit is a wonderful opportunity to invite our friends to hear the Gospel.

**Sunday 09 June - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking**

**Sunday 16 June - 10:30AM.**

**Sunday 23 June - 10:30AM.**

**Sunday 30 June - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking**

**Sunday 07 July - 10:30AM. Church service (also Wellington country park outdoor service in Thames Valley)**

**Sunday 14 July - 10:30AM. Visiting speaker Kerry Mathurin**

**Sunday 21 July - 10:30AM. Visiting speaker Olyden Johnson**

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## A Peace That Lasts

Welcome to our annual international celebration!

Our multi-national congregation is a delight to us, but international peace is not automatic. This world is torn by political, racial, ethnic and religious conflicts. As well as international wars, we experience hatred and trauma in our personal lives, families, neighbours and society. What can be done?

Have you heard of Leymah Gbowee? She is remarkable. Her efforts advocating for peace in the Liberian civil war earned her the Nobel Peace Prize. During the darkest days of civil war, Gbowee, a trained social worker and mother of four, emerged as a beacon of hope for her war-torn nation. Fuelled by her Christian faith and a deep desire for peace, she rallied women from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds to join forces in a nonviolent protest movement - the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. Together, they demanded an end to the violence and the initiation of peace talks.



Dressed in white, symbolising their desire for peace, these women mounted sit-ins and organised peace marches. They even staged a highly effective sex strike to pressure warring factions into negotiating a peace agreement!

Their efforts were not in vain. In 2003, under immense international pressure and spurred by the grassroots movement led by Gbowee and

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others, Liberia's warring factions finally agreed to attend peace talks in Ghana. Ultimately, these negotiations led to the signing of a peace accord and the end of Liberia's devastating civil war.

### Political Peace Passes

Yet, as we reflect on Gbowee's remarkable journey, we are reminded of a fundamental truth. While political peace is valuable, it is often temporary and fragile. A true and lasting peace—the kind that transcends understanding and transforms hearts—emanates from a deeper source: The peace that Jesus offers.

Amid life's storms, Jesus extends His hand, speaking words of solace and assurance:

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).*

His peace is not contingent upon favourable circumstances or fleeting agreements; it anchors our anxious hearts amid chaos and uncertainty.

Jesus told a woman, *"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."* (Luke 7:50). After his resurrection he reassured his confused followers by appearing among them and saying, *"Peace be with you."* (Luke 24:36). He wanted people like you and me to feel the peace he offers.

Paul declared of Jesus that *"he himself is our peace"* (Ephesians 2:14). Without Christ, a chasm of discord exists between God and humanity and among fellow humans. Yet, through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus bridges this chasm, reconciling us to God and enabling harmonious relationships with one another. His peace transforms hearts, breaking down walls of hostility and division.

### Passing on the Peace

Embracing the peace of Jesus not only brings personal tranquility but also empowers us to become instruments of reconciliation in a broken world. As we experience His peace, we are compelled to extend it to others.

Paul went from a man filled with anger, to someone full of peace because of the grace of Jesus. *"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy" 1 Timothy 1:13*

He felt the impact so profoundly that he said, *"I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16)* That compulsion was not duty, but gratitude. The good news of the peace of God available to humankind was too good to keep to himself.

However, this journey towards peace has its challenges. Like Jesus and Paul we will face trials, conflicts, and uncertainties along the way. Yet, even amid life's storms, we can find solace in the presence of our sovereign Lord.

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (Phil 4:4-7)

As we navigate life's complexities, let us be ambassadors of peace, carrying the transformative message of Jesus to a world in desperate need of His love and reconciliation.

*"Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14).*

### For reflection

- Are you experiencing the peace of Christ?
- How do you think God could grow more of His peace in you?
- Is God guiding you to someone who needs His peace?

Your brother, Malcolm

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## Watford Contribution Details

If you want to donate to the work of the church here, please go to this link and look for the 'ICC Missions standing order and gift aid form' — <https://watfordchurchofchrist.org/podcasts>

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## Watford Media

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