

# +WEEKLY SERMON

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## Why are you here?

*Readings for Advent 3, Yr C - Luke 3:7-18*

Within Blackburn Cathedral's Museum of the Moon events last month, I had the immense privilege of helping with a Science-Faith event for about 120 GCSE pupils one Thursday morning. It was terrific working with Cathedral organisers, volunteers and colleagues from the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, Christians in Science and my own Liverpool University to present on how Science and Faith can be complementary; teach about the science of DNA, Robots, Radiotherapy and Antimatter; discuss aspects of our own faith journeys; and of course answer many interesting questions from the pupils – one of which was, 'Why are you here?'

Incredibly insightful – to which we shared our passion and callings for being people of both science and faith; to demonstrate that there need not be conflict – for we require science, faith, history, literature, experience and lots more to understand more of God's wonderful world and universe. It was terrific being able to share those things and witness in this way; and an overwhelming response was for more time and more events like these.

Incredible as it was, though, it was nothing compared to the witness of John the Baptist, the focus of our gospel this Sunday. Who, in the face of similar questions like 'who are you' and 'why are you here', brought such a powerful testimony and message. So powerful that many responded – all manner of people asking what they should do. And John is clear – words and actions are needed; to turn away from old ways and embrace a path that leads to the Prince of Peace. Give to those in need, be honest and truthful, be satisfied with our many gifts from God.

Like John, we too are messengers, pointing to the one for whom we are not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals; and yet ... Jesus loves us, no matter what! We too can proclaim that Good News through our own ways, our own words, our own actions. We may often ask ourselves, why are we here; and be worried and anxious that we have neither the strength nor ability to respond to God's call. But, as in Sunday's letter to the Philippians (4:4-7), we need not worry – for the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN to that!

**The Rev Dr Mike Kirby, Liverpool Cathedral; PTO Blackburn Diocese**

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