



# ST JOHN'S HOLLING WITH ST PETER & ST PAU

WORKING, PRAYING, & HOPING WITH JESUS

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



As my family and I prepare for our summer holidays and a time of rest, I've been reflecting on what it means to 'rest.' I'm thinking about this, in part, because of the recent death of Ozzy Osbourne, front man of the pioneering metal band *Black Sabbath*, and the so-called "Prince of Darkness" – which it turns out, given the many tributes that have flooded the media in the wake of his death, is an entirely inappropriate moniker for a man who was characteristically kind, generous, gracious, and brought light into many people's lives (and was of course wildly eccentric).

When someone - like this rock legend - dies, we say they are "laid to *rest*." It's a funny thought, that they're just "resting", but even Jesus says it about his own friend (cf. John 11:11-15). Most of our lives are spent ignoring the fact that we too will one day be "laid to rest." Especially in our hyper-connected technological age, we are given no time to rest, no time to think, no time to just be and be still. Today's culture is a restless one, it's

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always demanding something from us, always nagging at our attention. This is why *rest* is radically counter-cultural because it looks foolish in a world that says you have to keep busy and do your best to avoid one of the most basic facts of being human - our mortality.

And there's good biblical precedent for rest, after all God Himself "rested on the seventh day" and even commands that we do the same on the Sabbath (nothing to do with the band, but traditionally the day of rest observed by Jewish people from a Friday to a Saturday evening). As a Christian, this is why I'm grateful for the person of Jesus. Because in Him, I find the one still point of the universe that doesn't demand anything from me, where the pressure is off, the one place where I can really rest, where I am simply known and loved and that's all that matters.

All this is to say that if you take one thing away from this newsletter it's this; allow yourself the grace of rest this summer. It's easier said than done because it has become so counter-cultural, but it's not just good for you, it's good for the whole world. And if like me you believe in a benevolent creator, well then, He thinks it's a mighty fine idea too.

Here's what's in the spotlight for this month's newsletter:

- **An update from my predecessor**
- **Building Projects Update**



### AN UPDATE FROM LUKE

Some of you will know that my predecessor had intended to move to Colorado after retiring, but if you've been around at Common Grounds Café the last few months, you'll have seen him knocking about still. It turns out emigrating to the United States is an arduous process (not helped by the current administration!). Well, after a protracted journey, there's some good news:

*"PTL! Finally, I have a visa and (at last) am allowed to live "stateside"! I won't bore you with the details but suffice to say that after initially applying in September 2023 my passport with US Visa was returned to me on the 9th July and I flew out to Colorado (indefinitely) two days later, just in time for Leo's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday! Despite some anxiety, the officers at immigration in Denver were very welcoming and even said "Congratulations". Thank you all for your prayers and support - particularly to Andrew Stevens for "putting up with me up". We are not beyond needing your prayers, but "visa" is no longer one of them. St John's and P&P will forever be in our hearts and prayers.*

We are blessed to have two beautiful buildings in which to worship and gather. However, if you've been into either of them recently, you'll know that these piles of bricks and mortar that we have inherited don't always serve us that well. There's some basic needs which need to be addressed at both churches:

- *St John's desperately needs some functional and accessible toilets.*
- *P&P needs a watertight roof.*

Readers of the Hastings Observer may have spied an update on the project for P&P – a project which will not only solve the leaky roof but will also expand and revolutionise that space to allow it to better serve the community. This proposal is now with the planning office of the local authority.

More than anything right now, these projects need your prayers – there's still various hoops to jump through (planning, faculty, quantity surveyance, finance and the like), but we are close to seeing some major improvements soon.

That's all for now, but don't forget that **this coming Monday the ParkinSongsters Summer concert will take place at St John's from 3-4:30pm**, and the **final Sunday of August (31<sup>st</sup>) will be our joint service hosted at P&P** (so no service at St John's) with three adults being baptised and lunch afterwards.

Much love, grace, and peace,  
Toby  
*Priest-in-Charge*

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P.S. Just in case you were wondering, the photo at the top is 'Hawk Abseilers' pigeon-proofing the tower at St John's - not for the faint hearted!

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**A Prayer from the Iona Community:**

*May God, who is present in sunrise and nightfall,  
and in the crossing of the sea,  
guide your feet as you go.*

*May God, who is with you when you sit  
and when you stand,  
encompass you with love  
and lead you by the hand.*

*May God, who knows your path  
and the places where you rest,  
be with you in your waiting,  
be your good news for sharing,  
and lead you in the way that is everlasting.*

*Amen.*